

IBL team gets nickname, logo

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By Steve Ungrey

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HOLLAND -- Tommy Wolf's love of basketball extends over 20 years, from his small-town roots in Oklahoma to his passion for following West Michigan hoops.

When studying the nickname of the International Basketball League's Grand Rapids Flight, Wolf tried hard to figure out something that fit in with the image of flight.

His imagination won over the minds of those in charge of the new Holland professional basketball team, and now Wolf and his family will have lifetime season-ticket seats to watch the Holland Blast at the Holland Civic Center.

"I looked at the name for the Flight, and I thought about what was faster than flight," Wolf said. "The IBL is a fast-paced league, and I live and breathe basketball. This is the biggest award I've won in my lifetime."

Wolf beat out approximately 100 other entries in a name the team contest.

"We kept coming back to the word blast," team General Manager Tom Moore said. "It's an action-oriented word, and the versatility of the word means we can do a lot with the name. We wanted some red in the team colors, and after that we wanted to go with a combo of some other colors too."

The logo was designed by graphic artist Wes Wooley, a Holland resident who runs his own business, W-Squared Design. He has created many well-known logos around the Holland area, including those for the Holland Civic Center, Macatawa Area Express and Tulip Time.

Everyone who submitted a team name for the contest will get a free ticket to the Holland Blast's opening home game.

The IBL's schedule has not been set, but it is expected the Blast's first game will take place in late March or early April. There will be at least 10 home games for the Blast, with the possibility of one more.

Fred Vander Ploeg, the marketing director for the Blast, is hard at work on ideas for attracting fans to the games.

"We've got kind of a natural break between the upper and lower parts of the arena, and we're

going to go with the season tickets in the upper bowl," Vander Ploeg said. "There will be some reserved sections in the lower area."

The plan tentatively calls for \$10 seats in the upper bowl and \$8 seats in the lower bowl, with \$100 and \$80 season tickets.

The Blast likely will offer some specials for students.

"We want to try and get fans who go to Hope basketball and Holland Christian games as close to their season ticket seats in the Civic Center as possible," Vander Ploeg said.

Hope and Holland Christian will play their home games in the nearly completed DeVos Fieldhouse.

Moore also said fans can visit Web sites (grflight.com or hollandblast.com) to click on a link to the American Red Cross for Hurricane Katrina contributions.

"To thank those who participate in this humanitarian effort, we are offering each contributor one ticket to our opening game next season," Moore said.

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