

Des Moines Register

Estimated printed pages: 2

March 10, 1999

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Thanks to solid shooting, restaurant is picking up the tab for 198 fans

Suk Tom

Register Staff Writer

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A promotional event at a Drake University women's basketball game netted the crowd gift certificates to Christopher's.
By TOMSUK

Register Staff Writer

Brett Gavin provided dinners at one of Des Moines' premier restaurants for himself, his wife and some new friends -198 of them.

The 29-year-old DeSoto man made three basketball shots -a layup, a free throw and a 19-foot, three-point-range shot - during a promotion at the Feb. 21 Drake University women's basketball game against the University of Northern Iowa.

Gavin and everyone else sitting in Section F at the Knapp Center were given \$8.95 gift certificates to Christopher's Restaurant in Beavertdale. Gavin also was awarded an additional \$25 gift certificate.

It is a promotion that Christopher's has been sponsoring for about seven years.

"It was their idea, not mine. I asked them if they would be willing to sponsor any promotions. They said let's give gift certificates to the whole section they were sitting in if someone makes the shots. I thought they were kidding," said Dolph Pulliam, director of promotions and marketing for the Drake athletic department.

Christopher's owner B.J. Guidicessi said, "We were just trying to work with Drake to get people out to the games . . . they are great games, and we wanted to promote them as good entertainment in Des Moines."

Pulliam said not many people make the shots. Technically, neither did Gavin.

"He missed the layup the first time," which is the easiest of the three basketball shots, Pulliam said. "The crowd was pretty disappointed, so we figured what the heck, give him another chance at the layup. Then he made all three shots in a row."

The last time Pulliam remembers someone winning free dinners for their section was in 1995.

But it happens more often than Pulliam remembers, Guidicessi said.

"A couple of years ago we got nailed two or three times" by hot-shooting fans, he said.

There is no insurance gimmick covering the cost of the free meals, he said.

"We will, if you will pardon the expression, eat it," Guidicessi said.

Gavin, who brought home the bacon, or at least lasagna dinners, for his seatmates, is no stranger to making shots. He was a guard on the Simpson College basketball team from 1989 to 1992.

There is another Simpson connection. Guidicessi is a Simpson alumnus.

9/21/2008

Des Moines Register: Document Displ...

So, why is he a Drake booster?

"They are in the neighborhood, and you have to be a good neighbor," he said.

Reporter Tom Suk can be reached at (515) 284-8000 or sukt@news.dmreg.com

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