

# DAKOTA PRO FOOTBALL

## Bismarck Bucks

### SB2214



***SPORTS***



**We have more collegiate championship titles than any other state in football and hockey, yet we have NO professional sports franchises in either sport.**





# Former Professional Sports in North Dakota Defunct or Relocated

- ❖ Bismarck Bulls (hockey) 92-93
- ❖ Fargo-Moorhead Beez (basketball) 95-02
- ❖ Dakota Wizards (basketball) 95-12
- ❖ Magic City Snow Bears (basketball) 96-02
- ❖ Bismarck Blaze (football) 99-00
- ❖ Bismarck Roughriders (football) 02-03
- ❖ Fargo-Moorhead Jets (hockey) 03-08
- ❖ Minot SkyRockets (basketball) 05-09
- ❖ FC Fargo (soccer) 15-16
- ❖ Bismarck Bucks (football) 2016-22

# Leadership

## Greg Schuh

General Manager

- ❖ Worked in professional sports management since 1998
- ❖ Managed both professional hockey and football
- ❖ Has worked in over 100 venues throughout the country
- ❖ Responsible for team safety and medical management

## Heidi Ripplinger

Vice President of Operations

- ❖ Worked with the Bismarck Bucks since 2019 Season
- ❖ Nominated for Executive of the Year
- ❖ Member of the Board of Directors for the IFL
- ❖ Served on the Executive Board for the IFL





# WHO WE ARE: Bismarck Bucks

- ❖ Inaugural Season: 2017
- ❖ Members of the Indoor Football League (IFL)
- ❖ We are solely owned by BEK Communications Cooperative since June 2019. BEK is 70-year-old North Dakota Cooperative.
- ❖ We make a positive impact in local communities by providing family-friendly sports entertainment.
- ❖ We have had over 120,000 in-venue spectators since 2017.
- ❖ All 16 games are broadcast LIVE on BEK Sports Network, local cable, satellite and over-the-air with 8 home games held at the Bismarck Event Center.



# PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL TEAMS

NFL	32 teams
XFL	8 teams
USFL	8 teams
IFL   CIF   NAL	31 teams

**79 TEAMS**



# Medical & Workers Compensation

## Professional Team Options – **EXCEPT** for North Dakota

- ❖ League Mandated Program
- ❖ Open Marketplace Healthcare Providers
- ❖ Cash / Barter Partnerships
  - ❖ Without exemption, healthcare providers are prohibited
- ❖ State Mandated Workers Comp Program
  - ❖ Exempting Professional Athletes

# State Mandated Workers Compensation language

- ❖ **Wyoming:** Wyoming excludes professional athletes from its definition of employee however the state requires that professional teams retain *private insurance coverage* for any work-related disabilities.

**WY ST § 27-14-102(a)(vii)(F) 2014**

- ❖ **Ohio:** **Elective Coverage.** Allows professional sports teams to elect to cover any work-related injuries through the states workers compensation system **OR** through private insurance coverage. Teams must submit evidence of external coverage in order to avoid coverage through the state's mandated workers' compensation system.

**OH ST § 4123.54(K) 2014**

- ❖ **Washington:** Professional and semi-professional athletic teams who regularly play games outside of the state are to complete a *Sport Player Coverage Agreement* designating the insurance carrier or state providing coverage.

**WA Employers Guide to Workers Compensation:**

**Publication F101-002-000 09-2016**



# IFL Safety & Medical Standards

## IFL Requires:

- ❖ General Liability Policy
- ❖ Workers Compensation Insurance
- ❖ Medical Coverage
  - ❖ General Manager certifies compliance with the IFL Medical Procedures and Controls
  - ❖ Annual Certification of Player Equipment following the NOCSAE certification process
  - ❖ Certified Athletic Trainer must be present at all practices and games
    - ❖ Mandatory compliance using the NFL Concussion Protocol - ImPACT Baseline Assessment
    - ❖ Mandatory Pre-participation and Post season Physical Exam
    - ❖ On-field Injury Evaluation and Treatment
  - ❖ Field Safety Standards
    - ❖ Certified by General Manager
    - ❖ Trained EMT Services present for all games
    - ❖ Safety standards confirmed by 5 Certified IFL Officials prior to each game

# Bucks ND WSI Timeline

**11.2021**

## Step 1 Annual Review

- ❖ Each year prior to the season our organization meets with WSI staff to review the previous and upcoming seasons.
- ❖ Annual review resulted in the Bucks being notified premiums will increase from \$31,931 to \$484,552.

