

Iowa to play UNI in inaugural Big Four Classic

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Iowa, Iowa State, Northern Iowa and Drake have all agreed to take part in the inaugural Big Four Classic, a doubleheader of games that will take place Dec. 15 at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines.

The Hawkeyes will face the Panthers in this year's event and will rotate playing UNI and Drake every other year, with the Cyclones facing the team Iowa doesn't play. [Details of this were first reported by the Des Moines Register.](#)

This event replaces Iowa facing both Missouri Valley Conference programs on a yearly basis, with trips to the McLeod Center in Cedar Falls and Knapp Center in Des Moines every other year. The 2012-13 season will mark the first time since 1984-85 that Iowa won't be playing Drake and the Hawkeyes' contest against the Panthers will be the first between the two teams not played in either Iowa City or Cedar Falls.

All four universities' academic calendars show their fall commencements taking place Dec. 15 – the same date the Big Four Classic will take place in the state capital. In recent years, the Hawkeyes have faced all three of their intrastate rivals during the month of December, playing UNI and Iowa State the Tuesday and Friday before the UI holds final exams for the fall semester and then Drake on the Saturday after finals week.

Iowa and Iowa State will continue to play annually on a home-and-home basis, with the two teams expected to play at Carver-

Hawkeye Arena during the 2012-13 season.

The four schools will also rotate the role of hosting the annual event, with Iowa being the designated host in 2012.

According to the joint release sent by the four universities Thursday afternoon, tickets for the Big Four Classic will range between \$25-\$70, with season-ticket holders for all four teams getting first dibs at purchasing. Any tickets that aren't sold by the four schools will be available in early October for the general public through the Wells Fargo Arena box office.