

I-AAA ADA



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Moving into a New Home

Whoever thought something good would come out of the global pandemic? Of all times to pick to transition from Division II to Division I, why not join the mid-major world and compete against your toughest opponent – COVID-19.

We played on campus in Knights Hall and experienced the longest home winning streak (67) in basketball with great crowds, won an NCAA National Championship, lived through numerous upgrades, and overall had some fun along the way. Flashback to the beginning of the pandemic, when crowds had to be six feet apart, masks were worn, and hand sanitizer was around every turn. Or consider your first ever Division I game which is supposed to be a dream come true in Cameron Indoor Stadium, and there are only three Bellarmine fans in attendance – the president, the senior vice president, and the director of athletics.

What?? ... No Cameron crazies?? If that is what it looks like at historic Cameron Indoor, how do we pull off our own home game successfully and safely?

Cash in some favors and move your men's and women's home games to a facility that has hosted more Final Fours than any other venue, not to mention events and concerts like Elvis Presley, Muhammad Ali's first professional fight, arena football, the Kentucky Colonels of the ABA and now, the Bellarmine University men's and women's basketball teams. Why not play in the iconic and historic Freedom Hall which is 2.5 miles from our campus? We went from a facility that can seat 2,196 how it is configured for basketball, to the 15th largest Division I basketball facility in the country that seats a mere 18,749 with the appropriate space for officials, teams, support staff, spirit groups, suite holders, and Knights Nation.

Settling into our new home has been a great partnership with the Kentucky Exposition Center staff and leadership. We were welcomed so well, it felt as if we had a relationship for many years before the first whistle of our first home game. As with any change, there are bumps along the way: parking for our fans, student attendance, and different concessions, but the potential for growth of our fan base and the opportunity to attract a competitive schedule of opponents has been a welcomed addition to our athletics

department. One way we've already realized the potential for growth came when our men's basketball team advanced to the finals of the ASUN Championship and earned the right to host. Playing in Freedom Hall, the 2022 championship game had more than 6,200 fans in attendance, the second largest crowd in conference championship history.

Beyond the fan experience, the ability to grow our corporate partners with the new LED scorer's table, fascia boards, stat panels, and center hung has afforded recognition of our supporters like never before. Suite revenue and courtside seats have also been a boost to our bottom line.

We are just one year removed from the pandemic. We are experiencing the right trajectory in attendance. I recognize that we are not there yet and we will continue to market our programs to continue to build our brand and seek more fan engagement. We have a great team in place, a strong game plan and will pivot as necessary. Big stuff ahead. Our best is in front of us. Go Knights!

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