

BLOOD, SWEAT, TEARS

Bringing the Excitement of
Professional Soccer to Sacramento

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A special advertising supplement to Sacramento News & Review

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PROFESSIONAL SOCCER

United Soccer Leagues awarded rights for a USL PRO franchise to Sacramento Professional Soccer during a press conference in December 2012. From left, USL President Tim Holt, Mayor Kevin Johnson, Sac Pro Soccer President Warren Smith, Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau President & CEO Steve Hammond, and former MLS player Kevin Goldthwaite.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL

Group is pitching a major league soccer team for Sacramento

BY TOBY LEWIS

Experts believe there's room for one more game to occupy American sportsfans' hearts — soccer.

Yes, soccer.

Just look at the statistics. According to a study by ESPN, soccer is the second most popular sport in the United States for those between the ages of 12-24, with at least one soccer player in 30 percent of all American households. In 2002, Major League Soccer had just 10 franchises run by a total of three ownership groups. Fast forward to 2012: There were 19 franchises and 17 ownership groups. And attendance at MLS matches is growing 8 percent annually.

Today in Sacramento, soccer is more popular than ever.

Combining youth and adult leagues, there are 93,000 soccer players in the Sacramento region, and Nor Cal Premier League Soccer has more than 340 youth soccer teams in the region. More than 17,000 players are playing indoor soccer at locations around the Sacramento area.

The founders of Sacramento Professional Soccer, LLC believe there's no doubt the

Sacramento region is ripe and ready for a professional team.

"The market is already here," says Joe Wagoner, executive vice president of Sacramento Professional Soccer. "We just want to give soccer fans something to rally around locally."

Sac Pro Soccer grew out of the desire to bring a professional soccer team to one of the most underserved professional sports markets in the nation. For example, the Sacramento region is home to 2.3 million people and serves as the hub for the ninth largest economy in the world. According to a 2009 survey, Sacramento is one of eight U.S. cities with only one major league sport and ranked 11th in the nation for soccer expansion.

During the 2010 World Cup, Univision had higher viewership in Sacramento than all of the major networks combined for the game between Mexico and Costa Rica.

Now, Sac Pro Soccer is bringing professional soccer to Sacramento with the announcement of a United Soccer League PRO soccer team coming in 2014. The 30-game schedule will feature 16 home games with the season running from April through September.

USL PRO recently announced an official affiliation with Major League Soccer, which means Sacramento will be positioned for an MLS franchise. Four out of the last five MLS expansion clubs came from the USL PRO league (Portland, Seattle, Montreal and Vancouver).

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Joe Wagoner

Executive Vice President of
Sacramento Professional Soccer

Officials will announce the new team's name, colors and crest during Sacramento Soccer Day. Everyone is invited to experience the excitement of professional soccer during this historic event July 18 at Raley Field.

The doubleheader will feature two soccer matches, one between the Sacramento All-Stars and an MLS reserve team, followed by a match between Mexico's Dorados de Sinaloa and the English Premier League's (EPL) Norwich City Football Club. This will mark the first time in history that an EPL team has played in Sacramento. The MLS reserve team will be made up in part of players from the San Jose Earthquakes. The Sacramento All-Stars is a team made up of the best-of-the-best from the Sacramento region. Players will be a mixture of professional and premier college players, nationally renowned recruits and prospects, and top amateurs. Tickets are available at www.sacprosoccer.com.

The goal of Sac Pro Soccer is to elevate the strong soccer culture in Sacramento to the next level and operate the best USL PRO franchise in the United States.

The group also plans to build a new stadium for the professional team.

Sac Pro Soccer believes building a landmark MLS urban stadium is instrumental in becoming a major part of the downtown fabric.

PART OF THE ACTION

Supporters are just as important as the game

BY **TOBY LEWIS**

The sport of soccer is well known for having some of the most ... ahem ... dedicated fans in all of professional sports.

You know the type: The face paint, the banners, the endless chanting, the fans who so conspicuously attack the opposite team with creative and, albeit sometimes borderline aggressive, banter.

R.J. Cooper knows this scenario all too well.

Cooper has been a longtime supporter of professional soccer and belongs to several “fan groups,” which regularly attend matches both regionally and nationally.

He recently started a supporter group called the Tower Bridge Battalion in an effort to gain fans for the new United Soccer League PRO soccer team coming to Sacramento next year.

