

So Cal Chargers – A Win for All Stakeholders

By George Mullen

Chargers win because they outflank the competition from getting into L.A., while still maintaining their San Diego roots and headquarters. Their potential fan-base rises eightfold from 3 million (San Diego County) to over 25 million (23 million Southern Californians from San Luis Obispo to Mexican border plus 2.5 million in adjacent Tijuana / Rosarito / Mexicali). The Chargers become *the* team in the NFL's new #1 mega-media marketplace of 25 million people – leading to significant NFL and Chargers revenue via television, advertising, licensed-merchandising and sellout home games with only four in each city. The franchise value soars. (In this scenario, New York drops to the #2 market with 15 million people and two teams.) (San Diego is currently the #28 media market.)

San Diego wins because the Chargers are retained and become one of the most valuable NFL team franchises. San Diego enjoys enhanced media exposure and economic benefits as team headquarters, while city pride and prestige flourishes. (The only identifiable downside is the loss of “San Diego” in the team name.)

Los Angeles wins by finally having an NFL team with proven staying power. The Chargers already have a significant fan-base in L.A. due to proximity and L.A.'s inability to hold a team. Likewise, the USC name and football tradition translates into instant name traction in the marketplace. (If the Rams or Raiders return to L.A., it is questionable at best that former-fans will reciprocate. Similarly, a new expansion team will take years to develop a fan-base and financial viability.)

Southern California wins by including millions who have never had an NFL team to root for. Most San Diegans, Santa Barbarans, and residents of other cities, will refuse to be L.A. Chargers fans, simply because they are L.A.'s team. It's a city-pride thing. The *So Cal Chargers* eliminates the internecine city-rivalries and gives ownership to all 25 million Southern Californians. *Inclusivity* trumps *exclusivity* every time.

NFL wins because they finally get a team back in America's #2 television-media marketplace, Los Angeles. However, via this uniquely inclusive approach, the market jumps to 25 million people making it the NFL's new #1 mega-media marketplace – leading to significant NFL revenue pick-up via television, advertising, licensed-merchandising, and sell-out games. The NFL wants a team in L.A., but it is a conundrum. You can't stop a billionaire from pulling the plug on a new expansion team if it is losing money. Likewise, allowing the Rams, Raiders or Chargers to relocate to L.A. is a zero-sum game – the NFL gains a team in L.A., but loses one in St. Louis, Oakland or San Diego. The nominal gain is not worth the risk of another L.A. retreat. The *So Cal Chargers*, on the other hand, provides the perfect solution – the Chargers were born in L.A. (1960), already have a significant L.A. fan-base, the approach grows the NFL pie by bringing in millions of Southern Californians who have never had a team, the critical L.A. market gets a team without sacrificing another city, and the NFL retains the option to approve a second L.A. team if the market proves itself viable.

Fans win because all Southern Californians will have a team. As far as San Diego fans specifically are concerned, only a tiny fraction attend games in person. More important to fans, easy sellout home-games equates to no television blackouts. For the fans who do attend, they gain four short road-trip opportunities per year – along with the parties and fun that go with such.

California wins because all Southern California will be activated, and the greatest of NFL rivalries will be born – *So Cal Chargers vs. Nor Cal Raiders or 49ers*. The subsequent annual *NFL California Bowls* will become media and advertising frenzies.

Go *So Cal Chargers!*

Mullen is a native San Diegan, lifelong Chargers fan, and principal of *StudioRevolution.com*.

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