Public Information Office
602 S. Main Street
Joplin, Missouri 64801
417-624-0820 Ext. 204
417- 625-4707 (Fax)
www.joplinmo.org

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SUBJECT: Professional Soccer coming to Joplin Athletic Complex

CONTACT: Lynn Onstot, Public Information Officer, City of Joplin
417-624-0820, ext. 204

Today, Joplin City officials were pleased to announce the Joplin Athletic Complex will serve as the home field to a new professional soccer team. During a press conference, Ed and Alison Hershewe, owners of Joplin's newest professional sports team, Joplin Demize, introduced this new program for sports enthusiasts who have followed soccer for a number of years.

"Our son Thomas plays soccer, and I thought having a professional team in our community would not only be good for athletes to watch, but also for families to enjoy this caliber of play," said Hershewe. "It will also serve as an opportunity to develop soccer, on both sides of the spectrum, including the youth soccer at the recreational and competitive levels."

Joplin Demize will be part of the National Premier Soccer League. As part of a national league that operates in the 4th Division of the United States Soccer pyramid, NPSL teams are eligible to participate in the U.S. Open Cup through their affiliation with the U.S. Soccer Federation (USSF) and the United States Adult Soccer Association (USASA). The NPSL is the fastest-growing national soccer league in the U.S., operating in 70+ markets across the country. Two Major League Soccer (MLS) clubs, D.C. United and the New York Red Bulls, operate U-23 squads in the NPSL.

NPSL Commissioner Michael Hitchcock noted that the league is proud to add this team to their league and look forward to playing in Joplin. Joplin Demize will begin play in the Central Conference of the Midwest Region in 2014.

"The NPSL is looking forward to bringing high level soccer to the great city of Joplin, Missouri," NPSL Commissioner Michael Hitchcock remarked. "One of the goals of NPSL is to grow the game of soccer in every city in the U.S. so we're excited to help inspire local youth players to reach their potential while providing soccer fans with a team to support in their own backyard."

Joplin Demize will play at the Joplin Athletic Complex. Parks Director Chris Cotten stated that the staff has been making improvements to the facility to meet the league's requirements. "Work has been going on for the past few months and will continue through the spring to ready the complex for the arrival of the pro club this summer."

The City is re-purposing existing assets and will utilize the operations building for locker rooms. Spectator seating is provided through the removal and reinstallation of the bleachers from the nonoperational Gabby Street Park. The Hershewe family also provided a facility sponsorship to help with upgrades.

Players from Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas and Illinois expect to make up the talent pool for the Demize. Players from local colleges like Northeastern Oklahoma A&M, Neosho, Southwest Baptist University, Crowder, and Missouri Valley will now have a place to showcase their talents and the Demize will continue to bring in top international talent to round out the roster.

The NPSL attracts top amateur talent from around the United States. The NPSL does not have any age limits or restrictions, incorporating both college players and former professional players alike. Teams are allowed to pay small salaries to players that are willing to give up their amateur status.

The NPSL began in 2003 in the Men's Professional Soccer League and in 2005 changed its name to the National Premier Soccer League. In 2003 there were 6 teams in the league, for this summer there are projected to be 82 teams in the league, making it the fastest growing league in the United States.

Chris Hanlon will serve as Director of Soccer Operations in addition to serving on the coaching staff with Armen Tonianse, Luis Percovich, and Keegan Hudson. Hanlon has extensive experience, having played as goalkeeper with the University of Pittsburgh and then with the United Soccer League and Major Indoor Soccer League. He has served in a variety of roles on the coaching and management side of the game, including time as a general manager, head coach, operations director, and director of coaching. Tonianse and Percovich both have much experience playing soccer with collegiate teams. Tonianse is a U.S. Soccer Federation "C" licensed coach noted for working with player ages 15 to 18.

Organizers of the team anticipate players from Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas and Illinois to provide the talent pool for the Demize.

"Players from area colleges, such as Northeastern Oklahoma A&M, Neosho, Southwest Baptist University, Crowder, and Missouri Valley will now have a place to showcase their talents," said Hanlon. "And the Demize will continue to bring in top international talent to round out the roster."

To get more information about this professional soccer team, go to www.demizesoccer.com or email Info@joplindemize.net