

MAMMA And Orioles Make Some Changes

BY KARL BERGER
Special Correspondent

They may have lost more than 20 games and a manager, but the Baltimore Orioles continue to be one of the mainstays in the promotional line-up of the Middle Atlantic Milk Marketing Agency, according to agency manager Dick Norton.

The agency, known as MAMMA, is committed to sponsoring commercials during radio and television broadcasts of Orioles games

throughout the summer, Norton said, and will hold its traditional milk promotion at Memorial Stadium Sunday, June 5, when the Orioles play the New York Yankees.

In addition, MAMMA will continue its affiliation with brothers Cal Jr., and Bill Ripken despite the firing six games into the season of their father, Cal Ripken Sr., as manager of the club. The two brothers appear side by side on a life-sized "growth poster" promot-

ing milk that will be given to fans 14 years of age and younger who attend the June 5 game. And Cal Jr., probably the Orioles best known player, continues a role as spokesman for milk in television and radio commercials that he has held for the past three years.

However, the departure of the elder Ripken has meant some changes, Norton acknowledged. MAMMA has withdrawn a television commercial and several radio spots it developed that used all

three Ripkens. Its original version of the growth poster also featured the trio.

In early April, the elder Ripken pleaded guilty to a drunk driving charge, but this did not figure in MAMMA's decision, which was based on his departure as on-field manager, Norton said.

The agency head said the Orioles poor play will have very little impact on the effectiveness of MAMMA's promotional campaign for fluid milk, which uses the slogan, "Milk: it's fitness you can drink," and which is focused in the Federal Order 4 markets of Baltimore, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

For one thing, he said, the Orioles record breaking losing streak has actually attracted fans, although that may not be the case later in the season.

For another, the agency has a number of spokesmen besides the Ripkens, including Philadelphia Phillies third baseman Mike Schmidt; John Thompson of Georgetown University, the coach of the U.S. men's basketball team

in the upcoming Summer Olympics; and tennis star Pam Shriver, a Baltimore-area native. Its Orioles affiliations represent about 20 percent of MAMMA's advertising activities, Norton said.

By having a number of spokesmen, the agency is insulated if, as is often the case in the sports world, a player or coach moves to another city. There is a lot of speculation, for instance, that Cal Ripken Jr., is playing his last season in the Orioles uniform.

Moreover, even before the baseball season began, the dairy farmers who comprise MAMMA's board of directors considered placing less emphasis on its costly sports spokesmen. According to Norton, the agency is weighing the use of a family of three women to promote its "three-milk concept" — contrary to the prevailing practice in the industry, whole, lowfat and skim milk are mentioned explicitly in MAMMA's ads — in 1989. Such a move would save the agency money and fit in nicely with its longstanding fitness campaign, Norton said.

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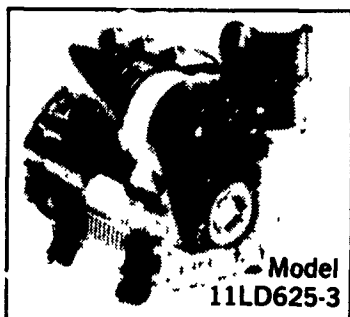
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