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ARENA FOOTBALL LEAGUE RE-LAUNCHES *AFL Back and Better Than Ever*

CHICAGO—After a one-year hiatus, the [Arena Football League \(AFL\)](#) is poised for a triumphant return, according to league executives who unveiled the revitalized league in a teleconference today with media. The league announced plans for the upcoming season, advanced progress toward expanding into the Philadelphia, Southern California, Denver and Pittsburgh markets and details of its contract with the NFL Network to broadcast AFL games in 2010.

The regular season will kick off with a full slate of games the weekend of April 2-4. The 15-team league will play a 16-game schedule leading into the playoffs and the Arena Bowl the third weekend in August. “We’re back and we’re not going anywhere,” Commissioner Jerry Kurz said. “We are tremendously excited to bring back Arena Football to our ardent following of fans across the country. With a restructured business plan, we are poised to come back stronger than ever.”

The AFL, formerly known as AF1, will benefit greatly from its new business model by owning all of the assets of the former AFL, including the team names and trademarks as well as intellectual property, video archives, statistical information and the championship game moniker—the Arena Bowl. The current owners of the 15 teams acquired the former’s league’s assets in a \$6.1 million bankruptcy settlement.

In 2008, fans embraced the AFL at a record pace. Games were played before an average crowd of almost 13,000 and 2008 was a record year for revenue.

“The financial trouble the former league ran into was not due to a lack of fan interest and support,” Kurz said. “The demise of the former AFL was more a function of a severe recession and rising league and team operational costs. Once we had the opportunity to work as a cohesive group of owners in developing the plan to retool the business model, it was an easy decision for the league to re-launch.”

Demand for Arena Football is such that there is significant interest in expansion for the 2011 season and serious negotiations are under way with at least four teams.

“The game is as popular as it has ever been,” said Tampa Bay Storm Coach Tim Marcum, the AFL’s all-time winningest coach.

Chicago Rush Coach Mike Hohensee, who has played or coached in every AFL season, has been overwhelmed by the response from the fans. "They have been craving the game as much as I have," Hohensee said.

Kurz stressed the AFL will continue to be the most fan friendly, affordable and accessible professional sports league as players; coaches will continue to sign autographs after every game and play an integral in each of the 15 communities where teams are headquartered. The game will also remain affordable to fans; in some cities, season tickets are priced as low as \$50.

The AFL's legacy teams are the Arizona (Phoenix) Rattlers, Cleveland Gladiators, Chicago Rush, Dallas Vigilantes (formerly the Desperados), Orlando Predators, Tampa Bay Storm and Utah (Salt Lake City) Blaze. The new cities and teams with an opportunity to compete for an ArenaBowl championship are the Alabama (Huntsville) Vipers, Bossier-Shreveport BattleWings, Iowa Barnstormers, Jacksonville Sharks, Milwaukee Iron, Oklahoma City Yard Dawgz, Spokane Shock and Tulsa Talons. New and veteran organizations alike will be able to leverage the tradition and equity of the AFL brand and its assets.

The tremendous platform provided by the NFL, through the NFL Network, will help grow the AFL's profile. The NFL Network is the only television network devoted to football 24-hours a day, 365-days a year. Earlier today, the NFL Network released which games it will broadcast.

Owners include former head coach and NFL Legend Mike Ditka, a returning Chicago Rush co-owner. "This was too good of an opportunity for me to pass up," Ditka said. "I have the utmost respect for the players. They are playing for the pure love of the game."

Former NFL quarterback Danny White will serve as the team president of the Arizona Rattlers. "I've always had a passion for arena football," White said. "I love the game, the product and the players who play it."

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