

LONG BEACH STATE WINS THE NCAA/BIG WEST CONFERENCE ‘PACK THE HOUSE’ CHALLENGE

The Beach hosted a record women’s crowd of 2,656 fans on January 8 vs. Pacific

Long Beach State was one of 32 winners in the NCAA Division I “Pack the House” Challenge. “Pack the House” is a national effort in which conferences and institutions compete to build attendance. NCAA Division I women’s basketball marketing staffs selected a home game and designated that date as a “Pack the House” game with the goal of setting an attendance record. One winner from each of the 31 conferences and one from a group of independent institutions were named. Selections were based on marketing plan creativity and attendance criteria. The NCAA will award prizes and donate \$500 to the nonprofit organization of each winning institution’s choice.



And pack the house, they did. Almost two-thirds of the Division I membership – 184 institutions – participated in the effort that attracted more than 559,000 fans.

Long Beach State, the ninth winningest women’s program in NCAA history, hosted 2,656 fans at its women’s basketball game on Thursday, January 8 against Pacific. The attendance was the largest women’s basketball crowd in the program’s history.

Events at Auburn, Bradley, Central Michigan, Gonzaga, Marist, Memphis, Niagara, Notre Dame and Providence College produced sell-out crowds. Sixty-three other programs surpassed their single-game attendance highs from last year.

“We believe this initiative has served as a catalyst to increase attendance, create excitement and enhance exposure for our women’s basketball programs,” said NCAA Vice President of Division I Women’s Basketball Sue Donohoe. “Institution personnel committed a great deal of time, effort and resources to this program and the results were extremely positive. This program provides great ‘best practices’ and examples of success for institutions that are seeking to ‘grow’ women’s basketball and these success stories will continue to strengthen efforts in the future.”

The ideas to market the games were as diverse as the membership itself.

At Long Beach State, for example, the Athletics Department partnered with Long Beach Unified School District’s GEAR UP Program to expose children to the atmosphere of a college campus and athletics. More than 2,000 students from Long Beach Unified School District visited the campus and the Walter Pyramid on January 8, participating in campus tours, basketball 101 homework activities, on-court promotions and in-game activities.

Winners of the 2008-09 NCAA “Pack the House” Challenge are:

CONFERENCE WINNERS

America East – Hartford
Atlantic Coast – Georgia Tech
Atlantic Sun – East Tennessee State
Atlantic 10 – Fordham
Big East – Notre Dame
Big Sky – Montana State
Big South – UNC Asheville
Big Ten – Illinois
Big 12 – Missouri
Big West – Long Beach State
Colonial – VCU
Conference USA – Marshall
Horizon – Valparaiso
Independents – Cal State Bakersfield
Ivy – Columbia
Metro Atlantic – Niagara
Mid-America – Central Michigan
Mid-Eastern – North Carolina A&T
Missouri Valley – Bradley
Mountain West – TCU
Northeast – Mount St. Mary's
Ohio Valley – Tennessee-Martin
Pacific-10 – California
Patriot – Army
Southeastern – Auburn
Southern – Chattanooga
Southland – Sam Houston State
SWAC – Jackson State
Summit – Indiana/Purdue-Indianapolis
Sun Belt – Arkansas-Little Rock
West Coast – Gonzaga
WAC – Louisiana Tech

OVERALL WINNER

Auburn University