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Character References™

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The Street Characters Inc. Newsletter

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Street Characters hits the hoop with NCAA mascot

By Ian D. D. Livermore, Editor

When NCAA Special Events staff went shopping for a mascot for the March Madness basketball tournament, they called upon the company many of their Division 1, 2 and 3 teams have used — Street Characters Inc.

NCAA Special Events first approached Street Characters in June 1999 with a request for information about the company.

A couple months later they phoned our marketing director Mark Decoux and asked for a quote. The

NCAA said it wanted a mascot to increase awareness of NCAA basketball and help increase the sale of licenced merchandise.

During the course of the conversation, Mark learned the NCAA needed other things in addition to a mascot including a new marketing image for its basketball programs.

Upon learning this, Mark referred the NCAA to SME Power Branding of New York, with whom ...See J.J. JUMPER, Page 2



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Character References

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NHL mascot summit a blast



Slapshot and Harvey the Hound listen intently as Howler makes a point. Photo by Bill Boppre

There was a meeting of the fur-brained minds on Feb. 3, 2000 when the National Hockey League's 16 mascots held their inaugural Mascot Summit. The summit was held in conjunction with the NHL All-Star weekend in Toronto.

The mascots exchanged ideas on various subjects including skits, props, costume maintenance and dealing with rowdy fans.

The summit and all NHL All-Star mascot events were organized by Street Characters Inc.

J.J. Jumper concluded

Street Characters has a strategic alliance. SME is one of the leading sports image design companies in the world.

SME sat down with the NCAA and developed an entire marketing concept including a mascot name and logo art rendering.

What they came up with was a bright-orange-haired, tall, lanky green dude named J.J. Jumper (see inset on page 1). SME then passed the artwork back to Street Characters for it to build not one, but **EIGHT** identical mascot costumes.

J.J. Jumper was unveiled during the March Madness basketball tournament on the road to the final four. NCAA Assistant Director of Promotions Mary Eiland said he was popular with the fans.

"J.J. Jumper was very well received at the Men's and Women's Final Four this year," said Eiland. "He also spent much time ... in and around the championship venues interacting with children."

Eiland said the NCAA was pleased with SME's and Street Characters' collaborative effort on the J.J. Jumper project.

"SME Power Branding and Street Characters were instrumental in bringing J.J. Jumper to life as the official mascot of NCAA Basketball," she said. "The communication and effort given to the project was tremendous."

NFL clubs bolster their gridirons with Street Characters

The Philadelphia Eagles, Cincinnati Bengals and two NFL Europe Clubs — the Amsterdam Admirals and the Rhein Fire of Dusseldorf — have signed four hairy imports to bolster their fan base. All are team mascots created by Street Characters Inc.

The Eagles mascot "Swoop" will be an updated reproduction of the team's existing mascot, as are the Bengals' mascot "Who-Dey" and the Admiral's "Albert the Albatross." The Rhein Fire's mascot "Burnie the Phoenix" is an original design.

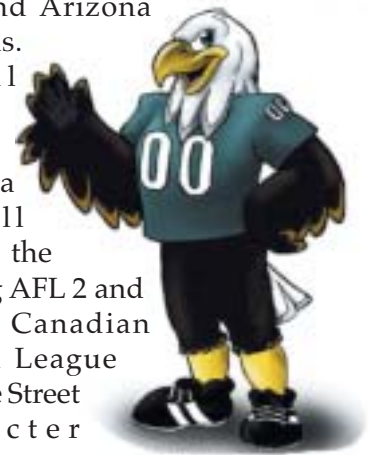
The two NFL Europe mascots will make their first public appearance in the early spring. Swoop and Who-Dey will hit the turf this fall.

The NFL Europe contracts are a great accomplishment says Street Characters marketing director Mark Decoux.

"It really gives us a foothold in the league," said Decoux. "Currently there are only six teams in NFL Europe. With such a high profile presence on a third of the teams, we are bound to make greater inroads when the league expands."

Street Characters other football clients include the NFL's Detroit Lions and Arizona Cardinals.

Several teams in the Arena Football League, the fledgling AFL 2 and the Canadian Football League also have Street Character mascots.



