

## Germain Arena 10-year anniversary: SW Florida sports fans share their thoughts and memories

By Naples Daily News staff report

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Daily News readers share their thoughts and memories about the 10-year anniversary of Germain Arena:

### **No Germain, no Mrs. Kornblue**

People call the arena different names, but I call it one of the most important tools that brought me the family that I now have and love.

If there were no Germain Arena, there would be no Florida Firecats. And if there were no Firecats, I would not have relocated to Southwest Florida. And if I had not moved here, I would not have met my incredible wife, Andrea, who grew up in the Estero area. We have been happily married for four-plus years, have a 2-year-old boy, Ty, and another boy due any day now.

After six seasons as the Firecats place-kicker, I have many wonderful memories, but two stand out. The first was the 2004 Arena Cup championship game. The second was kicking a game-winning PAT in the conference semifinal four days after my son was born. My wife was listening to the game at home with him and said his first smile came right after that PAT.

— *Brandon Kornblue, Florida Firecats kicker 2001-06*

### **Goon gets a lawyer ... with a stick**

If there is a lasting memory for myself and Germain (TECO) Arena, it has to be the night of Dec. 23, 1998.

It was the Everblades against the Miami Matadors. My wife and I were sitting directly across from the team benches. I noticed that after most visiting team penalties a fan, sitting behind the penalty box, was "jawing" with their players through the glass. I soon realized that I knew two of the now "alleged" hecklers. They were, Joe Scott (now deceased), who was the "Joe" of the 96 K-Rock "Joe and Stan Show," and Brian Howe, former lead singer of the group Bad Company, who resides in the area.

It was what I believe the second period, John Badduke, a designated "goon" for the Matadors, was penalized and sent to the box. Openly angry, Badduke entered the box. He was met by the "alleged" heckler, who I found out later to be, the honorable attorney Michael F. Hornung. Hornung appeared to say something to Badduke that I assumed was not entirely flattering.

Badduke, at that time turned, his back to his newfound fan and slammed his stick over his shoulder against the glass. If there ever was a building flaw in the arena, it was found at that time. There was about a one-inch gap between the Plexiglas sections surrounding the arena, and Baddukes stick found that gap that Hornung's skull had been temporarily filling.

While I can't say I heard the thud, I could see even at that distance, Hornung's eyes roll to the back of his head, like that of a white shark feeding on a seal. Soon there was a commotion behind the bench, as a group led the attorney out of the arena.

My next viewing of Michael, who I can now call a friend, thankfully was not in a casket, but was of him and his

two cronies coming out of the first aid room. Michael, visibly shaken and sporting a bloodstained gauze wrapped around his skull, looking much like one of pipers in the Battle of Waterloo, was being supported by both. Today, the lasting affects of that blow are known only to Michael and his family.

— *Greg Cross*

### **My top 10 memories**

No. 10 — Firecats winning the af2 championship

No. 9 — Last game that the Florida Sea Dragons (basketball) played at Germain. The worst product to ever perform at Germain.

No. 8 — Josh Groban concert

No. 7 — Blades losing to Trenton in Kelly Cup Finals, and Leon Hayward after the series telling me he is No. 1 with a finger gesture

No. 6 — AC/DC playing in a local radio station hurricane fundraiser with local guitarist Cliff Williams

No. 5 — Former lead singer of Bad Company Brian Howe getting married at halftime of a Firecats game and being in the wedding party

No. 4 — Sarah Palin

No. 3 — Blades opening night at TECO, hockey finally hits Southwest Florida

No. 2 — Elton John concert, the first major performer to appear at Germain.

No. 1 — Blades winning Game 5 against Reading in the playoffs. Germain never had that much electricity. It felt like a major hockey venue.

— *Michael F. Hornung*

### **Volunteers paid in full**

I have been a volunteer goal judge for the Everblades and the ECHL since the team's inception. My wife, Lee, is a press box volunteer for the past five years.

Germain Arena is one of the very best sports complexes. It has a wonderful family atmosphere, reasonable ticket prices and is exceptionally clean. It's a delightful place to work. Over the years, players come and go. I guess my favorite was Everblades forward Steve Saviano. Although we are in the early stages, this season's team appears to be as good as any from the past. Size, speed and experience, well balanced. Outstanding goaltending. Could be a great 2008-09 season. Unfortunately, call-ups and injuries could take their toll.

— *Irv Sherwood*

### **NARCh madness is the best**

Moving here almost 11 years ago, it's safe to say that our family has seen a lot at Germain (TECO, as we call it) Arena. Having three boys, now ages 17, 15, and 12, who at one point or another were all involved in the ice hockey program there, you could say we have spent a lot of time at the arena. Our youngest plays for the Jr Everblades Peewee AA team now. Our boys started skating up there when roller hockey was played there in the summers. Yes, they did have a recreational roller hockey league there.

We've seen many concerts (Cher, Elton John), shows (Disney, Larry the Cable Guy) and many hockey games.

I would have to say our favorite event would be NARCh, the North American Roller Hockey Championships. NARCh brings people from all over the United States to play roller hockey. All three of our boys participate in this tournament. Our youngest, Nicholas, even won the Silver Division one year. It's an exciting time and gives the kids of our area something to do and look forward to each time it is here.

— *Patty & Ed Cafone*

*Share your memories in the comments section below*

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