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## UIC Men's Basketball Selected To Participate In Inaugural ESPN Bracket Buster Saturday

Flames will play at home on February 22, 2003 in elite event on ESPN and ESPN2.

Aug. 8, 2002

• [Audio From Press Conference](#)

**Chicago, Ill.** - The UIC men's basketball team will take part in a unique in-season event this year as it was announced this morning that they will be one of 18 participants in the inaugural Bracket Buster Saturday on February 22, 2003, on ESPN and ESPN2.

The defending Horizon League Tournament Champion and 2002 NCAA Tournament participant Flames, join fellow league members, Detroit and UW-Milwaukee, among the field that includes teams from the Mid-American Conference (Kent State, Ball State, Bowling Green, Marshall), Missouri Valley Conference (Creighton, Southern Illinois, Illinois State, Northern Iowa) and Western Athletic Conference (Louisiana Tech, Hawaii, Tulsa). Three at-large teams will also participate: Gonzaga, UC-Santa Barbara and Western Kentucky.

UIC, which posted a record of 20-14 last season and returns its top two players in [Cedrick Banks](#) and [Martell Bailey](#), was also designated as a home team for this premier event.

Each conference selected its participating teams months prior to the beginning of the season and determined the home teams for each of the nine games. The match-ups for the one-day, nine-game Bracket Buster Saturday will be announced Feb. 3, 2003. The only pre-determined game will feature two teams that reached the Elite Eight round in recent years:

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Junior Martell Bailey and the UIC Flames will participate in ESPN's

Tulsa (2000) at Gonzaga (1999).

The Bracket Buster Saturday concept, named because of the success of teams in the 2003 field in NCAA Tournament play over the past few years, stands to uniquely provide participating teams with an opportunity to play strong, non-conference opponents on a national stage just three weeks prior to Selection Sunday.

"This is a great opportunity for our program," UIC Head Coach [Jimmy Collins](#) said. "It gives us the opportunity to show how competitive we are against teams from the other top college basketball conferences."

"We are extremely happy to be included in this event."

Game times for the event will be Noon, 3:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 9:30 p.m. and Midnight with five of the nine games will be nationally televised on either ESPN or ESPN2. ESPN Regional will distribute the remaining four games in the markets of the competing teams.

"I can't even begin to say how excited we are to be playing in this event," said Horizon League Commissioner Jon LeCrone. "Having the opportunity to partner with ESPN and go head-to-head against teams from the top mid-major conferences in the nation provides a great platform that will not only showcase the quality of our men's basketball teams but also what our League is about."

Bracket Buster Saturday  
this season.

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