Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Jersey Shore BlueClaws
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Abstract:

The purpose of this case study is to analyze the decisions and actions of the Jersey Shore BlueClaws before, during, and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The BlueClaws are a Minor League Baseball team affiliated with the Philadelphia Phillies. The study starts by providing a look into the traditional business model of the BlueClaws built around entertainment and hosting events from a financial, logistical, and psychological perspective. It then describes the actions of BlueClaws’ management in anticipation of an announcement by Minor League Baseball that the 2020 season would be cancelled. The case focuses on how the Jersey Shore BlueClaws prepared to communicate with their stakeholders and planned for multiple scenarios for the 2020 season.

Jersey Shore BlueClaws:

• The Lakewood BlueClaws were founded on February 28th, 2000. The name was chosen after the organization held a contest in which fans sent their suggestions for the team.
• The Jersey Shore BlueClaws are a Minor League Baseball team. They are/became an affiliate for the Major League baseball team the Philadelphia Phillies on September 20th, 2000.
• In order to include more of the surrounding Jersey Shore area. After 20 years on October 21st, 2020, the Lakewood BlueClaws changed their name and became the Jersey Shore BlueClaws.
• The Jersey Shore BlueClaws primary area of business is in the realm of Event hosting and Event planning.
• The team’s current President and General Manager is Joseph Ricciutti.

The BlueClaws play their regular season games at FirstEnergy Park in New Jersey.

Event Planning:

A major event planning task that the BlueClaws started preparing for in early 2020 was the potential cancellation of the 2020 minor league baseball season. The BlueClaws were prepared to implement a financial plan in the case of the season not taking place. The BlueClaws took action to put together a plan to produce and host events in the form of a firework show, a film series to be held at FirstEnergy Arena, or they would hold a rental-venue event. This event was prepared in the case of the minor league season not taking place.

Questions for fans:

• Do I get a refund?
• Do I roll over tickets into next season?
• Is the season canceled?
• Will games start up later in the season?

COVID-19 Pandemic:

March 12th, 2020: Minor League baseball made an announcement that it would be delaying the start to their season which was originally scheduled to start on April 9th, 2020.

March 13th-14th, 2020: President/GM Joseph Ricciutti and his team began planning out how they would communicate to their fans and partners. They also began planning different scenarios as to how they should move forward.

March 16th, 2020: the BlueClaws were forced to shutdown their facilities and went remote for the time being.

Financial Side:

Self-produced events will be planned and produced in-house. The BlueClaws will not think of and produce on their own. A 3rd party will come to the organization and ask permission to use the venue so that they can host their event.

Logistical Side:

• The BlueClaws will either pay for the event on their own or look for sponsors to co-host an event.
• The BlueClaws will pay for the event on their own and require them to have a permit to the finance the event to be held at their locale.

Psychological Side:

• If the event is a self-produced event for the BlueClaws can be in the form of a firework show, a film series to be held at FirstEnergy Arena, or they would hold a rental-venue event for their loyal fans to enjoy.

The BlueClaws spent this time preparing answers for questions so when the time came in any scenario, they would be ready and not give rushed answers they wanted to pick and choose their words wisely.

Communication:

While preparing answers to questions the BlueClaws also spent this time communicating to their Stakeholders, ticketholders, corporate partners, and elected officials whether it be to reassurance, keeping them up to date thanking them for their patience.

• Sometimes they would contact them to let them know that there wasn’t any new info at all, but it was just to stay connected and reassure them that when new info did come, they would be notified.

Major League Baseball:

• Major League Baseball is broken into 2 leagues the National League and the American League.
• Both the American League and National League are broken into 3 divisions.

• The 2 leagues differences involve their playing styles with American League centering on homeruns and power. While the National League centers on offensive running and pitching.

• Including that in the American League each team is allowed a Dedicated Hitter when it’s the pitchers turn to bat. But the teams in the National League do not have a Dedicated Hitter to bat for their pitcher.

Minor League Baseball Levels:

References:

COVID-19 Aftermath:

Scenario:

• These are the 3 scenarios that the BlueClaws prepared for as soon as the season was delayed.

1st Scenario: What happens if the season is delayed?

2nd Scenario: What happens if the season is canceled?

3rd Scenario: What happens if the season does take place, but you can’t have fans in the ballpark.

• Games start up later in the season?

Questions for the press:

Tell us about the BlueClaws?

How are the BlueClaws going to handle the cancelation of the season?

Is your season canceled?

Tell us about the BlueClaws?

Will games start up later in the season?

Do I get a refund?

Do I roll over tickets into next season?

Is the season canceled?

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