



WORLD'S BEST SPORTS CITIES



JASON O'REAR



LVCVA



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POPULOUS

Las Vegas Raises the Stakes for World's Greatest Sports Cities

Las Vegas has long been one of the world's greatest sports cities, hosting world championship events in world-class facilities with a multitude of enticing entertainment options including casinos, live shows, fine dining, and outdoor activities.

With the recent addition of several new, state-of-the-art venues, the city has upped the ante for fans, competitors, and the sports industry. Las Vegas is building on its legacy as the place to be for title fights in boxing and UFC and now the area hosts sports spanning the spectrum from NASCAR to the PGA TOUR and NCAA basketball to the more recent addition of teams in the NHL, WNBA, and the NFL.

While COVID-19 is currently keeping fans from attending sporting events in the area, Las Vegas is very much open for business to host sports fans.

"Things look a little bit different right now, but you can still come to Las Vegas to watch all of your favorite sports while enjoying world-class lounges and sportsbooks, dining, golf, shopping and spas," notes H. Fletch Brunelle, vice president of marketing, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA).

Brunelle added that there are also plenty of options for active, sporty visitors including hiking, biking, mountain climbing, water sports, and zip lining.

New Venues, New Vistas

One of the most noticeable changes to the Las Vegas sports scene, and the city's skyline, is the 65,000-seat Allegiant Stadium. It's the new home of the NFL's recently relocated Las Vegas Raiders. The \$2 billion state-of-the-art venue is expected to literally be a gamechanger for the area.

In addition to Raiders' home games, the venue is slated to host the NFL's Pro Bowl in January. Las Vegas already attracts visitors who are motivated to attend events. In 2019, 51% of visitors saw entertainment of some

kind, and of those, 8% said they attended a sporting event. That sports attendance number is likely to grow once fans are allowed back into sports arenas, especially given Allegiant Stadium's capacity and the addition of football and other sporting events there.

In fact, the new stadium may help the city score the biggest dates on the sports calendar.

Brunelle said, "Allegiant Stadium gives us the ability to welcome mega-events like the Super Bowl, major international soccer matches, NCAA events like the Final Four, and even stadium tours by popular artists that may have previously been out of reach because we simply didn't have



A full house cheers on the WNBA's Las Vegas Aces.

the appropriate venue."

And the LVCVA official adds that the venue will offer unique vantage points that fans won't find anywhere else: "The facility's north-facing retractable doors, which showcase the Al Davis Memorial Torch and overlook the Las Vegas Strip, will provide a sweeping only-in-Vegas view for fans in the stadium as well as those watching an event broadcast."

While the Raiders have brought a fresh wave of excitement and further burnished Las Vegas's claim to the mantle of world's greatest sports city, it was the city's first major team sports franchise, the NHL's Vegas Golden Knights, that captured the sports world's imagination. The Knights' epic run to the Stanley Cup finals in its inaugural season put the team and its



Las Vegas stakes its claim as sports & entertainment capital of the world.

new home, 20,000-seat T-Mobile Arena, in the spotlight.

Brunelle, a native Las Vegas, says the emergence of pro team sports gives his hometown even more powerful and distinctive fan experiences. "When the time is right for audiences, you'll be able to go to an NFL game on the same weekend as attending an NHL game, enjoy some of the finest and most diverse dining options, and see world-class live entertainment. All of these unparalleled experiences come together to create something no other destination can offer."

Marquee Attractions Beyond the Big Leagues

While Vegas's pro teams and their venues grab headlines, the city's minor league clubs are thriving as well. Las Vegas Ballpark opened in April 2019 to much fanfare, winning Ballpark Digest's 2019 Triple-A Best of the Ballparks. The 8,200-seat venue has capacity for 10,000 with 22 suites, party zones and decks, plus a kids' zone and a pool beyond the outfield wall. Locals and visiting baseball fans embraced the new ballpark, as the Las Vegas Aviators averaged more than 9,000 fans per game and led Triple-A baseball in total home attendance.

Las Vegas has also made inroads into the world of esports, hosting professional tournaments and B2B video gaming conferences. It's a growing area that city officials are keenly watching for potential expansion.

Game On!

Even when it's not hosting the big game, Las Vegas has long attracted sports fans who come to watch events in the city's sports books, lounges, and restaurants. In fact, more than 300,000 people visited the city over Super Bowl weekend in February of this year.

While it's unknown when fans will be welcomed back into in any of Vegas's sports venues, resorts began reopening in June. The LVCVA launched a citywide "Vegas Smart" campaign reminding visitors to adhere to social

distancing suggestions, wear state-mandated facial coverings, and to wash their hands frequently.

