

Predators Land Deal With Tire Maker Bridgestone to Rename Sommet Center

Written by Matthew Coller

Tuesday, 23 February 2010 02:51 - Last Updated Tuesday, 23 February 2010 03:50



Same place, new name. According to [WKRN](#) in Nashville, The Nashville Predators, who currently stand in seventh place in the Western Conference, have reached an agreement with Bridgestone Americas, Inc. for naming rights to the Predators' current home.

The arena originally opened in 1996 under the name "Nashville Arena," naming rights were sold to Gaylord Entertainment in 1999. The arena remained under the name "Gaylord Entertainment Center" until 2007, when it became the Sommet Center.

Last fall, the Predators sued the Sommet Group, claiming it wasn't making its payments. The Group argued the franchise was not fulfilling its part of the agreement by purchasing products and services from competitors. Since the dispute could not be worked out, the rights were sold to Bridgestone.

In Nov. 2009, as the announcement of the lawsuit came down, [bizjournals.com](#) reported that president of business operations said, "For months, Sommet Group has not met its payment obligations under our naming rights agreement. We repeatedly reached out to Sommet Group and sought its compliance with these obligations. Unfortunately, Sommet Group did not do so, or give us any indication that it would. We regret that Sommet Group left us no alternative but to terminate the agreement and seek legal redress."

Predators' management said they had no idea why Sommet Group stopped paying. T-shirts. They probably wouldn't have guessed T-shirts. But, as managing partner Brian Whitfield said, the T-shirts were the straw (or cotton?) that broke the camel's back. Whitfield said, "The reason we have withheld payments is because our supposed partner in naming rights is not acting like one," Whitfield said. "We entered into the agreement with the understanding that in partial exchange for our payments, our business units would be the preferred provider of certain products and services."

Predators Land Deal With Tire Maker Bridgestone to Rename Sommet Center

Written by Matthew Coller

Tuesday, 23 February 2010 02:51 - Last Updated Tuesday, 23 February 2010 03:50

"The most recent straw that broke the camel's back was their order of thousands of T-shirts from out of state instead of from Sommet's BrandCentrik business unit. That in our view is not being a good partner as was promised."

The Bridgestone Arena will be officially announced as the new arena name on Tuesday.

In other Predator news, the team has extended its affiliation with the Milwaukee Admirals of the American Hockey League through the 2011-'12 season. The teams have a mutual option for the 2012-'13 season.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE BUSINESS OF SPORTS NETWORK

- [MLB Makes Tickets to 2010 All-Star FanFest Other Activities Available Feb. 23](#)
 - [Upscale Private Club at Miller Park Renamed "NYCE Stadium Club"](#)
 - [Today on Yahoo! Sports: Salary Arbitration Winners and Losers](#)
 - [Local Legislature Decision to Fund New Cubs Spring Training May be Challenged](#)
 - [LWIB: Ticketing Gets Creative in MLB, Portland Beavers Update, MiLB Might Face Tough Year, Plus Tidbits](#)
-

Matthew Coller is a staff member of the Business of Sports Network, and is a freelance writer. He can be [followed on Twitter](#)

[Follow The Biz of Hockey on Twitter](#) 

Predators Land Deal With Tire Maker Bridgestone to Rename Sommet Center

Written by Matthew Coller

Tuesday, 23 February 2010 02:51 - Last Updated Tuesday, 23 February 2010 03:50



[Follow the Business of Sports Network on Facebook](#)