

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH VOLLEYBALL

MARKETING PLAN

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2019

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Volleyball program has established a unique fan base and fan experience that has allowed the program to differentiate itself from other Pitt Athletics programs and in the surrounding area. Due to the success of the team, there has been a lot of buzz around the program. This season we will put a focus on increasing student attendance through various promotions and initiatives and also modernize the fan experience in the Field House through the use of a newly constructed video board. We will promote home matches through a variety of channels such as digital, social and grassroots marketing techniques to increase brand awareness throughout the Pittsburgh community.

The Panthers face a difficult path back to the top, looking for continued success after earning the program's highest season winning percentage in 2018 (30-2, .938). Twelve of Pitt's 2019 opponents competed in the 2018 NCAA Volleyball Championship. Eight played in the second round or further and two reached the Elite Eight (Penn State and Oregon). Three ended the 2018 season ranked in the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) Top 25 (Penn State – No. 6, Oregon – No. 9, Cal Poly – No. 22). From a marketing perspective, we will capitalize on the "big-name" programs that we will be facing at home and providing the fan-base with high-caliber matches.

Pitt returns all four of its 2018 American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) All-Americans including outside hitters Kayla Lund and Stephanie Williams, right side Nika Markovic and middle Layne Van Buskirk. Newcomer Hali Hilligas, a transfer from Iowa State, earned AVCA All-America honors in 2017 in addition to being named Big 12 Libero of the Year. Other new faces rounding out the program's nationally ranked recruiting class include Lexis Akeo, Ashley Browske, Sadie Dick, Chiamaka Nwokolo, Anastasia Russ and Valeria Vázquez.

The purpose of the following working document is to lay out a plan to increase student attendance throughout the season, broaden our spectrum of advertising in the Pittsburgh community, and provide a high caliber, family-friendly volleyball atmosphere for fans to enjoy. As we progress through the season, items in this document may be altered in order to give our fans the best possible experience. The overarching goal is to be the home of the best volleyball atmosphere in the ACC and in the NCAA, regardless of our facility or record.

STRATEGIES:

Increase student attendance. While the trend of student attendance at Volleyball is the best among Olympic sports at Pitt, there is still an incredible amount of room for improvement. This season, we will be amplifying the number of student promotions in hopes that it will increase the overall student attendance number. In the past, we have lacked advertising on lower campus. This year to bridge the gap, we will be placing flyers all over lower campus with match information as well as placing A-Frame signs in high-traffic areas.

Broaden our spectrum of advertising in the Pittsburgh community. While success is an attendance driver and is a great advertisement, it is not something to bank on. This year, it is crucial that we get the Pitt Volleyball brand into the Pittsburgh community to draw in fans at an exciting point in the programs history. We will distribute our schedule poster to local businesses to visually catch the eye of the community. Taking a digital approach, we will geo-target different demographics throughout the region with digital advertisements.

Provide a high caliber, family-friendly volleyball atmosphere for fans. While the options of entertainment in the Pittsburgh community are endless, many are expensive for families. This season, while ticket prices have increased, there is a larger number of family-oriented ticket promotions that will take place throughout the season that are perfect for the average blue-collar Pittsburgh family. Examples of these are the A-Day promotion where children ages 12 and under can bring an "A" on a report card or assignment and get into the match for \$1.00 and the Food Drive in which fans can bring a bag of non-perishable food and receive a BOGO ticket offer. Groups of 15 or more can purchase \$3.00 tickets which is a great option for youth teams and clubs. Aside from tickets, we will utilize a newly constructed video board to energize our means of entertainment throughout the match.

2019 GOALS



PHILOSOPHY

Quality over quantity approach to the season.

In past seasons, there has been an effort to do a large number of promotions with little quality. This year, the goal is to have fewer promotional giveaways of a higher quality that fans will be able to utilize in order to extend the Pitt Volleyball brand. An example of this is a ACC Champions pennant giveaway for the match in which the players receive their ACC champion rings. The promotional item is commemorative and has meaning, rather than just being a giveaway to give fans something free. This philosophy will provide an overall fan experience that models consistency and excitement.

01

Increase the number of season ticket holders by 50% .

