



Applebee's(R) Offers Solution to Nation's Workers Who Spend 8 Million Hours Watching College Basketball at Work

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Back Away From Your Computer, Watch March Hoops With Friends and Co-Workers at Applebee's

LENEXA, KS, Mar 13, 2011 (MARKETWIRE via COMTEX) --

Extra games, wider access to coverage and more ways to watch the games all mean one thing for the nation's workforce during the three-week long college basketball tournament: less productivity. Online viewership of the tournament during work hours is likely to reach 8.4 million hours according to Challenger Gray & Christmas, a global outplacement consultancy.

In addition, nearly one in four online American adults (23 percent) revealed they will be using some form of social media to follow this year's tournament. The research showed that among those who plan to use social media to follow March hoops, 27 percent plan to use a mobile application to do so, according to research (<http://imresportsiq.com>) conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of IMRE sports.

Applebee's, the world's largest casual dining restaurant, offers a different approach for those who plan to fill out brackets and watch the games on their company's dime or on their mobile devices: back away from the computer and put down your phone, grab your co-workers (even your boss), call your friends and watch the games at Applebee's.

To reiterate its position, Applebee's created a web video message featuring an Applebee's waitress, who urges those watching the games while working to visit Applebee's during the tournament instead of watching it on a computer or mobile device.

"How is the game looking on that little screen? That's what I thought. Back away from the computer, grab some buddies and come to Applebee's," she says. "Best place in the neighborhood to catch all the big games. We've got tons of TVs, spinach dip, boneless buffalo wings and more. And, you look like you could use an ice cold beverage. Wait, is that your boss? Bring him too."

"The tournament is one of the most exciting sports event of the year and if you're watching it from your office or cubicle, we say there is a better way," said Mike Archer, president of Applebee's Services, Inc. "College basketball is an American pastime meant to be enjoyed with friends over great food and drinks and there is no better place for that than Applebee's."

In addition to showing all of the games at more than 1850 restaurants in the US, Applebee's will make watching March hoops extra exciting this year through an exclusive sponsorship of ESPN's Round by Round Pick 'Em, an online Fantasy Game full of second chances. The game is dramatically different from normal bracket contests and promises to keep players engaged throughout March hoops.

-- Unlike bracket contests where players only have one chance to predict the ultimate winners, Round by Round Pick 'Em lets players make selections for the most immediate round -- and accumulate points along the way.

-- Players can create their own groups, public or private, while competing against the overall group.

-- Players earn bonus points if their lower seeded teams win games.

-- In order to reward players for picking upsets correctly, points will be determined by a combination of a team's seeding and the round in which the game takes place.

-- The ultimate winner -- who receives a trip to the ESPN Headquarters among other prizes -- is based on total points accumulated during the tournament.

-- The trip to ESPN headquarters includes a trip for two to New York City (two-night hotel and roundtrip airfare), a tour of ESPN Studios in Bristol, Connecticut and a \$200 Applebee's Gift Card.

With the tournament's recently announced new schedule, fans can see all games live and in their entirety at Applebee's restaurants which are open until midnight or later. Guests can cheer on their local teams and perennial powerhouses at Applebee's restaurants, which offer ample bar seating and many flat screen televisions showing the exciting basketball games.

Check with local restaurants for specific game times and showings. Visit www.applebees.com/hoops and look for big game-day specials.

About Applebee's

Applebee's (www.applebees.com) is the world's largest casual dining chain, with approximately 2,000 locations in 49 states, 16 countries and one U.S. territory. Based in Lenexa, Kan., Applebee's takes pride in providing a welcoming, neighborhood environment where everyone can enjoy the dining experience. Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar(R) is a DineEquity, Inc. (NYSE: DIN) brand, and is franchised and operated by Applebee's Services, Inc. and its affiliates.

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