

Let's think big when the Cell Center reopens

Written by Scott Unash

Tuesday, 25 January 2011 18:33 - Last Updated Thursday, 27 January 2011 17:17



It's been a significant last 10 days for the city of Cedar Rapids and the U.S. Cellular Center.

First it was announced that the 2011 Girls State Volleyball Tournament will remain in the city. This was in jeopardy because the tournament's home since 1991, the U.S. Cellular Center, is going to be closed for renovation, forcing the IGHS AU to look for another site. After much deliberation, and a last second push by Sioux City, the tournament will temporarily move to the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena for 2011. This is huge news for the city and the surrounding area.

The state tournament has pumped in a tremendous amount of revenue into the metro area over its run and if that money left, particularly post-flood, the entire metro as well as the corridor would have taken a hit. The IGHS AU has not guaranteed that the tournament will stay in Cedar Rapids beyond 2015, when the contract with U.S. Cellular Center expires, but hopefully that will be a formality after it sees the improvements made.

Speaking of the U.S. Cellular Center.

My latest visit to the lady-in-orange was last Saturday for the Girls Rivalry Saturday basketball games. Before we went on the air with our two broadcasts, I wanted to look around and see the behind-the-scenes areas before the transformation begins in a couple of months. I wanted to be able to compare and contrast it with the "new" setting after it has been completed.

To say that changes are needed is an understatement.

The locker rooms are amazingly small by mid-70s standards, when the place was built. There are only six lockers in the room I saw, that was housing a team of 12 to 15 players. The team room area at the front is so small that everyone needs to stand before the game and during halftime, although some teams require that of their players at any rate.

Let's think big when the Cell Center reopens

Written by Scott Unash

Tuesday, 25 January 2011 18:33 - Last Updated Thursday, 27 January 2011 17:17

The Green Room, where the officials and organizers gather also is very inadequate. Very small and nothing for amenities ... and this room is where the "stars" would gather for performances! To say a big change was needed is like saying the Titanic hit an ice cube that night!

After the arena is re-opened and the events come back, and hopefully they will, it is time to get some bigger sports events in the Cell Center. The Boys and Girls Rivalry Saturday events along with the State Volleyball Tournament, Dual Wrestling and substate basketball finals games are great, but we need to look at a bigger stage.

It's time for some college basketball games again in the building as well as what I would like to see the most a holiday basketball tournament that brings in teams from all over the Midwest. I think it could work in a new state-of-the-art arena.

Remember, you have to think big to get big things.