Acadiana gets first look at new team

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LAFAYETTE — Acadia’s wild world of sports got a little more crowded Sunday evening when its newest players took to the pond — uh, the field.

The Bayou Bullfrogs professional baseball team made its debut against the USL Ragin’ Cajuns in the inaugural KPEL Classic at Tigue Moore Field. The exhibition game was mostly an exercise in relaxation for the Cajuns, who were fresh off winning their first Sun Belt Tournament title Saturday in Mobile. The Cajuns await word of their NCAA Tournament assignment, which will be announced at 8 p.m. today on ESPN.

Sunday’s game was primarily a dress rehearsal for the frog’s first regular season opener at 7:05 p.m. Thursday at Moore Field against instate rivals, the Alexandria Aces.

“I guess this is a good thing,” said Sidney Alleman, of Lafayette, who brought his 16-year-old son, Trey, to the game. “I mean, I’m sure the front office people know what they’re doing, business-wise, by bringing another professional sports team to town. I just worry about flooding the market, you know?”

“Look at the IceGators,” Alleman continued. “Attendance was down this season. Look at all the gambling venues we have all around us now. And every weekend there seems to be a new festival or another festival or something at the Cajundome. I just hope the economy can sustain it all.”

But Trey Alleman wasn’t ready to let such hefty dollars-and-sense concerns spoil his evening.

“I think the Bullfrogs are way cool,” he said. “I like their purple uniforms and Jerimiah is awesome!”

The aforementioned “Jerimiah” is the Bayou Bullfrogs’ official mascot, an immense emerald croaker who made his on-field debut driving a four-wheeler around the bases, stopping to wave, dance and generally pander to the family crowd.

Like the Louisiana IceGators, the Bayou Bullfrogs have jumped early onto the marketing bandwagon. A huge inflatable frog was strategically positioned just inside the gates at Moore Field, its jaws open wide, beckoning kids to climb inside and jump up and down to their heart’s content. Parents, meanwhile, could remain outside and figure how much money they could spend on Bullfrog caps, shirts, etc.

Also, like the IceGators, commercially-sponsored events (like the Shoney’s Seventh inning Stretch Give-Away) dotted the entire game.

And how did the exhibition game go?

Well, frankly, the Bullfrogs may have thought the wheels had fallen off their welcome wagon. The crowd was clearly in a mood to cheer their Sun Belt Conference champions and that left little room for frog favor.

Daniel Roy, 2, and his father, Kevin Roy, of Carencro, seem to take exception to Jerimiah the Bullfrog, the Bayou Bullfrogs’ mascot, during opening action Sunday at Moore Field.