Women’s Soccer Game Promotional Plan

September 24, 2010

Cara O’Brien, Jenna Pitsenbarger

**Property Identification**

The Longwood Athletic Complex is a multi-field complex that serves as home to Longwood Soccer, Field Hockey, and Women’s Lacrosse.  The $5.5 million project opened during the spring of 2006 and features a Bermuda natural grass turf field for men's and women's soccer along with an adjacent synthetic turf field for field hockey and women’s lacrosse.  Each field has permanent lighting, scoreboard, and spectator bleacher seating for approximately 350.  There is additional seating on a grass incline, and unique new press boxes made from modified and recycled freight containers were installed in November 2008.  The press boxes feature all steel welded construction and windows with double pane insulated tempered glass; created from shipping containers and designed with energy efficient and environmentally friendly construction in support of Longwood’s sustainability program.  Each box has a rooftop platform for professional sports videographers.

On the evening of September 24, 2010, at 7:00PM, the Longwood University women’s soccer team will host Liberty at the Longwood Athletic Complex. The game will consist of two 30 minute halves with a 15 minute halftime.

**SWOT Analysis**

The game we are marketing is the Women’s Soccer game on September 24, 2010. This game falls on a Friday at 7p.m. This game has been marketed and established as the Take a Kid to the Game day. With that said, there are plenty of opportunities to make this appealing to the community. We will attempt to analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in order to implement a plan, which will maximize spectator and youth participation in the event.

**Strengths**

*Prior Relationship* ­– Prior to this game, the Longwood University Athletic Department had begun to establish a relationship with the Prince Edward County Elementary School and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). This enabled us to already have a foot in the door when it came to approaching the school and PTA and asking them to help us in promoting this event in their school.

*Date and Time* – This game is occurring on a Friday at 7p.m. This date and time is exceptional for this game due to the fact that it is not on a night in which the youth have to attend school the next day. Therefore, it will be okay if the youth are out at the game until 9p.m. The fact that the game is at 7p.m. allows families to get home from work and school and relax before coming out to the game.

*Location* – The soccer game is being held at the Longwood Athletic Complex, which is in the Farmville and Prince Edward Community. This facility is not located outside of town and is relatively close to the town of Farmville and is located right off Main Street.

*Price* – Free admission into the soccer game may attract more youth and community members to attend the game. This will allow us to gain a larger market.

**Weaknesses**

*Popularity* – Women’s soccer is not a major sport at Longwood University. In comparison to other sports, such as Men’s Basketball, it does not receive as much attention through media or Longwood marketing.

*Concessions* – There will be limited concessions available at the soccer game. Parents may feel that they do not have to provide dinner for their children prior to the game and may be relying on concessions to have some sort of dinner for their children. However, concessions only offer a limited number of items to drink, and an even more limited number of items to eat.

*Giveaways* – Due to the budget of the Longwood University Athletic Department, it is hard to come up with prizes to give away to the youth for winning a halftime game or another promotion. Therefore, we have to potentially rely on local businesses to donate giveaways or ask coaches of the Women’s Soccer team to donate giveaways.

*Limited Resources* – Due to the budget of the Longwood University Athletic Department, we are limited in the amount of resources we have for this game. Students have to be encouraged to bring their own item to be signed during the autograph session when it would be better if the athletic department could provide something for the youth.

**Opportunities**

*Spear-it event* – Lancer Productions promotes athletic events by allowing students to earn stamps and eventually win prizes if they attend the game. Lancer Productions chose Friday’s game as one of their Spear-it events, and therefore more Longwood University students may attend the game in order to gain a stamp.

*Continued Relationship* – Due to the fact that this is the most interaction that the Women’s Soccer team has had with the Farmville and Prince Edward youth, we are hoping that this relationship will only continue to grow and become stronger. The athletic department is going to strive to do more for the youth in the community if they do more for us by supporting our athletics.

