

Fans Returning to Sport Playbook- 2

Since I left you, I believe in Delaware enroute to the Carolina's, the journey has been full of the unexpected.

Biggest surprise, everywhere I go I'm finding hockey fans. A diehard Leaf fan in North Carolina whose dad works for the Durham Bulls (neither of them have played hockey), 5 of the 7 front office staff in Biloxi Shuckers AA team including Biloxi's President of Hockey, and the owner of Planet Fitness Delaware who included a 1-month pass and a Gatorade because Connor McDavid and I were both from Ontario.

Other discoveries, from NYC to Florida it feels like every road is toll. They range from .50 cents to \$17.00 and when I pull up or get scanned in the sky for future mail, I can't even guess what the fee will be. The good news, from Florida to Texas they don't exist. What does exist are bridges, long bridges and more bridges. Some run for feels like 15 miles and they're all over water. The other footnote, whatever time someone tells you it takes between 2 places, add 50%.

Economic climate: Everywhere you go you see help wanted signs. The stimulus packages vary between states and for the heavy subsidized states the inability to get staff as sports returns with fan capacity is noticeable. On the game day side, last week the Durham Bulls were looking to hire 100 people for their opening day May 11th and they couldn't even get people to show up for the interview. Wizards, Caps and Carolina Hurricanes were looking to bring back people who were Furloughed and needed between 10-20 Full time new staff.

Hotel prices: Florida, nuts. Hotels off the busy highways as people are all flocking to Florida, are full fare. The major cities that are still vacant due to office towers not re-opened, hotel bargains. My 2.5 star off the highway in Newark Willington was more expensive than my rooms in Washington, Houston and Dallas which were all 4 stars. That said to park in Washington (no connection to S&D) was slightly less than my hotel room.

Sports atmospheres: Overall they've been pretty good, but it's an adjustment to not have fans around. Orlando FC with the highest capacity was the best atmosphere (well done CS) and for minimal capacity, the Phillies with a terrific game day operations staff did the best job given the limitations. Being in Suites feels the most normal which as I read this sounds pompous which wasn't the intention.

People to say Thanks too for being the Stars of my second week leg.

My kids: They Zoom me every night which when you hate being alone is the best way to end everyday.

Kelly who came to Florida when I was coming thru that State and quite frankly, is just awesome.

Ryan the Raptor who made the 30-mile drive from Tampa (Florida highways are rammed) for a breakfast on my schedule.

My Collingwood childhood next door neighbour Shawn Corbishley who made time and picked up lunch yesterday in Houston.

My event hosts in Charlotte, Orlando, Houston, Biloxi and Dallas tonight whose insight and guesting in their buildings makes the Playbook meaningful.

Tom McDonald for making the Mavs vs Raptors game happen. Thanks, TMAC.

Pat Ryan- Not only has he opened up his network to support this Playbook, he's also maybe the most loved name I hear about on every team visit. When sports return to normal after this ticketing crisis, I hope Pat is properly recognized for the vital role he played.

Tonight, after my visit with the Mavs, I start my longest leg to Des Moines Iowa to meet Eric Grundfast from the Iowa Wild. Trust me, if I didn't think Eric was one of the best Business Development creative minds in Sports and a really good person, I would have skipped this 11-hour leg.

I lied; the second update wasn't shorter.