Cooper says supporter culture is unlike any other you might see in professional sports.

“I think supporter groups are more like a community or a family,” he says. “Once you’ve stood in that section and chanted and sang and marched and all that, it’s

hard to go back. It’s hard for me to sit down when I’m watching soccer now.”

The Tower Bridge Battalion recruits its membership through social media and is open to anybody and everybody who is, or wants to become, a fan of the sport.

“IT’S HARD FOR ME TO SIT DOWN WHEN I’M WATCHING SOCCER NOW.”

R.J. Cooper

Founder, Tower Bridge Battalion

He started the group shortly after the announcement that Sacramento Professional Soccer, LLC would be bringing a USL PRO soccer team to Sacramento in 2014.

“When the USL PRO team came about, we didn’t see anybody stepping up for a supporters group,” Cooper says. “And a lot of us go to San Jose and stand with the

supporters group there. We just saw a need.”

Cooper is talking about the 1906 Ultras, the local supporters group for the only Major League Soccer team in northern California, the San Jose Earthquakes.

Much like the Ultras, Cooper hopes the Tower Bridge Battalion will become a recognizable force at local professional soccer matches.

“I think people will see what we’re about and see that there is more to being just a passive recipient of sports,” he says. “You can provide the soundtrack for the team. You become part of the fabric of the atmosphere.”

Cooper says he is a fan of most professional sports, including the Sacramento Kings. But as a fan of soccer, he feels a deep connection with the team that is not felt at most sporting events.

“You just feel like you’re part of it,” he says. “You sort of supply the tapestry for the event. It’s very passionate.”

**BE A
PART
OF THE
ACTION!**
SEE BACK PAGE

R.J. Cooper has created a supporter group for the soon-to-be-named Sacramento team.

THE RULES FOR BEING A SOCCER FAN

R.J. Cooper says there is an unspoken “code of ethics” when it comes to fans and supporter groups at professional soccer events. In order to fully appreciate the sport, have fun and be safe, he says a fan must:

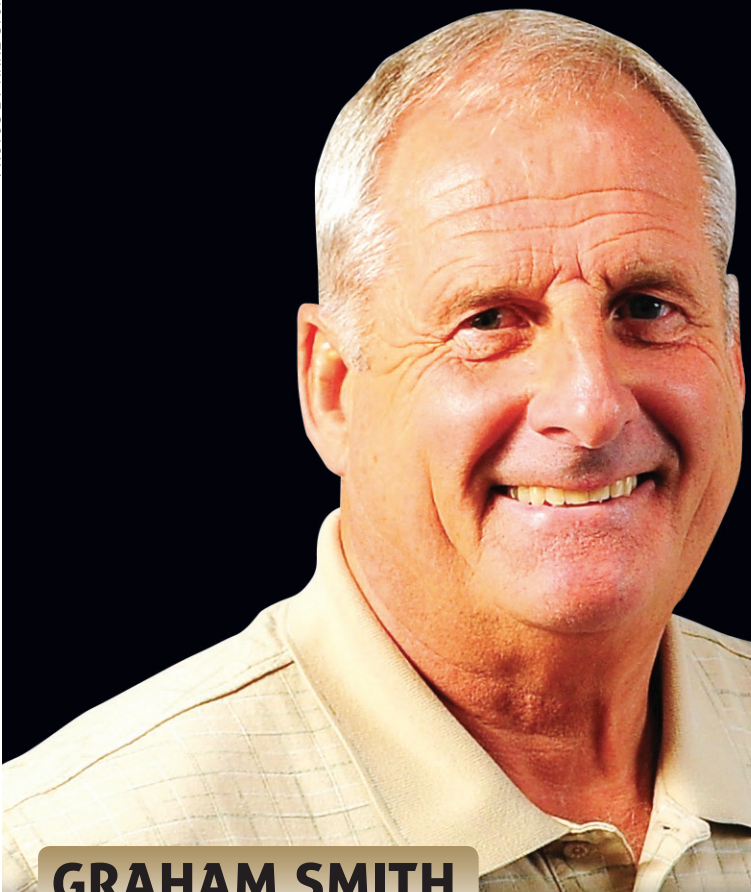
STAND FOR THE ENTIRE 90 MINUTES AND SING YOUR HEART OUT. “That is the first thing.”

HAVE A HEALTHY HATRED FOR THE OPPONENT. “We are not going to talk nicely to the opponent. We’ll come up with some creative stuff for them, but after the game, you want to be able to shake your opponent’s hand.”

