

Lions' tournament sees no ticket sales

By Laurie Stern
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Penn State fans may have turned out in droves for last year's National Invitational Tournament (NIT), but that exuberance hasn't carried over to this season: the university has yet to sell a single student section ticket for the Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament.

This is the first year that students who attend Big Ten Conference schools will be able to buy a ticket at the discounted price of \$50.

This ticket is considered an "all-session" pass and will allow students to come to as many sessions as they want, throughout the tournament, which will be held at the Conesco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, Ind.

Neither Penn State nor the University of Iowa has sold a single ticket as of press time Monday. All schools in the conference were allotted 75 at the discounted student price.

Both schools are at the bottom of the Big Ten standings, with Penn State in last place as a result of its 0-7 conference record.

"We haven't made any type of significant push on the tournament and typically don't until this time of year," said Greg Myford, associate athletic director for marketing and communications at Penn State. "Typically, there's been very low turnout from a student perspective."

The dates of the tournament, March 11 to 14, could be one reason for the lack of student ticket sales, he said, as it falls during Penn State's spring break.

This gives students the opportunity to travel without missing classes but interferes with other vacation plans.

"A lot of students like to take that time to go to Florida or Cancun or different places like that," said Alex Cohen, marketing chairman of Nittany Nation, a student organization that promotes Penn State basketball.

Transportation and hotel accommodations could also pose a problem for students contemplating going to the tournament, Myford said.

Currently, there are no all-inclusive packages being offered to Penn State students who wish to travel to Indianapolis for the tournament.

But the Big Ten has been trying to

If you go

What: Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament

When: March 11 to 14

Where: Conesco Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Ind.

Details: Students can purchase \$50 tickets at ticketmaster.com or by calling the Penn State ticket office at 814-863-1000. To guarantee seats in Penn State's block, tickets must be purchased by Jan. 31.

arrange a hotel package for students and secure partnerships with various companies through Indiana's tourism organizations, said Daryl Seaton, assistant commissioner of marketing for the Big Ten Conference.

"We're desperately trying to create a hotel package right now for students," he said. "I'm not optimistic we will be able to get it together. We'll keep it in mind for next year."

Though some schools organize their own travel packages — as Penn State did for last year's NIT, held in Madison Square Garden — Myford said the athletic department currently has no such plans.

"We haven't planned that to date, but if there was any kind of significant demand, it is something we would consider," Myford said.

But don't expect students to suddenly flock to ticketing Web sites by Jan. 31, the last day to secure discounted tickets in Penn State's student seating block, Cohen (junior-marketing) said.

Coming off of last year's NIT win, many students expected Penn State to be competitive in national standings. But the team's recent performance has not done much to encourage student support, he said.

"There's 11 games left and 11 games to prove to the student body why they should travel across the country to go to Indiana for the tournament and give up spring break," Cohen said.

"The best marketing tactic right now is for the team to win. They're running out of time."

To e-mail reporter: lqs5076@psu.edu

Clinton man faces trial today in connection with drug ring

By Laura Nichols
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

A Clinton County man will be tried before a jury today in connection with his alleged involvement in a \$2 million cocaine and heroin ring that operated until 2007 in Centre, Clinton and Lycoming counties.



Shaffer

Kalen Shaffer, 28, of 601 Dutch Hollow Road, Jersey Shore, Pa., is charged with possession with intent to deliver heroin, delivery of heroin, criminal conspiracy and criminal use of a communication facility, according to a 2008 press release by the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office.

Shaffer was one of the three individuals arrested in connection with "Operation Flat Tire," a reported drug trafficking ring that dispersed cocaine and heroin in bulk quantities around the Lock Haven, Pa., area, according to the press release.

Shaffer obtained the drugs in New York from Orlando Diaz, a reported member of

the Latin Kings street gang and leader of the trafficking operations, according to the press release.

Shaffer brought the drugs back into Pennsylvania for resale, according to the press release.

Attorney General Tom Corbett said after the first phase of the investigation, which concluded in January 2007, the 15 individuals initially charged in "Operation Flat Tire" were convicted, according to the press release.

Diaz is currently serving a sentence of 10 to 20 years in state prison, according to the press release.

Shaffer was incarcerated in 2008 at the Centre County Correctional Facility on \$50,000 bail, according to the press release.

Shaffer will face a trial by jury today before Centre County District Judge Pamela Ruest, according to court documents.

Diaz will also be present at the trial today to testify under the custody of the Attorney General's Bureau of Narcotics Investigation and Drug Control, according to court documents.

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Terminated lecturer wants definition of 'consulting'

By Laurie Stern
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

As he begins his final semester at Penn State, lecturer Jose Texidor has assigned himself one last task before he cleans out his desk: to convince the administration to define the word "consulting."

Texidor was terminated after crime, law and justice department head John McCarthy found him to be in breach of his contract after he engaged in what was deemed to be "consulting" at another institution. This came after he was put on probation because of issues concerning grade inflation in his classes.

"There's this unwritten rule that your grades have to have some quality spread," Texidor said.

"The department head stated that I was giving a false impression to criminal justice majors that it's easy. How can you make a statistical evaluation when you haven't seen me in class or evaluated any of my paperwork?" he said.

To further his cause, Texidor e-mailed Penn State President Graham Spanier earlier this month with the hope of making progress regarding contract definitions.

Instead, he received a 15-word response from Tom Poole, vice president for administration.

"Personnel decisions are fully within the purview of the college. The President does not intervene," the e-mail read.

Texidor said he was disheartened by the

response but has not wavered in his opinion that he was wrongly terminated, though he has no plans to take legal action.

"The president's a busy man and he can't deal with me," Texidor said. "I'm just asking that somebody in the hierarchy make a decision on a policy matter. It can't be one that is decided by the college."

McCarthy could not be reached for comment, but Penn State spokeswoman Annemarie Mountz wrote in an e-mail, "We have no information to share on what obviously is a personnel matter being decided within the college."

Texidor said he incurred a \$25,000 loss upon being put on probation in 2008 and was forced to take up other employment in order to make up for the financial loss.

"I didn't sit around and twiddle my thumbs," he said. "I tried to make up for action against me. This rule that they have about consulting is not applicable."

In his remaining time at Penn State, the 14-year lecturer said he is on a mission to protect other faculty members from meeting the same fate as he did, as he attempts to convince university administrators to more stringently define contract language.

In last Friday's Board of Trustees meeting there was no discussion of any contract clarification.

To e-mail reporter: lqs5076@psu.edu

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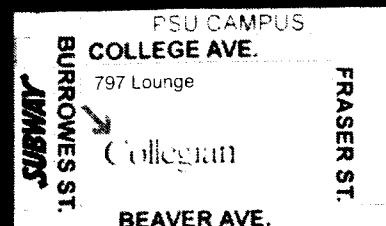
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