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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