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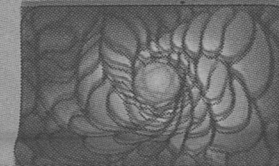
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a e SPORTS

IWFL Hall of Fame Follows the New York Sharks

Women's Football Team Honored

BY MERLE EXIT

Women's tackle football took its place on the treasure map as a New York Sharks display was unveiled at the Museum of World Treasures in Wichita, Kansas on November 4, along with the official announcement that the Independent Women's Football League (IWFL) will make the museum the home of the IWFL Football Hall of Fame.

"It is just the beginning of a long relationship we plan to have with the New York Sharks and the IWFL," declared Lon Smith, director of sales and marketing for the museum.

"The Museum of World Treasures has agreed to offer these great athletes a well-deserved place in history, and we are very excited to work with them on this ground-breaking partnership," stated Laurie Frederick, Chief Executive Officer of the IWFL. "We've known all along how tremendous these women are and the sacrifices they make to play this sport. Now the rest of the world can too," she added.

"Women's full contact football is about to explode in popularity and we want to be a part of this exciting new sports offering," stated Mike Noller, President and CEO of the Museum of World Treasures. "This means an annual, national level induction ceremony and convention; and national recognition on team and league websites, along with possible mentions on nationally syndicated TV programs, along with similar possible coverage in national publications."

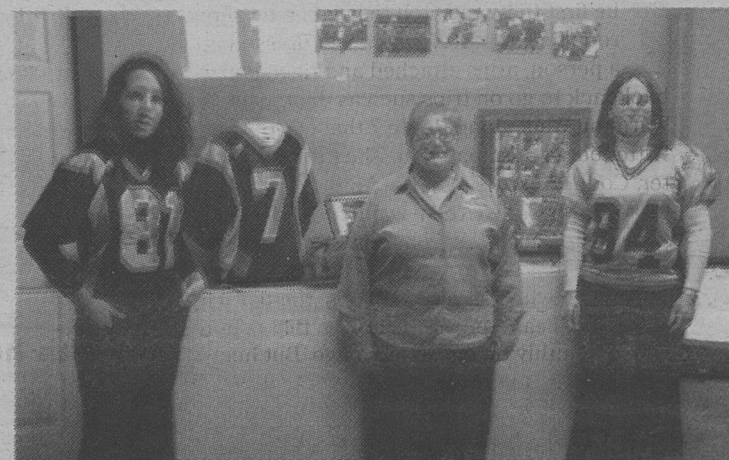
It was during a press trip to Wichita, and view of the museum's sports memorabilia, that I suggested the exhibit, and along with Sharks photographer James Dockery, chose the set of photos and asked the team to sign one of the official IWFL footballs.

The display will be the first permanent museum exhibit (last year I took on the task of getting a signed football in a temporary display at the Pro Football Hall of Fame) in regards to a women's sport that has not gotten much media attention. Sharks players Diana Gonzalez and Jen Blum flew down for the event while members of the local

media were on hand to interview these two wide receivers.

As the public and Museum of World Treasures board sat waiting for the unveiling, Lon

Later that evening we were treated to a great dinner at the nearby Larkspur restaurant. Joining us was: Michael K. Noller; founders Jon and Lorna Kar-



(L to R) Diana Gonzalez, Merle Exit, and Jen Blum.

PHOTO PROVIDED COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF WORLD TREASURES

Smith approached the podium and spoke highly of the achievements of the New York team. After Jen, Diana, and myself, as the New York team's publicist, each voiced our enthusiasm, Lon presented a Certificate of Appreciation signed by Michael K. Noller. After pointing out the team's winning streak and NFL's Junior Player Development Program, I then emphasized that no player can achieve greatness without a team, as no team can exist without a league.

The exhibit was revealed with much applause. What originally began as a display featuring a framed collage of photos and a signed football, grew as owner Andra Douglas had submitted a photo taken at the Women's Sports Foundation annual dinner as well as her jersey. Lon chose several action shots that were placed above and in the display case creating an extremely impressive presentation.

In addition, a CD depicting highlights of the 2006 season was set up on a "loop" and shown on a monitor which allows visitors to experience the action of both the New York Sharks as well as other teams of the IWFL; including the Manchester Freedom and the Montreal Blitz, two teams accessible to Vermont residents.

datzke; and the Coleman Company's Director of Global Continuous Improvement, Steve Moore.

What did Diana have to say about the whole experience?

"We were treated and given the respect NFL players would have been given. Lon Smith, director of sales and whom we dealt with most of the time, was great! He is pro-feminist and shares many of the ideals to excel women's athletics. The presentation at the museum was great. Several channels were there and this is the type of publicity that our league needs."

"Lon seemed excited about the relationship with the IWFL as a whole, but also is making big efforts to push women's football to the public," Diana continued. "More importantly, I've realized how crucial it is for us as players to maintain an image and work hard to be role models for other young ladies. I hope we can get the recognition we deserve to inspire others and make this team and league big!"

Hey Vermont - it's your turn to tackle the task of taking on a tough sport! ▼

➔ Merle Exit is publicist for the New York Sharks. Learn more by going to her Web site at www.merleswhirls.com.