

## Lessons Score With Kids at Classroom on the Court

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The Tulane Green Wave women's basketball practice Thursday morning (Oct. 30) had an unusual twist: screaming fans. More than 450 students from area elementary schools were welcomed by the team in the tip-off event of the Classroom on the Court program.



Surrounded by eager kids in the stands at Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse, Green Wave student-athlete Ashley Langford answers questions. She is a senior guard on the women's basketball team (Photos by Steve Kashishian)

Seven schools joined in the event, picking up their information packets for the 2008-09 season. The program, a Conference USA initiative, will help elementary school children learn geography and math concepts while attending C-USA women's basketball games and participating in classroom curriculum.

“The Classroom on the Court program is a great way for elementary school students to learn in a setting outside of the classroom and an excellent way for the women's basketball program to reach out to community,” said Tulane senior woman

administrator Maria Woods, who spearheads Tulane's participation in the program. "We are definitely looking forward to the participation of these schools all season long."

Students can earn points for their school by attending games and completing worksheets during the basketball season.

Thursday served as an introduction to the team and provided the young students an opportunity to learn the hometowns of each Green Wave student-athlete. The students also learned Tulane's fight song and cheers, participated in on-court relay races and received a nutritional presentation from Andy Massey, Tulane head athletics trainer.



Elementary students from seven New Orleans area schools stream onto the basketball court at Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse during the Classroom on the Court tip-off event.

Afterward, the Green Wave players and coaches autographed posters and held question-and-answer time with the students.

"It was a tremendous turnout for the event," Woods said. "Judging by how loud the cheers were, I think the students had a good time seeing how our student-athletes practice and play, while getting to know our players and coaches. And our student-athletes certainly enjoyed meeting their young fans."

“It was fun to bring in kids from the community and explore why academics is important in sports,” said Tulane senior guard/forward Megan Valicevic. “Instead of a quiet gym while we've been practicing, it was really rowdy in Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse today, so that will definitely help us prepare for the season when we play in front of an audience. With the amount of home games we have this year, having these kids at our game is going to be a positive experience for all of us.”

Tulane will welcome back the Classroom on the Court participants in the season opener on Friday, Nov. 14, at Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse against the Illinois State University Redbirds in the first round of the 2008 Preseason Women's National Invitation Tournament.

*Kevin Wilkerson is assistant athletic communications director.*