Gentile Arena stacking up to be tops in Horizon League  
By Peter Skiadopoulos  
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Midway through the 2011-12 Loyola Ramblers season visiting schools are continuously taking delight in the newly renovated Gentile Arena. The finalization of the court concluded Phase Two of the 100 million dollar reimagine campaign Loyola University Chicago has embarked on. Phase One comprised of erecting the state-of-the-art Norville Center for Intercollegiate Athletics. The Norville Center also houses the Gentile Arena in addition to world class locker rooms and weight lifting exercise facilities. These two athletic department venues together have already shifted the Rambler culture forward and initiated a true "Rambler Renaissance" for the rest of the university.

Complementing the upgrade in facilities, Porter Moser, men's basketball head coach, and Dr. Grace Calhoun, athletic director, tirelessly work to keep Rambler Pride flowing around campus and within the student body. They have successfully instilled a new-found swagger in students and Loyola alums, evident each home game at the 'Joe. The tenacious crowd plays well into the thunderous design of the arena.

Mark Lazerus of the Post-Tribune is marveled by the construction and believes Loyola has made the perfect decision on the cozy size of Gentile. He also sees the gym as a microcosm for other Horizon League arenas. "Well, Loyola has created a mid-major paradise," Lazerus writes. "The Gentile high school gym has been converted into arguably the nicest facility in the league." Anyone that has been to the Gentile pre-renovation knows exactly what Mark is talking about by referring it to a 'high school gym.' Valpo plays home to a high school style gym and would cherish in the chance to convert the Arc into a Gentile like arena.

Not only have the renovations increased fan fare, but have had an insurmountable effect on recruiting. When talking to Class of 2012 commit Matt O'Leary he stated the following for the reason he chose the Ramblers for college, "What ultimately drew me to Loyola was the fact that the campus is amazing, I see the program as one that has a chance to be very successful in the future."

Bill Potter, Director of Communications for the Horizon League, finally took in a game last Saturday when Butler paid Loyola a visit. "I was lucky enough to take a hard-hat tour of Gentile Arena earlier in the year, and the finished product is remarkable. The fans are on top of the action, which I think they enjoy, and I think will serve Loyola well in terms of building a home court advantage in the years to come," Potter explicated. Last month when cross town team DePaul played at Gentile, Blue Demon head coach Oliver Purnell took notice of the crowd right away. Having the Rambler Rowdies jeering and screaming amplified by the dynamics of the stadium is the ultimate form of home court advantage.

"What I was fortunate to see on Saturday was the energy in Gentile. I look forward to seeing the energy continue to pick up as Porter Moser builds his program," Potter said. As delightful as it is to have a brand new first rate home court, the potential and forward direction for the Ramblers is the most enticing. All of Rambler nation anticipates the return to college basketball greatness.

Porter Moser and his Gentile Arena are just the first two steps.