

Duke City Gladiators visit Gallup

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
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Gallup recently welcomed the Duke City Gladiators, Albuquerque, New Mexico's first-ever Professional Indoor Football team.

Co-Owner/CFO John Lopez, General Manager/Co-Founder Matt Caward, Director of Media Relations Andres Trujillo, Head Coach Dominic Bramante, Sales Manager Fidal Lopez, and DCG Defensive End player Eric Banford, headed west to Gallup to promote the team with a meet and greet at Sammy C's Rockin' Sports Pub & Grille.

Now to those who already know outdoor professional football like the NFL, indoor football is slightly different – the excitement is there, the fans are definitely there, but the field is only 50 yards unlike the original standard 100-yard field – and only eight players on the field. It is a must see and it is a totally family-based entertainment that was needed in New Mexico, according to Director of Media Relations Andres Trujillo.

"This was something missing and badly needed for Albuquerque," Trujillo said. "We saw the gap and we decided to fill that gap. New Mexico needed it, Albuquerque needed it, and now Albuquerque is embracing it."

Professional indoor football is the second highest quality football New Mexico will ever see according to General Manager/Co-Founder Caward, who boasts highly about the concept of professional indoor football. Since New Mexico has no professional football team the DCG team

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will fill that missing gap.

“It’s professional indoor football at the highest level New Mexico will ever see, our athletes reflect that being former NFL players who have been released for what ever reason who are trying to get back in,” he said. “We boast four league teams this season and hopefully [will] add two more for 2018. We average between three to five-thousand fans a game. It’s a family event game; we have a tail gate before the game and a spectacular pre-game show.”

Besides letting the public know about the DCG, free tickets were given out for their pre-season home exhibition game of 2017 to be played Feb. 25 at 6 pm at Tingley Coliseum, where they currently play all of their home games.

There will be a free tail-gating party with a live DJ and free food starting at 4 pm. Also on the floor of Tingley Coliseum they will have Loco Jumps providing free jumpers for the kids, Lucky 13 Barber Shop providing free hair cuts to all kids, and “free mommy massages.”

Family entertainment is the biggest goal that DCG wants to bring to Albuquerque because of the lack of it and Co-Owner John Lopez envisions much more for quality family entertainment.

“Our community is a real family-oriented community, and when I came across the DCG I saw that this was real family entertainment,” Lopez said. “I didn’t hesitate to jump on it. Our plans are big, we hope to build a bigger stadium and hopefully bring in other professional sports. The whole goal is family and we want them to come experience it and if they have fun then we have done our job.”

General admission is only \$10 and the response toward the DCG has been overwhelming since being in existence for three seasons. Attendance has doubled and they guarantee that once you see one game you will come back for another game. Fans can also catch the games on MY50 TV out of Albuquerque.

Sales Manager Fidel Lopez says the response from a sales point of view has been amazing.

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“You know the first year was touch and go, but this year has been phenomenal, the community has embraced it, we have had so much fun. Our biggest customer is the kids and that is why we do it ... we had an advertising budget of hundreds of thousands of dollars and we are nearly sold out,” he said.

On hand at the meet and greet was DCG Defensive End Banford, who says playing indoor football is equally fun, but very different than playing regular football as he has done professionally. Being from the Bay Area of San Francisco, Calif., the environment he is in now in is thrilling as well as interesting.

“I feel great and it’s a blessing to be a part of this kind of environment ... it’s definitely grown on me,” he said. “The difference is the speed of this game where it’s all fast paced. As players it makes us think our plans and execute them.”

On hand also was DCG Head Coach Bramante, otherwise known as “Coach B,” who is a Otoe Native American member from the Otoe Missouri tribe, from Red Rock, Okla. He discussed the players and what it’s like to be the head coach for the DCG.

“Being the head coach I’m humbled by it and blessed by it ... the Creator is good,” Bramante said. “DCG is a national team where we recruit nationally, we recruit players who come to NM from all over the county. They’re all college guys who have been in the NFL trying to get back to the NFL, trying to create a door to that. They’re all strivers who still dream of getting there and that’s important, and I’m blessed to be a part of that.”

The pre-season game set for Feb. 25 will be against the Metro Stars made up of Albuquerque and Bernalillo police and firefighters – all formal college football players. The game will be in honor of first responders.

For more information on the Duke City Gladiators, visit website at: www.dukecitygladiators.com

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