

ICLA | CORNER

EXPANDING ON GREAT IDEAS

As we began working on a marketing plan for our program at Purdue University last spring, we wanted to create new ways to engage our partners on campus, at retail and in the community. Our goal was to create unifying events that would tie many programs into one.



Jim Vruggink

We identified two important missions for our program: to find a way to engage our licensees in the summer and to expand the awareness of our 12th Boiler Scholarship Endowment program. After meeting with representatives from our athletics department and the National Football Foundation's (NFF) Joe Tiller Chapter of Northwest Indiana, we decided to create a new event that could mutually benefit all parties.



David Wilson

We created the 12th Boiler Golf Outing and held it on the same day, June 23, as the sixth annual NFF Honors Dinner. That event, which is preceded by a Silent Auction Reception, is highlighted every year by presentations and comments by New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees, a Boilermaker superstar from 1998-2000, and by Joe Tiller, the all-time winningest football coach at Purdue, who retired in 2008 after taking his teams to bowl games in 10 of his 12 seasons.

The golf outing/NFF reception and dinner made for a full day of activities for our licensees and retailers on the Purdue campus and gave our licensing and athletics staff an opportunity to interact with them at a time of year that was a little more "low-key" than during the school year.

We provided a lunch and a preview of the redesign of Mackey Arena (which is currently undergoing a \$99 million renovation and expansion), provided 18 holes of golf at Purdue's Birck Boilermaker Golf Complex that hosted the NCAA Men's Championships in 2008, and took the licensees and retailers to the Purdue Memorial Union Ballrooms for the NFF reception and dinner that also recognized some community award winners and 17 high school scholar-athletes, one of which was named the Scholar Athlete of the Year for Northwest Indiana. It was a win-win-win for all three groups involved.

From a licensing perspective, we had representatives come to campus, giving us a chance to meet with them to expand business while also raising awareness for our 12th Boiler Program, which raises scholarship funds for Purdue athletes.

From the perspective of the athletics department, we brought 40 licensees/retailers to play on the athletics department's golf course, bringing in revenue on what otherwise would have been a "slow" Tuesday afternoon, and giving athletics access to our key partners. From an NFF perspective, we exposed new people to their program,

and also helped them find a licensee to assist them with their auction, that helped raise additional dollars. The Northwest Indiana Chapter started just six years ago when Coach Tiller presented the challenge of creating one of the largest chapters in the NFF. In a little more than five years since receiving its charter, the Northwest Indiana Chapter (which was renamed in 2007 the Joe Tiller Chapter of Northwest Indiana) has enlisted more than 435 members, becoming the largest chapter in the state and now ranking fifth largest in the nation. As a non-profit organization, this chapter has awarded more than \$82,000 in grants, scholarships and honorariums since receiving its charter in the fall of 2004. Nationally, the NFF awards more than \$1 million worth of scholarships per year.

Every NFF chapter is looking for partnership opportunities. In most places, it's a group of football-loving enthusiasts with the purpose of advancing amateur football at the local, state and national levels, providing grassroots support for athletics in many ways—ways that are often consistent and overlapping with the interest of local licensees and retailers. This is a great way to build support for your institution and its athletics program at the grass roots level.

Over the course of the months after the event, we have been able to capitalize on projects that were initiated as a result of the licensee visit to campus for the 12th Boiler golf event.

One licensee made a gift of 1,000 shirts to a summer youth program in our area called PALS (Purdue Athletes Life Success) that is supported heavily by Drew Brees and his Brees Dream Foundation, and teaches underprivileged youth about education, finances, health and other life skills.

In another instance, we developed a regional program with a retailer who was able to discover new ways to connect with our alumni and fans through the event.

The licensees and retailers who attended the event said it was great because they could do business in a fun, laid-back atmosphere. They received a "behind the scenes" VIP look at Purdue, and it was a great chance to finally get some major key retailers to campus for more than just a big football game. In addition to that, people got to meet their sports heroes, and many current and former NFL stars.

The golf outing was such a success that we are staging it again in 2010, late in the spring to give people another opportunity to get a different perspective of what Purdue licensing, Purdue athletics, and the NFF have to offer.

Thanks for this article to Jim Vruggink, director of special projects at Purdue University and former President of CoSIDA; and David Wilson, trademark licensing director at Purdue University and ICLA 3rd Vice President.

Editorial note: NACDA began administering the Northeastern Ohio Chapter of the National Football Foundation in the summer of 2008. The Chapter consists of 15 counties, more than 240 high schools and 15 four-year collegiate football-playing institutions.