To achieve the goal, of reaching 100 flex holders for the 2019 season, we will begin by collaborating with the Sales team on outbound call outreach to past buyers to up-sell them to purchase season tickets. This is a new element that has not been done in the past but has potential to be incredibly successful due to the buzz around the success of the team. We have the resources to create a digital advertising campaign for Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook to reach the greater Pittsburgh market.

02

Work with Media Relations to utilize Opendorse to promote upcoming matches and promotions.

Opendorse is a under-utilized resource that can easily assist us in using the players social media platforms to get our message across, whether it be about upcoming matches or promotions. Over the summer, we will ensure that all players and coaches are on-boarded and will then devise a plan on how to best utilize the platform. Many of the players have a larger following on social media and will be our influences on the social platforms to get information out to the fan base.

03

Increase overall student attendance by 25%.

In the 2018 season, Pitt Volleyball attracted 4,028 students throughout the course of the season which was around 18% of the total attendance (22,851). For the 2019 season, our goal is to increase overall student attendance to 5,000, a 25% increase. To increase student attendance, we will first increase advertising efforts on lower campus through flyers, dorm storms, and advertisements for upcoming events on television screens. Throughout the season, we will designate specific games and target students through t-shirt and food giveaways at the match. (See page 10 for more information on student promotions)

2019 SCHEDULE

2019 AUGUST						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
29	30	31	01	02	03	04
05	06	07	08	09	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	01
02	03	Notes:				

2019 SEPTEMBER						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	01
02	03	04	05	06	07	08
09	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	01	Notes:				

2019 OCTOBER						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
30	01	02	03	04	05	06
07	08	09	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	01	02	03
04	05	Notes:				

2019 NOVEMBER						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
28	29	30	31	01	02	03
04	05	06	07	08	09	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	01
02	03	Notes:				

FULL COLOR: HOME MATCH
 BLACK + WHITE: AWAY MATCH

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TICKETING

PRICING

	PRICE
Advance Sales - will go OFF SALE 11:59 pm the day prior to the match ChampYinz Volleyball Invitational & Penn State	\$5.00 \$8.00
Day of Match Sales ChampYinz Volleyball Invitational & Penn State	\$8.00 \$10.00
Group Sales (15+, only available in advance) ChampYinz Volleyball Invitational & Penn State	\$3.00 \$5.00

ON SALE DATES

Flex Tickets: June 5, 2019

Group Tickets: June 5, 2019

Single Match Tickets: August 1, 2019

TICKETING GOALS

- Sell 100 Flex Plans (in 2018, 67 Flex Plans were sold)
- Have 25% of our total tickets out be Advance Single Game tickets
 - Last season, our Advance Single Game sales made up 18% and the Walk Up sales made up 41% of total tickets sold
- Announce 3 sell out matches

GROUP SALES GOALS

- Increase total Group Ticket sales to 2,700 tickets (up 346 tickets from last season)
- Reach \$7,500 in Group Ticket revenue (up \$5,146 from last season)

ATTENDANCE HISTORY

YEAR	AVERAGE	HIGHEST	TOTAL
2014	533	1,952	8,525
2015	435	918	6,528
2016	411	701	6,984
2017	569	1,126	7,402
2018	1,140	3,179	22,802

NOTE:
IN 2018, WE HAD THE HIGHEST AVERAGE ATTENDANCE, SINGLE MATCH ATTENDANCE, AND SEASON TOTAL ATTENDANCE.

FITZGERALD FIELD HOUSE

CAPACITY & SELL OUT INFORMATION

“Oversell” Potential: Based on last year’s data, we had on average 20% of paid tickets not scanned in. Using this number, we have determined that if necessary, we will be able to sell an additional 500 seats beyond our sales capacity, to account for the tickets that will not be redeemed.

