

Tourney Gives Birth To A Fascinating Travel Story

NCAA, MARCH MADNESS, TOURNEY TRAVEL, SHORTS TRAVEL, DARREN ROVELL, SPORTSBIZ, SPORTS, CNBC, CNBC.COM, BLOG, SPORTS BUSINESS

Posted By: Darren Rovell | CNBC Sports Business Reporter
cnbc.com | 18 Mar 2010 | 12:33 PM ET

Short's Travel Management, a travel agency out of Waterloo, Iowa, has received plenty of publicity as a result of its role in planning the travel for tournament bound teams since 2004.

But the story of how it comes together hasn't completely been told.

Here's how it works.

When the bracket comes out on Sunday, the team sends a list to Short's as to how many passengers are in its travel party and its desired time of leaving. Short's then compiles a list of all the teams and blasts it out to all the air carriers.

The airlines then have to assess their fleet and figure out how cheaply they get a team from one location to the tournament site. They then submit their bids back to Short's.

This year, the NCAA tells us that eight teams will be taken bus trips to their first location. This is because the NCAA requires that, if the tournament site is less than 400 miles away, a team must bus or won't be reimbursed for its air travel.

This includes some of the top seeds in the tournament. No. 1 Syracuse took the 150-mile trek to Buffalo on a bus, while No. 1 Kansas and No. 2 Kansas State each traveled more than four hours on bus to Oklahoma City. Perhaps the most unfortunate team is the Minnesota Golden Gophers, who had to take a bus to Milwaukee (336 miles), which is about a six-hour trip.

Most travel parties are too big that there aren't enough free seats on commercial flights. That's why 51 of the teams are traveling by charter, costing a total of \$2.6 million, according to the NCAA. Keep in mind -- that's just a one-way ticket. Two undisclosed teams are flying commercial for a total cost of \$51,500.

Short's has a contract to manage the NCAA's tournament travel through 2014.

Questions? Comments? SportsBiz@cnbc.com

© 2010 CNBC, Inc. All Rights Reserved

URL: <http://www.cnbc.com/id/35931575/>
