



Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet Kentucky Exposition Center

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Please see the attached photos with captions.

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NBA All-Star Rajon Rondo Surprises Young Athletes

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (July 16, 2018) — When Rajon Rondo walked into the South Wing of the Kentucky Exposition Center, a young boy noticed him standing beside a basketball court. The boy pointed Rondo out to his friends and it didn't take long before the entire crowd of young participants were trying to catch a glimpse of the newly-minted Los Angeles Laker.

"For me personally, Louisville is where I grew up and became the player I am today. I was always able to go to city parks and play," said Rondo. "Anything involving kids I'm always all for, especially kids and basketball."

Rondo was at the Kentucky Exposition Center for Midsummer Hoopla, which is a free event for members of the Boys & Girls Club and Louisville Metro Parks Community Centers. Young athletes compete in three point shootouts, a slam dunk contest, a skills challenge, and other activities.

The participants of the slam dunk contest tried their best to impress Rondo with creative alley-oops and under the leg dunks. Some of the more imaginative attempts may not have scored many points, but it was all-smiles and laughter as they showed off their skills to the four-time NBA all-star.

What does Rajon Rondo look for in a slam-dunk contest?

"The uniqueness of their skill set," said Rondo. "I'm looking for originality and a little bit of flashiness."

One participant, Chase Jones of the Parkland Boys & Girls Club, expressed his excitement for the opportunity not only to demonstrate his basketball abilities but also meet an NBA Champion.

"I had fun and I came in second place for the slam-dunk contest," said Jones.

Rondo enjoyed serving as a judge for the slam-dunk contest but more importantly, his time spent encouraging the young athletes at Midsummer Hoopla.

"My favorite part of the day was seeing smiles on kids' faces," said Rondo.

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One of the 10 largest facilities of its kind in the U.S., the [Kentucky Exposition Center](#) (KEC) features 1.3 million square feet of contiguous exhibit space, including Freedom Hall, an indoor arena that seats 13,500 people. The facility's class "A" exhibit space totals 680,700 square feet and accommodates a wide range of events year round. KEC is the permanent home of the Kentucky State Fair, National Farm Machinery Show and North American International Livestock Exposition. For more information, go to www.kyexpo.org.

Conveniently located adjacent to the Louisville International Airport and near the junction of three major interstates, KEC is easily accessible and just seven minutes south of downtown Louisville. Entrances to the facility are located off Phillips Lane, Crittenden Drive and Preston Highway. Parking is \$8 per vehicle and \$20 per bus.