

Site for stadium being considered

By BRANT LONG
Assistant Sports Editor

Mark Richardson, son of restaurant entrepreneur Jerry Richardson, announced Monday that Dec. 15 would be the date that the site for the stadium of a possible NFL expansion team in the Carolinas will be determined.

Richardson, whose father has been trying to attract an NFL team to the Carolinas since late 1987, joined a partnership with his family and other prominent business officials in September 1989. He owns Richardson Sports in Charlotte.

"We've spent the last three weeks evaluating all of the information we've had and gathering additional information," Richardson said. "We're still doing that on a daily basis. We've got about a week and a half left, and we're still shooting for that deadline, and I think we'll be able to make that announcement on that day."

The four sites in contention for the 65,000-seat complex are uptown Charlotte, York County, S.C. (near Carowinds), across the street from Charlotte Motor Speedway and between Gastonia and King's Mountain in Gaston County, N.C.

Richardson said there are many factors that have to be weighed before determining the final location of the stadium on Dec. 15.

"There are a lot of different issues, and we've had to take a look at all of them," Richardson said. "There's the issue of how the traffic gets in and out. That's a major factor to us. We need to have the ability to get the fans in and out."

According to Richardson, the NFL has a guideline that says a stadium parking lot needs to be cleared within one hour after a game. Richardson and his associates are looking into what kind of projects will have to be done in

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order to meet the guideline.

"We've tried to assess what's the best for the fans' convenience," he said, "not the fans in any one area, but for fans across the Carolinas as a whole, what's going to be the easiest for all of our fans — not just one group of fans."

Richardson emphasizes that a team in the Carolinas would be a regional team, not just a Charlotte team.

"We need to sell this as a Carolinas franchise," Richardson said. "We need the people from Greenville and Spartanburg, Columbia and Florence to feel that this is their franchise."

Richardson also said that NFL teams such as New England, Seattle and Denver are teams that sell themselves regionally.

Richardson said some advantages to building the stadium in York County would be the ability to make the NFL team a true "Carolinas" team.

"The main advantage is that it allows us to tie in the Carolinas concept that we are trying to market... the franchise is going to be affiliated with Charlotte — that's going to be the metropolitan market — and tying in the stadium in South Carolina would probably give us a better marketing angle to take it to everybody in the Carolinas."

Richardson is still unsure about when the NFL will decide if and when they will expand, partly because of the recent change of the NFL commissioner. Former commissioner Pete Rozelle wanted a collective bargaining agreement, and in two years, two new teams would be playing.

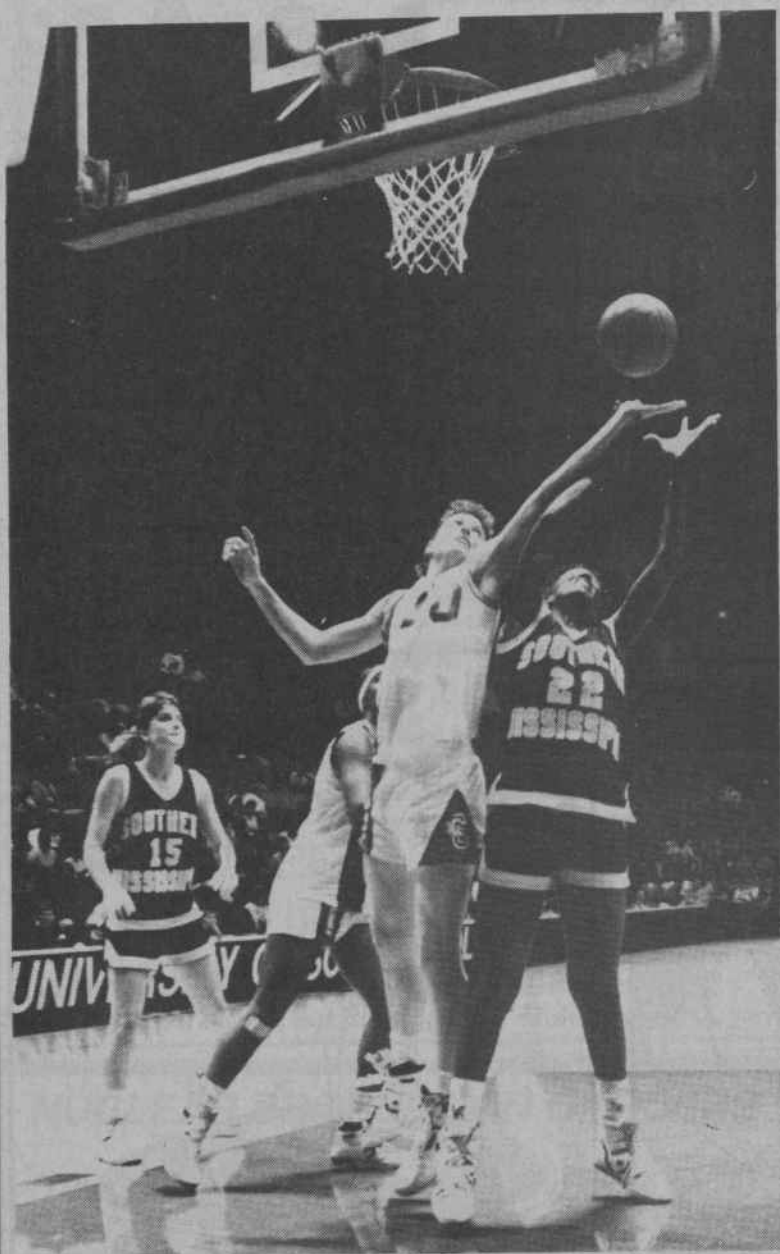
Richardson now thinks a new collective bargaining agreement will be negotiated in the next few months, and the NFL would possibly begin expansion in March or the spring of 1990. It would then take six to nine months to decide who the first expansion team would be.

