

Real Reasons the ESPN Zone Restaurant Chain Failed

by Baron von Funny

The Walt Disney Company announced this week that they are closing five of their seven remaining ESPN Zone restaurants around the country (after shuttering two previous locations in 2009), stating that the economics of the business were "very challenging." But that response barely scratches the surface of what really happened...

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—For starters, it turns out that people don't really like being sexually harassed while eating. (*Brandon*)

—Kitchen full of food-preparing rats not as charming as *Ratatouille* would lead you to believe. (*Tenessa*)

—Promotional gimmicks like "Make Out with Charley Steiner Night" and "Dave Revsine Nude Poster Day" did not meet projections. (*Mike*)

—Most locations felt less like a Zone and more like a Region. (*Matt*)

—Most diners didn't like the chain's attempt to pass off reheated entrees unsold from the night before on a special "ESPN Classic Zone" menu. (*Jameson*)

—Crushing debt due to lawsuits involving their "Hockey Puck Burger," which was just a regulation hockey puck between two slices of bun. Delicious, fresh-baked, toasted bun... but still. (*Joe*)

—All of the servers hired Scott Boras as their agent. (*Brad*)

—Simply couldn't compete with the new CNN Sector franchise and its signature menu item, the Wolf Blitzer Chili Cheese Fry Kibitzer. (*Brandon*)

—Chris Berman's devastating decision to begin Weight Watchers. (*Mike*)

—When it was realized that not a single member of the waitstaff was banged by Tiger Woods at any of the locations, the consensus was that there was something fundamentally wrong with the way ESPN Zone was doing business. (*Matt*)

—Most people lose their appetite near the actual Tony Kornheiser and Woody Paige; larger-than-life cutouts weren't doing anybody any favors. (*Jameson*)

—All of those giant, blaring TVs caused a surprising number of murder-suicides. (*Tenessa*)

—Not economically viable to have wait and kitchen staff

made up exclusively of famous professional athletes, all of whom were paid a salary commensurate with what they earned on the field. (*Joe*)

—The restaurants aren't closing, they're just joining the Big Ten. (*Mike*)

—Even a 50 ticket payout wasn't enough to make "winning" the Russian Roulette game socially acceptable. (*Matt*)

—The Sean Salisbury Steak was a top seller until the former broadcaster began insisting on delivering each order himself, along with a complimentary photo of his genitals. (*Brandon*)

—Too many birthday celebrations were ruined by having the staff do their table-side rendition of the *SportsCenter* theme. (*Jameson*)

—Refusal to turn the giant plasma screen TVs to important sporting events because, as the head bartender put it, "When *The Cutting Edge* is on, we watch *The Cutting Edge*." (*Mike*)

—The Ron Artest Kidz Menu contained more swearing than you'd think was even possible while still maintaining some semblance of coherent English. (*Matt*)

—Do you people have any idea how expensive barbecue sauce is? Sheesh. (*Tenessa*)

—Customers turned off by unattractive staff, all of whom were required to go on the "John Kruk Diet." (*Joe*)

—Too many curling-themed menu items. (*Mike*)

—Sliders are great, but not when they're thrown at you by Randy Johnson. (*Brandon*)

—Americans wary of eating anywhere near a "zone," having already been burned by the P'zone. (*Jameson*)

—Totally Obama's fault. (*Matt*)

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