



OHIO VALLEY CONFERENCE

Ohio Valley Conference Announces Change to Format and Location of Future Basketball Championships

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For Immediate Release

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BRENTWOOD, Tenn. – The Ohio Valley Conference announced a change in format and a new venue for its men's and women's basketball championships on Monday.

Starting with the 2011 Championships, all eight men's and all eight women's teams that qualify for the tournament field will gather at a single site for the entire tournament. Previously first round games were played on campus sites with the semifinals and finals being held in Nashville.

The bracket will also shift from a traditional 1 vs. 8, 2 vs. 7, etc. format to a merit-based format that rewards the top teams during the regular season with byes into the quarterfinals and semifinals. Starting in 2011, the first round of each the men's and women's tournament will feature the No. 5 seed against the No. 8 seed and the No. 6 seed against the No. 7 seed. The winners of those games will advance to the quarterfinals to face the No. 3 and No. 4 seeds (who received a bye). The winners of those quarterfinal matchups will advance to the semifinals to face the No. 1 and No. 2 seeds (who received a pair of byes).

"This is a positive development for our conference and will truly enhance the championship experience for our student-athletes," said Beth DeBauche, OVC Commissioner. "Having 16 teams come to Nashville gives us the opportunity to showcase what our student-athletes and our member institutions are all about."

Along with the change in format, comes a relocation of the tournament to historic Nashville Municipal Auditorium in downtown Nashville, Tenn. The venue will host the championship, which will now be a four-day event. Municipal Auditorium has been the site of the OVC Basketball Championship in 1989 (men only), 1994, 1995, 1996, 2004 and most recently in 2008.

"The Nashville Municipal Auditorium is excited about the opportunity to be home court for the OVC basketball tournament during the next four years," said Bob Skoney, general manager of Nashville Municipal Auditorium. "Mayor Karl Dean and the Metropolitan Council members have expressed their appreciation of this event in downtown Nashville by approving funds that will allow the NMA to purchase an NBA Finals basketball floor, a new scoreboard, and make improvements to our locker rooms. We are looking forward to March Madness and the OVC in the NMA."

The move to Municipal Auditorium will keep the championships in Nashville, a place where they have been held 16 times in the last 17 years (including this year's championship which will be held March 5-6 at the Sommet Center). The only year the tournaments have not been held in Nashville during that stretch was 2002.

"Having a permanent home to call our own and an expanded format makes Nashville a destination location for our fans," said DeBauche. "The former structure limited our fan base's ability to plan ahead, but now our fans will be able to plan well in advance and make a trip to Municipal Auditorium for the OVC Basketball Championship an annual part of the basketball season."

The 2011 OVC Men's and Women's Basketball Championship dates are March 2-5.

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