

Alouettes aren't the Canadiens

Ray Lalonde should have realized that the Canadiens and Alouettes are not just not in the same business, they're not in the same galaxy (Gazette, May 12, "Als part ways with bristly Lalonde"). Larry Smith talks about community, but with the Als it's even more personal than that. Most of the Canadiens' season-ticket holders are corporations buying them for customer relations. The price of hotdogs outrageous? No difference because they don't pay for them. The Als, on the other hand, have a fan base made up of individuals. By and large, Alouettes' season-ticket holders use their tickets, and anything management does is felt immediately and very personally. There were plenty of problems last year, including with the free shuttle bus and a lack of game programs. Basically, what this marketing genius did was bring in the lady from the Bell Centre to inflict her screechy voice while exhorting us to buy overpriced sweaters at the team store. Lalonde had no clue who he was marketing to. I wasn't a great fan of Smith, but he regularly sat in the stands and was certainly able to get a feel for what the fans were feeling. Had Lalonde done the same, he would have felt the withdrawal happening from game to game. Personally, I was at the 1956 game as an 8-year-old when the Als beat the Tiger-Cats 82-14 and have attended virtually all their games since, other than the ones at the Big O. But not this year.

Allan Tanny
Montreal

Gauthier, Lalonde cut from same cloth

By all accounts, former GM

Pierre Gauthier's perceived abrasive, authoritarian, controlling and dismissive style of management contributed to bringing the Canadiens' franchise to its lowest point. Now, it seems that Ray Lalonde has done the same with the Alouettes. While there is no denying Lalonde's considerable marketing skills, he obviously alienated his support staff by requesting they remove family pictures from their desks because he believed it gave the appearance of an unprofessional organization. That had to be perceived as the ultimate insult to those employees and their families. Perhaps Lalonde should have looked to star quarterback Anthony Calvillo, who really knows the importance of family. One can only marvel at the apparent lack of people skills in someone who has risen to the top echelons of sports management. We are all people first, and the Als have always been a first-class community operation. They need to remain so. The team and their fans deserve it.

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