



Richmond, South Carolina & Southwest Missouri State to Host 2003 Guardians Classic

Princeton, NJ (October 2, 2003) · Richmond, South Carolina, and Southwest Missouri State will each host the opening rounds of the Guardians Classic, a twelve-team, exempt college basketball tournament on November 17-18, 2003. The championship rounds of the Event will be held on November 24-25 at Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City, Missouri. Other schools participating in the tournament include Elon, Gardner-Webb, Idaho, Mississippi Valley State, Mount Saint Mary's, New Hampshire, San Francisco, Tennessee-Martin, and Western Illinois (Please see bracket below for match-ups and dates).

The Richmond Spiders (16-13) return to the hardwood after their sixth consecutive winning season and third straight National Invitational Tournament berth. Led by their 2002-2003 leading scorer, Mike Skrocki, and Atlantic-10 Defensive Player of the Year, Tony Dobbins, this year's squad is aiming to climb atop the A-10 standings and build on last year's victories against conference rivals Temple and Xavier.

The South Carolina Gamecocks (12-16) enter this season with the hopes of claiming a spot among the elite programs of the Southeastern Conference. With 9 returning lettermen, including power forward Carlos Powell, Coach Dave Odom's squad will rely heavily on their experience as they tip off the 2003 campaign.

Southwest Missouri State (17-12) is coming off a strong third place finish in the Missouri Valley Conference, one of the fastest rising mid-major conferences in college basketball. The Bears are led by guard Merrill Andrews and forward Kellon Easley, members of the MVC All-Defensive and All-Freshman teams, respectively.

The winner of each regional round and one "wild card" (four teams total) will advance to the championship rounds at historic Municipal Auditorium in downtown Kansas City. The criteria for determining the "wild card" team will be announced in the near future. Municipal Auditorium has played host to more NCAA Final Fours than any other building. The national collegiate basketball champion has been crowned nine times on the Municipal hardwood, including John Wooden's first UCLA title team in 1964 and San Francisco's 1954-55 squad led by Bill Russell and K.C. Jones.

In last year's Guardians Classic, Creighton defeated Notre Dame in the championship game, 80-75.

"We are delighted to have twelve outstanding programs from across the country coming together to be a part of this year's Guardians Classic. It is a testament to the strength and positive message of our Guardians of the Game program. This event will focus on the positive aspects of college basketball, the role coaches play in the lives of student-athletes, and the contributions that coaches make to their communities," said Jim Haney, Executive Director of the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

Championship round tickets will be available in the near future and can be purchased by calling Ticketmaster at (816) 931-3330 or by visiting www.ticketmaster.com.

Tickets to the Opening Round games can be purchased through each host school's box office:

University of Richmond: (877) SPIDER-1 or visit <http://www.richmondspiders.com/>

University of South Carolina: (800) 4SC-FANS. <http://www.uscsports.com/>

Southwest Missouri State University: (888) 4SMS-TIX or visit <http://www.smstix.com/>

The Guardians Classic, created to promote the NABC's Guardians of the Game program, which emphasizes four core values; advocacy, leadership, service, and education, is produced by the Gazelle Group. For more information about the Guardians Classic, visit www.guardiansclassic.com or contact Bill Dunigan at (609)921-1300 or wdunigan@gazellegroup.com



The Gazelle Group • 475 Wall Street, Princeton, NJ 08540 • phone (609) 921-1300 fax (609) 921-2332

