

outside the stadium. Each tent holds up to 10 students. The campers who arrive first take the spots closest to the stadium's entrance, and the ones who come later line up farther back. The evolving community is called Krzyzewskiville, reflecting the respect the students have for Coach K—Mike Krzyzewski—as well as their aspirations for victory in the coming season.

So that the serious basketball fans are separated from those without “Duke blue” running through their veins, an air horn is sounded at random times. At the sound, a countdown begins, and within the next five minutes at least one person from each tent must check in with the basketball authorities. If a tent fails to register within these five minutes, the whole tent gets bumped to the end of the line. This procedure continues for most of the spring semester, and intensifies in the last 48 hours before a game.

At that point, 48 hours before a game, the checks become “personal checks.” From then on, the tents are merely a social structure: when the air horn is sounded, every student has to check in personally with the basketball authorities. Missing an “occupancy check” in these final two days can mean being bumped to the end of the line. Although the air horn sounds occasionally before routine games, it can be heard at all hours of night and day before the really big contests (such as games against the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and during the national championships).

But that's not the oddest part of the ritual. The oddest part is that for the really important games, such as the national titles, the students at the front of the line still don't get a ticket. Rather, each of them gets a lottery number. Only later, as they crowd around a list of winners posted at the