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Ticket distribution policy unveiled

By: Katy Doll, Assistant University Editor

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The new student ticket distribution policy was rolled out Friday, with changes including general admission for students and phased-in entrance times for men's basketball games.

The online policy has one round of lottery selection in which winners receive two tickets. Tickets are printed with a phase that details how early before tip-off students can enter.

"Based on this timeline, we hope the lower level of seats will be filled before the team comes out to warm up," said Clint Gwaltney, associate athletic director for ticket and Smith Center operations.

The distribution system was widely disputed last year, as it was the first year distribution was online. Because so many students voiced concerns, officials used their input to change the online policy.

Students may enter any phase later than the one they are assigned. The phasing aims to allow group seating - something students requested last year.

No one is allowed to save seats, and lower-level seats require a bracelet that is handed out upon arrival.

"You get to decide whether you want to get a better seat or to go in with your friends," Gwaltney said.

Senior Sean McMullan said he disliked the old system's seating because friends couldn't sit as a group. He said the new system is an improvement.

"That doesn't sound too bad," McMullan said of the changes.

Another change this year is that riser seats are not assigned through the lottery. If there are still riser seats available when students enter, they can receive a bracelet and join the stands.

"We're not pinning people down to whether they want to go in the risers until that game," Gwaltney said.

There are about 400 riser seats, and the first phase includes 500 people. So the first phase could fill the risers, but officials said they think those seats will be available for later phases.

"A lot of people prefer good lower-level seats to the risers," said Colby Almond, president of the Carolina Athletic Association.

Ticket registration begins on the 22nd of each month for the games scheduled during the next month. Last year students could register for every game at one time.

"Students felt it made it too easy," Gwaltney said.

Because students can only register for the next month, Almond said they will have a better sense of their schedule when signing up.

"You can't see three months into the future and know if you're going to an ACC game or not," he said.

The first sign-ups begin at 10 a.m. Oct. 22. The only exception to that policy is the Duke University game, which opens Jan. 9.

Students also must register starting today for the University of South Carolina football game Oct. 13, and they will receive only one ticket through the lottery. The same goes for the Duke game on Feb. 6, which also will give seniors priority.

Students also expressed concern last year that the online system did not benefit "die-hard" fans.

To help remedy that concern, a standby line was created. Students can join the line two and a half hours before tipoff by signing in and receiving a numbered bracelet.

All unclaimed student tickets become invalid four minutes into the game at the first TV time out. And students in the standby line will be admitted at that point.

"If the die-hard fans are willing to go down to the Dean Dome and stand in line, more than likely, they will get into the Dean Dome," Almond said.

For the Winter Break games, students can pick up tickets from the ticket office starting six hours before tipoff, as there won't be a lottery.

At the end of last semester, CAA held a forum to hear what students wanted from the ticket system. The new policy was developed around those concerns, Gwaltney said. "We heard the voice of the students and made a lot of those changes."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

REGISTER FOR DISTRIBUTION

Time: 10 a.m. today

Location: www.tarheelblue.com

See the full text of the new student ticket distribution policy here:

<http://ev10.evenue.net/evenue/linkID=unc/core/2007-2008StudentTicketDistributionPolicy.pdf>

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