Lower Level Capacity	1,918
Upper Level Capacity	1,100
TOTAL CAPACITY	3,018

SALES POSSIBILITIES

Advanced Tickets Out	3,343
includes paid tickets + students	3,018 capacity - 175 holds for teams + 500 oversell potential
Total Tickets Out Capacity	3,518
	3,018 + 500 oversell potential

TARGET MARKETS

STUDENTS

Last season, a total of 4,028 students attended volleyball matches over the course of the season. This season, the goal is to increase this number by 25% and attract a total 5,000 students. While attendance was high last season, the student presence on match-day was lacking. Students bring energy and school spirit to match days. Due to past success, there is a large buzz around volleyball among the student body and we hope to capitalize on it through the following initiatives:

- A freshmen specific giveaway the first week of classes to expose them to volleyball right from the start
- In-game engagement with the VolleyPitt
- T-shirt giveaway
- Various food giveaways
- Opportunity to win field passes for Football

CHILDREN

Children are a key group when trying to increase attendance due to the influence that they have on their parents. All parents want to make their children happy and will often go out of their way to make sure to provide their kids with anything to make that possible. This season, we have increased the number of child-based initiatives to drive in a larger youth population and create Pitt Volleyball fans for life:

- A-Day in which kids grades 6 and under can bring a A on a test or assignment and receive a discounted ticket
- Diocese Day and WPIAL and Team Day to attract the youth volleyball community
- Reading is Fun Night in which the target is elementary aged children

VOLLEYBALL FAN BASE WITHIN THE PITTSBURGH COMMUNITY

This year, the city of Pittsburgh will be hosting the 2019 NCAA Volleyball Championship at PPG Paints Arena. There is a lot of excitement around the sport, therefore this season we will try to capitalize and bring in volleyball fans from across the community. This season, Pitt Volleyball has the hardest schedule in program history and will be facing big name opponents at home therefore making the match-ups more attractive to avid volleyball fans. We will reach this market through digital advertising, newspaper ads for marquee matches, and by distributing our schedule poster to businesses within the community to make the Pitt Volleyball brand visible.

SWOT ANALYSIS



- The Pitt Volleyball team has earned the title of ACC Champions the last two years and are looking to extend the streak this season.
- Strong following from the Pittsburgh community and student body due to teams success.
- Strong home schedule with well-known opponents.



- There are 3 matches throughout the season in which students will not be able to attend due to classes or breaks.
- Two matches occur on football game days which are hard to compete with.



- The 2019 NCAA Volleyball Championship is being held in Pittsburgh therefore we can capitalize on the excitement around the event.
- Due to demand, we are able to increase prices across the board to reflect those of the other Olympic sports.
- Fans are attracted to the success of the team rather than the promotions, therefore we can allocate more money on different advertising avenues rather than setting it all aside for promotional items.



- We are gaining traction among the Pittsburgh community and throughout the University through the success that we are earning. If our record were to shift in the opposite direction there is a chance that the fandom around the team dies down.
- Our schedule this season is the toughest in program history. While this will lead to an increase in competitive matches for our fans to watch in the Field House, we may not leave each match victorious. In order to combat these threats, we need to create an incredible atmosphere that keeps fans coming back regardless of the outcome of the match.

FAN EXPERIENCE/GAME PRESENTATION

VIDEO BOARD CONTENT

For the first time, the Fitzgerald Field House will have a modernized video board which will assist in increasing the match atmosphere. Aside from having a more legible board, we will incorporate the following this season to provide our fans and student athletes with a higher caliber experience:

- Intro video shown pre-match
- Ability to show replays throughout the match
- Incorporate crowd prompts to energize fans
 - "Get On Your Feet"
 - "Get Loud"
 - "Let's Go Pitt"
- Incorporation of hype videos throughout the match that can be played at timeouts and in between sets to get the crowd hyped up for the remaining portion of the match.
- Graphics promoting upcoming events and promotions

IN-MATCH

During the match, we will try to create a high energy environment. After every Panthers point, upbeat music will be played and crowd prompts and/or a replay will be visible on the video board. During timeouts, cheer and band will provide the fans with music and crowd engaging chants. In a hot time out situation, we will play a hype video to increase crowd participation and excitement. Between the first and second sets, the cheerleaders will lead the fans in "Sweet Caroline.

Between the second and third sets, any planned recognitions will take place as well as a t-shirt toss to get fans on their feet. Any remaining breaks between sets will be filled with the band and cheer as well as various videos (ex: ACC Network advertisement, university advertisements, hype videos, ACC videos).

POST-MATCH

After the match, fans are encouraged to stick around as the team lives out the new tradition of dancing with the band.

After a selected few matches, fans will also have the opportunity to collect autographs from the team and coaches.

