UNITED STATES SPORTS ACADEMY

MLK CELEBRATION BASKETBALL SHOWCASE

 A Class Paper Submitted for

SAM448

 Contemporary Issues in Sports

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by:

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**Introduction/Purpose of Event**

 Researching an event was rather easy, being that I’ve actually hosted events have hosted two here recently. The most recent sporting event hosted was the MLK Celebration at Bishop State Community College in Mobile, Alabama. It was originally a two day event the first three years. We’ve transitioned to a two-day event for 2024, including both middle and high school boys and girls basketball teams. It took place on the Saturday before MLK Day and that Monday of MLK Day. Only the middle school teams competed on Saturday, while both middle and high school competed on Monday. The purpose of the event is to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., while fulfilling his dream of kids of all colors being able to play together with no malice.

**Goals**

 One of the main goals is to continue to fulfill Dr. King’s dream of kids of all colors having the ability to play together without any turmoil or racial mindsets. By doing so, our selection of teams was very open, and not just limited to predominantly black schools in which most MLK Day showcase events usually host. This ensures that kids of all colors get to share the court together. This event also affords the opportunity for teams to play each other they usually don’t have the chance to, given their typical regular season schedules.

 This is also a huge fundraising event for our men’s basketball team at Bishop State. We used this event to allow our players to work, which puts money in their pockets. The MLK Celebration also helps fund our team throughout the season. This includes pregame meals, gear for players and/or an addition to our emergency funds.

**Target Market/Attendance**

 This in turn helps our target market by having parents of all colors attend our event. Parents usually attend their children’s games, along with their siblings, if they have any. This also affords parents that have to work during their kid’s games, the opportunity to see their kids play as they are more than likely off on Saturday and the MLK holiday. Middle schools games in the Mobile, Alabama area usually take place during the week and at an early time so, parents sometimes miss those games.

 From an attendance standpoint, our goal was to attract 20 middle school teams, boys and girls included, and 6 varsity boys’ basketball teams. We anticipate each team brings 100-150 spectators each team for the middle school games and a capacity crowd of 750 spectators for the varsity games.

**SWOT Analysis**

 Our connections and relationships in the community was one of our key strengths to drawing good teams and crowds. Another key strength is, we used our own gym and campus police. A weakness is the facility, as there are numerous entry points which needed more security to man doors. Referees were also an issue as some didn’t show on time. One team didn’t show on time as well. Key opportunities were to have people on our campus, recruit prospects in our own gym and raise money for the program.

**Event Budgeting/Facility**

 There were no registration fees for the teams as we invited them to be a part of the experience and occasion. We also didn’t receive any sponsorship funds. Our budget was simple with minimal overhead. Our only expenses were referee fees, concession and paying our players to work the event. Advertising was free via social media and our schools marketing representative spread the word on our local radio station.

 Since we used our own facility, that cost was eliminated. Insurance was already in place as well with our coverage. We made sure we used to metal detectors as it is mandatory when hosting basketball events involving Mobile County Public School Systems athletic teams.

**Conclusion**

 The Martin Luther King Jr Celebration provided young basketball players with a platform to compete, learn, and grow within the sport. More importantly, we were able to fulfill Dr. King’s dreams of children of all color were able to play together. Through strategic planning, effective and inexpensive marketing, the tournament has become a cornerstone event in the community on such an important weekend.