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East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
University holding pep rally

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, December 03, 2009

East Carolina University officials are holding a pep rally on campus today in an effort to drum up more excitement about Saturday's Conference USA football championship game.

The rally will begin at noon in the mall area on central campus. The Pirates play 18th-ranked Houston at noon Saturday, looking for their second straight league title.

ECU Director of Athletics Terry Holland, the pep band, cheerleaders and dancers are scheduled to attend. While it has not been confirmed, some members of the team also might participate, Jacob Tidwell, ECU assistant director of student activities and major events, said.

“We don’t usually do pep rallies, so we’re excited to see how this one turns out,” Tidwell said. “Given the importance of the game, we’re assuming a lot of people will want to come out and participate.”

The rally will be a collaborative effort of the Office of Student Activities and Organizations and the athletics department. The event is being held on campus with hopes of attracting more people, Tidwell said.

Officials also have tried to spread the word quickly by reaching out across the campus community, he said.

“We have tried to spread the word, but it was kind of a quick turnaround so we haven’t had a lot of time,” Tidwell said. “It is kind of in the middle of campus and during the middle of the day, so we are hoping that if the students haven’t seen our marketing blitz for it they will at least hear it or see it and participate.”

The rally will last about 15-30 minutes, Tidwell said.

Want to go?

What: ECU football pep rally.
Where: Central campus mall.
When: Noon today.
Who: Featuring Terry Holland, the pep band, cheerleaders, dancers and more.

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‘Apprentice’ winner: Aspire to greatness

The Daily Reflector

Thursday, December 03, 2009

Randal Pinkett, season four winner of Donald Trump’s “The Apprentice,” asked a group of East Carolina University medical school students to ponder the difference between success and greatness on Thursday afternoon.

Pinkett spoke to about 50 Brody School of Medicine leadership fellows at the Hilton Greenville during the Brody School of Medicine Student Leadership Summit.

“You are better educated and better prepared than the generations before you,” Pinkett said. “You are products of programs that place you in a position to achieve power.”

He told the students that success can be measured by how it benefits the individual, but greatness is measured by how it benefits other people.

“I take for granted that you are successful,” he said. “But the question is — is success the standard, or is greatness the goal?”

Pinkett said success is a destination, and greatness is a journey.

“You are part of a continuation of a legacy of greatness,” he told the students.

Pinkett is the co-founder, chairman and CEO of BCT Partners, a multimillion dollar management, technology and policy consulting firm based in Newark, N.J. He holds five academic degrees and studied as a Rhodes Scholar.

After winning “The Apprentice,” Pinkett served as an executive with Trump Entertainment Resorts in Atlantic City, where he was responsible for overseeing both renovation and information technology projects.

Pinkett has reappeared on The Apprentice as a boardroom adviser and is a regular segment host for CEO Exchange on PBS.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@reflector.com or (252) 329-9565.

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Greenville, ECU roll out the purple-and-gold carpet

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, December 03, 2009

East Carolina football fans will be treated to some of the usual Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium fanfare during this Saturday’s conference title game, but they will have to endure a few Houston-related spectacles as well.

As part of Conference USA’s effort to maintain a neutral feel for its championship game, ECU officials have been asked to make some adjustments to their usual strategies for revving up the fans.

Among the changes will be the painting of Houston’s name in one of the end zones. A short video introduction provided by the conference also will be played for each team before they take the field. While ECU will enter through the usual clouds of purple smoke and opening guitar riffs for Jimi Hendrix’s “Purple Haze,” a white smoky entrance also will be provided for the Cougars.

Some of the usual fanfare will have to be eliminated such as public address announcer Morgan Ahlers’ “First down Pirates. Arrgh ...” call and the video montage played prior to the fourth-quarter raising of the “No Quarter” flag in the west end zone.

Fans still will hear the cannon blast following an ECU touchdown, but officials also will be playing a cougar’s growl following all Houston scores.

“This is a Conference USA event, and East Carolina is the host,” ECU Associate Athletics Director for Administration Lee Workman said. “The conference has said we are to provide a neutral-site event. But they want to have a great atmosphere at the game, so if we can add things for Houston and just do everything for both teams, that is a good approach to take.

“If we can’t offer the same thing for the Houston side, it will not be done.”

The conference is paying for all expenses related to the game, Workman said, and the two universities will split a percentage of the revenue. More than 30,000 tickets had been sold through Thursday, according to officials at the ticket office. The stadium holds about 43,000.

Workman compared ECU’s hosting responsibilities to those of the university when an NCAA baseball regional is played in Greenville.

