

Monday, March 31, 2008

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TU loves CBI, despite its doubters

By [ERIC BAILEY](#) World Sports Writer
3/30/2008

The College Basketball Invitational has received plenty of hits.

When Tulsa meets Bradley this week, some of the national media will blow off the inaugural best-of-3 championship series.

But what may mean little to some means everything to TU coach Doug Wojcik.

"Certain things happen to all of us in our life, like how you met your wife or got your job," Wojcik said. "What the CBI has been is an unbelievable blessing for me as a coach, for the team and the university.

"How do you capture what we were trying to say in December? This has been an opportunity to do that."

Wins are still being tallied, and Reynolds Center crowds have been electric over the past few weeks.

Still, this new 16-team tournament has its doubters.

Rick Giles is the president of the Gazelle Group, which manages the inaugural CBI Tournament. He has seen the event take plenty of hits during the first week, from questions about the best-of-3 format to criticism of the \$60,000 fee to host home games.

"I laugh at that," Giles said. "Anytime you challenge the status quo, people doubt you. Anytime you challenge the establishment, there are naysayers.



"I'm marveling at PTI (ESPN's Pardon the Interruption) and Billy Packer, who ask who's going to care about this tournament. Yet they're taking the time to talk about it."

In the CBI's corner are the coaches, who have raved about the event.

Bradley coach Jim Les is pumped about playing in the series, which could end up with the Braves winning a championship.

"I'm grateful to our president and athletic director, who supported us in this event," Les

said. "I'm excited about getting in, and this tournament has been a first-class event.

"A lot of people had apprehension because it's new, but it's been great. We've been treated extremely well and honored to be in the finals."

Part of the apprehension has been because of the \$60,000 fee required to host a CBI game. Many teams offered to go on the road; not many made the commitment to host.

Has Giles grown weary of hearing about that payment for rights to a home contest?

"Yes, I am tired of hearing it," Giles said. "We're offering teams a chance to make money. Fifty percent of the gate . . . gives teams an incentive to promote this and generate ticket sales and revenue."

Tulsa athletic director Bubba Cunningham has said the school needed to break the 5,000 mark in attendance to break even. The Golden Hurricane has averaged 5,489 through its first three games, and has already sold more than 6,000 tickets for Monday's 7 p.m. home game against Bradley.

TU could have two more games in the Reynolds Center if the best-of-3 series is tied after Wednesday's game at Bradley, which is in Peoria, Ill.

The decision to play the best-of-3, and at campus sites, was to make the tournament unique, Giles said.

"One thing we noticed about the NIT was that as teams went through the first couple of rounds, it would build up more interest," Giles said. "But when the teams went to New York, (attendance) would drop like a rock. The very essence of college basketball, the intensity and passion in the building, is lost when you want it most.

"The reason for the best-of-3 series was to give both teams' fans a chance to be part of the championship series and also see how players and coaches adjust."

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Houston 80, Nevada 79
 Valparaiso 72, Washington 71
 Virginia 66, Richmond 64
 Old Dominion 68, Rider 65
 Tulsa 61, Miami (Ohio) 45
 Utah 81, Texas-El Paso 69
 Ohio 80, Brown 74
 Bradley 70, Cincinnati 67

Quarterfinals

Houston 91, Valparaiso 67
 Virginia 80, Old Dominion 76
 Tulsa 69, Utah 60
 Bradley 79, Ohio 73

Semifinals**Wednesday**

Bradley 96, Virginia 85
 Tulsa 73, Houston 69

Finals**BEST OF 3**

Tulsa versus Bradley
 Monday at Tulsa, 7 p.m.
 Wednesday at Bradley, 7 p.m.
 Friday at Tulsa, 7 p.m.

[By ERIC BAILEY World Sports Writer](#)

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1. 3/30/2008 3:33:28 AM, David (rail-bird), T-town

I will be there monday night to see TU whip up on Bradley. I hope that the crowd is a sell-out, for I bought 10 tickets, they are not that expensive so there should be no reason to not go out and help support Tulsa's Team
 . Hope to see everyone there to help root TU to another win.

GO TU!!!!

2. 3/30/2008 3:56:54 AM, David (rail-bird), T-town

I will be there monday night to see TU whip up on Bradley. I hope that the crowd is a sell-out, for I bought 10 tickets, they are not that expensive so there should be no reason to not go out and help support Tulsa's Team
 . Hope to see everyone there to help root TU to another win.

GO TU!!!!

3. 3/30/2008 4:28:28 AM, Mike,

Onomatopoeia and Alpha Dog can suck it!

4. 3/30/2008 8:46:07 AM, justme,

We've got our 4 seats for Monday night. LET'S GO BRAVES!!!!!!

5. 3/30/2008 6:57:15 PM, Bobby,

Mike, from what your wife tells me, you have nothing to suck.

6. 3/30/2008 7:03:05 PM, Brandon, Sapulpa

Tulsa All the way !!! be there Monday Night.....

7. 3/30/2008 7:34:01 PM, Frank, Tucson

GooooooooooooTU and tomahawk the Braves 2 straight. Play your best games TU!! GOLD, blue and red, go right ahead, down the court to VICTORY!!!!!!!!!!!!

8. 3/30/2008 8:46:19 PM, Mike,

Bobby, in order for jokes like that to work you have to either know the person or the person's wife. Otherwise....how could I be offended?

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