"That would mean this time next year — late 1990 — we should find out whether we're going to be taken in the first wave of expansion," he said. "If we're taken in 1990, we'll probably begin playing in the fall of 1992. That's our timetable that we're working under, that is not the timetable set by the NFL."

A temporary facility might be used if the organization has a year and a half to two years before it begins play. The stadium cannot begin construction until the Carolinas learns if it will have a franchise. It will take about 24 to 30 months to build a playing facility.

Other cities vying for a franchise are Baltimore, Oakland and St. Louis, which have all had a franchise before, and Memphis, Jacksonville and the Carolinas.

"When you look at all the numbers, you understand exactly how strong the Carolinas market is and how much the Carolinas have to offer the NFL," Richardson said. "I'm getting to the point now that I think it's going to be hard for the NFL to say no to the Carolinas."



Master rebounder

Beth Hunt fights for a rebound in a match this past season. Hunt was named the Tournament MVP in the Contel Fastbreak Fest this past weekend in DeKalb, Ill. Hunt scored 33 points and grabbed 18 rebounds in the championship game as USC defeated Northern Illinois 87-84 in overtime.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Sharpe sets record for pass receptions

Former USC star wide receiver Sterling Sharpe has broken the Green Bay Packer record for pass receptions in a season, according to the National Football League franchise.

Sharpe caught eight passes for 169 yards in a 17-16 Packer win over Tampa Bay Sunday, surpassing Don Hutson's season record for receptions set in 1942. Sharpe has 77 catches on the season, three more than Hutson's 74.

Sharpe, now in his second year, has 12 receiving touchdowns this season and 1,252 reception yards. Sharpe's 12 touchdowns tie him for third on the season list, five behind Hutson's 17. Sharpe's 1,252 receiving yards currently places

him fourth, but only 109 yards behind James Lofton's 1,361 yards in 1984.

Sharpe has also tied the Green Bay record for most 100-yard games in a season with six, a record he holds with Hutson, Bill Howton and Lofton.

Pflughaupt named to academic team

Stephanie Pflughaupt, a member of the 15-15 Lady Gamecock volleyball team, was named to the 1989 GTE Academic All-America District 3 University Division Women's Volleyball Team as chosen by the College Sports Information Directors of America this past Thursday.

Pflughaupt, a senior, maintains a 3.6 GPA in marketing. Starting in every match in 1989 for USC, she led the Lady Gamecocks in five categories this season including

hitting percentage, solo blocks, block assists, total blocks and blocks per game.

She has earned numerous honors such as being named to the 1988 and 1989 All-Metro Conference Teams and the 1988 All-South Region Team. She was also named the Metro Conference Player of the Week for the week of Oct. 17.

Swimming squad takes fifth place

The USC men's swimming squad concluded their fall swimming schedule this past weekend finishing fifth in the Texas Invitational, a meet featuring some of the nation's top swim teams.

The meet, with six teams competing, was won by sixth-ranked Tennessee while the host team, Texas Longhorns, the No. 1 ranked team in the nation, finished second.

USC's top finishes belonged to

Mark Smith in the 200-yard breaststroke and the Gamecocks' 400 and 800 freestyle relay teams.

Smith finished eighth in the 200 breaststroke with a time of 2:10.5. In the 400 free relay, the Gamecocks used the team of Rick Havekost, Peter Cadwell, Brent Blackman and Tom DeJarnette and the team of Brian Benda, Jeff Palm, Brian Hannafin and Todd Lang to place eighth and 10th respectively.

In the 88 freestyle relay, Dennis Mehan, Blackman, Hannafin and Cadwell swam the Gamecocks to their best finish in the three-day meet, placing seventh.

USC's men's and women's swim teams will now concentrate on final exams and the holidays before returning to action against Metro foe Virginia Tech on Jan. 6. The double dual meet will be held at the Carolina Natatorium in the Sol Blatt P.E. Center starting at noon. Admission is free.

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