A feature that will remain for Saturday’s game is the new Pirate logo in the middle of the field, he said. But there also will be four C-USA logos on the field and additional C-USA signage throughout the stadium.

Thomas Pilkington, an ECU junior planning to attend Saturday’s game, said he believes any attempts to make Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium a neutral site will prove to be futile.

“I understand they want to make it seem neutral, but you can’t control the crowd,” Pilkington said.

Workman agreed.

“One of the benefits of hosting is we have an opportunity for East Carolina fans to fill the stadium,” Workman said. “They need to set the atmosphere in the stadium that this is East Carolina’s home. It is a neutral-site game, but our fans can certainly make it an ECU home-field advantage for our team that day.”

The Pirates play the 18th-ranked Cougars at noon.
One game: Pirates seek to defend championship

Friday, December 04, 2009

On Oct. 10, the East Carolina University football team returned to Greenville following a humbling loss to Southern Methodist University. With a 3-3 record and several tough games remaining, prospects of reaching the Conference USA Championship Game seemed dim at best.

On Saturday, however, the Pirates will return to Bagwell Field at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium as champions of the Eastern Division, playing in the title game for a second consecutive year. The team has taken fans on an improbable and exciting journey this year, one that can be best completed with another championship and an invite to the Liberty Bowl.

A month ago, the eyes of the college football world turned to Greenville as East Carolina welcomed Virginia Tech for an anticipated Thursday night match-up. The results may have been disappointing to the Pirate faithful, but the energy and passion on display that night again showed the special relationship that exists between the East Carolina fans and their team.

A greater effort will be needed by both on Saturday as the Pirates look to defend the Conference USA title against a nationally ranked Cougars squad. The Pirates won three straight games to win the division title and earn a spot in this game, but those victories accompanied stumbles by conference rivals that landed the game in Greenville. It is no stretch to say this is the most important game the city has hosted in recent memory.

It also represents an unprecedented opportunity for this city. Rarely does this community find itself in the spotlight of national media attention as it will this weekend, which is a treat for East Carolina as well as the city. What's more, the influx of football fans will present a financial windfall for Greenville's businesses, one forecast to be at least $300,000.

Yet, despite the attraction of the peripheral benefit, the focus of this weekend will be the football game. The Pirates' strong defense and special teams have guided the team to this plateau, and they will need strong efforts from both to bottle up an explosive Houston offense. East Carolina will need strong play from quarterback Patrick Pinkney, in his final regular season game, and the solid leadership of Head Coach Skip Holtz, whispered to be a target of schools with head coaching vacancies.

With a boisterous home crowd behind them, however, the Pirates are sure to put forth their strongest effort. This may be an expected adventure for East Carolina, but one that may have a very happy ending.
Shooting of UNC-CH frat president justified, DA says

The fatal shooting of a UNC Chapel Hill fraternity president was justified, Randolph County District Attorney Garland Yates said today.

In a news release, Yates said the Archdale police officer who shot and killed Courtland Smith in the early hours of Aug. 23 did so because he believed he faced "an imminent use of deadly force."

Police pulled Smith over on Interstate 85 in Archdale because he had called 911 saying he wanted to kill himself. He told the 911 operator he was drunk and had a gun.

"It is clear from all the evidence that Officer J.P. Finchum reasonably believed that he and Officer Jones were in imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury when [Finchum] shot Courtland Smith," Yates said in the release.

Yates said that Smith acted aggressively towards the two officers, leading them to assume he had a weapon behind his back.

"Mr. Smith aggressively advanced on the officers, forcing them to retreat to the rear of their patrol cars twice," Yates said. "He ignored officers' repeated and clear orders to stop advancing on them and to show his hands."

Smith was a junior studying biology. He was president of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity, where he was partying before driving to Archdale. The fraternity has been sanctioned for the party because alcohol was present.
Report: Va. Tech alert was delayed

New York Times cites revisions to state’s official report on the tragedy

BREAKING NEWS

msnbc.com staff and news service reports
updated 11:34 a.m. ET, Fri., Dec. 4, 2009

RICHMOND, Va. - Virginia Tech officials locked down administrative buildings and told their own families more than 90 minutes before the rest of the campus was alerted to one of the worst shooting rampages in American history, The New York Times reported Friday.

The Times cited revisions to the state's official report on the April 16, 2007, tragedy, in which 32 students and faculty members were killed before the shooter killed himself.

The Times said the original report, issued in 2007, had concluded that university officials could have saved lives by notifying students and faculty members earlier.

The report indicates that students who were initially locked down at the residence hall where the spree began were later released from the building by the police and allowed to attend their 9 a.m. classes. Two of those students then were killed by the shooter, the Times said.

This breaking news report will be updated.

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