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Destroyer Merchandising Company to Operate The Zone Charleston for Charleston Dirty Birds Five-Year Agreement Includes Complete Renovation of Team Shop at GoMart Ballpark

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Destroyer Merchandising Company, LLC has entered into a five-year agreement with the Charleston Dirty Birds of the Atlantic Professional Baseball League to operate the team's official retail store at GoMart Ballpark.

As part of the agreement, Destroyer will completely renovate the existing team shop and rebrand the retail operation as The Zone Charleston.

The new agreement brings Destroyer's experience operating professional sports retail stores into baseball while expanding the company's longstanding presence in the sports merchandise industry.

"We're excited to welcome Destroyer and The Zone Charleston to GoMart Ballpark," said Andy Shea, President and Owner of the Charleston Dirty Birds. "Jeff and his team bring years of experience in professional sports merchandise and retail, and we're looking forward to seeing them transform the team shop and create an even better retail experience for Dirty Birds fans."

For Destroyer founder and CEO Jeff Bouchy, the Charleston agreement represents an exciting expansion of a retail business that began nearly two decades ago in professional hockey. It also represents a return to a state where Bouchy has deep personal and professional ties.

Bouchy is a West Virginia University alumnus, having earned his master's degree from WVU, and in 2013 was honored as the WVU Sport Management Graduate Alumnus of the Year. His connection to West Virginia extends beyond the university: Bouchy's maternal family has roots in Randolph County, West Virginia.

"West Virginia has always had a special place in my life, so this opportunity means more to me than simply opening another team store," said Jeff Bouchy, CEO of Destroyer Merchandising Company. "I'm a proud WVU alumnus, my family has roots in Randolph County, and I've maintained a connection to the state throughout my career. To now have an opportunity to invest in a business in Charleston and become part of the Dirty Birds organization makes this especially meaningful to me."

The Charleston agreement also brings Destroyer's team-store operation into a new sport.

"We've operated team shops in hockey for many years, and we're incredibly excited to bring that experience into baseball," Bouchy said. "Baseball has such a strong connection between the team, its merchandise and its fans. We think there is a tremendous opportunity to take everything we've learned operating professional hockey stores and create something special for Dirty Birds fans here in Charleston."

The relationship will begin with a complete renovation of the existing retail space at GoMart Ballpark. Destroyer plans to transform the store into The Zone Charleston and develop a broader merchandise assortment and retail experience for fans attending Dirty Birds games.



"We're not just coming in and putting our name on the existing store," Bouchy said. "We're going to completely renovate the space and build The Zone Charleston into a destination inside the ballpark. We want fans to walk in and immediately feel like this is the place to get Dirty Birds merchandise."

The Zone Charleston will have a role that extends beyond the Dirty Birds' regular baseball season. Destroyer will also operate the team store during Dirty Birds Light the Night, the ballpark's annual holiday event running from November through January 1.

"One of the things that makes this opportunity particularly exciting is that GoMart Ballpark is active beyond the baseball season," Bouchy said. "Light the Night gives us an opportunity to operate during the holiday season and introduce The Zone to people who may be visiting the ballpark for an entirely different experience. We see a lot of potential in making the store a year-round part of what's happening at the ballpark."

Destroyer will also operate The Zone Charleston during the annual West Virginia University vs. Marshall University baseball game hosted at GoMart Ballpark.

For Bouchy, the annual matchup adds another personal connection to the new operation.

"The West Virginia-Marshall game is one we're really looking forward to," Bouchy said. "As a WVU graduate, obviously I'll have a little personal interest in that one. But from a retail standpoint, you have two universities with incredibly passionate fan bases coming together in Charleston. We think The Zone can become a great retail destination for that event and give fans of both schools another reason to visit the store when they're at the ballpark."

Bouchy's relationship with West Virginia University extends beyond his time as a student. In 2013, WVU recognized him with its Sport Management Graduate Alumnus of the Year Award, honoring his career in the professional sports industry.

"Receiving that recognition from WVU was one of the great honors of my professional career," Bouchy said. "Now, more than a decade later, it's exciting to have our company putting down some roots in West Virginia. I hope The Zone Charleston becomes something we're operating here for a very long time."

For Destroyer, the agreement also represents the continued growth of a business segment that developed from the company's roots in promotional products and merchandise.

Destroyer began operating professional sports team stores through its relationship with the Grand Rapids Griffins of the American Hockey League. The experience of working directly with fans and seeing firsthand which products resonate at retail eventually became an important part of the company's overall sports merchandise business.

"Operating team stores has taught us an incredible amount about sports merchandise," Bouchy said. "We're not sitting in an office guessing what fans want. We get to see them walk into our stores, pick products up, try them on and ultimately decide what they're willing to buy. That knowledge makes us better retailers, and it also makes us better at everything else we do in the sports merchandise business."

Bouchy said Destroyer sees Charleston as more than simply another location.

"We're excited to become part of the Dirty Birds organization and the Charleston community," Bouchy added. "Our goal is to build The Zone Charleston into something



that Dirty Birds fans are proud of and that becomes an important part of the experience at GoMart Ballpark. Given my connection to West Virginia, I couldn't be more excited about where we're doing it."

About Destroyer Merchandising Company

Destroyer Merchandising Company, LLC operates team retail stores and merchandise operations for professional sports organizations. Its retail business grew from the company's experience operating team stores in professional hockey and now expands into professional baseball with The Zone Charleston.

Destroyer's retail operations complement the broader capabilities of the Destroyer family of companies, which provide custom merchandise, promotional products, apparel and specialty products to professional and collegiate sports organizations throughout the United States and Canada.

About The Zone Charleston

The Zone Charleston is the official team store of the Charleston Dirty Birds at GoMart Ballpark in Charleston, West Virginia. Operated by Destroyer Merchandising Company, the store offers Dirty Birds apparel, headwear, collectibles and other officially branded merchandise and will also operate during special events at the ballpark, including Dirty Birds Light the Night and the annual West Virginia University vs. Marshall University baseball game.

About the Charleston Dirty Birds

The Charleston Dirty Birds are a professional baseball team based in Charleston, West Virginia, competing in the Atlantic Professional Baseball League. The team plays its home games at GoMart Ballpark.

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