



Fit for a king?

BY JOHN CLANTON, THE OKLAHOMAN

At 6-foot-9 inches tall, Renzi Stone fits comfortably Wednesday onto an extra long king-size bed that is 15 inches longer at the Colcord Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City.

NBA-size customers prefer hotel beds with extra footroom

By Steve Lackmeyer
Business Writer

With the NBA coming to town, a bet taken two years ago by Colcord Hotel owner Paul Coury might just be about to pay off.

Coury had only one season to test out the beds when the Hornets were playing at Ford Center, and the results, he said, were encouraging.

"We spent 18 percent more on the beds," Coury said. "Visiting teams fought over those rooms."

But will the Colcord Hotel really be the place to get a glimpse at some of the NBA's biggest star players, both in marquee draw and height?

The Oklahoman needed a really tall person to show how the Colcord's beds measure up and explain the perils of traveling while tall. And who better to pester than Renzi Stone, a 6-foot-9-inch former player with the OU Sooners and a public relations consultant for the Colcord?

It was Stone, president of Saxum Communications, who helped talk Coury into buying 10 extra-long beds — more than enough for the average NBA team. Months before the hotel opened, Coury told Stone he was considering buying large beds just in case the city landed a permanent NBA team.

"I said, 'Forget the NBA,'" Stone said. "Guys like me will spend a lot more nights in a hotel like this than any NBA team will. You'll get the question, and when you say yes, they will be loyal customers forever."

Stone's employees say they're used to arriving at restaurants early to ensure he's not forced into a booth. They show up early for plane flights as well so that Stone can secure a seat in the exit row.

'Like wearing a pair of shoes a size too small'

Stone showed just how significant the difference is by sampling a regular- and NBA-size bed this week at the Colcord. In the regular bed, his ankles and feet dangled over the end —



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Renzi Stone's feet hang over the edge of a king-size bed.

something he's used to.

"Dangling feet become the norm, not the exception," Stone said. "It's like wearing a pair of shoes a size too small. Can you make it around? Sure, but it's not preferable."

Stone said word gets out among tall people, not just NBA players, on where they are best accommodated and he doubts any advertising will be needed by the Colcord this fall.

"Having played with and against a lot of current NBA players, you have certain areas you learn in which to play the system," Stone said. "How to buy shoes (at www.largefeet.com), how to get a seat in the exit row of an airplane (he prefers Continental), and how to get the best bed in a hotel. And it's only at a special type of hotel that you have the right size beds."

Jeff Irwin, general manager, said 12 teams checked into the Colcord during the Hornet's final season at Ford Center. During a recent visit with NBA officials, Irwin learned the league is still very aware that the Colcord went to extra lengths — including room design — to ensure a good fit for players.

"I'd say we have as good, if not better, a crack at getting these teams as anybody else this fall," Irwin said.