

Commentary

CFL Erred in Granting Las Vegas a Team

Imagine how bad Major League Baseball would look if the Colorado Rockies averaged 13,000 fans per game in its first season.

Baseball writers from Boston to San Diego would criticize the expansion committee for selecting Denver. They'd say there's no interest in baseball there, and that the committee used poor judgment.

That's how bad the Canadian Football League looks for selecting Las Vegas as the site for its second American franchise.

Ever since the franchise was awarded to former Chief Operating Officer Nick Mileti on July 26, 1993, the city has proved there is no interest in Canadian football here. The Posse is last in the league in attendance, drawing 8,940 per game for eight home dates.

Crowds at the start of the season in July weren't great, but averaged nearly 12,000. But ever since rumors of the team's demise became public in late August, attendance at Sam Boyd Sta-



JOHN SANTANA

dium has fell dramatically.

The Posse is the only CFL team to draw fewer than 10,000 for any regular season home game this season. The lowlights? Only 2,350 saw Saturday's 48-17 loss to Winnipeg. Just 4,761 saw a 25-21 win over Hamilton on Sept. 24. Equally disappointing were the 7,438 who saw the Posse lose 45-26 to the Calgary Stampeders, the league's marquee team, on Oct. 2.

Also, about 800-1,000 fans came from Winnipeg and another 800 came from Calgary.

Finances are so bad for the Posse that, just to complete the season, the team is borrowing millions almost every week.

Recent reports list Calgary owner Larry Ryckman as one of the lenders. Ryckman, who chairs the league's expansion committee, will reportedly lend the team money through the Nov. 5 end of the season. After purchasing them, he plans to move the team to San Antonio, one of six cities mentioned as a relocation site.

After the franchise was granted to Mileti last July, a well-placed source in the

local sports community called Mileti. The source asked if market research showed a desire among Las Vegas to have a pro football team.

Mileti, a Cleveland-based businessman who once owned the NBA Cavaliers and baseball's Indians, said he did no research prior to spending \$3 million to obtain the team, according to the source.

With attendance hovering around the 11,000 mark, Mileti apparently got desperate. Another source said that for helping Mileti with an upcoming promotion, Mileti gave him about a thousand tickets to the Aug. 20 game with British Columbia.

In late June, Mileti proclaimed that the team would not give away tickets. He also said every game would be a sellout.

The CFL isn't defenseless. When it awarded the franchise, the only competition facing the Posse in the summer was the Pacific Coast League's Stars and the expansion Dustdevils of the Continental Indoor Soccer League. Fall competition was limited to the Thunder of the International Hockey League.

No thought was given to competition from Arena Football or Roller Hockey

International, who both placed teams here.

After all, Las Vegas is the fastest growing city in the United States, and the economy's booming.

Even though they expressed little concern over the relentless summer heat, the expansion committee probably didn't anticipate this summer being one of the hottest on record.

In spite of those reasons, the Posse blunder tarnishes the success of the league's two other American expansion teams, the Shreveport Pirates and the Baltimore "no-names."

Baltimore has averaged 37,327 per game with a team in contention to win the Eastern Division title. Shreveport has averaged 16,102, despite a terrible team and the league's second smallest market.

But admitting Las Vegas to the financially ailing league wasn't all bad. At least they got the franchise fees from Mileti.

—John Santana is a sports writer at The Rebel Yell.

A listing of sporting events

Friday

Rebel swimming hosts Sixth Annual Fall Invitational, Buchanan Natatorium.

Rebel soccer at UC Santa Barbara.

Intramurals golf begins, Las Vegas Golf Club.

Las Vegas Thunder vs. Hous-

UNLV Sports Schedule

ton, International Hockey League, Thomas & Mack Center.

Saturday

Rebel swimming hosts Sixth Annual Fall Invitational, Buchanan Natatorium.

Sunday

Rebel soccer hosts Cal State Northridge, Johann Memorial

Field 1 p.m.
Rebel rodeo at Scottsdale, Ariz.

Monday

Rebel rodeo at Scottsdale, Ariz.
Rebel golf at Jerry Pate Intercollegiate, Birmingham, Ala.

Tuesday

Rebel golf at Jerry Pate Intercollegiate, Birmingham, Ala.
Las Vegas Thunder vs. Milwaukee, International Hockey League, Thomas & Mack Center.

Wednesday

Rebel soccer hosts New Mexico, Johann Memorial Field 7 p.m.
Intramurals indoor soccer meeting, 4 p.m., 6 p.m., MSU 201.

Oct. 28

Las Vegas Thunder vs. Milwaukee, International Hockey League, Thomas & Mack Center.

Oct. 29

Rebel soccer hosts UNLV Rebel Invite, Peter Johann Memorial

Field (UNLV vs. Maryland-Baltimore County, noon; UC Irvine vs. Sacramento State, 2 p.m.)

Rebel swimming hosts UNLV Fall Invite - diving, Buchanan Natatorium.

Rebel football vs. San Jose State, Sam Boyd Stadium 7 p.m.

Rebel cross country at Big West Conference Championships, Logan, Utah.

Las Vegas Thunder vs. San Diego, International Hockey League, Thomas & Mack Center.




Player of the Week





Kristina Lopez
Intramural Supervisor

Sponsored by Pizza Hut - Maryland Pkwy




1994-95 Volleyball Champions

Women

Men

Diggin it

Junk Ballers



Intramural Flag Football

Top Ten Men

1. PBnJ
2. Mustangs
3. Silver Bullets
4. Kappa Sig
5. Steady Mob'n
6. Rather Be Drinking
7. Hawaiians
8. Sig Ep
9. Posse
10. XXX

Top Five Women

1. Untouchables
2. King Jaffey's
3. Island Girls
4. AGD
5. D.O.D.



Single Elimination Tournament

Intramural Indoor Soccer

Mandatory Captain's Information Meeting
Wednesday, October 26th at 4:00 pm or 6:00 pm
in MSU - Lounge 201
Entry Fee/Forfeit Fee \$20.00/\$20.00