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Destroyer Merchandising Company and Grand Rapids Griffins Extend The Zone Team Store Partnership

Five-Year Extension Continues Relationship That Began in 2007

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Destroyer Merchandising Company, LLC and the Grand Rapids Griffins of the American Hockey League have agreed to a five-year extension of their longstanding partnership for Destroyer to operate The Zone, the Griffins' official team store.

The extension continues a relationship that began nearly two decades ago. Destroyer signed its original agreement with the Griffins on May 27, 2007, to assume full responsibility for operating the team's retail merchandise business and The Zone.

The Griffins are the American Hockey League affiliate of the NHL's Detroit Red Wings and have established themselves as one of the AHL's premier organizations, capturing Calder Cup championships in 2013 and 2017.

What began as a new venture for Destroyer has since grown into one of the company's longest-standing and most meaningful relationships.

"Destroyer has been a valued partner of the Griffins for nearly two decades, and we're pleased to extend our relationship for another five years," said Tim Gortsema, President of the Grand Rapids Griffins. "Jeff and his team understand our organization, our fans and the Grand Rapids market, and we look forward to continuing to grow The Zone together."

For Destroyer founder and CEO Jeff Bouchy, the extension has significance well beyond another business agreement.

"When Tim asked us to take over The Zone in 2007, operating team stores wasn't even on our radar," said Jeff Bouchy, CEO of Destroyer Merchandising Company. "We were a promotional products company, and this was something completely new for us. Nearly 20 years later, it has become a part of our business that we absolutely love and something we don't ever want to stop doing."

Over the course of the relationship, The Zone has given Destroyer the opportunity to work directly with Griffins fans while developing an understanding of the retail side of professional sports that goes beyond simply supplying merchandise.

Bouchy said the company's connection to Grand Rapids and the Griffins organization has become particularly meaningful over the years.

"We genuinely love Grand Rapids and we love this organization," Bouchy said. "After almost two decades, you don't look at a relationship like this as simply a contract. We've spent countless nights in that building, we've gotten to know the people and the fans, and we've watched generations of families come through The Zone. We've also had the privilege of being there for some incredible moments, including two Calder Cup championships. We're incredibly proud to be associated with the Griffins, and we're grateful that they continue to trust us with their retail business."



The experience gained through The Zone also ultimately helped create a new business segment for Destroyer. What was not part of the company's business plan in 2007 has developed into an important extension of its work in professional sports.

"There's something special about being inside the arena and interacting directly with the fans who are buying and wearing the products we create. You learn very quickly what works and what doesn't."

The five-year extension ensures that Destroyer Merchandising Company will continue operating The Zone and overseeing the Griffins' retail merchandise operations while the two organizations build upon a partnership approaching its third decade.

"Twenty years is a long time to do business with anyone," Bouchy added. "The fact that we're extending this relationship again means a tremendous amount to us. We don't take it for granted. Our goal is to keep making The Zone better, keep finding new products Griffins fans are excited about and hopefully be doing this together for many more years."

About Destroyer Merchandising Company

Destroyer Merchandising Company, LLC operates team retail stores and merchandise operations for professional sports organizations. Its retail business grew from the company's relationship with the Grand Rapids Griffins and the operation of The Zone beginning in 2007.

Destroyer's retail operations complement the broader capabilities of the Destroyer family of companies, which provide custom merchandise, promotional products, apparel and specialty products to professional and collegiate sports organizations throughout the United States and Canada.

About The Zone

The Zone is the official team store of the Grand Rapids Griffins, offering Griffins apparel, headwear, collectibles and other officially branded merchandise to fans.

About the Grand Rapids Griffins

The Grand Rapids Griffins are a professional hockey team competing in the American Hockey League and the AHL affiliate of the NHL's Detroit Red Wings. Based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Griffins have won two Calder Cup championships, in 2013 and 2017.

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