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Ouachita Student Foundation to host annual Tiger Traks competition April 25-26



By Bethany Peevy

April 22, 2014

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- Spring is here, the sun is out and Ouachita Baptist University students are gearing up for "Arkansas' most exciting college weekend." On April 25 and 26, the Ouachita Student Foundation will host the university's annual Tiger Traks.

OSF created the event in the spring of 1975 to raise money for student scholarships. What began as a bicycle race around a track has evolved into a field day where students participate in a variety of competitions over two days. The events range from a basketball relay to an egg toss to mud volleyball and more.

Since its inception, Tiger Traks has continued to be an important fundraiser for the Ouachita Student Foundation. Each team pays a registration fee, which goes to OBU student scholarships. The event is also a great way for students to come together as a community and use the weekend to escape the stress of the semester.

"It brings together hundreds of students from across campus to have a blast playing competitive games and raising money for scholarships," said OSF Special Events Chair Lindsey Fowler, who coordinates the event. Fowler is a senior business administration/finance, political science and history major from Arkadelphia, Ark.

"It's important because it allows us to raise money for student scholarships and take a break from the stresses of college life to enjoy being OBU students together," Fowler added.

"It's a way of bringing people together in community through competition, which is a very unique thing, which I think is really great," said Jake Coffman, a senior music major from Tyronza, Ark. Coffman serves on the OSF special events committee.

Jon Merryman, staff director of OSF and director of alumni, is especially hopeful for the turnout for this year's Traks.

"We have more teams signed up than we have probably in 15 years," Merryman said. "I think today we have 56 teams signed up, and our goal was 40. So this one will be a really great one to help provide scholarship money, for sure."



Though the event is for a serious cause, there is no escaping the silly and fun atmosphere that comes with Tiger Traks. Students get creative by coming up with clever names for their teams and sometimes even dressing the part.

"We are team Oreo and we are going to wear black and white. That's why we are team Oreo," said Mary Rothwell, a freshman church media and production arts major from Arkadelphia, Ark.

"I am excited about Traks because my team is the European Union and we are going to dominate on U.S. soil," said Emily Anderson, a senior psychology major from Siloam Springs, Ark. "We called it European Union because we all studied abroad."

Tiger Traks is just one part of the exciting weekend. The events will kick off with "Thank-a-Donor Day," sponsored by Student Senate, from noon to 1 p.m. in the Ouachita Commons from Wednesday to Friday. Students are encouraged to visit the tables set up in the cafeteria to write thank you notes to donors. In addition, there will be a photo booth set up every day by the entrance to the cafeteria where student can take "thank you" photographs to send to donors.

Then on Friday at 4 p.m., there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony for the LJ Brooks Memorial Basketball Court in honor of Brooks, a Ouachita student who died unexpectedly in December 2012. Ouachita President Rex Horne will speak at the ceremony, where the Brooks family will be present.

“It will be a really neat time to celebrate his life and his legacy on campus,” said Fowler. “So many people have contributed and been a part of this basketball court. It’s a big project that we’ve been working on for over a year now so, it’ll be fun to celebrate everyone who’s been a part of that and get to celebrate LJ’s memory in the process.”

Following Tiger Traks events on Friday evening, OSF will host “Floats & Floaties,” a birthday celebration of OSF’s 40 years of service. The event will kick off around 9:30 p.m. in the Student Village Circle with birthday cake and ice cream floats, provided by Sodexo. Then, a “dive-in movie” will be shown in Waggoner Pool in Sturgis Physical Education Center starting at 10 p.m.

Tiger Idol is the final event of the weekend. It will be held in the amphitheater on Saturday at 7 p.m. following the Tiger Traks awards ceremony. Tiger Idol is a singing competition sponsored by Student Senate open to student contestants from across campus. All proceeds will go to Ouachita’s Annual Fund.

“Tiger Idol is just the next step in being a Tiger for Life,” said Meg Hart, an accounting and Russian major from Little Rock, Ark., who serves as the chair of Student Senate’s Tiger for Life committee. “The cool thing about this event is that everyone gets to cheer on their favorite contestant, and it ultimately benefits Ouachita.”

The full schedule for the weekend is available on Ouachita’s mobile app. For more information about “Arkansas’ most exciting college weekend,” visit www.obu.edu/osf or contact Jon Merryman at merrymanj@obu.edu or (870) 245-5111.