*Continued Market* – Members of the athletic department are going out into the community and to the schools in order to reach the youth. Once the youth and their families attend one of these games, we hope that they will realize how fun they are and continue to attend.

**Threats**

*Weather Conditions* – Due to the unpredictability of weather, it could pose a possible threat to the scheduling or progress of the event. Soccer is traditionally more favorable when viewed in fair conditions. Inclement weather may cause spectators to find another activity in which weather is not as influential.

*Other Events* – The Longwood Women’s Soccer game is not the only even that is occurring on Friday night at Longwood, or in the community. Some of the market audience members may have prior obligations, or other plans. This may prevent them from being in attendance at the game.

*End of week* – Although the fact that the game is on a Friday is seen as a strength, it is also potentially a threat. A lot of people may be tired after the work week and may feel like staying in and relaxing for the evening rather than going out to the game.

Our promotional plan will help women’s soccer achieve an increase in attendance, as well as develop a lasting relationship with organizations in Farmville and Prince Edward. Overall, we want to give people the opportunity to have an understanding and appreciation of our Women’s Soccer Team.

**Objectives and Goals**

Our objective is to increase overall awareness of LU’s women’s soccer, and attract patrons due to the awareness we create through the advertisement of our promotional activities. Our goal is to increase attendance by 30%, and this game especially, we want to increase the amount of youth that come out to the game. In the following section we will introduce the methods in which our goal will be assessed.

**Assessment of Target Market**

One of our main target markets are Longwood University Students. However, the main group we are targeting in this promotional plan is the youth in Farmville and Prince Edward due to the nature of this game. We will assess how many youth and their families were reached through our promotions by counting how many youth attend, as well as taking note of how many youth bring something for the soccer team to autograph after the game. This was advertised on the flyer.

**Promotional Activities**

***The steps we will take to promote this event, and corresponding activities, to our target market:***

Prior to this event, we will visit and establish a relationship with the Prince Edward Elementary School administrative staff. We will be delivering flyers to each classroom for the teacher’s to give out to their students. Also, we will be delivering flyers to Longwood University faculty and staff. We are also inviting the youth from various non-profit organizations in Farmville and Prince Edward. This will, in essence, create a greater awareness of women’s soccer within the community, which is expected to yield an increase in attendance. The flyers that we will be handing out will promote the game, as well as the autograph session for the youth after the game.

**Giveaways**

There will be two promotions in which the youth will have the opportunity to win a giveaway as a prize.

*Lucky Seat Contest*

The Lucky Seat Contest will only involve the youth that attend the game. Reserved seating will be available for all youth. The audience member that is sitting in the bleacher seat with an index card taped under it is the one who wins the contest. They will be given a women’s soccer shirt as their prize. This was donated to the promotion by the women’s soccer team.

*Halftime Promotion*

The youth member that wins the halftime promotion will also be given a prize. This prize is an Adidas drawstring bag. This was also donated to the promotion by the women’s soccer team.

*Autograph Session*

Although the Longwood University Athletic Department is not providing the youth with something to get signed by the team, the department is providing the youth with the opportunity to get something signed. Youth were asked to bring something from home if they were interested in participating in the autograph session with the soccer team after the game.

**Signage**

We will hand out flyers that have details of the event. Some of these flyers will be placed in teacher’s mailboxes at Prince Edward Elementary School, and then handed out in each classroom by the teacher. Other flyers will be placed in the faculty and staff mailboxes at Longwood University. Flyers will also be posted around campus in order to still target our student market. These flyers highlight the date, time, location, and facts about the event. The signs will inform each community that there is a game that day, as well as point them in the direction of the game.

**Plan Evaluation**

Once the promotions are implemented, we will ask fans or spectators in attendance the reasons for attending the game. We will also ask them if they enjoyed the promotions and if they will attend further games. We will achieve this assessment by asking the attendees personally and document our results. These questions will pertain to how they heard of the match and further reasons of attending.