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Jason Kornwitz
Northeastern University

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The battle of the Huskies



Northeastern men's basketball plays UConn tonight in the first round of the NIT. Photo by Jim Pierce.

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Busloads of **Northeastern basketball** fans are taking a road trip.

Hundreds of students, faculty, staff and alumni are going to Storrs, Conn., to cheer on the Huskies as they battle the University of Connecticut in the first round of the National Invitation Tournament tonight.

The playoff game between No. 5 seed Northeastern and No. 4 seed UConn tips off at 7 p.m. at the Harry A. Gampel Pavilion. The game will be televised on ESPN2.

Students, coaches and other members of the Northeastern community are hoping that a little extra support can spur the Huskies to a playoff victory for the second consecutive season. Last year, Northeastern beat Wyoming in the first round of the College Basketball Invitational tournament.

"We're very pleased with the support we've received from the student body this year," said head coach Bill Coen, the 2010 United States Basketball Writers Association District 1 Coach of the Year.

Coen led the Huskies to a 20-12 regular season record, but Northeastern fell to William & Mary, 64-62, in the semifinals of the Colonial Athletic Association conference tournament.

Third-year criminal justice major Darren Costa echoed Coen by pointing to the growing enthusiasm for Northeastern basketball. Costa blogs about Husky hoops and created The N Zone, a Facebook group dedicated to Northeastern's cheering section.

"The program's on the upswing and players really enjoy having that sixth man in the stands to get them going," he said.

The Office of Alumni Relations spread the word about the game through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

Alumni from all over the country are expected to watch the Battle of the Huskies (the teams share the same nickname), while others are driving down from New York to cheer on the red and black, said Jack Moynihan, vice president for alumni relations and The Northeastern Fund.

"Any time we can put together a group of alumni to network, support our teams and support the University, it's really beneficial for us," he said.

The Northeastern Huskies would host a second round game on Saturday at Matthews Arena if they win on Tuesday and No. 8 seed Quinnipiac upsets No. 1 seed Virginia Tech. But Coen's not looking past UConn.

For Northeastern to get a "W," they'll have to stop UConn's transition game and rebound the basketball with greater ferocity, Coen said, adding, "They're a tremendous basketball team that presents a great challenge to us."

To read about the game, please click the following link: <http://gonu.com/mbasketball/2010/mb10-33.shtml>

For more information, please contact Jason Kornwitz at 617-373-5729 or at j.kornwitz@neu.edu.

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