



FLORIDA & CARIBBEAN **GO ESCAPE**

2020

THE MAGIC IS BACK!
Safety plans at theme parks

PLAY-ACTION ON HOLD
Super Bowl LV awaits ruling

UNPLUGGED PARADISE
Off-the-grid getaways

LINKS & LUXURY
Posh golf resorts

Divine

\$4.95



Everglades National Park, Florida

FLORIDA | TAMPA

Game On!

Tampa is writing the playbook for Super Bowl LV



Raymond James Stadium

TAMPA SPORTS AUTHORITY

By Susan B. Barnes

WHEN TAMPA, FLA., WAS named the host site for Super Bowl LV in May 2017, the city immediately began planning to welcome enthusiastic football fans from around the world.

Now, in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee and local officials

are working around the clock to not only make the area welcoming to football fans with fun-filled events leading up to the big game on Feb. 7, 2021, but a healthy and safe destination, too.

“Our hotels, airport and attractions are taking safety very, very seriously,” says Visit Tampa Bay CEO Santiago Corrada. “All of our major players are really focused on all of the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines, taking those proactive measures.

And our local government has been very proactive.

“We have, from day one, done as much as possible to ensure public safety, and that will continue,” Corrada adds.

As of late August, Florida was in phase 2 of its reopening plan, with restaurants, shops and museums open at 75 percent capacity; occupancy at large sporting events limited to 50 percent; and theme parks open with limited capacity. State parks and beaches are open with social

► Stay up to date on Super Bowl LV preparations at tampabaylv.com and visittampabay.com.

FLORIDA | TAMPA

distancing parameters in place.

In late June, the secretary of the Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation mandated that bars across the state cannot serve alcohol. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis will determine when to initiate phase 3, at which time the state will be fully reopened.

GAME PREP

In anticipation of the Super Bowl, a number of multimillion-dollar development projects have either been completed or are scheduled for completion in time for the big event. They include:

Midtown Tampa. This 1.8 million-square-foot project featuring retail and residential space, including office buildings, apartments and a hotel with a rooftop activity area, is on track to be completed by February 2021.

JW Marriott Tampa Water Street. This 26-story hotel will feature 519 guest rooms and suites, 89,757 square feet of meeting space, a fitness center and spa, and a 3,200-square-foot ballroom, the largest in the Tampa Bay area. It is scheduled to open in November.

St. Pete Pier. This 26-acre attraction along the city's waterfront provides space for residents and visitors to walk, bike, dine, drink, shop and more. An extensive \$92 million renovation is complete and the area is open to the public under COVID-19 safety protocols.

Museum of the American Arts & Crafts Movement. This museum, located on Fourth Street, is expected to include an extensive collection of furniture, pottery, textiles, photography and fine arts from the American Arts and Crafts movement. It's scheduled for completion by game day.

Clearwater Marine Aquarium. An \$80 million expansion of the aquarium, near Clearwater Beach, including a new home for Winter the dolphin, will have a total of 103,000 square feet of guest space, more living space for rescued dolphins and increased room for wildlife rehabilitation. Completion is targeted for late 2020.

FANFARE READY

When it comes to the game itself, the host committee and the NFL are working to create a positive fan experience by recruiting about 8,000 volunteers to serve as community ambassadors. These ambassadors will provide event and



Skyline of Midtown Tampa, Fla.

GETTY IMAGES

destination information to locals and visitors all around the city, including at Tampa International Airport, downtown and along the Riverwalk, as well as at local hotels.

"We are thrilled to bring our region its fifth Super Bowl and will rely heavily on our supportive community and locals to show the world what our area has to offer," Rob Higgins, host committee president and chief operating officer stated in a press release. "Team Tampa Bay will work together to help our hometown shine on the biggest of stages."

Preparations are also being made at Raymond James Stadium, the site of Super Bowl LV.

"We continue to work with the local host committee to ensure a safe and secure experience for our fans, players, clubs and partners at all our Super Bowl events," says Brian McCarthy, an NFL spokesman. "Our planning processes and decisions will be led by the latest recommendations of public health experts and in accordance with local and state mandates. We will continue to make adjustments as necessary to meet the public health environment as we approach the 2020 season, playoffs and Super Bowl."

In addition to adhering to updated COVID-19 health and safety guidelines, fans traveling to the area through Tampa International Airport will benefit from recent renovations and expansions, including easy-to-navigate



TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

Raymond James Stadium, the home of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, will host Super Bowl LV. Tampa Bay has hosted four Super Bowls, the last being in 2009.

terminals with clear signage, local and regional restaurants and shops, and a SkyConnect train that connects the main terminal to the new rental car center.

"Super Bowl LV is destined to be historic, and we are so excited to host it right here in Tampa," says Tampa Mayor Jane Castor. "We are taking every measure possible to ensure that

we can have a fun and safe Super Bowl, including working with our hospitality, transportation and tourism partners."

One might say Castor is making a game-winning prediction for the local Tampa Bay Buccaneers. "We can't wait to welcome the teams and fans to Tampa, and to become the first host city to win that (Vince) Lombardi Trophy."