

SPORTS

Is LV a pro sports town?

A little over two decades ago, when boxing matches involving some of the top names in the sport gave the town world wide exposure, the public administrators began a campaign to give Las Vegas an all-around sports image.

With the University of Nevada at Las Vegas winning a national collegiate Division I basketball championship and the construction of the Thomas and Mack Arena, a gift from two well-endowed citizens, the possibility of gaining a major sports franchise began to become more than just a wild-eyed dream by the town's administration.

And although a minor league baseball team, an occasional exhibition game by a National Basketball Association team, the National Finals Rodeo, the Professional Bull Riders final, a minor hockey franchise from the East Coast League, and an Arena League Football team, keep some of the sports fans happy, Las Vegas are reaching for the brass ring as a sports city.

The city fathers have attempted to woo the NBA team which seems futile as long as David Stern, who has been the commissioner for years and will probably continue, has this dislike about a city having open gambling on athletic events and especially basketball.

Before Commissioner Bud Selig granted the Montreal Expos franchise to Washington, D. C., there was



SPORTS PACE

By Huel Washington

some speculation that Las Vegas was being considered. That entire discussion was a joke. Las Vegas was never really considered.

To get any major franchise, the city has to have a facility that can become useful immediately and Las Vegas simply doesn't have one. The Thomas and Mack is very good but not anything like the Staples Center, the Super Dome, or Robert F. Kennedy Stadium.

Those were just some of the venues that have been considered when a team wanted to relocate in any of the leagues.

The Charlotte Hornets went to New Orleans after having a few problems between management and the fans. The New Orleans fans were anxiously waiting.

There have been at least two professional basketball leagues with franchises in Las Vegas during the last five years and both folded from the lack of attendance. One year, Earvin "Magic" Johnson staged a tournament with an European team and the Harlem Globetrotters which was poorly attended.

The co-owners of the Sacramento Kings, an NBA team, also own the Palms Casino in Las Vegas, the Maloof brothers, said Stern

should come to Las Vegas and see just how betting is done on the games before deciding not allow a franchise to come to the city.

Currently none of the 30 NBA franchises are thinking of relocating but with the economy switching around from state to state, who knows what the future might bring.

The Toronto Raptors aren't exactly making a profitable margin.

And the Charlotte Bobcats, who will start in the league next year, after being founded by former BET owner, Robert Johnson, will be under constant scrutiny.

While the Las Vegas administrators are looking at the NBA, the National Football League has a few clubs that aren't doing so well at the box office either although they split the television funds equally with each team.

Mayor Oscar Goodman said he thinks to be a major sports city, there must be a major sports team there. How about the National Hockey League when it begins again.

And to get a football team to come, the city must have a stadium that holds more than 60,000 fans each weekend, not Sam Boyd Stadium.

There is one thing certain about dreams, though, They sometimes come true.



GHOSTBUSTERS

The Boston Red Sox celebrate after defeating the St. Louis Cardinals 3-0 to win game four of the World Series at Busch Stadium in St. Louis, Missouri. The win completed a four game sweep in Major League Baseball's best-of-seven final, bringing Boston a World Series title after an 86-year drought.

40TH ANNIVERSARY

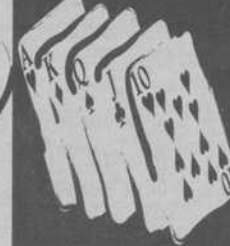
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1970's



1980's



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