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Basketball webcasts connect fans with Golden Grizzlies

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

For OU basketball fans unable to see a men's or women's game in person or when televised, the live audio webcasts have become a welcome option.

For OU junior guard Jason Rozycki's parents, it used to be especially hard following their son's basketball games because they live in Boyne City, Mich., more than 200 miles away from campus. Now they never miss a game thanks to the webcasts.

"It takes about four hours, sometimes longer depending on the weather, to drive to a home game," said Jane Rozycki, Jason's mom. "Before the webcasts were offered, my husband would call me after the game and tell me as much as he could. Sometimes I'd turn on SportsCenter and watch the bottom of the TV screen to try to find an OU game score. But I don't have to bother with that now. We're very thankful that OU offers this service."

Since the start of the 1999-2000 season, fans have been able to hear Golden Grizzlies game action, as called by announcer Jon Bloom, from the OU athletics site at www.ougrizzlies.com. A RealPlayer plug-in, which can be downloaded for free, is required to listen to the streamed audio.

"The webcasts are wonderful, with not being able to travel," Jane Rozycki said. "And Jon Bloom is terrific. He describes the games so you can picture everything that's happening. There's excitement in his voice when there's excitement during the game. It's really fun to listen to him."

A bonus for the Rozyckis is being able to hear their son's commentary. Jason has been providing his insight during the webcasts since his season ended due to injury.

"Jason knows the plays and what's going on in the practices, so he adds that little extra to the webcasts," his mom said. "Besides, Communications is his major. So not only has it helped his education, he's also got some involvement instead of just sitting on the bench."

All the men's games are webcast - both the men's and women's games are offered if there is a doubleheader at the same venue - and all the women's postseason games will be webcast. Archived broadcasts of the men's basketball games and selected women's basketball games also are available on the OU athletics website.

OU men's basketball coach Greg Kampe said the webcasts are an important part of OU's athletic program.

"I think it's an effective way to build a fan base, especially when the team is on the road," Kampe said. "We're very fortunate to have Jon Bloom, who has such a distinctive and recognizable voice, to equate with Oakland basketball. And it's great for fans who don't have the opportunity to come to games in person."

"My brother listens from his home in California, and he'd never be able to hear our games otherwise. It's definitely a service we have to provide as an athletic program."

The final game of the season for the men is at home February 24 at 7 p.m. against the University of Missouri. The women host the University of Missouri February 24 at 4:30 p.m., then travel to Youngstown State February 26 for the final game of the regular season at 7 p.m. The women also will compete in the Mid-Continent Conference Championship March 3-6 in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

SUMMARY

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