

Power sluggers inspire slogan Pirate brainstorm scores points

By MIKE VANDINE
Collegian Sports Writer

Although he doesn't suit up for the games, Jack McNamara, a Pittsburgh advertiser, is getting people excited about the Pirates.

With his slogan "Lumber and Lightning," a new positive feeling about the Bucs is being generated and attendance is on upswing.

Two seasons ago, after the Pirates lost their second straight play-off series, the Pirate front office decided the team needed some outside help.

They realized that Pittsburghers were disillusioned about the team. The magic of the early eventies Pirate teams had long been extinct as was illustrated in the yearly drops in attendance.

After shopping around, the Pirate organization selected Jack McNamara to handle the advertising and promotion for the club.

"I knew the team needed a nickname — something the fans could hook into, like Cincinnati's 'Red Machine,'" McNamara said.

The Pirates' strong hitters gave McNamara material to work with. "Guys like Oliver, Parker, Stargel, and Hebner were like another 'Murder's Row.'" Big bats mean a lot of lumber and that's how I got the idea for "The Lumber Company."

Pirate headquarters was unanimously in favor of the slogan and the green light was given for an entire campaign to be organized.

Advertising and management, however, don't

always work well together. McNamara recalled trying to get players for commercials during spring training while General Manager Joe Brown wanted to have team meetings.

"It can get to be tedious standing around for 45 minutes while some player keeps messing up his lines all the while the manager is saying he thought it was only supposed to be a thirty second spot," McNamara said.

With all the promotion ready the problem of how to lay the slogan on the public still remained. After some discussion it was decided that Milo Hamilton, the team's announcer, should just start saying "The Lumber Company" during the exhibition games.

Almost as soon as the promotion was kicked off the ground everyone was ready to see "The Lumber Company" go into business.

The Pirates started off the season by winning their first six games. The name was capturing national attention and the fans were turning out.

The players seemed to like the slogan too; they would often refer to the team as the "company" in interviews.

But McNamara knew there could be one huge problem. "I knew if the team stopped hitting the slogan would die," he said. And unfortunately, just what McNamara feared came true.

After their early season explosion the Pirates fell off the pace miserably. Soon sports writers all over began sinking their teeth into the team as they

talked of the "toothpick company" or the "splinter group."

"The advertising was fine but the product needed improvement," McNamara joked. And it seemed none knew it more than the Pirate management.

With a few trades and phone calls to the Charleston farm club, a new Pirate team was shaping up.

The emphasis was on speed to accompany the hitting. Along with some new players came Chuck Tanner, one of the more enthusiastic managers in the majors.

"With the new speed and go-go attitude I decided that 'lightning' was the word that would fit — so I made the slogan 'Lumber and Lightning.'"

At first there was some pessimism about the new team — they lost consistently during exhibition season. But after a few games of stolen bases and hard hitting, the fans began to be convinced.

"Lumber and Lightning" is flashed on the scoreboard every time the Bucs get a rally going. It is also printed boldly on the front of the Pirate scorebooks.

At the moment all is well at the Pirate organization. The team isn't in first place but they are certainly in contention. And attendance is running far ahead of last year and the year before.

"Unless the Bucs stop running and hitting this slogan will be around a lot longer than the last," McNamara said.

RECYCLE

UNIVERSITY CALENDAR

Wednesday, July 20

Thursday, July 21

SPECIAL EVENTS

Wednesday, July 20

Psychology Seminar. Betty Drinkwater, James Cook University, Australia, on "Cognitive Skills of Australian Aboriginal Children," 1 p.m., Room 351 Moore.

Intergenerational Summer Community Lectures. James J. Potter and Joseph H. Britton on "Schools Converted into Housing and Centers for Older Adults: A Community Forum for an Exploratory Project," 2 p.m., Room 112 Kern. Roger N. Cornish on "Theatre for the Retired: Age is No Barrier," 7:30 p.m., Room 101 Kern.

Graduate Council meeting, 3 p.m., Room 101 Kern.

Chess Club meeting, 7 p.m., HUB game room.

Women United meeting, 7 p.m., Room 321 HUB.

Young Socialists meeting, 7:30 p.m., Room 67 Willard.

G.S.A. Commonsplace Theatre, Taxi Driver, 7:30, 9:30 and 11:30 p.m., Room 112 Kern.

Festival Theatre, A Little Night Music, 8 p.m., Playhouse Theatre.

Nittany Mountain Summer Spectrum, The Hoofers, Dixieland sound with tap dancing by seven virtuoso dancers, 8 p.m., Eisenhower Auditorium.

Thursday, July 21

College of Education Faculty Council meeting, 2:20 p.m., Room 101 Kern.

Shaver's Creek Nature Center, dusk walk, 6:30 p.m., Stone Valley.

Festival Theatre, A Little Night Music, 8 p.m., Playhouse Theatre.

Festival Theatre, Preston Jones, The Last Meeting of the Knights of the White Magnolia, 8 p.m., Pavilion Theatre.

Office of Student Activities free film, The Mouse that Roared, 9 p.m., HUB lawn.

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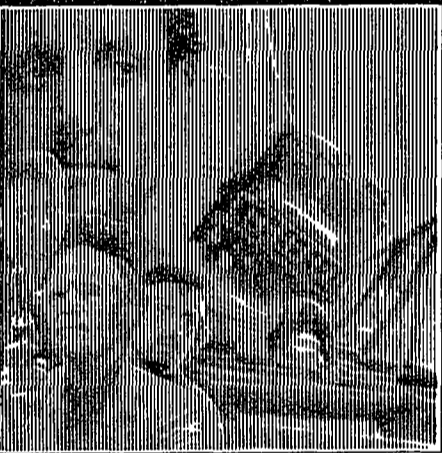
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