

TEAM OVERVIEW FOR THE 2009 WOMEN'S U. S. VIRGIN ISLANDS PARADISE JAM

Women's Field Announced for 2009 Paradise Jam Basketball Tournament.

Seattle, Washington – The U.S. Virgin Islands Paradise Jam tournament directors released the 2009 women's basketball tournament field and brackets today. The eight NCAA division I women's basketball teams participating in the 10th annual event include Mississippi State, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Rutgers, San Diego State, South Carolina, Southern California and Texas. The tournament is held annually in November at the University of the Virgin Islands in St. Thomas, USVI.

Six of the tournament's eight participants earned berths in the NCAA Tournament in March. Oklahoma, Rutgers, Mississippi State, Notre Dame, San Diego State and Texas each competed in the tournament, with Oklahoma advancing all the way to the Final Four before falling to Louisville. Rutgers advanced to the Sweet Sixteen before succumbing to Purdue. Mississippi State and San Diego State both advanced to the second round before falling to Ohio State and Stanford, respectively. Notre Dame and Texas both lost in the first round of the tournament. Tournament-hardened teams such as these help to make the U.S. Virgin Islands Paradise Jam one of the most competitive, neutral-court, early-season tournaments in America.

Five teams of this year's teams will make return visits to the islands, three of whom earned Paradise Jam championships. Rutgers will defend its 2004 crown; South Carolina claimed a 2002 championship and Texas won in 2001 with a narrow victory over fellow 2009 participant, Southern California. Mississippi State finished second in 2003. Rutgers will be the first women's team to appear in three Paradise Jam tournaments, having also competed in the 2006 event.

The Paradise Jam consists of two separate tournament divisions. Each is a four-team, three-game round-robin event. One is called the "Island Division" tournament and the other is called the "Reef Division" tournament. Both are Multiple Team Event (MTE) tournaments. An MTE tournament counts as only two games against a team's annual maximum of 29 games, despite playing three games at the tournament.

The Paradise Jam "Island Division" tournament includes Oklahoma, San Diego State and Notre Dame and South Carolina. Competition begins on Thanksgiving Day, November 26th, at 2:00 PM with a matchup between South Carolina and Oklahoma, followed by the 4:30 PM game between San Diego State and Notre Dame. Games continue on November 27th with Notre Dame vs. South Carolina at 2:00 PM and Oklahoma vs. San Diego State at 4:30 PM. Competition concludes on November 28th at 2:00 PM with San Diego State vs. South Carolina followed at 4:30 PM by Oklahoma vs. Notre Dame.

The Paradise Jam "Reef Division" tournament participants are Rutgers, Mississippi State and Texas, and Southern California. Competition begins November 26th at 7:00 PM with Southern California playing Rutgers, followed by the 9:30 PM game with Mississippi State vs. Texas, a rematch of last year's NCAA Tournament first round in which Mississippi State defeated Texas. Games continue on November 27th with Rutgers vs. Mississippi State at 7:00 PM and Texas vs. Southern California at 9:30 PM. The remaining match ups will conclude on November 28th at 7:00 PM with Southern California vs. Mississippi State and 9:30 PM with Texas vs. Rutgers.

All game times are listed as Atlantic Standard Time, which is one hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time. Games will be played at the U.V.I. Sports and Fitness Center, the Caribbean's premier basketball facility located in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas.

In 2008 Paradise Jam action, Wisconsin came from behind to take the lead with seven seconds to play, upsetting sixth-ranked Baylor to claim the Island Division championship. Villanova finished ahead of Central Florida to earn third place in the division. In the Reef Division, second-ranked California cruised past Texas Tech, South Florida and Iowa to claim that division's championship. South Florida defeated Iowa in overtime to earn 2nd place.