



Sports Inc. – 100 Years of Sports Business

by Phil Schaaf

published by Prometheus Books 2004

Chapter 12 – Owning and Shaping the Sports Industry

Trends Worth Following

A Different Kind of Facility Development (excerpt)

Local progressives in Ottawa have on the drawing board a concept for a massive soccer park on the outskirts of Ottawa called The Ottawa Sports Park (OSP). The concept is to develop a totally “green” (environmentally sustainable development) soccer complex to serve the community and attract national youth tournaments. They hope to lease land from the neighbouring airport and extend a special light rail line out to the park to serve the city. So far, the concept has overcome safety, environmental, commercial, bureaucratic and political obstacles to become a leading example of potential sustainable development in North America.

The OSP knows that large soccer developments have served both community and sponsor needs elsewhere. Soccerplex, in Maryland has over nineteen fields with plans for five more. It has also attracted several high-priced sponsors like Discovery (Channel), Pepsi, Adventist Health care, whose associated fees total millions for the development. Soccerplex hosts over 250,000 visitors each year, and has an indoor multi-sport facility called the Discovery Sports Center. In short, the soccer complex as a regional destination is a great idea for local residents and regional sponsors...

The Ottawa developers hope to create a similar success story in their Nation’s Capital and add responsible environmental integration as an identifying attribute. What makes the ambition of the OSP so remarkable is that they plan to integrate advertising and marketing with the airport and rail authorities, even having plans for visible corporate markers for landing and departing planes, which truly opens the door for a whole new category of captive audience demographics! Their goal is to build 30 separate fields, an indoor sports complex, cross-country skiing trails, ice hockey rinks, and other facilities to serve the local, national, and international enthusiasts. The scope means that sponsorship will make sense for companies.

In short, the OSP will be innovative from both a developmental aspect and a marketing aspect. As the first aerial billboard related to an athletic facility, the residual publicity could be worth millions to a participating company...

The OSP is a great idea for both the community and potential sponsors. Its timely development will only inspire more progressive, environmentally friendly facilities and unique marketing features for corporate partnerships.