

Memphis Redbirds Now Managed By Global Spectrum

Written by Devon Teeple
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Blues City Baseball, who has managed the Memphis Red Birds since 1998, is no longer the case. It was announced last week that the Pacific Coast League's Memphis Red Birds, is now under management of [Global Spectrum](#). They are the subsidiary of the Philadelphia-based, [Comcast Spectator](#), whose specialty is sports venue management and consulting. They were also involved in Comcast's previous ownership of the Bowie Baysox, Delmarva Shorebirds and Frederick Keys.

Change in management was due in large part to the AutoZone Park bondholders. Memphis was issued a total of \$72 million in bonds in 1998 and defaulted on their March 1st repayment of \$1.625 million. According to a report in the Memphis Commercial Appeal, this is the first time that in the history of the club it has not been able to fulfill its obligations.

"We were approached by the lenders, who had seen what we were able to do in a similar situation five years ago with the Rose Garden in Portland," said Global Spectrum CEO John Page. "That facility had gone bankrupt, and we were able to put it back on the map. We had owned Minor League Baseball teams in the past, so it was natural to get back involved. We want to find ways to generate revenue while preserving the team as a community asset."

The Redbirds are still under contract as an affiliate to the St. Louis Cardinals until 2012, and will remain under current ownership of the [Memphis Redbirds Foundation](#). The Redbirds Foundation is currently the only entity in the country that owns and operates a sports team and a sporting facility. All of the profits are then put back into the Foundation that supports two youth sports programs. [RBI](#)

(Returning Baseball to the Inner City) and [STRIPES](#)

(Sports Teams Returning in The Public Education System). Both programs promote amateur

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sports, education and skills for the future.

Ray Pohlman, President of the Redbirds Foundation says that the conversion gives the team the opportunity to become more efficient.

"Blues City Baseball has done a great job over the last 12 years," Pohlman said. "(Dean Jernigan's) vision brought the Redbirds here, but it was time for a change." The current deal includes a 30-day transitional period that allows Global Spectrum to evaluate all aspects, such as staffing needs and operations. Pohlman is looking ahead to the future while keeping the city of Memphis and the Redbirds in mind, "This is an agreement between the lenders and borrowers in the best interest to keep playing baseball in Memphis," he said. "The fans won't notice any difference."

Current Redbirds President David Chase will remain onboard until the end of the season to make this changeover as smooth as possible. It is unfortunate that this is necessary due to the team's financial needs, but Page is looking at the big picture, "We've only been at this a day and a half," said Page. "We'll take a look at the way things are, versus what we think they should look like, and make some decisions. We want to finish this season strong and move forward with a plan in place".... "This is a team with a great history, playing in a great market," he said. "Our business model is one that can succeed, we've just got to put it into play."

Devon Teeple is a staff member of the Business of Sports Network, which includes The Biz of Baseball, The Biz of Football, The Biz of Basketball and The Biz of Hockey. He is a former professional baseball player with the River City Rascals & Gateway Grizzlies. Devon is a former student within Sports Management Worldwide's Baseball General Manager Class.

He is the founder of The GM's Perspective, is a intern with *The Football Outsiders* and contributor with the Plymouth River Eels. Currently, Devon is a Branch Manager at a financial institution in Southern Ontario Canada. He can be reached at thegmerspective@gmail.com

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