BE NONVIOLENT. “You don’t want brawling in the stands.”

NO HOMOPHOBIA. “Major League Soccer has taken a zero-tolerance stance, so if you make any homophobic slur, you are out for three matches and fined.”

ADHERE TO TOLERANCE. “There are better ways to insult your opponent than gender and homophobic slurs.” **TL**



SMITH &

— *Sporting and business experience*

GRAHAM SMITH

TITLE: Technical Director for Sac Pro Soccer

AGE: 65

WIFE: Leanne Smith

CHILDREN: Davis, Adam and Cameron

BORN: Liverpool, England

CURRENT HOME: Ojai, California

FAVORITE TEAM: Everton

FAVORITE PLAYER: Lionel Messi of FC Barcelona

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Played soccer for England in the under 18 age group. Graduated from Loughborough University. Professional footballer for 12 years, including over 300 games with Notts County, Colchester, West Bromwich Albion, and Cambridge United. Head of Adidas public relations department for 10 years. Main Board Director for Chelsea Football Club for five years. Technical Director of Sacramento Professional Soccer.

When Warren Smith set out to realize his dream of bringing a professional soccer team to Sacramento, he realized he would need someone with serious soccer cred. And while he doesn't purport to know anything about the intricacies of the game itself, he's more than qualified to handle the business side of things — he was one of the major players responsible for bringing the Sacramento River Cats to town, as well as getting Raley Field built. As luck would have it, the perfect partner found Warren. Enter Graham Smith: He's a veteran of the sport, having played professionally for 12 years in more than 300 matches in the English Premier League and he served on the Board of Directors for Chelsea Football Club. The two recently sat down to lay out their plan for success.

WHERE DID THE IDEA TO BRING PROFESSIONAL SOCCER TO SACRAMENTO COME FROM?

Warren: It came from watching our community struggle with the Kings arena challenges and watching how we were trying to do something that, to me, seemed so simple, but was such

a struggle. So, it really began as more of an analysis of what sport Sacramento could really support at a major league level. The more I researched the more convinced I became that the Sacramento region is ready for professional soccer and that we will receive an MLS franchise if we do things right.

Graham: In 2006, my company put on an exhibition match between Preston United from England and the club from Monterey, Mexico, with the people from Raley Field, and it was a great experience. The game was played on a Thursday evening and just under 10,000 people turned up, and I remember thinking how wonderful it would be to have a soccer team in Sacramento.

I actually read about Warren and his involvement in trying to bring professional soccer to Sacramento. ... We started a discourse and felt a lot of common ground there, so, as a consequence, I found myself involved with the project.

WHY IS SACRAMENTO THE RIGHT CITY FOR A PROFESSIONAL SOCCER TEAM?

Warren: Over the last 30 years, the region has been able to create affordable housing and provide a great place for people to live, primarily families moving from the Bay Area. They needed things for their kids to do, and the sport of soccer has become the true youth sport that everybody participates in. Organically,

we've started to grow a soccer culture. With over 93,000 participants in a demographic of 2.3 million people, we actually have an unbelievable amount of participants.

When you look at soccer viewership in Sacramento, it's off the charts. We were in the top 10 viewership for the World Cup and in the top 5 viewership for the last U.S./Mexico match. People are participating and watching and these are very strong indicators that if given an opportunity, people would come and attend at a professional level. Unfortunately, the people of the Sacramento region haven't had a professional team to follow and call their own.

Graham: There is a tremendous demand that has been created and needs to be filled. Together with the fact that it's a sports-oriented city and actively participating in the world's most popular sport, I think it's a no-brainer.

WHAT IS THE PLAN TO MAKE MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER IN SACRAMENTO A REALITY?

Warren: There are three things we need to do to attract an MLS franchise. Number one: We've got to prove the market. That's our goal with the United Soccer League PRO franchise — get people coming to the matches, become acclimated to the professional event and begin to build a "soccer culture." Through

BY MIKE BLOUNT

& SMITH

ertise make the perfect team

Graham Smith and Warren Smith believe they are the perfect team to bring professional soccer to Sacramento.



