

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Pitt athletic director Pederson talks about CBI bid

By John Grupp
PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW
Monday, March 12, 2012

Athletic director Steve Pederson said today that Pitt will host as many games as possible in the College Basketball Invitational.

Pitt (17-16), shutout from the NCAA Tournament and the NIT after a disappointing 13th-place finish in the Big East, will play host to Wofford (19-13) on Wednesday night at Petersen Events Center.

With a win, Pitt would host the Princeton-at-Evansville winner on March 19 in the quarterfinals. The teams are re-seeded after the quarterfinals with the higher seed hosting the semifinal.

"As long as we keep winning, we will keep hosting the games," Pederson said. The cost to host a first-round game is reported to be \$35,000, though Pederson declined to confirm that figure.

Pederson, who held a teleconference this afternoon, said accepting a bid to the 16-team CBI was the plan if the Panthers didn't get into the NIT.

"It was an easy decision and one that we made some time ago," he said.

As for ticket sales – the first-round average in the CBI last year was 2,414 – Pederson said the "phones have been busy."

"We already have been pleased with the ticket sales and the response we've gotten," he said. "We feel pretty good about being able to cover the cost of hosting the tournament here."

Pederson, who said he was surprised, but "not shocked" that Pitt missed the 32-team NIT field, said the CBI will provide a positive opportunity for the youthful Panthers.

"We're doing this because it's important to Jamie and the players," he said. "This was the right things to do. Overall, it will be good competition for our players. We've enjoyed so many fabulous years and this is just a little bit different for us. There are a lot of advantages."

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