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FC Arizona soccer to be played in Mesa

Feb 2nd, 2017 · by Andrew Millan, Special to the Independent · Comments: 1

The long, excruciating wait for die-hard soccer fans in Mesa is finally over. FC Arizona is bringing the world's most popular sport to town starting in March and maybe even a championship.

FC Arizona opens its inaugural season March 4 at John D. Riggs stadium at Mesa Community College. The website is fcarizona.com.

"I think the fans can expect a winning season right from the beginning," said defender Dominic Papa. "Scott has brought in a great group of local players and very experienced veteran players as well. You're going to see a very mature and organized team."

Owner Scott Taylor is eager to get the wheels rolling on the project. "We've already sold close to 400 season tickets, so I'm encouraged by that. Hopefully we get a couple thousand fans in the stands each game," said Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Taylor's plan was always to bring a soccer team to the Valley. "I'm a huge soccer fan and I'm very plugged-in business-wise. I've studied the leagues in the professional soccer world very detailed in the past two years and I'm not going to make the same mistake that others have made in the past," said Taylor.

He anticipates the community supporting the hometown squad. "I think people are going to gravitate to this because we are local and it's their team. There is a real connection because most of the guys we've signed are from Maricopa County," said Mr. Taylor.

Taylor says he has the right man for the head coaching job. Aidan Davison has 20 years of experience in England as a goalie. "We have very similar philosophies and believe that defense wins championships," said Taylor. "I wanted to bring an outside coach in for various reasons, and he's the real deal."

Mr. Davison retired at the age of 40 and played in over 400 games throughout his career.

Mr. Papa, an Arizona native, is excited to be playing in front of his family and friends. He grew up in Chandler and his parents still live in the Valley.

Another homegrown player, Paul LaMarca, can't wait to get started. "It means more than words can express, to have a professional team in the East Valley and being built around local professional players," said Mr. LaMarca. "The community couldn't ask for anything more and everybody is going to be able to come and see what Arizona has to offer, as far as local players."

Mr. Taylor hopes the community gets behind the team. "Just come out and support us, I'd just say that to the people if you want us here. I'm committed to be here year after year, but we do know we're on the right track if people support us," said Mr. Taylor.

Andrew Millan is a journalism student at the Arizona State University Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and wrote the article as a class assignment.

[Related link: <http://mesaindependent.com/sports-and-outdoors/new-professional-soccer-team-fc-arizona-hosts-launch-party-aug-5-at-mesa-stadium-2/>]

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