WARREN SMITH

TITLE: Founder of Sac Pro Soccer

AGE: 49

WIFE: Teresa Smith

CHILDREN: Nicholas and Dominic Smith

BORN: Fort Sill, Oklahoma, although grew up in Mililani, Hawaii

CURRENT HOME: Sacramento, California

FAVORITE TEAM: US National Team

FAVORITE PLAYER: Adam Jahn of the San Jose Earthquakes

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS: National Account Manager for AT&T Wireless Services/McCaw Cellular and Cellular One/ for nine years. Co-founder and Executive Vice President of Raley Field and the Sacramento River Cats Triple A Baseball franchise. Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Clean World Partners, recently acquired by Synergex Ventures. Manager and President of Sacramento Professional Soccer.

this effort, we will build a brand that's strong and can transfer from the USL PRO level to MLS. Number two: Build a soccer-specific stadium that meets MLS requirements. The third thing MLS requires is a strong, well-heeled ownership group and we're laying the foundation for that now.

Graham: USL is a good standard and it's very close to MLS. Montreal, Seattle, Vancouver, Portland — those clubs were playing in the USL to audiences between 5,000-6,000 people. If you look at their crowds, they are the best in MLS today. The last four franchises to come into the league were all from USL.

WHERE ARE YOU LOOKING TO BUILD A STADIUM AND HOW WILL YOU FILL IT ONCE IT'S BUILT?

Warren: We haven't determined a preferred location as of yet, but we're looking in the downtown urban core. In order for us to be able to attract MLS, we need to be able to fill a stadium in a location that makes sense for them, so the downtown urban core is key.

MLS has learned through their expansions in Montreal, Philadelphia, Seattle, Vancouver and Portland that downtown stadiums outperform suburban locations in ticket sales, especially in the long term. Facilities in the urban core have proven to attract the MLS demographic (18- to 34-year-olds) at much higher rates and consistencies. Since soccer is only a two-hour event, locating

the stadium where people generally are — and that is around infrastructure like bars and restaurants or other things to do — provides fans with the opportunity to extend their night out. We call this helping them make an “and decision” versus an “or decision.” The more options and opportunities sports venues provide to their fans around the stadiums, the higher likelihood people will come to the event.

Graham: Warren and the Sac Pro Soccer team will be principally working on the MLS stadium while I build a top notch soccer organization. The way that I would try to maintain interest is the appointment of a top-class coach — someone who has experience in the U.S. game at the highest level and someone who has played at the highest level. That is the caliber that we are looking for, and so far I have been very encouraged by the number of football coaches and people in the game who have made contact with us. We haven't even advertised we need a coach yet! That coach will hopefully bring in the type of player who will endear himself to the crowd. We want the crowd to have their favorites and we want players that will be able to entertain.

The team itself we want to identify with the public. We want to reach out to the community in many ways and have numerous meet and greets and appearances at various places, including charities, schools and coaching clinics. We want to get everyone involved and those people who want an opportunity to get

involved will have that opportunity.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SOMEONE SKEPTICAL OF BRINGING ANOTHER SPORTS FRANCHISE TO THE CITY?

Warren: First I would ask them, what type of community do you want to live in? One that is stagnant and not growing? One where the children we bare choose not to live in and to move away from? In order to compete against other cities, we must learn to make investments in ourselves.

Secondly, I would share the details about the growth of soccer and how it is increasing at such alarming rates while other sports are stagnant or even declining. Soccer will definitely eventually be the number one sport in this country and not even by a small margin. Wouldn't we want to invest in a growth market versus one that is stagnant or declining?

Lastly, I would say just watch and see what happens. Many people came out and shared their skepticism about building Raley Field and bringing the River Cats to town and we weren't deterred then. We, as a community, tend to pontificate way too much and act less. What I would say to those people is, “What are you doing to make Sacramento a better place to live? Get on board the ship and together we can create something special.”

Graham: We're not really getting any naysaying so far. Why not Sacramento?

WHY ARE YOU EXCITED FOR PROFESSIONAL SOCCER TO COME TO SAC?

BY MIKE BLOUNT



Art Urbina, creator of *The Midtown Podcast*

For me being a Midtown resident, it's really about a sense of community. In my circle of friends, we love getting behind something we can ride our bikes to, and with the World Cup, people just packed out all the bars. Imagining that crowd rooting for a Sacramento team would be a lot of fun.



Lisa Wrightsman, director of *Street Soccer Sacramento: Lady Salamanders*

I think it's a fantastic idea. It's genius really, to tap into one of Sacramento's greatest resources — its soccer players — and then use that as a way to make stronger connections locally, nationally and internationally via soccer. I love it and I can't wait.



