

RAIDERS ANNOUNCE MOVE FROM COLISEUM

Al Davis, the owner of the Los Angeles Raiders, has never been afraid to fight the National Football League or local governments when it comes to the success of his team. He beat the NFL and he beat the city of Oakland and he is about to beat the Los Angeles Coliseum Commission.

When his team completes its ten-year contract with the Coliseum in 1991, Davis is moving the Raiders to their own stadium to be constructed in Irwindale, a city 25 miles northeast of central Los Angeles. For more than a year, Davis has been battling with the Coliseum Commission over details that are important to the profitability of an NFL franchise. Agreements he thought had made with previous commissioners about seating, sky boxes and stadium conditions when he moved the Raiders from Oakland to Los Angeles weren't being honored to Davis' satisfaction by new commissioners. Davis did not hide his dismay about the situation and other cities started to approach him with attractive options.

The city of Irwindale apparently came up with the right package. Not only is Irwindale willing to help Davis finance the new stadium, it enticed him with a nonrefundable \$10 million development fund. The new stadium will be strategically located near the intersection of two major highways on the site of an old gravel quarry. Miller Brewing Company's plant is located directly across the highway causing some reporters to speculate that the brewer is a strong backer of the move.

Irwindale's city council is confident they can help the Raiders clear all hurdles with Los Angeles County supervisors and neighboring land owners regarding zoning, parking and traffic. If for any reason the project is blocked, Davis keeps the \$10 million.

When Davis moved to the Coliseum he understood that the city would add sky boxes to the old stadium that seats nearly 100,000. The 2,000-plus seats eliminated by construction of the sky boxes were to be relocated. When work was to begin, the Coliseum Commission hedged on replacing the seats and Davis cried foul. After months of debate, it appeared in August that Davis and the Commission were close to an agreement. At the same time other cities approached Davis about other stadiums for the Raiders to call home. Before the Coliseum could close its amended deal with Davis, he announced the future switch to Irwindale.

Davis has been a strong proponent of natural turf. He insisted on sand-based Hi-Play fields for the Coliseum and the Raider's practice facility in El Segundo, CA. Ken Irons, grounds manager at the practice facility, believes Davis will install a state-of-the-art natural field in Irwindale if the stadium is built. "It makes a big difference whether you are a tenant or the owner of a stadium," Irons said.

The Raider's contract with El Segundo expires the same year as the Coliseum con-

tract does opening up the possibility that Davis will move the practice facility and headquarters to Irwindale. The team also holds practice camps in Oxnard, CA.

SPORTS TURF ASSOCIATION LAUNCHED IN CANADA

After numerous organizational meetings at the University of Guelph, Ontario, the Sports Turf Association (of Canada) became reality this summer. Michael Bladon of the University of Guelph has been elected president. The organization is busy planning its first annual educational conference and putting together its first newsletter.

The primary objective of the new group, says Bladon, is to improve the safety and quality of turf athletic facilities by collecting and disseminating scientific, educational and practical knowledge. Cooperative educational and research projects will be developed to find solutions to turf problems specific to Canada.

Membership in STA is open to anyone with an interest in safe sports turf. "We invite members from the turf industry in its entirety," explained Bladon, "including schools, parks, professional sports, golf course superintendents, community colleges, contractors and sod producers." STA intends to represent the sports of field hockey, lawn bowling, soccer, rugby, softball, baseball, cricket and golf.

The association will have its first conference in March 1988. Bladon invites interested sports turf managers to contact him, 185 Edinburgh Road South, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2H8, (519) 824-4120.

OMAHA RENOVATES STADIUM FOR COLLEGE WORLD SERIES

Due to the increasing popularity and sponsorship of college sports the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the city of Omaha, NE, have taken steps to improve the College World Series by renovating city-owned Rosenblatt Stadium.

The College World Series has been held in Rosenblatt Stadium since 1950. It is estimated that more than two million fans have attended the series over the past 38 seasons. A large portion of the stadium's 15,000 seats are bleachers with limited reserved seating. NCAA officials believe the event will attract more fans and attention by increasing the number of reserved seats. James Wright, NCAA media coordinator for the Series, said people buying season tickets don't want to sit in bleachers, so the NCAA felt there was a need to expand the stadium.

When Omaha corporations, including Mutual of Omaha, Conagra and Union Pacific heard about the NCAA's criticism, they

contributed more than \$3 million to renovate the stadium to keep the event in the city. Construction is scheduled to begin in November. The city wants to have most of the renovation completed by the 1988 series. CBS Sports will broadcast the event for the first time next year which will increase the national exposure of the event.

City officials estimate the event contributes more than \$12 million to the local economy each year. The Kansas City Royals AAA farm club also plays its home games at the stadium.

LANDMARK PURCHASES PALM BEACH POLO CLUB

Landmark Land Company, Inc., developer of PGA West and La Quinta Golf and Tennis Resort in La Quinta, CA, has purchased the Palm Beach Polo & Country Club in Wellington, FL. The posh polo club includes 11 polo fields, two 18-hole golf courses, 17 tennis courts and a championship croquet field.

In the past, Landmark has built its own golf course/real estate developments. The only other established property Landmark has purchased is Mission Hills in Rancho Mirage, CA. The company is already planning improvements to Palm Beach Polo & Country Club. "The first thing they did when they completed the purchase," says golf course superintendent James Branstrom, "was increase my budget by 20 percent." Gould Inc., the previous owner, had been trying to sell the club for almost two years. "We had been putting off buying some equipment," admits Branstrom. "Now we can get back to business."

Landmark's courses are famous for major tour events, both PGA and LPGA. The two courses at Palm Beach, one designed by professional golfer Jerry Pate and the other by golf course architect George Fazio, will probably follow the Landmark tournament tradition.

ST. LOUIS SOCCER PARK HOSTS OLYMPIC MATCH

The United States National Soccer Team will play an Olympic Qualification Match against Trinidad/Tobago at St. Louis Soccer Park in suburban St. Louis this month. The U.S. Soccer Federation arranged the match for the multi-field soccer complex owned by Anheuser Busch, Inc. The match will be played on the Kentucky bluegrass main field.

The U.S. National Team qualified for the match by beating the Canadian National Team last May. If the U.S. team wins, they will play El Salvador. The winner of the El Salvador match will then be part of the 16-team Olympic Soccer Finals in Seoul, South Korea in 1988.

More than 5,200 soccer fans are expected to pay to see the two teams play.