STUDENT PROMOTIONS

LAPTOP STICKER GIVEAWAY - FRESHMEN

Students return to campus on August 26th, just days before we host the Panther Challenge. Friday night when we take on **Cincinnati**, the first 1,000 freshmen in attendance will receive laptop stickers. Upon arriving to campus, freshmen are always eager to attend sporting events. By creating a large buzz around the success of the team and drawing the new students in with the laptop stickers, this match has potential to draw in a large crowd of students and get them hooked right from the start. In order to get the word out to the new students, the Street Team will table in freshmen dorms the week of the match. Flyers will also be hung around campus.

VOLLEYPITT T-SHIRTS

The VolleyPitt is the emerging student section of Pitt Volleyball. On **September 7th** as we take on **Duquesne** in the ChampYinz invitational, we will give out VolleyPitt t-shirts to the first 250 students. While it is a football game day, the t-shirts should be enough to convince the student body to rally and attend the match. In order to raise awareness, the team will host a "dorm storm". Flyers will also be hung around campus in high traffic areas.

FOOD GIVEAWAY

For our midweek matchup versus **Oregon**, we will provide pizza to the first 200 students in attendance. Food is always an attendance driver among the student body. With the match being at 8:00pm, it will be the perfect late dinner or study break snack. Flyers will be hung around campus to raise awareness.

YETI RAFFLE

When we take on **Wake Forest** on **November 1st**, students will have a chance to enter to win a custom Pitt Yeti cooler. In the past, Yeti has provided the cooler for no cost with the only stipulation being we promote their brand via PA reads and video board advertisements. Yeti coolers are attractive to the student body because they are an expensive item that many students cannot afford themselves but would like to have for tailgates and gatherings.

FOOTBALL FIELD PASS ENTER TO WIN

On **November 10th** as we host **Clemson**, students will have a chance to enter to win field passes for the football game vs North Carolina on November 14th. Students can enter at the marketing table and we will randomly draw 25 names that will be presented at the end of the match, therefore requiring all students to stay the entirety of the match. Winners will receive 2 passes, one for them and then one to give to a friend.

FAN PROMOTIONS

BLUE OUT

September 22nd when we take on **Penn State** in the Petersen Events Center the match will be deemed a Blue Out. The first 3,000 Pitt fans will receive a royal blue pompoms to extend the theme throughout the match. We will promote the theme via social media platforms and encourage fans to wear royal.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MATCH

October 18th when we take on **North Carolina**, we will recognize Breast Cancer survivors and those still fighting for a cure. A form will be posted on social media for survivors to fill out and we also will work with with UPMC for assistance in gathering survivors. Between the 2nd and 3rd sets, there will be an on court recognition and we will work to get an informational table for fans.

READING IS FUN NIGHT

The match versus **Wake Forest** on **November 1st** will be Reading is Fun night. Fans will receive a ticket discount by bringing a new or gently used book that can be donated to a local library.

There will be a bookmark making station for children. Fans will have a chance to enter to win various books from "The Bookshelf" - the list of books that Coach Fisher encourages the team to read. After the match, there will be a bedtime story read to all fans who decide to stay.

JR. PANTHERS DAY

November 22nd is the Pitt Volleyball Jr. Panthers Day. Members of the Junior Panthers Club will get a free ticket to the match and will get to form a high five tunnel for the team to run through during player intros.

MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY

November 27th vs **Louisville** is the Military Appreciation match. Invitations will be sent to the VA Hospital that the team visited in the Spring and all former and current members of the military will receive a complimentary ticket.

ACC CHAMPIONSHIP RING CEREMONY

While the date of the ACC Championship ring ceremony is still TBD, we will be celebrating the success of the team the past two seasons throughout the entire match. Fans will receive a commemorative pennant that they can display in their office or house to show their Pitt Volleyball pride. Pre-match, the team will receive their 2018 ACC Championship Rings. The 2018 ACC Championship trophy will also be on display throughout the match for fans to take pictures with.

TICKET PROMOTIONS

DIOCESE DAY

Diocese Day has been a huge success in the past and we are excited to continue the promotion during the 2019 season. Local Diocese teams are invited to come to our match for the group ticket rate (\$3.00).

