

Runza® renews AVCA Showcase sponsorship, 2010 Teams Announced

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LEXINGTON, Ky. - The American Volleyball Coaches Association announced today that Runza® Restaurants has been renewed as title sponsor of its College Volleyball Showcase in 2010, marking the third year of their involvement in the event.

"On behalf of our employees across Nebraska, we are proud to sponsor the Runza®/AVCA College Volleyball Showcase for the third year," said Becky Perrett, Runza®'s Director of Marketing. "The caliber of teams is outstanding and fans will be very impressed by the level of play during the tournament. Nebraskans love volleyball as much as they love Runza, and the two paired together are a great match."

The AVCA also announced the field of teams and schedule for the 2010 event, to be played at the Qwest Center in Omaha, Neb., on Saturday and Sunday, August 28-29. The Conference Challenge format that was unveiled in 2008 will continue in 2010, with host school Nebraska, as well as Iowa State, representing the Big 12 Conference. Florida and Kentucky, both from the Southeastern Conference, will be the Big 12 challengers.

Under the Conference Challenge format, each school plays the two teams from the other conference, and does not play the other school from its own league.

This year's Showcase will be played on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, a change from previous seasons in which the event began on Friday night. Florida will square off with Iowa State at 2 p.m. (CDT) on Saturday afternoon to open the event, followed by Kentucky playing Nebraska at 4:30. Sunday's matches feature Iowa State and Kentucky at 2 p.m., with Nebraska and Florida facing off at 4:30.

Now in its 16th year, the Showcase continually proves to be the country's premier regular season collegiate volleyball tournament. Six of the Showcase's eight participating teams in the past two seasons have reached the NCAA Tournament round of eight later that same year; four of those six advanced to the national semifinals. This year's field promises to continue that tradition of excellence, as each of the four teams finished in the top 15 of the final 2009 AVCA Division I Coaches Top 25 Poll, as well as reached an NCAA Regional in 2009.

Iowa State reached new heights under head coach Christy Johnson-Lynch in 2009, climbing to No. 5 in the AVCA poll, its highest ranking ever, and setting NCAA-era team records for both wins (27) and conference wins (17). The Cyclones finished second in the Big 12, their best conference finish since tying for second in the Big Eight in 1995. Iowa State, who will be participating in its first Showcase, returns AVCA All-Americans Victoria Henson and Ashley Mass to the court this season.

In 2009, Nebraska advanced to the NCAA Tournament Regional Finals for the sixth consecutive year, and ninth time in head coach John Cook's ten seasons. The 2010 Huskers return AVCA All-Americans Sydney Anderson, Brooke Delano and Tara Mueller, and welcome 2009 AVCA Division I National Freshman of the Year, Lauren Cook, who transferred to Nebraska from UCLA in January. Nebraska will be participating in its ninth Showcase.

Since head coach Mary Wise arrived on the scene in Gainesville in 1991, Florida has won at least a share of 18 of the last 19 SEC regular season championships, and has been ranked in the top 10 of the AVCA poll in each of her 19 seasons. The Gators, who finished third in the

conference in 2009, return to the fold two-time AVCA All-American Kelly Murphy. This will be Florida's fifth Showcase appearance, the last coming in 2003.

Kentucky has experienced a re-birth under head coach Craig Skinner, who has led the Wildcats to the NCAA Tournament in each of his five seasons in Lexington, including their advancement to the round of 16 last year for the first time since 1993. The Wildcats also ascended to No. 7 in the AVCA poll last season, their highest ranking since 1993, and won the SEC Eastern Division, finishing second overall in the conference for the second consecutive season. Kentucky will be participating in its first Showcase.

Qwest Center Omaha will host its fourth consecutive, and fifth overall, Showcase in 2010. The venue, which played host to an NCAA-record crowd of 17,430 during the 2008 national semifinals, has also hosted the four highest-attended Showcase sessions in the event's 15 years.

Information for purchasing tickets for the 2010 Runza/AVCA College Volleyball Showcase will be released at a later date.