

### Community, Competition and Pride at O Fest Cup

O Week came to a stunning close on the basketball court last Friday as the Men's and Women's Dragons teams went head-to-head with Monash University in the much-anticipated O Fest Cup clash.

From the moment the doors opened, and spectators began filing into their seats, it was clear the event would become so much more than just a basketball game.

A live DJ kept crowd energy levels high, the Red Bull Activation Zone kept everyone engaged and a plethora of giveaways ensured there was something for everyone to enjoy. As tip off time neared, all eyes turned to the basketball court with great anticipation.

The stadium was electric, a full house of eager Dragons supporters and their presence was felt from the start up until the final buzzer. For some in the crowd, this was their very first sporting event as part of Deakin University.

For returning students, supporting the Dragons is a staple of uni life. The atmosphere and passion within the crowd was undeniable. Fans roared with excitement at every defensive stop, fast break and score. Some even leapt from their seats as 3-point baskets swished through the net.

The Deakin Men's team produced a composed and determined performance, beating Monash 51 – 45.

From the outset, the contest was tight. The teams traded baskets and matched one another's defensive intensity. However, it was the Dragons' ability to capitalise from defensive wins that ultimately lead to their victory.

Through immense on court pressure and disciplined execution, the Dragons maintained control to overrun Monash despite a surge from them in the final six minutes of play.

The final buzzer was met with an eruption of cheers and sheer elation from spectators as Deakin claimed bragging rights over the Monash men.

In the Women's game, the Dragons again showcased impressive cohesion and grit. It was a competitive and impressive competition, with Deakin ultimately falling to Monash 39 – 47.

Despite the result, there were several impressive offensive passages of play that kept the crowd engaged. Teamwork, defensive intensity and willingness to contest every possession were evident.

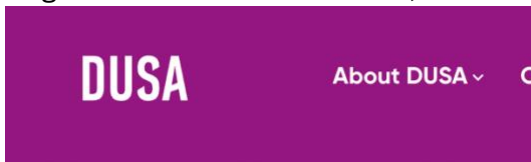
However, Monash's ability to convert from turnovers created scoreboard pressure that ultimately proved too difficult to overcome.

Adding to the extravagance of the afternoon was Dexter the Dragon, who ensured the atmosphere within the crowd never subsided. From dancing with the DJ to warming up alongside the Women's team and moving through the crowd high-fiving supporters, the beloved mascot Dexter was simply impossible to miss.

The event captured what sport at Deakin University is all about. It was a celebration of community. Students from different courses, year levels and perhaps, different campuses gathered in unified support of the Dragons.

The afternoon, as well as O Week as a whole, served as a powerful reminder that life at Deakin extends far beyond lecture theatres and assignments. It is a place where shared experiences are forged.

Displaying school pride is a way to unite students across all academic faculties. Regardless of the final results, the O Fest Cup has set an exciting tone for the year



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