

Temporary loge boxes find audience at minor league ballparks



**BREAKING
GROUND**
DON MURET

The trend of developing flexible group spaces where fans can hang out at the ballpark has not been lost on sports architect **Jonathan Cole**.

Cole, a principal with **Pendulum Studio** in Kansas City, started his own company in January 2008 after working 16 years for **360 Architecture**, **Populous** and **HNTB**, three of the larger sports design firms in town.

At the same time, Cole formed a company called **Modular Products** that designs temporary loge boxes for outdoor stadiums at a fraction of the cost to produce permanent suites. It's finding a niche at the minor league level, where stadium construction costs average \$25 million.

One aluminum structure packaged with 15 swivel chairs, drink rail, buffet space, mini-refrigerator and roof cover costs \$35,000, according to Cole. He works with a fabricator to build the loge boxes, drink rails and several other affordably priced products for arenas and stadiums.

By comparison, Cole said, a standard

enclosed suite made of steel and elevated above the concourse traditionally costs \$150,000 to \$175,000 a unit.

Modular Products' first installation of loge boxes was midway through the 2009 season at **Modern Woodmen Park** in Davenport, Iowa, home of the Quad Cities River Bandits. Cole was familiar with the facility after serving as lead designer for a 2004 renovation when he worked for **Populous**.

One full season later, four loge boxes with room for up to 60 people are filled for almost every game after the River Bandits took out 1,000 bench seats at the top of the bleacher section on the third-base side, said **Kirk Goodman**, general manager for the River Bandits, Class A affiliate of the St. Louis Cardinals.

The loges have hit the mark for firms that need smaller group spaces to entertain customers, Goodman said.

Loge box seats cost \$20 a person and include food and non-alcoholic drinks for a seat that would otherwise cost \$5 to \$8, Goodman said. The River Bandits sell small and large kegs of beer for \$125 and \$225, respectively, that slide into the mini-fridge.

Cole said the refrigerators can also be connected to the stadium's point-of-sale system, allowing the ballpark operator to monitor consumption and bill the cus-



Modular Products put four loge boxes in the Quad Cities River Bandits' ballpark.

tomers by the ounce.

Separately, **Modern Woodmen Park** installed 300 feet of **Modular Products'** drink rail space at the top of the outfield berm, and **BB&T Field**, a new park in Winston-Salem, N.C., installed its drink rails in the facility's premium club.

Cole's innovations have caught the eyes of MLB. Last week, he had a meeting scheduled with one major league team to talk about a potential installation but he declined to identify the club until a deal is signed.

"We've seen with **Target Field** and all of its standing-room positions and drink rail space that the interest is there," Cole said.

Planned \$342M stadium at Stockholm complex will remake Scandinavian facilities scene

BY DON MURET

STAFF WRITER

Stockholm officials will break ground Sept. 10 on a 30,000-seat stadium, the first step in refreshing the city's middle-aged sports complex and expanding its mixed-use elements.

The \$342 million, publicly funded stadium is the future home of **Hammarby**, Sweden's most popular soccer team. **AEG** co-owns **Hammarby**, has operated the complex's four venues since October 2008 and has a deal to manage the new facility when it opens in late 2012.

The retractable-roof stadium will also be able to accommodate ice hockey. It has been selected as a host venue for the 2013 **International Ice Hockey Federation World Championship**, along with the **Ericsson Globe**, the city's 21-year-old arena next door. The **Globe** is also part of the 2012 world championship.

The property's three indoor facilities and **Soderstadion**, the 12,882-seat outdoor stadium where **Hammarby** now plays, make up a sports and entertainment hub that draws 1.4 million visitors annually, most coming from Scandinavia's five-country region. The complex's two smaller arenas are 8,500-seat **Hovet Arena**, home of two professional hockey teams, and the **Annexet**, a 3,500-seat building primarily used for corporate hospitality and conferences. **Hovet Arena** opened in 1962 and is the oldest of the four facilities.

City planners are developing a master plan tied to the new stadium and renovations proposed for the three arenas, a document

they hope to complete by the end of the year. A key part is adding more retail and entertainment options to the hotel, shopping center and restaurants already on site.

Soderstadion will be torn down after the new stadium opens, and the sale of the land it sits on will help pay for construction, said **Marie Lindqvist**, head of communications and guest services for **Stockholm Globe Arenas**, the group formed by **AEG** to manage the facilities.

The city has had early discussions with local developers for what could be built on that parcel when it becomes available, **Lindqvist** said.

"The vision for this area is to build a glass roof to connect the [**Ericsson Globe**] with the shopping center and hotel, so it will be nice and warm all year round," **Lindqvist** said.

The new stadium's flexibility to grow from 30,000 seats for soccer, ice hockey, motorsports and equestrian events to 45,000

seats for concerts fills a programming void in Sweden's capital. To date, **Stockholm** has not had a venue of that size to attract bigger touring shows and sports events.

"Throughout Europe, there are lots of stadiums for different uses but nothing of this quality and size and location," said **Bob Newman**, chief operating officer of **AEG Facilities** in Los Angeles. "Nothing will compare to it in the region or all of Scandinavia."



The planned 30,000-seat stadium (left) would house the **Hammarby** soccer team and fit into **Stockholm's** sports complex next to the **Ericsson Globe** arena (above).



STARTING TIME: Sports designer **Ron Smith** recently visited with **Carolina Panthers** President **Danny Morrison** at the NFL team's training camp to discuss developing an embankment overseeing a practice field into a fan amenity space.

The Panthers have held summer camp at **Wofford College** in **Spartanburg, S.C.**, since 1995, when they entered the league as an expansion team, and **Smith** has designed several upgrades to the school's athletic facilities to meet the Panthers' needs.

Separately, **Smith** and his firm, **McMillan Pazdan Smith** in **Spartanburg**, has carved a niche designing small football stadiums for startup NCAA programs at **Benedict College**, **Campbell University**, **Coastal Carolina** and **UNC Pembroke**.

McMillan Pazdan Smith also designed **E. Claiborne Robins Stadium**, the University of **Richmond's** new \$27 million facility. The **Spiders** open their 9,000-seat building Sept. 18 against **Elon**.

Wofford's Gibbs Stadium, a project **Smith** helped design, opened in 1996 in conjunction with the **Terriers'** move from **NAIA** to **NCAA Division I-AA**. **Morrison** was the school's athletic director at the time.

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To keep crowds flowing in the summer, peak season for tourism but a slow time for arena events, the city built **SkyView**, a pair of glass gondolas on the **Ericsson Globe's** exterior facade. For \$20, visitors can take a 20-minute ride to the top of the spherical building for a spectacular view of **Stockholm**.

SkyView opened in February and is on pace to sell 160,000 tickets in its first year, 40,000 ahead of projections, **Lindqvist** said.

Newman added that the attraction is an early indication of what the complex can do to promote itself as a year-round destination.

"I think there is a definite opportunity for the district, and **Globe Arenas**, to reinvent itself as a great event and leisure destination," he said. "With the new stadium going up, it ties all the parts together to create a whole new product."

City officials are in talks with two other Swedish soccer teams, **AIK** and **Djurgarden**, to become tenants in the new stadium, but no deals have been done, **Lindqvist** said. The owners of those two clubs also own the two hockey teams that play at **Hovet Arena**.

AEG hired **Rossetti** to help plan renovations to the three arenas and develop a revenue analysis of the new stadium, which is being designed by two European firms, **White Architects** and **Arup**.

AEG owns the marketing rights to sell sponsorships and premium seating at the new stadium and is in discussions with potential partners for the facility's naming rights, **Lindqvist** said.