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### GOOD CALL, BAD CALL: Vanderbilt should have accepted CBI invite

Submitted by [Nick Gallo](#) on 03-19-09, 8:01 pm | Updated on 03-20-09, 1:22 am | [More from this Writer](#) | [Submit to Digg](#) or [Facebook](#)

The Vanderbilt Commodores passed up the opportunity to play in the College Basketball Invitational, because of a large entrance fee into the tournament. Although these days financial considerations are a great reason to make decisions, it seems like for this Commodore team, the valuable experience of playing in the post-season, any type of postseason would have been a rewarding experience.

With so many contributors being freshmen and sophomores, the Commodores need as much experience playing together as they can - against real competition. The men will certainly be honing their skills all summer, but nothing can replace intense competition in a tournament setting.

After Vanderbilt was prematurely bounced from the Southeastern Conference tournament, the team most likely was left with a bad taste in its mouth. Having the chance to compete for a postseason championship and reaching the 20 win plateau might have been a nice experience for this Commodore team, and it also could help build confidence for a team that is extremely young.



Taking a look at the other teams in the field of the CBI, it seems that some high profile programs accepted invitations, and that the CBI is not just for mediocre programs. Stanford's head coach Johnny Dawkins is a disciple of Hall of Fame Duke head coach Mike Krzyzewski and was Krzyzewski's right hand man for 10 years. Dawkins thought that the CBI would be a valuable enough experience for his team that the entrance fee was worth it.

If Dawkins thought so, why didn't Vanderbilt coach Kevin Stallings? Clearly, other typical NCAA tournament teams also entered into the tournament. St. Johns, Vermont and UTEP are all in the field with Stanford, and Vanderbilt would have made this tournament even more interesting. The Commodores may have been the favorite to bring the trophy home, after winning seven of their last 10 regular season games.

With young, impressive stars like Jeff Taylor and Brad Tinsley chomping at the bit to gain more playing experience, it would make sense for Stallings to keep his guys on the floor together.

This is the first time since 2003 that Vanderbilt hasn't played in a postseason tournament, and it would seem that the experience of playing together and the opportunity to win a championship would make the cost to the Vanderbilt basketball program worth it.

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