Philadelphia Eagles
© Street Characters 2000

Street Talk

with Glenn Street, President, Street Characters

Don't overuse your mascot

When I train new mascot performers and program managers, I'm frequently asked what is the biggest mistake people make with their mascot. It's a good question, and typically sets me off on a tangent about the perils of overexposure.

At Street Characters, our philosophy has always been "it is better to leave the fans wanting more than to overstay the mascot's welcome." In other words, if your mascot isn't contributing to the fans enjoyment of the game, don't force it upon them. If you don't pull him out of the game in these situations, the fans may start to get irritated and take their frustrations out on him.

Unfortunately, many minor league teams think that because a mascot is intended to provide fans with value-added entertainment, he has to be in the limelight at all times — before, during and after the game. Their tendency to do this is also triggered by their instinctive desire to obtain the biggest return on their investment. After all, they will say, "We spent good money to buy the mascot, so why should we have it sit idle. That would be a waste of money."

If you overexpose your mascot, its marketing and public relations value actually diminishes because it becomes too familiar and predictable to the fans.



That equates to BORING, which is the last adjective you want fans to associate with your character. We've all seen inactive characters standing in the crowd, obviously looking for something to do. The question a team has to ask is what's the point if the character is having no impact.

When I performed as Harvey the Hound with the Calgary Flames I always varied the time I would appear. Sometimes I'd be on the concourse before the game and sometimes I wouldn't. Likewise, I sometimes didn't make an appearance during the game until well into the first period. And if the game was going badly for the Flames and the fans were in an ugly mood as a result, Harvey went and took a break in his dressing room. After all, the last thing disgruntled fans want to see when the team is playing a stinker game is the mascot trying to convince them they have something to cheer about.

Because you want your mascot to make a positive impact with the fans, pick and choose the times that will happen best, and always make sure he has a reason to be out there. If you don't, you risk your mascot being ignored as commonplace.

Glenn Street

If you would like to learn more about this subject, e-mail Glenn at topdog@mascots.com or phone 1-888-MASCOTS.

Minnesota Twins bear win fans' hearts

Baseball fans in Minneapolis-St. Paul have something new to cheer about at Minnesota Twins games — a cuddly bear with a winning smile.

T.C. is the bear's name and having fun is his game. True to his family name, T.C. has a twin brother, also named T.C.

While there are two bears in the Twin's line-up, they will never work a game together because the Twins officially have but one mascot. Instead, the two will split their mascot duties evenly, just like Kate and

Ashley Olsen split acting duties on the 1990s sitcom Full House.

T.C. was unveiled at the Metrodome on April 10 and was an instant fan favourite. He made his entrance in a stretch limousine. He was greeted at centre field by the Minnesota Timberwolves mascot Crunch and Peanuts character Charlie Brown among others.

The Twins have been mascot-less since 1980 when Twinkle the Loon stalked the Met stadium.



Street Characters Inc. stands out in TIME magazine project

By Ian D. D. Livermore, Editor

In early March TIME magazine asked Street Characters and various other mascot manufacturers and graphic design companies to participate in a fun project. The purpose of the project was to dream up a series of mascots for three stock market indices: the Dow Jones, the NASDAQ and the S&P 500.

The winning entries would then be displayed in the Notebook section of the March 27 issue.

TIME's inspiration for the project was the major market rally taking place at the time. As TIME's editors wrote in the article unveiling the mascots, "market watching can be a harrowing sport, so we asked designers to give the indexes their own mascots."

Street Characters was only too happy to participate, said company president Glenn Street.

"It was quite an honour to be asked," said Glenn. "When they came up with the idea for the project they started surfing the Internet for potential participants. They came across our site at



TIME Magazine Market Mascots

Street Characters submitted six entries for TIME's market mascot design project. Designs 1 and 2 were for the Dow Jones, 3 and 4 were for the S&P 500 while 5 and 6 were for the NASDAQ. No. 1 was selected as one of the winners.

www.mascots.com and gave me a call."

"They were curious if we would be interested in doing it and we said sure."

Each participant was asked to submit two mascot designs for

each index. In Street Characters case, the job fell to in-house designers Caleb Hystad and Jill Johansen. Their creations are displayed in the box above. Caleb's bullish design of Mr. Jones was chosen as a winner by TIME.

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