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MATCH

New for 2019 is the Breast Cancer Awareness Match. Those who are currently fighting or have beat breast cancer will receive \$1.00 tickets to the match and will be recognized between the 2nd and 3rd sets. UPMC employees will receive a ticket discount.

WPIAL/TEAM DAY

WPIAL and Team Day has been an incredible success and brings out a large number of youth volleyball players. Local volleyball teams receive the group ticket price of \$3.00.

A-DAY

New for 2019 is A-Day in which children ages 12 and under will receive a \$1.00 ticket when they present an "A" on a report card or assignment.

MVP NIGHT

On MVP night, we recognize professors who have made an impact on the lives and futures of members of the volleyball team. This year to take it a step further, we are providing all professors and teachers a discounted ticket as a thank you for all that they do.

SEASON TICKET HOLDER APPRECIATION DAY

As a new ticket promotion for 2019, "Season Ticket Holder Appreciation Day" aims to draw in fans from around Pitt Athletics that may not normally attend a volleyball match. Prior to the match, season ticket holders from every Pitt sport will receive a discount code to purchase tickets. We feel as though getting a fan to one match will make them a long-term fan of Pitt Volleyball and will hopefully influence them to purchase tickets in the future.

FOOD DRIVE

The final match of the season falls directly before Thanksgiving which is one of the busiest holidays for food banks. Fans who bring in a bag of non-perishable food that can be donated will receive a BOGO ticket for the match.

SOCIAL MEDIA

PLATFORM

FOLLOWERS (AS OF 7/9/2019)

Instagram - @Pitt_VB	5,858
Facebook - Pitt Volleyball	2,426
Twitter - @Pitt_VB	5,273

INSTAGRAM

- Throughout the season, we will have players go live on Instagram on both the Volleyball and Pitt Athletics accounts to create a buzz around upcoming matches and promotions and also provide fans a behind the scenes look into the program.
- A Highlight will be created for "Promotions" for fans to check out the promotional schedule.

FACEBOOK

- Facebook events will be created for each home match that include information on how to purchase tickets as well as any promotions occurring that match.
- Graphics will be posted for each promotion so that fans are aware.

TWITTER

- Graphics will be posted for each promotion so that fans are aware.
- Polls will be posted on Twitter throughout the season to increase fan engagement.
- Retweet to win giveaways throughout the season

OPENDORSE

For the 2019 season, Opendorse will be utilized to increase self-promotion among players. Many of the athletes have a larger following than the Volleyball account itself, therefore we will reach a larger audience. Graphics and posts will be pushed through to various players each match and will be posted to their personal accounts.

Media Relations will hold a pre-season Opendorse training in which they will on-board all players and coaches and explain how the platform will be used throughout the course of the season.

During this meeting, players will provide input as to what types of content they would prefer that we push out via their accounts and a strategic plan will be created.

ADVERTISING PLAN

ON CAMPUS

- Petersen Events Center lobby board
- Flyers in high traffic areas on campus
- Dorm Storms throughout the season for marquee matches and student focused promotions
- "Match Day" a-frame signs around campus
- Ticket office TV screens
- Facility banner on Field House

COMMUNITY

- Posters distributed to local businesses
- Newspaper advertisements for marquee matches

DIGITAL

- Press releases posted on pittsburghpanthers.com
- Pitt Livewire Features
- E-mail blasts targeted to past buyers and students

BOOSTED SOCIAL MEDIA

Throughout the season, digital advertisements will be purchased to increase awareness of marquee matches and promotions.

AD FOCUS

Season Tickets
Single Match Tickets
Penn State
Clemson
Florida State

DATE OF ADVERTISING

June 5 - (CURRENT)
August 1 - TBD
September 12-22
November 4-10
November 11-22

*ABOVE MATCHES AND DATES MAY BE ALTERED WHEN DEEMED NECESSARY

NEW FOR 2019

ADVERTISING

- A-frame signs in high traffic areas around campus
- Flyers around campus promoting upcoming matches
- Poster distribution to local businesses
- Strategic geo-targeting through digital advertisements

PROMOTIONS

- Reading is Fun Day
- Breast Cancer Awareness match
- A-Day
- Blue Out vs Penn State
- Season Ticket Holder Appreciation match

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Opendorse
- Fan engaging polls and contests

