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Contact: gazelle@gazellegroup.com, 609-921-1300

College Basketball Invitational Introduced as New Postseason Event

PRINCETON, N.J. –The Gazelle Group, producers of the 2K Sports College Hoops Classic benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer, the O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic and the Legends Classic, is pleased to announce the inaugural postseason College Basketball Invitational (CBI), which will be played this upcoming March. This event will feature 16 teams not playing in the 2008 NCAA Tournament and will secure an important opportunity for more deserving programs to have a postseason experience. When the CBI begins play, 113 Division I men's basketball teams will be enjoying the postseason, up from 97 in 2007.

Selection Process:

The 16 team field will consist of teams that are not selected for the 65-team NCAA Tournament. Teams will be invited based upon their performance during their conference and non-conference schedule, as well as how well the team is playing at the end of the regular season.

Format:

The College Basketball Invitational will be a single-elimination tournament, up until the Championship Series, with all games being played at campus sites. The Championship Series will be a best of three series, home-away-home, in which the higher seed will get the first and last (if necessary) home games.

- The event will feature eight first-round games, four second-round games, a semi-final round and then a Championship Series.
- The opening round of the event will take place March 18th and 19th
- The winner of each opening round game will advance to the round of eight on March 24th.
- The semi-finals will be on March 26th
- The Championship Series will take place on March 31st, April 2nd and April 4th.

Bracketing will be done geographically into four regions of the country (East, West, South, Midwest) to minimize missed class time. Brackets will be balanced competitively within each region. This process will take place after the NCAA Tournament field is announced. Television arrangements will be announced as they are confirmed.

This past season UConn, LSU, Iowa, Oklahoma, Missouri, California, Washington, Akron and St. Louis, among others, were all left out of postseason play. The CBI creates the opportunity for such deserving teams to continue playing and be part of the postseason environment. Attached is a mock bracket with teams that were not invited to the NCAA Tournament or NIT and could have been invited to the CBI last year. ([Click here for 2007 mock bracket](#)).

The Chairman of the NCAA Selection Committee said the following after the announcement of the NCAA Tournament field last year. "This was, without question, the most difficult year of my five years on the committee," he said. "We ended up with 104 teams that won over 20 games versus a previous high of 78, and that added more complexity to the whole process and maybe added more disappointment, too."¹

He also commented, "I think the second issue...was the fact that I thought we were going to be struggling more this year with trying to shoehorn more and more teams into the final spots because of the issue of parity that has been trending now for the last four or five years."²

The Executive Director of the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) also commented on expansion after the 2006 NCAA Tournament, "They'd [College Basketball Coaches] love to see the tournament double to 128. It's based on several things. First, there are a lot of good teams worthy of making the NCAA field, and second, the size of 64 or 65 has been in place for a number of years."³

These reasons, along with the NCAA's decision to reduce the field of the Post Season NIT from 40-32, all promote the need for another postseason opportunity.

The women's game recently announced the addition of a third postseason event — the Women's NCAA Tournament, the Women's Post-Season NIT (WNIT) and the Women's National Invitational Championship (WNIC). The women's NCAA Tournament features 64 teams, the WNIT features 48 teams and the WNIC features 32 teams for a total of 144 Division I programs on the women's side enjoying postseason. The WNIT and WNIC are both not run by the NCAA.

The postseason College Basketball Invitational is produced by The Gazelle Group in 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 College Hoops Classic benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer, the O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic and the Legends Classic. For more information on the Gazelle Group,

please visit gazellegroup.com.

1 Marot, Michael. USA TODAY. (2007). Big Schools Hold Their Ground for NCAA
Tourney. http://www.usatoday.com/sports/college/mensbasketball/2007-03-11-2148091605_x.htm

2 Walters, Gary. NCAA Sports. (2007) Gary Walters Press Conference
Transcript. http://www.ncaasports.com/basketball/mens/recaps/walters_conf_0312/2007

3 Associated Press. ESPN.com. (2006). <http://sports.espn.go.com/ncb/news/story?id=2500025>