

Nebraska B.E.A.R.S. to play indoor football at MAC

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Another Nebraska team has found a home at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs.

On Wednesday, team owner Michael Carter announced that the Nebraska B.E.A.R.S. will play their American Professional Football League home games at the MAC.

The team joins the Iowa Blackhawks - which also play at the MAC - in the APFL's six-team league that runs from the end of April to July.

Carter thanked Blackhawks owner Jake Hiffernan for his cooperation in getting the B.E.A.R.S. into the same arena.

"Without his support for having both teams at the same venue, this wouldn't have been possible," Carter said.

Carter also thanked the MAC management, especially general manager Charles Schilling, for "rescuing us and putting us in a situation where the organization can succeed."

In December, it was announced that the B.E.A.R.S. would be playing their home games at the Qwest Center in Omaha. Carter said that the change of venue was necessitated because he couldn't get solid commitments in Omaha.

"Business sponsorships are critical; we need people behind us, and those commitments just weren't coming," he said. "They didn't come forward. We had a deadline with the league, so we moved on."

Carter added that he was happy to be at the MAC and hopes that having two area teams in the league will bring out fans from both communities.

"It's a natural rivalry; a border-war," he said. "Hopefully that will generate enthusi-asm for both teams and the entire league."

Carter is no stranger to the metropolitan football scene. A graduate of Omaha Central in 1973, he went on to play college football at Princeton University. In 1974, he was the second-leading kick-off returner in the nation.

He founded the North Omaha B.E.A.R.S. youth organization in 1989 (the acronym stands for Building Esteem And Responsibility Systematically), and has given hundreds of area youth the opportunity to learn valuable lessons while playing football.

In 2000, he started the Nebraska B.E.A.R.S., a successful outdoor semi-professional football team.

This new venture will not only be about football and entertainment, but about making a difference in the community the way that each of his previous programs have, he said.

Carter said that his team will make presentations to area schools and be involved in the community on and off of the field.

"We are not just about selling tickets," he said. "We want to make a difference in the community."

