

## Tenth Annual *ACC/Big Ten Challenge* Matchups

### North Carolina vs. Michigan State at Ford Field Highlights Event

Matchups for the 10th annual *ACC/Big Ten Challenge*—featuring top college basketball programs playing for conference supremacy and the Commissioner's Cup on ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPNU—will be highlighted by North Carolina vs. Michigan State at Ford Field in Detroit, site of the 2009 Final Four. This year's schedule will also include defending Big Ten regular-season and Conference Tournament Champion Wisconsin at Virginia Tech, Duke at Purdue and four other first-ever *Challenge* showdowns.

For the fourth consecutive year, the event will feature 11 games and will include two telecasts on ESPNU, the 24-hour college sports network. ESPN and ESPN2 will combine to televise the remaining nine games. The event will be played on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday after Thanksgiving (December 1-3).

2008 *ACC/Big Ten Challenge* schedule (times and networks are to be determined)

Date	Game
Monday, Dec. 1	Wisconsin at Virginia Tech
Tuesday, Dec. 2	Duke at Purdue
	Clemson at Illinois
	Ohio State at Miami
	Virginia at Minnesota
	Iowa at Boston College
Wednesday, Dec. 3	North Carolina vs. Michigan State (from Ford Field)
	Indiana at Wake Forest
	Michigan at Maryland
	Florida State at Northwestern
	Penn State at Georgia Tech

### **2008 Challenge highlights:**

**First-Ever Meeting:** Wisconsin and Virginia Tech will square off in the first meeting between the two programs.

**Pursuing Perfection:** Two teams will look to continue their undefeated streaks in the Challenge: Duke is 9-0 while Boston College has won its previous two games.

**First Time Around:** Six of the 11 games will feature the first *Challenge* matchup between the schools: Wisconsin at Virginia Tech, Clemson at Illinois, Ohio State at Miami, Iowa at Boston College, Duke at Purdue, Michigan at Maryland.

**Unfamiliar Opponent:** Iowa and Boston College's first *Challenge* matchup will also mark the first time the teams have met since 1974, a Boston College victory.

**Commissioner's Cup:** The ACC has won the Commissioner's Cup the previous nine years.

Since 2000, the ACC (8) and the Big Ten (7) have combined for 15 Final Four appearances (42 percent of the Final Four field) and four national titles - North Carolina (2005), Maryland (2002), Duke (2001) and Michigan State (2000). The ACC and the Big Ten also rank 1-2, respectively, in all-time NCAA Tournament bids, NCAA Tournament victories and Final Four appearances.

## **Big Ten highlights include:**

**Final Four Regulars:** The Big Ten has accumulated a record 39 Final Four appearances, tying the ACC for the national lead. The Big Ten is also tied with the ACC and SEC with the second-most national titles (10) in college basketball history. The Pac-10 leads all conferences with 15 titles. Since the inception of the NCAA Tournament in 1939, the Big Ten has recorded the most appearances of any conference in the Big Dance with 184 (ACC, 171) and has the second-most NCAA Tournament victories with 295 (ACC, 329).

**A Deep Conference:** The Big Ten is the only conference since 2000 to advance five different programs to the Final Four. The ACC, Big 12 and Big East have each had four different schools reach the national semifinals over that time, followed by the Pac-10 (2) and the SEC (2). Michigan State leads the Big Ten with three appearances (2000, 2001 and 2005) while Illinois (2005), Indiana (2002), Ohio State (2007) and Wisconsin (2000) have each earned a Final Four spot since 2000.

**Rare Air:** Michigan State and Wisconsin advanced to the third round of this year's NCAA Tournament, making them two of 12 programs that have advanced to the Sweet 16 in at least three of the last six years. Duke, Kansas and Texas lead the group with four appearances. The Spartans and Badgers join Connecticut, Memphis, North Carolina, Pittsburgh, UCLA, Villanova and West Virginia with three appearances.

**The Big Dance Constants:** Michigan State is one of only five schools in the nation that has advanced to the NCAA Tournament in each of the last 11 years, joining Arizona, Duke, Kansas and Kentucky. Wisconsin is only one of eight schools to make 10 straight appearances. The Badgers are joined by Gonzaga and Texas and the five teams listed above.

**Cream of the Crop:** With the addition of Tom Crean at Indiana, Todd Lickliter at Iowa, John Beilein at Michigan, and Tubby Smith at Minnesota, the Big Ten coaching contingent boasts six national coach of the year honorees, more than any other conference. The Big Ten's six national coach of the year award winners include Illinois' Bruce Weber (2005); Indiana's Crean (2003); Iowa's Lickliter (2007); Michigan State's Tom Izzo (2001, 1999, 1998); Minnesota's Smith (2005, 2003) and Wisconsin's Bo Ryan (2007, 2008).

**The Nation's Best Fans:** With an average of nearly 12,900 fans per Big Ten home game during the 2007-08 campaign, the conference is on pace to lead the nation in attendance for the 32<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year. Big Ten teams welcomed 2,437,673 fans for 189 home contests this season to average 12,898 per game. The Big Ten broke the two-million mark in total attendance for the 16<sup>th</sup> straight year and the one-million-fan mark in conference games for the 31<sup>st</sup> straight year.

-30-

## **Media Contacts:**

ESPN:	Mike Humes	( <a href="mailto:michael.c.humes@espn.com">michael.c.humes@espn.com</a> )	(860) 766-2233
ACC:	Brian Morrison	( <a href="mailto:bmorrison@theacc.org">bmorrison@theacc.org</a> )	(336) 851-6062
Big Ten:	LaTonya Sadler	( <a href="mailto:lsadler@bigten.org">lsadler@bigten.org</a> )	(847) 696-1010, ext. 143