

## Everyone wins in 'Toon Town

Contributed by Gerry Prince  
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On paper, the Montreal Impact were the home team. In reality, the Edmonton Drillers were the fan favourites in last night's NPSL neutral-site clash between the sides at Saskatchewan Place.

Despite the outcome of the tilt, it was a win-win situation for both clubs.

The Impact players racked up a few extra frequent-flyer miles, while the Drillers can now go from Cleveland to Wichita without detouring north through Montreal on their next road trip.

Naturally, SaskPlace compensated the Impact with a percentage of the gate for heading west.

"We have a financial arrangement with compensation to them for bringing their game here," said Scott Ford, marketing and events manager at SaskPlace.

"Obviously, we're also covering (Montreal's) costs for airfare and hotels. I think the Drillers are actually quite happy because it's a bus trip to Saskatoon instead of a flight to Montreal.

"I think it was a win-win situation between Saskatchewan Place, the city of Saskatoon, the Montreal Impact and Edmonton Drillers."

Last night's cameo by the Drillers and Impact may not be the last time they'll roll out the carpet at SaskPlace.

Rumours a group of investors are serious about landing an NPSL expansion franchise for this city of 220,000 began swirling yesterday.

According to Ford, the group will huddle with SaskPlace officials next week.

"They haven't talked to the building about a lease yet, but it's my understanding they they're interested in bringing a franchise into Saskatoon," said Ford, who declined to name names.

**DINING WITH THE ENEMY:** Following the traditional post-game autograph session the Drillers and Impact gathered at Saskatoon's indoor soccer centre for an informal reception hosted by the folks from SaskPlace.

Fortunately, the gathering was nowhere near as spirited as the neutral-site contest itself.

"It's a nice touch because we're all friends," noted Drill coach Ross Ongaro. "For the most part, these are Canadian kids who worked their way through the provincial select programs onto Olympic and national teams. These guys have played together for years, way before indoors even came about."