



BIG EAST Baseball Championship Returns to Clearwater
Bright House Field Set to Host Annual Eight-Team College Tournament

St. Pete/Clearwater, FL (May 18, 2009) – The road to Omaha once again runs through Clearwater.

For the third time in four years, the BIG EAST Baseball Championship takes place at Clearwater’s Bright House Field. The annual conference tournament is the first step for players with dreams of advancing to college baseball’s mecca—Omaha, Nebraska—for the College World Series.

Hosted in partnership by the St. Pete/Clearwater Sports Commission and the Clearwater Threshers, the tournament takes place tomorrow through Saturday (May 19-23).

“To be hosting the BIG EAST Baseball Championship for the third time in four years is a prime example of how the St. Pete/Clearwater area is a leader in sports tourism,” said Kevin Smith, Director of the St. Pete/Clearwater Sports Commission. “We’ve established a great relationship with the BIG EAST and to earn their repeat business says a lot about the destination.”



The event pairs the eight teams with the best regular season conference record in a double elimination tournament. Opening ceremonies take place tonight at 5:00 at Bright House Field and are free to attend.

Tournament play kicks off tomorrow morning at 10:00 as Notre Dame takes on St. John’s. Other games tomorrow include Cincinnati and Louisville at 1:00, Connecticut and West Virginia at 5:00 and Pittsburgh and the University of South Florida at 8:00.

Games continue Wednesday, Thursday and Friday with the championship game scheduled for Saturday at 1:00.

The entire tournament, including tonight's opening ceremonies, can be viewed for free on BIGEAST.TV, while Sirius XM satellite radio will carry the games for subscribers. In addition, all University of South Florida games will be carried locally on Bright House Sports Network and Saturday's championship game will be broadcast nationally live on ESPNU.

Daily tournament passes can be purchased for as low as \$8 for adults and \$4 for seniors, students and children. An all-tournament pass providing access to every game is available for \$32 for adults and \$16 for seniors, students and children.

The tournament marks the second time this year that the BIG EAST will converge on the St. Pete/Clearwater area.

In February, approximately 17,000 fans attended the inaugural BIG EAST/Big 10 Baseball Challenge where they saw eight BIG EAST teams face off against 10 teams from the Big 10. The three-day event was held at major league-caliber venues across the St. Pete/Clearwater area, including Bright House Field.

To purchase tickets online or for more information, please visit the BIG EAST baseball Web site at www.BIGEASTBaseball.com.

Visit St. Pete/Clearwater is the destination marketing organization for Pinellas County, Florida.

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