

BRESLIN CENTER STAGE



Freshman forward Lykendrea Johnson laughs after practice while sitting on new seats for the NCAA women's basketball tournament to be held at Breslin Center Sunday and Tuesday.

By Joey Nowak
THE STATE NEWS

The madness is coming to East Lansing. Breslin Center will shed its green and white in favor of NCAA blue this weekend as MSU plays host to four teams, hundreds of media members and thousands of screaming fans for the first round of the women's NCAA Tournament. No stranger to postseason play, Breslin Center was home to MSU's deep WNIT run last season and the Spartans' first-round NCAA Tournament win in 2007, making it the third consecutive year East Lansing will play host to a title dream.

For updates of NCAA Tournament action this weekend, check stateneews.com.

Big change in little time

But this year, there are some difficult expectations to live up to. In its first year as a host site two years ago, Breslin Center drew more than 21,000 fans, the most of any site across the country. This year, there are only four teams — compared to eight in 2007 — which equates to half as many games. And although

some of the schools have ordered more than the minimum 100 tickets per game and there is a No. 1 seed competing, it doesn't have the same regional draw as 2007 when Bowling Green was in attendance.

"Because you've got teams coming from a distance that may not travel as well, you're going to see the number of fans coming through

being less because you've also got less games," said Shelley Appigbaum, senior associate athletics director and senior women's administrator. "There's going to be more of a reliance on Spartans fans and people in this area to make a drive here to our beautiful campus and take in the Breslin Center. It's going to be a lot more difficult than it was in 2007."

Sunday's first-round women's basketball games at Breslin Center

- No. 9 MSU (20-10) vs. No. 8 Middle Tennessee State (28-5), noon
- No. 1 Duke (26-5) vs. No. 16 Austin Peay (17-15), 2:30 p.m.

The winners will play at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

Two years ago, starting at the thick binder of guidelines provided by the NCAA, Assistant Athletics Director for Facilities and Event Management Rick Atkinson said he and his staff would pore over it, worrying about small aspects of the weekend. The second

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OBITUARY

MSU student was positive, 'eccentric'

By Kyle Feldscher
THE STATE NEWS

Josh Parks may have provided the best summary of his life when he painted an exclamation point on his chest for an MSU football game last fall.



Parks

Friends said Parks, a 19-year-old kinesiology sophomore from Marshall, was an eccentric person with as much enthusiasm as one could muster.

"He always gave 100 percent," friend Linda Venema said. "He was very passionate about what he did (in his life)."

Parks died Wednesday afternoon in a single-car accident on Bennett Road near the College Road intersection, MSU police Sgt. Florene McGlohan-Taylor said. Parks was the only person in the vehicle when it veered off the road and collided with a tree.

Parks' friend Adam Clements, an education junior, said Parks was the person others always wanted to be around.

"He was this smart, funny, athletic guy," Clements said. "He was a good kid."

Clements was among the group of friends who joined Parks in painting their chests for the game last fall. He said the experience was one of his favorite college memories.

"It's just like all the other ones, but it's still the best one," he said. "It just summarizes who he was like nothing else."

Venema, a social work sophomore, met Parks when the pair began working together at the East Complex cafeteria. She said he was the type of person who wasn't afraid to take risks.

"This past summer, a group of us went skydiving and Josh and I jumped out together," Venema said.

"He was more eccentric. He had no limits. If it could be done, he was the one to do it."

Venema said when the weather was right, Parks could nearly always be found in an open field playing his beloved game of Ultimate Frisbee.

"He played Ultimate a lot," Venema said. "That was actually what our last conversation was about."

Clements said Parks didn't just play Ultimate Frisbee often — he played it better than most, and was a coveted asset when the time came to choose teams.

"You'd always win with him on your team," he said.

Parks also played soccer and was a member of the MSU club bowling team.

Venema said Parks was the type of person who had a constant smile on his face. He was the person she sought to brighten her day if she wasn't feeling well.

McGlohan-Taylor said police were still investigating the accident Thursday afternoon, and the final police report would not be available for some time. She said she could not comment on what had caused the accident.

Phone calls made by The State News to Parks' parents' home in Marshall were not answered Thursday afternoon.

ACCIDENT

Student dies after fall from balcony

By Kyle Feldscher
THE STATE NEWS

To friends, Shane Collins was a bright student whose promising future was cut short by his sudden death last week.

"He was the smartest kid I knew and still had time to be friends with everyone," said non-preference sophomore Nick Weaver, a close friend of Collins. "You don't find that very often."

Collins, an accounting student, died March 13 after falling eight stories from a hotel balcony while on vacation with friends in Miami Beach, Fla. He was 20 years old.

A spokesman for the Miami-Dade County medical examiner could not be reached Thursday for additional information on Collins' death.

Weaver met Collins while they were living in the dorms last year. He said Collins, a Clarkston native, loved being with his friends and was fiercely loyal.

"He had everyone's back," Weaver said.

Lindsay Kolesar, a psychology sophomore who is also met Collins in the dorms, said she'll never forget his unusual passion for Rubik's Cubes.

"He had had, like, three of them in his room and he and I would do them all the time," Kolesar said.

"He always had one in his hand. He even took them apart and oiled them so they'd go

faster."

Collins had a large group of friends and a large group of friends and always did his best to make others feel like a part of the group, psychology sophomore Hannah Gobbs said. Gobbs said she'll never forget her friend's smile and sense of humor.

"He was really outgoing, with a great smile, and was always energetic," she said. "He could cheer up anybody and brighten up their day."

Caitlin O'Neill, a social work junior, said Collins was a big, "goody" personality who never wasted a moment in his shortened life.

"He made the most out of life," she said. "It may be a cliché for some people, but for Shane, it really was."

Friends said Collins had the ability to make average days spent hanging out in the dorms memorable. Whether playing basketball outside or concentrating on video games, Collins was always doing something fun.

He also kept friends amused with his ability to talk his way out of sticky situations.

"The only way I can sum it up, Shane could get into trouble and get out of it faster than anyone else could," Weaver said. "He would never have problems."

Collins' father, Tim Collins, declined to comment on his son's death when reached by The State News on Thursday afternoon.

CRIME

Students robbed, briefly held captive in Guatemala

By Jacob Carpenter and Kayla Habermehl
THE STATE NEWS

Eleven MSU students were briefly kidnapped and robbed at gunpoint on a Guatemalan highway during a spring break trip last week, four of the students involved said Thursday.

The students, a tour guide and two bus company employees were near the end of a three-hour drive when several armed men approached their tour bus and boarded it with guns, said Alex Cummings, Mikeabyn Law, Zahkia Smith and Jennifer Tzeng, four students on the bus at the time. The students were not harmed.

The tour bus driver was told to drive several miles into a rural field, where the group members were forced off the bus and tied up before the men took money, electronics and other items from them, the four students said.

Nobody was hurt during the robbery, they said. Cummings is an advertising senior and The State News'

Trail of robbery

Eleven students faced terror when a stieseeing trip went awry.



1. Nueva Alianza — Eleven students, a tour guide and two drivers left a rural town Friday morning.
2. Patulul — Students were briefly kidnapped and robbed by several armed men.
3. Lake Atitlan — A popular tourist destination where the group was driving to when kidnapped and robbed.
4. Antigua — Home base of Encountour where students were taken.

advertising manager, Law is a nursing senior, Smith is a journalism junior and Tzeng is a linguistics senior.

The students were in Guatemala as part of a spring break trip organized by Encountour, a New York-based travel group

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