



Big Ten recruit tops list of Rockford players to watch on defensive line

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HARD ROCK CASINO ROCKFORD

Giveaway celebrates 3 million visits

Abreanna Blose
AI-assisted reporter
USA TODAY NETWORK

Hard Rock Casino Rockford is on the brink of welcoming its three millionth guest since opening in November 2021.

The count includes visitors to both the temporary Rockford Casino: A Hard Rock Opening Act and the permanent facility, which is set to celebrate its one-year anniversary on Aug. 29.

“Crossing the threshold of three million visitors is not merely a milestone, it’s a testament to the magnetic appeal of our destination and the unwavering dedication of our team,” Geno Iafrate, president of Hard Rock Casino Rockford, said in the announcement.

The casino has grown beyond a gaming venue, becoming a regional hub for entertainment and cultural activities.

“We’ve built a place that connects, celebrates and gives back to the region,” Iafrate said. “It’s not just about counting visitors, it’s about creating moments that count.”

To mark the milestone, the casino is hosting a 3 Million Unity Point Giveaway for its loyalty program members from Aug. 8 to Aug. 29. Unity by Hard Rock allows members to earn and redeem points at the on property or online.

Each night at 10 p.m., one Unity Rewards member will be randomly selected to win Unity points. On Aug. 29, the casino will award 1 million Unity points to one guest. Guests are automatically eligible by playing with their Unity card.

Hard Rock Casino Rockford spans more than 175,000 square feet, offering over 1,300 slots, 50 live table games

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TOP: Khloe Wiegiers reacts to being named the 2025 Winnebago County Fair Queen on Aug. 13, at the Winnebago County Fairgrounds in Pecatonica. LEFT: The Winnebago County Fair Queen contestants complete their dance routine. RIGHT: Deegan Edwards reacts to winning the 2025 Junior Miss title.

PHOTOS BY KARA HAWLEY/ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR

Variety of things to do this weekend in the Rockford area

Kathi Edwards
Special to the Rockford Register Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

The weekend brings 815/Rockford Day events, the 53rd Annual Poplar Grove Airport Fly-In, Harlempalooza and Polish Fest, along with fundraisers, live music, Independence Day celebrations and more to the Rockford area.

Winnebago County Fair

What: Come out to the Winnebago County Fair and enjoy the sights, the sounds, the animals, the competitions, the music, the lights and the great entertainment. See winnebagoountyfair.com for more details.

When: Aug. 13 – 17

Where: Winnebago County Fairgrounds, 500 W. First St., Pecatonica

Cost: \$3-\$7 daily; \$15 season pass; \$30 mega pass; \$30 wristband; \$80 pit

pass

Music on the Mall: Nauti-Nauti

What: Music on the Mall is located in Center Court near Cora Physical Therapy. The performer Aug. 15 is Nauti-Nauti, playing Yacht Rock – 70’s and pre-MTV 80’s music. There will be a mall sidewalk sale from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Aug. 15.

When: 6:30-8:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 15

Where: Edgebrook Center, 1643 N. Alpine Road, Rockford

Cost: Free admission

Rockford City Market: Long Shot

What: Rockford City Market features local vendors who sell handmade products, including cheeses, flowers, baked goods, and prepared food, as well as artisans and vendors with unique offerings. Most vendors originate within a 150-mile radius of Rockford. There are weekly chil-

dren’s activities. Rockford Mass Transit District provides free trolley service between the Museum Campus, Davis Park, UW Health Sports Factory, Nicholas Conservatory and Rockford City Market (with additional stops at the Coronado Theatre and Nordlof Center) from 3:30-9:30 p.m. The main stage performer Aug. 15 is Long shot. McKenna Faith Winters performs on the Acoustic Stage.

When: 4-8:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 15

Where: East State and Water Streets, downtown Rockford

Cost: Free admission

815 Day: 8-1-Live

What: Celebrate Drew Eurek’s birthday at this 8-1-LIVE event. The collective is hosting a public event with live painting from collective artists Drew Eurek and Jessica Quam, live music from several local musicians, with a Cloth and Canvas and Odd Oddities pop-up.

When: 6-9 p.m. Friday, Aug. 15

Where: Kith & Kiln, 510 E. State St., Rockford

Cost: Free admission

815 Day: Burpee Museum

What: Celebrate 815 Day at Burpee Museum with special event tables highlighting Rockford’s rich fossil record and native plants and animals. Explore our natural history in a fun, family-friendly way.

When: 1-5 p.m. Friday, Aug. 15

Where: Burpee Museum of Natural History, 737 N. Main St., Rockford

815 Day: Inscape Collective

What: Celebrate 815 Day by sharing your memories and dreams for Midtown. Stop by to draw or write your ideas—no

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