Simon de Vere White, co-owner of *de Vere's Irish Pub*

I'm a lifelong soccer fan. I think anything that we can bring to Sacramento on a professional sports level is great for the city, and selfishly, it's my favorite sport.



Kevin Goldthwaite, former MLS player

I just had my first little boy six weeks ago, and for him to be able to grow up with a professional team here in town that he'd be able to go out and support and watch is something I'm real excited for. It also really puts the city of Sacramento on the map in terms of professional soccer and puts the city in the national scene. After playing professionally for almost 10 years throughout the USA, it will be nice to see the game at the highest level being played in my backyard.



Taro Arai, executive chef at *Mikuni Japanese Restaurant*

I am excited because it's fun. I love sports, and I love to get involved and have fun, so how can I say no to that?



Emilie Cameron, senior account executive at *Lucas Public Affairs*

I'm excited to see pro soccer coming to Sacramento as a young professional because of the job opportunities and economic input and output. It's also a new cultural amenity that will revive the area and eventually make this the destination city it deserves to be.



IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

Sac Pro Soccer looking downtown for a stadium — BY MIKE BLOUNT

There's an old saying in business: Location, location, location. This couldn't be more true for a Major League Soccer team's stadium.

While every market is different, one can glean from the successes of the most recent MLS expansion teams that there is something of a formula. The last five expansion teams to come to MLS — Philadelphia, Seattle, Vancouver, Portland and Montreal — all have record-breaking attendance, and all share the fact that their stadiums are located within each city's downtown urban core. Each club benefits immensely from the enormous amount of civic support from their downtown supporters. In fact, downtown urban core stadiums represent on average roughly 75,000 more patrons who attend MLS matches annually compared to suburban locations like Commerce City, Colo. (Colorado Rapids), Frisco, Texas (FC Dallas), and Bridgeview, Ill. (Chicago Fire).

based in a smaller market, the Timbers have an extremely passionate fan base, with an average attendance of around 20,000 per game. Jeld-Wen Field is located in the heart of downtown Portland, and is extremely walkable and public-transit friendly — just like downtown Sacramento.

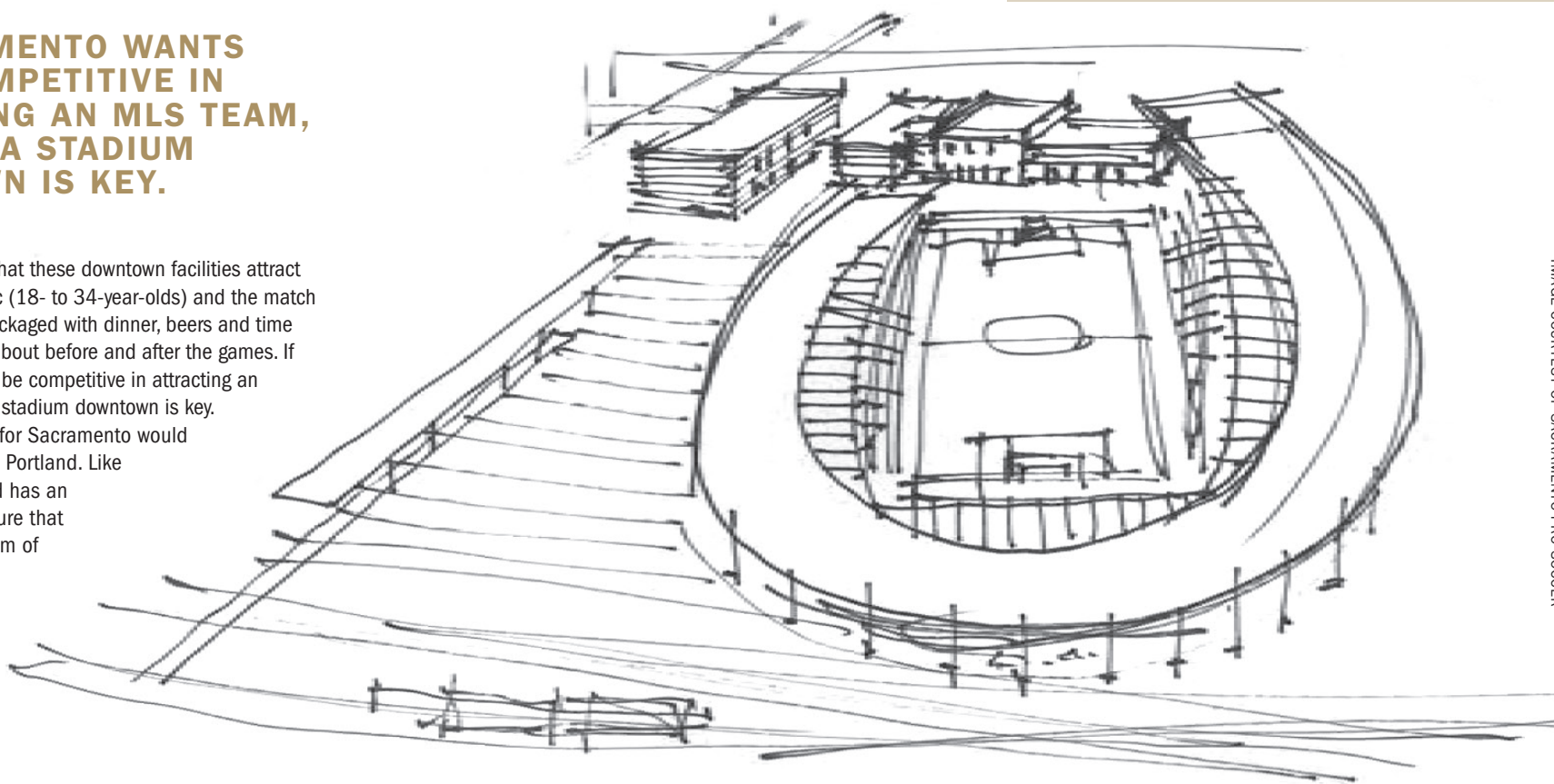
Placing a stadium within the city's downtown urban core will give soccer fans who normally wouldn't drive to a match the ability to utilize convenient public transit, such as the light rail and buses. It would also provide a boost to local bars and restaurants that can cater to patrons before and after each game. Additionally, a stadium will attract new businesses, providing several additional jobs to the local economy.

