



BOSTON, MA -- The Basketball Classic presented by Eracism is thrilled to announce five marquee games, honoring college basketball legends, to highlight the first round of this year's tournament.

The primary purpose of these games is to educate modern players and coaches about stars from the past, shine a light on their groundbreaking achievements. These legends of the game played during an era when college basketball games were rarely televised yet made a lasting impact on their colleges and universities and set records that are still intact today.

Each game will be played on a campus site and the winner advances to the second round of The Basketball Classic presented by Eracism.

The remainder of the field for The Basketball Classic presented by Eracism and the other first-round matchups will be announced.

All games will be broadcast on the ESPN+ platform.



**UMES (11-15) vs. Coastal Carolina (16-13)
Wednesday March 16**

Nicknamed "Big Z" Zelmo Beatty was a force at both ends of the floor during his career at Prairie View A&M University (1958–1962), averaging 25 points and 20 rebounds per game in four seasons. He was a two-time first team NAIA All-American and led the Panthers to an NAIA National Championship in 1962.

After a 12-year professional career in the NBA and ABA, Beatty was inducted into the

Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016.

The Zelmo Beaty Award is given annually to the nation's leader in total blocked shots.



**Southeastern Louisiana (19-14) vs. South Alabama (19-11)
Wednesday March 16**

Known as the “Machine Gun” Travis Grant was part of three consecutive NAIA National Championships in four seasons at Kentucky State University (1968-72). As a sophomore he set a school single-game record with 75 points and averaged 35.4 per game while shooting a ridiculous 70% from the field. He never shot less than 60 percent in any of his four seasons.

As a senior, Grant averaged 39.5 points per game and became the first small college player to win the Lapchick Trophy for College Basketball Player of the Year award. He graduated as the all-time and all-division scoring leader in college basketball history with 4,045 points.

The Travis Grant Award is given annually to the leading scorer in college basketball, at any level.



**Morgan State (13-14) vs. Youngstown State (18-14)
Wednesday March 16**

A wizard with the basketball, Marques Haynes had a stellar career at Langston University (1942–1946). During his four seasons, the Lions recorded an incredible 112-3 record, which included a 59-game winning streak. He led Langston in scoring all four years and was a four-time All-Conference selection.

In 1946, Haynes and Langston upset the Harlem Globetrotters in an exhibition game. One year later Haynes was part of the famed Globetrotters, who traveled the world entertaining audiences in games against the Washington Generals, exposing millions to the game of basketball.

The Marques Haynes Award is presented annually to the player with the most total steals.



**TBA vs. Wofford State (19-13)
Friday March 18 – * 2nd Round Game**

In four seasons at Winston-Salem Teachers College (1957–1961), which is now known as Winston-Salem State, Cleo Hill averaged an impressive 25.4 per game making him the second-highest scorer in program history.

Playing for the legendary Clarence “Big House” Gaines, Hill helped the Rams to consecutive Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association titles in his final two seasons. He was a two-time All-CIAA selection and named first-team NAIA All-American as a senior in 1961.

The Cleo Hill Award is presented annually to the player who leads the nation in assists per game.



**Kent State (23-10) vs. Southern Utah (20-11)
Wednesday March 16**

During his four seasons at Grambling State University (1960–1964), Willis Reed helped the Tigers to three Southwestern Athletic Conference championships and an NAIA National Championship in 1961.

Known for his inside presence, the two-time All-American also had a lethal jump shot. In his senior season he averaged 26.6 points and 21.3 rebounds per game.

A Hall of Fame member, Reed was named to the NBA’s 50th anniversary and 75th anniversary all-time teams.

The Willis Reed Award is given annually to the nation’s best rebounder on a per-game average basis.