FAN EXPERIENCE/GAME PRESENTATION

- New video and scoreboard
- New tunnel

TICKETING

- New ticket pricing and structure
- Inside sales representative
- Mobile tickets
- Student ticket reservations
- Field House capacity number

PROJECTED BUDGET

ITEM	TOTAL COST
BUFFER	\$500.00
Seat Cushions (100) - Flex Holder Gift	\$425.00
Flyers (10 bundles of 100) - Advertising	\$1,110.00
VolleyPitt T-Shirts (250) - Student Giveaway	\$1,500.00
Pennants (1,000) - Fan Giveaway	\$1,075.00
PomPoms (3,000) - Fan Giveaway	\$2,100.00
Laptop Stickers (1,000) - Freshmen Giveaway	\$740.00
Pizza - Student Promotion	\$300.00
Books - Fan Promotion	\$500.00
TOTAL COST	\$8,250.00
BUDGET REMAINING	\$750.00

The above is a list of anticipated expenses for the 2019 Volleyball season. The \$500.00 buffer is for unexpected expenses that come up throughout the course of the season and changes of prices for promotional items.

The remaining \$750.00 of our budget will be utilized when deemed necessary as a backup promotional budget. It is enough to host (2) food giveaways for students which we can use if there is ever a drop in excitement around campus. This money may also potentially be reserved for post-season if deemed necessary.

COLLATERAL



ABOVE: Digital ad promoted on Facebook promoting Flex Tickets



ABOVE: Schedule release graphic released on social media

COLLATERAL

ACC
Pitt
ACC

Pitt 19

molten

AUG	24	AT DAYTON (EXH)		OCT	4	AT MIAMI *
	30	CLEVELAND STATE °			6	AT FLORIDA STATE *
		CINCINNATI °			11	AT SYRACUSE *
	31	SOUTH CAROLINA °			13	AT BOSTON COLLEGE *
					18	NORTH CAROLINA *
SEPT	6	vs OHIO STATE +			20	NC STATE *
	7	GREEN BAY +			25	AT NOTRE DAME *
		DUQUESNE +			27	AT LOUISVILLE *
	11	OREGON				
	13	vs CAL POLY **		NOV	1	WAKE FOREST *
	14	vs UTAH **			3	DUKE *
		AT PEPPERDINE **			8	GEORGIA TECH *
	20	AT PENN STATE			10	CLEMSON *
	22	PENN STATE			16	AT DUKE *
	25	AT VIRGINIA *			22	FLORIDA STATE *
	29	VIRGINIA TECH *			24	AT NC STATE *
					27	LOUISVILLE *

° PANTHER CHALLENGE
+ DUQUESNE - PITT TOURNAMENT
** PEPPERDINE ASICS CLASSIC

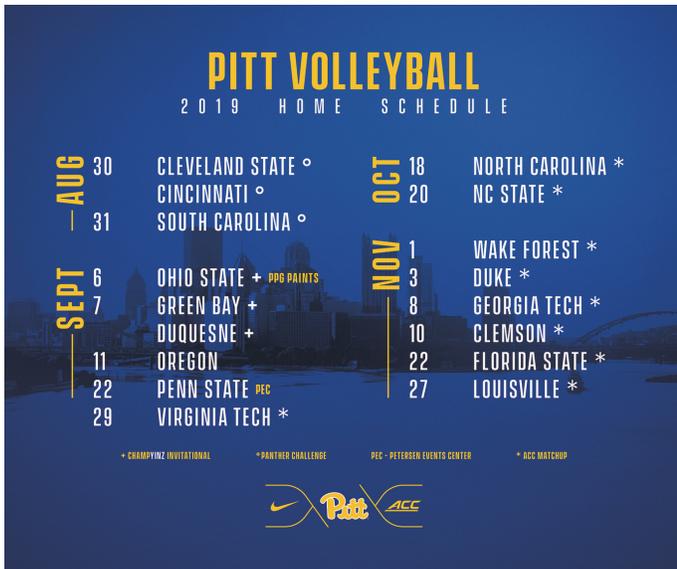
* ACC MATCHUP
AWAY
HOME

LEFT: Schedule release graphic released on social media

COLLATERAL



LEFT: Field House team banner



LEFT: Field House schedule banner