**4.2022**

## Step 2 Find a solution

- ❖ For the past year we have spoken to WSI about finding a solution to the rate structure which makes it impossible for the Bucks to operate in ND. In the Fall of 2022 WSI suggested we present the issues to their Board with the understanding they could provide an exception.

**10.2022**

## Step 3 WSI Presentation

- ❖ Presented why the current model in place does not work for Dakota Pro Football as well as any professional sports team in North Dakota. We asked for an exemption on Medical and Rehab and to utilize state long-term disability.
- ❖ WSI Board said they could not provide an exception and were merely an advisory Board. They suggested any changes would need to be pursued through legislation

**12.2022**

## Step 4 Determination

- ❖ Our attorney met with the attorney for WSI to draft appropriate language and determine a suitable section for the change.


**01.2023**

## Step 5 Bill Presentation SB2214

- ❖ Bill ONLY targets a very small employer classification, professional sports athlete.
- ❖ Passing this bill remedies the structural impediment facing all professional sports.
- ❖ SB2214 addresses a team's inability to manage/reduce the medical costs portion of insurance and its inability to manage the excessive use and benefits by professional athletes after they leave North Dakota.



# **SB2214 Enables market coverage for pro-athletes**

- ❖ The league **REQUIRES** professional athletes have coverage.
  - ❖ **WE NEED** the ability to go to the open market to solve this issue.
  - ❖ **WE NEED** to have the ability to meet the coverage obligations of our players.
- 
- ❖ **SB2214** allows us the freedom to choose, in an open market, the coverage necessary to protect our professional athletes and manage their care after they leave North Dakota.

# **Bismarck Bucks: Economic Impact**

**Public & Private Partnership REACH**

**- 124 Businesses in ND**

**Direct Economic Activity**  
**\$780,000 annually**

**Indirect Economic Activity**  
**\$445,000 annually**

**Total Economic Impact**  
**\$1,225,000 Annually**

Meals, hotels, air & bus transportation, team housing, facilities, game day costs, equipment, media & advertising, staff, player and game day payroll



# **Bismarck Bucks: Community Benefits**

## **Faith and Community Outreach**

### **– 67 Organizations**

- ❖ Family Entertainment
- ❖ Community Pride
- ❖ Mentorship e.g. Kids & Youth Camps
- ❖ Tourism
- ❖ Professional Sports is an Important Mechanism to Promote Equity and Inclusion
- ❖ Regardless of Socioeconomic background, Race, Religion, Language, etc.
- ❖ Mission is Centered Around Providing Opportunities For Youth

## **SB2214 is a modification to the current Workforce Safety Insurance program.**

**In its' current state, WSI's current requirements create an unintentional structural impediment that prohibits the development of any professional contact sport in North Dakota.**

- ❖ Professional contact sports with significant intentional physical contact between athletes are a unique form of employment.
- ❖ All professional sports leagues require their teams have acceptable minimum standards of medical and worker's compensation insurance policies in place prior to each playing season.
- ❖ North Dakota is the ONLY state in the country that does not allow an alternative to the State Mandated plan for athletes of professional contact sports.
- ❖ Currently, every level of injury (from a bruised forearm to a torn ACL) has to go through the same fixed medical & claims procedures. This system is not workable for professional contact sports.
- ❖ Having professional sports teams in North Dakota creates positive economic impact.
- ❖ Professional sports teams provide immeasurable benefits and value to children and adults in our communities.
- ❖ If SB2214 is enacted, professional sports teams in North Dakota will continue to provide athletes (employees) with exceptional medical care and rehabilitation with the goal to have them back in the workforce through medical clearance or transitional duty.























































  
**FURRY FRIENDS**  
rescue















