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Contact: Ray Cella (rcella@gazellegroup.com), 609-921-1300

Chevrolet Gotham Classic Tips Off On Saturday

PRINCETON, N.J. - The inaugural Chevrolet Gotham Classic features two of the winningest programs in college basketball history, a team that is coming off a trip to the NCAA Tournament for the first time this century, and two teams looking to get back to their winning ways.

TICKET INFORMATION: Tickets for the Chevrolet Gotham Classic featuring No. 3 Syracuse vs. Temple at Madison Square Garden are on sale now and may be purchased by calling **Ticketmaster** at **800-745-3000** or through Ticketmaster.com.

There are plenty of story lines in this event. Let's start with Syracuse, which has won more games than all but four programs in the history of college basketball. Its coach, Hall of Famer Jim Boeheim, is two wins shy of the 900th of his career, a milestone only two other coaches have reached at the Division I level. Boeheim, who has led the Orange to an 8-0 record despite losing four players from last year's 34-3 team, began at Syracuse as an undergraduate 50 years ago and will guide the Orange into the Atlantic Coast Conference next season.

Then you have Temple, which ranks right behind Syracuse on that all-time wins list. The Owls will join the Big East Conference next year after returning for football in 2012. Their coach, Fran Dunphy, has won over 400 games and has returned Temple to its lofty perch in the college basketball world. Temple is 7-1 despite the graduation of three starters from last year's NCAA Tournament team.

Alcorn State is under the direction of second year coach Luther Riley. After winning 10 games last year, Riley has brought in six new players to help return the SWAC championship trophy to Alcorn for the first time since 2002. Canisius is now headed by veteran head coach Jim Baron, who inherits a talented team that underachieved last season. As a matter of fact, at 6-1 the Golden Griffins have already exceeded their win total of all of last season. Detroit rounds out the field and looks to return to the NCAA Tournament fresh off a Horizon League championship in 2011-12. Head coach Ray McCallum will rely on his son, Ray, who is one of 50 players on the preseason Wooden Award Watch List.

The format of the inaugural Chevrolet Gotham Classic features 10 games with all five teams playing each other. The schedule for the Chevrolet Gotham Classic is:

Dec. 15 - Canisius at Syracuse	Dec. 22- Syracuse vs. Temple (at MSG/ESPN2)
Dec. 17 - Alcorn State at Temple	Dec. 27 - Alcorn State at Canisius
Dec. 17 - Detroit at Syracuse (ESPN2)	Dec. 28- Detroit at Temple
Dec. 19 - Canisius at Temple	Dec. 29 - Alcorn State at Syracuse
Dec. 19 - Detroit at Alcorn State	Dec. 30 - Canisius at Detroit

SYRACUSE (8-0) - The No. 3 Orange are coming off their eighth NCAA Elite 8 appearance in 2011-12 and their 35th NCAA Tournament appearance. Under Hall of Fame head coach Jim Boeheim, Syracuse has gone to the postseason 35 times in 36 years. Last year the Orange won a school record 34 games and earned the Big East regular season championship. Two starters return from that team. Senior guard Brandon Triche is netting a team-best 14.9 ppg while junior forward C.J. Fair is adding 12.1 ppg and a team-high 7.0 rpg. Sophomore Michael Carter-Williams is scoring 12.4 ppg and leading the nation in assists with a 10.4 apg average.

TEMPLE (7-1) - Temple earned a trip to the NCAA Tournament for the 30th time in 2011-12, compiling a 24-8 record and winning the Atlantic 10 regular season championship. In his six previous seasons at Temple, head coach Fran Dunphy has taken the Owls to the NCAA Tournament five times. The Owls return two starters from last year's squad, led by senior guard Khalif Wyatt, who is tallying 13.5 ppg and a team-best 4.5 apg. Senior forward Rahlir Hollis-Jefferson is averaging 9.9 points and 5.6 rebounds a game. Senior swingman Scootie Randle, who sat out last year, leads the Owls in scoring (14.9 ppg) and rebounding (7.8 rpg).

DETROIT (5-4) - The Titans went 22-14 and won the Horizon League championship last season. Detroit is coming off its sixth NCAA Tournament appearance and first since 1999. Head coach Ray McCallum's squad is led by his dynamic backcourt of junior Ray McCallum, who leads the Titans in scoring (19.2 ppg) and assists (4.8 apg), and senior Jason Calliste, who is netting 12.8 ppg. Senior Doug Anderson is posting 11.2 points and a team-high 6.4 rebounds a game.

CANISUIS (6-1) - With 390 career wins and eight 20-win seasons on his coaching resume, Jim Baron assumes the reins at

Canisius. The senior backcourt of Harold Washington (team-high 18.6 ppg) and Alshawn Hymes (7.1 ppg) highlights a team which returns four starters and five of its top six scorers from a year ago. In fact, the Golden Griffins return nearly 80 percent of last year's offense. Four transfers, led by Baron's son, Billy (17.7 ppg, team-high 6.0 apg), add to an already deep team.

ALCORN STATE (2-6) - Second-year head coach Luther Riley continues to rebuild the Braves' program. Last year Alcorn State registered a six-win improvement from the previous season as the Braves posted 10 victories. This year's team is paced by a trio of guards - senior Anthony Nieves (10.3 ppg), junior Anthony Evans (team-high 13.1 ppg), and sophomore newcomer LeAnwtan Luckett (13.0 ppg), who is one of six newcomers on the team.

Founded in 1911 in Detroit, Chevrolet is now one of the world's largest car brands, doing business in more than 140 countries and selling more than four million cars and trucks a year. Chevrolet provides customers with fuel-efficient vehicles that feature spirited performance, expressive design, and high quality. More information on Chevrolet models can be found at www.chevrolet.com.

The Chevrolet Gotham Classic is produced by the Gazelle Group of Princeton, N.J. The Gazelle Group is a sports marketing firm, specializing in event production and management, client representation, and sponsorship consulting. Gazelle produces numerous nationally-recognized events, such as the 2K Sports Classic benefiting Wounded Warrior Project, the Progressive Legends Classic, the College Basketball Invitational, and the All-American Championship. For more information on the Gazelle Group, please visit gazellegroup.com.

The Northeast Conference (NEC) is the sponsoring conference of the Chevrolet Gotham Classic. Entering its 32nd season, the NEC is a NCAA Division I collegiate athletic association consisting of 12 institutions of higher learning located throughout six states. For more information on the NEC, visit the official website at www.northeastconference.org or follow on Twitter @NECsports.