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## Cost to host CBI is high, but result is priceless



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By [JOHN KLEIN Senior Sports Columnist](#)  
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PEORIA, ILL. -- Tulsa has paid \$60,000 per home game in the College Basketball Invitational.

The Golden Hurricane, on the road Wednesday night for the first time in the CBI, found out the real value of home games. Priceless.

TU should have known this would not be fun when it fired up a couple of air balls, including one that should have been a dunk, in the opening minutes.

The Golden Hurricane will send another check to the CBI and get another chance to win the tournament on Friday in Tulsa after an 83-74 loss to Bradley at Carver Arena.

The lopsided loss, never in doubt, will set up a third and deciding game in the CBI championship series at the Reynolds Center.

"They played a great game," TU coach Doug Wojcik said. "They pretty much controlled the game after we won the opening tip and scored."

That was pretty much the last time the Golden Hurricane was in the game.

"We've got a very unselfish team," Bradley coach Jim Les said. "We were passing up good shots to get great shots."

There wasn't much mystery about how Bradley got away to such an easy victory.

The Braves shot better than 50 percent.



That happens at home. A team gets into a comfort zone when there's 9,014 fans, the biggest crowd of the CBI tourney, cheering its every move.

"The crowd was into it," Wojcik said. "They were feeding off of it."

It is exactly what Tulsa has been doing on its mini-run to the CBI finals. In four home games, Tulsa has drawn the most enthusiastic crowds at the Reynolds Center in five years.

Not since the 2003 Western Athletic Conference Tournament, a springboard to

an NCAA Tournament bid, has TU enjoyed such support.

That's likely to be the case again on Friday.

It was the advantage Bradley had on Wednesday.

"It'll be a big challenge for us," Bradley's Jeremy Crouch said. "They play very well at home.

"We will have to be much more aggressive than when we played down there a couple of nights ago."

Bradley romped and stomped the Hurricane from the start. The Braves erected a 10-point lead barely six minutes into the game.

From that point, there wasn't much of a game.

The Braves, who finished fifth in the Missouri Valley Conference, were on a roll in their final home game of the season.

Bradley's Crouch had 20 points and five 3-pointers, along with Daniel Ruffin's 12 points, to overwhelm the Hurricane.

The Braves, who shot poorly in a Monday night loss at Tulsa, were on fire on Wednesday.

Bradley hit 11 3-pointers and kept Tulsa at a distance.

"We came out with a lot of enthusiasm and pressure in this game," Les said.

That was far different than in the game at Tulsa, a 73-68 victory by the Hurricane.



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"Again, the home court," Wojcik said.

That should be very comforting to Tulsa.

The Golden Hurricane did not play well on the road this season. The only road victories came at Colorado, SMU and East Carolina. None of those schools have much basketball history.

Playing at Bradley, a legitimate basketball school with a rich tradition, is a different animal.

Tulsa looked out of synch for most of this game.

Bradley shot out to a 17-point lead in the the first half on 66 percent shooting.

Then, every time Tulsa tried to make a run, Bradley would hit another 3-pointer and kill TU's hopes.

"I'm not real happy with the way we performed," Wojcik said.

TU's defense, excellent in the opening victory over Bradley, was not there on Wednesday. TU has held foes to about 40 percent shooting this season. The Braves were way ahead of that figure all game.

As a result, the lead inched up to 18 points in the second half.

Tulsa never made a serious run at the Braves. Bradley, playing much more aggressive on the defensive end, held Jerome Jordan to just 2-of-9 shooting and Ben Uzoh, who finished with nine points, did not score in the first half.

"That was the biggest difference in the two games," Les said. "We had guys in position to make plays."

But it all shifts back to Tulsa on Friday and home has been sweet.

"We'll bounce back," Wojcik said.

[By JOHN KLEIN Senior Sports Columnist](#)

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