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Golden State Warriors executives Jerry West, Kirk Lacob and Jim Weyermann introduce the new logo for the franchise's Development League team Tuesday at the Crow's Nest.

SC Warriors unveil new logo, arena sponsor

Basketball
Largest D-League naming rights deal goes to Kaiser Permanente

By JIM SEIMAS

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SANTA CRUZ — The Santa Cruz Warriors, the Golden State Warriors' Development League affiliate, have a logo and sponsor for their soon-to-be-built arena.

Both were unveiled Tuesday at an exclusive meet-and-greet with Warriors' brass on a packed second floor of the Crow's Nest.

Midway through an hourlong presentation announcing their expected move, Kirk Lacob — the director of basketball operations for the Golden State Warriors — stepped in front of local business leaders, politicians and media, and flipped over a giant white piece of particle board, unveiling the logo for the 2012-13 Santa Cruz Warriors.

Lacob revealed a large, blue "W" with trident-look-

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WARRIORS

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ing endpoints emblazoned over a yellow circle. Underneath the circle, in capital block letters: "SANTA CRUZ WARRIORS," the team's name bending around the lower half of the circle.

"Yeah, it's bold and powerful, but the thing I like is the first thing you notice is 'Santa Cruz,' not the 'W,'" said NBA legend Jerry West, a member of the Warriors' executive board.

Said spectator Peter Andrade, Kaiser Permanente's senior vice president of sales and account management for California, "I got pretty excited when I saw it. Kirk didn't explain it, the points on the W, but it looks like Poseidon's trident. That's what I thought since it's by the sea."

The gathering's response to the image — whooping and furious clapping — was the sound of a slam dunk.

Mayor Don Lane said he is even more excited to eventually see the team's mascot, whether it will also reflect Santa Cruz's connection to the sea. He also said he expected the community, known more for being peace seekers than warriors, would accept the team's name.

"People are used to the Golden State Warriors," Lane said. "There is a tradition in the (San Francisco) Bay Area of similar progressive attitudes as in Santa Cruz, and it's worked out fine for the Warriors. People recognize it's just a basketball name."

BASKETBALL FEVER

The crowd, also treated to a buffet lunch, apparently is hungry for professional basketball in Santa Cruz, too.

Jim Weyermann, the Warriors' director of new franchise development, said the team has already secured 100 reservations for priority seating — without advertising. That's 300 to 400 tickets sold.

The 74-year-old West — elected to the NBA's All-Star team 14 times — whet the attendees' appetite for basketball by praising the talent level in the D-League.

"They're here to prove a point," West said. "They want to be NBA players and fulfill a childhood dream. Trust me, you'll be entertained."

Lacob pointed out that roughly 25 percent of the NBA's players this year have D-League experience.

He also announced in private that Nate Bjorkgren will return as coach and that



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Basketball legend and Golden State Warriors executive Jerry West holds court in the Crow's Nest with Santa Cruz Mayor Don Lane, Patrice Edwards and Mark Edwards on Tuesday, when West and two other Warrior executives from their NBA Development League team introduced themselves to members of the community.

negotiations are ongoing to return assistants Vitaly Potapenko and Casey Hill. Lacob also expects that half the players on last season's team — which made the playoffs — will return.

"I think people are really going to appreciate this," said Bruce McPherson, a former editor at the Sentinel who later served as California's secretary of state. "I hope they show up to games."

While the deal to move the D-League Dakota Wizards from Bismarck, N.D., isn't complete, headway is being made.

Lacob likened the prospective move to a football metaphor.

"We're in the red zone," he said.

KAISER PERMANENTE ARENA

In addition to unveiling the logo, the Warriors disclosed the naming rights deal for their eventual 3,200-seat arena to be built on Front Street at Spruce Street, near Laurel Street Extension. The winner was a surprise: Fans, welcome to Kaiser Permanente Arena.

The move is a surprise because Kaiser has no presence in Santa Cruz County. Yet.

"It makes sense, since we already have a deal with the Warriors," Andrade said.

Weyermann didn't disclose numbers for the deal, but called it the largest deal in D-League history.

The deal is tied to the current contract Kaiser has with the Warriors. Two years remain on that deal, but there's an option for a five-year renewal period, Weyer-

mann said.

Kaiser's marketing department was unavailable to comment on the pact. Officials with the city, which is providing a \$3.5 million loan to build the arena, said they didn't know how much Kaiser had offered for the naming rights.

Andrade, who didn't have details on the deal, said there's a possibility Kaiser establishes more of a presence in the county, but he couldn't say when or where.

"We've been evaluating Santa Cruz for many years," he said. "And a number of statewide employees have told me they'd love to have [us] there. The coolest thing I heard today were the words 'local, small and community.' If we get there, we need to have local presence. We want to cover the entire Bay Area, and Santa Cruz is in the Bay Area. No commitments, no dates, but customers are interested."

The meet-and-greet was just another step closer to the season, a 50-game slate that begins in mid-November.

The Warriors play 24 home games, 24 away and two contests at neutral sites.

"For the first time, it's become real for everybody," said Lacob, a 23-year-old who attended Menlo School in Atherton and later Stanford University. "And business leaders and others from the community get to be part of it."

Staff writer J.M. Brown contributed to this report.

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