And even though 2020 has disrupted travel and tourism, Las Vegas is still growing. The Circa Resort and Casino is scheduled to open its doors this fall and it will be the first downtown Las Vegas casino constructed from the ground up in four decades. The former Hard Rock Hotel is undergoing an overhaul and rebranding to Virgin Hotels Las Vegas.

Next summer the \$4.3 billion Resorts World Las Vegas is slated to open its doors near the Las Vegas Convention Center, which is completing a 1.4 million-square-foot expansion of its own.

So, while this year has been unpredictable, Brunelle says this great sports city is about to hit fresh paydirt: "Las Vegas is evolving into the sports and entertainment capital of the world, and we believe the leagues that aren't here yet have taken note. Almost nothing about 2020 has gone as expected, yet Las Vegas is poised and ready to usher in a new era of sports and entertainment in the coming year."



NASCAR drives thousands of fans to the races at Las Vegas Motor Speedway



The versatile T-Mobile Arena stages UFC fights and is home to the NHL Vegas Golden Knights.



Allegiant Stadium adds a sporty facade to the Vegas skyline.

LAS VEGAS FOR THE WIN

Las Vegas is the ultimate sports and events destination. No matter the event, Vegas has the state-of-the-art facilities and stadiums to take your competition to the next level. If you're ready to play, you're ready for Las Vegas. Plan now at VegasMeansBusiness.com.

LAS
Vegas



Building Monumental Venues for the World's Greatest Sports Cities

Most sports towns have rabid, knowledgeable fans — but to join the ranks of the world's "greatest" sports cities, it takes venues that can seamlessly host world-class sports events and entertainment.

"Stadiums, ballparks, and arenas are a critical part of a city's mystique and reputation," asserts Logan Gerken, VP/general manager, Mortenson Construction, a company that has built many of these facilities. "Because of the popularity of sport, venues and teams often act as the proverbial 'front porch' and a source of civic pride."

And with table stakes for venues now in the \$1 billion ballpark or higher, Gerken said even the world's best-known cities are looking to raise their profile with these monuments to sport. "Allegiant Stadium was designed and constructed to stand out among Las Vegas' entertainment venues and be what the entertainment capital of the world has been lacking, a state-of-the-art stadium venue. The scale, amenities, and flexibility of the stadium combined with the city's flair for the dramatic and renowned hospitality will place it at the top of any major sporting event's short list for host sites."

Mortenson and joint venture part-



MORTENSON

Mortenson raised the roof and dug deep to rebuild Seattle's Climate Pledge Arena.



MORTENSON



HOK

A new St. Louis MLS Stadium promises the best views in soccer.



POPULOUS

Nashville's new MLS stadium: designed to blend with the area's historic architecture.

ner McCarthy built Allegiant Stadium, home of the NFL's recently relocated Las Vegas Raiders. The firm claims it's the fastest NFL stadium ever built (31 months), beating its own record at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis.

Allegiant's features include a 20-million-pound retractable natural turf field, operable walls that open to views of the Vegas Strip, and an outdoor media mesh videoboard wrapping the building that measures 350

feet wide by more than 50 feet tall. The venue's transparent roof made of ETFE lets sunshine bathe the bowl. Premium seating will include 127 suites and 8,000 club seats.

"Every space and iconic feature of the stadium reinforces the Raiders' brand and was designed to enhance the fan experience," Gerken said, adding, "With each new project we're doing something that's never been done before."

Release the Kraken

Seattle's Climate Pledge Arena is another first. The former Key Arena has been gutted and Mortenson literally raised the roof to renovate and rebuild the venue. "The complex renovation has been likened to building a ship in a bottle, as crews lifted and suspended the 44-million-pound roof over the project as the arena's footprint was expanded underground," Gerken explained, adding that it's being built with a focus on sustainable construction practices and materials.

The 18,100-seat arena will be home to the NHL's expansion Seattle Kraken and WNBA's Seattle Storm and will become a premier sports and entertainment venue for the Northwest.

Gerken said the Mortenson team is energized by building modern coliseums in great sports cities, including new stadiums for MLS expansion clubs in Nashville, St. Louis, and Sacramento. "When done well, a stadium embodies unique traits of the team, site, neighborhood, and city, reinforcing old traditions and spurring new ones. It becomes part of a community's identity and is immediately recognizable." ■



Mortenson

REDEFINING WHAT'S POSSIBLE



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GAME CHANGING SPORTS PROJECT DELIVERY

Driving innovation and collaboration while developing opportunities for the community