

Commissioner Julian Tackett

Topic

Sports Report

Sports Report

Sport

Winter Basketball

Positive Developments and Highlights

A super state championship tournament was held for both genders. Thanks to all who supported the event. Financially, the boys' event far exceeded the budget while the girls was slightly under budget. However, the combined total more than allowed the association to show a profit for the year.

Issues of Concern (legal, playing Rules, fiscal management, etc.)

The costs at the Lexington Center continue to slightly rise, and we fully expect additional rate changes when the current operation agreement expires in 2025. Rupp is committed beyond that time for both boys and girls, but the financial terms are re-negotiated every three years.

Championship Update/Review

The boys' tournament bracket certainly played into favor strong attendance. With the changes made in schedule and seating configuration, we have been able to leave the ticket prices stable for the last three years (and likely next year), and yet see continued increases in tickets.

The key change that allows the tournament to continue to be more successful, without a question and acknowledged by all at the arena and our operations team, is the schedule of games. With the current schedule, which generally results in an extra 13 to 17 minutes between games of a session, the following can occur:

- 1) Fans of both teams can primarily sit in the lower arena for one game at a cheaper price ticket than the two game prices on the sides.
- 2) Those end zones are cleared out after each game, basically allowing for the same seat to be sold twice during a session
- 3) No fans have to start out in the upper arena and then after the first quarter, move down to the lower arena
- 4) Operational costs are decreased by the fact that we do not have to pay security to help with that first quarter transition
- 5) There is no monetary value on the atmosphere created when nearly all of the fans can fit downstairs and a few center court upstairs seats
- 6) Teams playing the second game know exactly when they are playing their game, instead of constantly having to check and see when and if they can come out
- 7) The extra 13 to 17 minutes allow workers who have been there all day, to have a bit of a break
- 8) Those extra minutes decrease as the week goes on and allow for plenty of time for postgame awards, etc without impacting the next game time
- 9) Only when we have a running clock game (three in the last three years for both tournaments) is that delay noted.

10) The changes made this year to move up the night session worked out very well, barely allowing but yet, definitely allowing, for a cleaning of the arena between games. Perhaps, that isn't a priority for a regular season home game at a high school, but it is much better to clean up 9 to 12 thousand people worth of trash between games.

11) And that change in times this year put us out within a half hour of the former session schedule pre-pandemic, which seemed to work well.

Things are not perfect. Will there always be naysayers, yes. And those that want it like it was in 1980. Obviously there are less restaurants open downtown, and we do hear some concerns about that. We have not found a way we could control that however.

We will continue to look at room and space usage, particularly for the media, in our efforts to accommodate a diverse group of needs.

But the 2024 events went very well.

**Officials
Update/Review**

Did not seem to be much of a factor this year. We did have a couple of teams come in from areas that likely are used to a "tighter" whistle and didn't get that, but that happens nearly every year.

**Staff and Worker
Update**

Our regular group of workers hit it out of the park as usual!

**Fiscal and Budget
Issues and Review
(attendance, etc.)**

Budget was made.

**Noteworthy Changes /
Anticipates Changes**

We will do ticketing somewhat different next year, at least in terms of timeline. We will set ticket prices by the July meeting and process renewals in the fall. That way there is a longer period of time for general sales once renewal deadlines have passed.

We will also be retrofitting the Sweet 16 Club. Thankfully no one has a written contract (except for one) of our Club members, so we will be able to re-seat folks without much displacement in those lower five rows.

During this next school year, the Commissioner will work with Rupp on a long term extension of the operational contract with the arena.