

Lacrosse clash offers fans bargain

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In tough economic times, most retailers try to sell less and charge more. Inside Lacrosse is taking a unique approach to beating the recession by offering more for the same price with its fourth annual Konica-Minolta Face-Off Classic.

A doubleheader for the initial three years of its existence, the Face-Off Lacrosse has expanded to three games without a change in ticket prices. As a result, fans can spend the entire day at M&T Bank Stadium and see six of the best teams in Division I play in rapid succession.

"Even though the Face-Off Classic was already established as a destination date for fans, we did not want to become complacent. By adding a third game we give two new schools the chance to play on the big stage and offer lacrosse fans even more value for their experience," said Andy Bilello, Director of Business Development for Inside Lacrosse.

"This has worked out even better than we imagined. All six teams are going into the event ranked in the Top 10 nationally and the weather will be ideal with 50-plus degrees and sun. The 2010 Konica Minolta Face-Off Classic is shaping up to be the best early season celebration of lacrosse possible."

Since 2007, Bilello said nearly 100,000 fans have attended Inside Lacrosse events, which also include the Smartlink Day of Rivals and the Konica Minolta Big City Classic. The Face-Off Classic has averaged just shy of 20,000 fans since being created in 2007.

Maryland head coach Dave Cottle, whose squad will face Duke in the opener of the tripleheader, said the event provides a Final Four atmosphere early in the regular season. M&T Bank Stadium, home of the Baltimore Ravens of the National Football League, will host this year's NCAA Division I championships.

"It's a chance to play at the venue where the Final Four will be held in front of 20,000 fans. Our players love being part of this event because it's an opportunity to play in a big-time atmosphere," said Cottle, an Edgewater resident.

Sixth-ranked Maryland, coming off an impressive 15-13 come-from-behind victory over Georgetown, will meet No. 9 Duke in an Atlantic Coast Conference contest that would normally be played in College Park or Durham, N.C. Each school gave up a home game for a two-year run as part of the Face-Off Classic.

Organizers also convinced Johns Hopkins and Princeton to move a long-standing rivalry to Baltimore for the past four years. Those are the only two schools to partake in the event since its inception.

"We are thankful to Inside Lacrosse for inviting us to participate in the Konica Minolta Face-Off Classic again this season. The event has become a highlight of the college lacrosse schedule and our players, coaches and fans are looking forward to what should be an exciting day of lacrosse at M&T Bank Stadium," Hopkins head coach Dave Pietramala said.

Anne Arundel County natives will play prominent roles in each game on Saturday. Severna Park High graduate Mike Gvozden is the starting goalkeeper for fifth-ranked Hopkins while Severn School product holds the same role for Maryland. Gvozden has been superb through three games, compiling a .650 save percentage and 5.03 goals-against average.

St. Mary's alum Grant Krebs is the top midfielder for third-ranked Notre Dame, having been named an honorable mention All-American last season after firing in 29 goals. The 5-foot-8 senior has used a wicked left-handed crank shot to score 61 career goals.

No. 10 Loyola has its own midfielder with a strong, accurate left-handed shot in Eric Lusby (Severna Park), who has scored five goals this season and 20 during his three-year career.