Locations in downtown Sacramento are still being scouted, but the success of bringing an MLS franchise to the River City hinges on building a soccer-specific stadium where fans can show their support for their home team.

IF SACRAMENTO WANTS TO BE COMPETITIVE IN ATTRACTING AN MLS TEAM, BUILDING A STADIUM DOWNTOWN IS KEY.

MLS has learned that these downtown facilities attract their key demographic (18- to 34-year-olds) and the match becomes an event packaged with dinner, beers and time with friends out and about before and after the games. If Sacramento wants to be competitive in attracting an MLS team, building a stadium downtown is key.

An ideal scenario for Sacramento would be what happened in Portland. Like Sacramento, Portland has an ingrained soccer culture that draws a wide spectrum of fans to games. Also



A bird's-eye view of what a downtown stadium could look like in Sacramento.

SACRAMENTO LOVES SOCCER

Sacramento is a prime soccer market, just look at the facts:

- Soccer is the No. 1 most participated sport in Sacramento
- There are more than 93,000 registered soccer players in the Sacramento region
- Sacramento was in the top 10 TV ratings during the last two World Cups
- 18 players from Sacramento have reached the Major League Soccer level
- During the 2010 World Cup, Univision had higher viewership in Sacramento than all of the major networks combined for the game between Mexico and Costa Rica
- The San Juan Soccer Club (based in Folsom) is one of only 77 USSF Development Academies in the nation
- Sacramento recently hosted the 2012 U.S. Youth Soccer Nation President's Cup, with more than 7,500 in attendance, providing a \$1.2 million economic impact to the region
- Sacramento has momentum now that the Kings are staying
- People are investing in this town
- Sacramento is 20th in the nation as a professional sports media market
- Sacramento is one of only eight U.S. cities with only one major league sport, and is the second largest market out of those eight cities
- Sacramento is the second most underserved community in the U.S. from a professional sports standpoint, just behind Orlando, Fla. [TL](#)

IMAGE COURTESY OF SACRAMENTO PRO SOCCER



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INTERNATIONAL SOCCER COMES TO SACRAMENTO

NORWICH CITY FC VS DORADOS DE SINALOA

English Premier League

Liga Ascenso (of Mexico)

SAC ALL-STAR TEAM VS SJ EARTHQUAKES RESERVE TEAM

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