

Florida Where the World Comes to Play



**A Year of Sports
to Watch,
Participate and
Enjoy**

Welcome to Florida – The Sports Capital of the World

Sports is a year-round business in Florida. Not a day goes by that a baseball, football or soccer field is not in use for practice or game. You can say the same about indoor facilities as well. Multi-purpose gymnasiums play host to basketball, volleyball, wrestling and martial arts competitions. You want sports involving water? Same thing goes. Both indoor and outdoor facilities host swim meets, synchronized swimming and water polo competitions. Then, there's man-made bodies of water where everything from sport fishing to wakeboarding can be found.

Welcome to the Sports Capital of the World.

Whether it be professional, amateur or recreational, sports is a mainstay in Florida. Whether it's the heat of the summer or if there's a slight chill in the Florida air, sports are being played.

As we flip the pages of the calendar, here's what will be offered between September, 2005 and August, 2006.

September, 2005

All eyes will focus on Tallahassee, on Labor Day night when the Florida State Seminoles host the Miami Hurricanes on a Monday-Night Football telecast. While the Florida State/Miami game will be under the brightest spotlight, **Florida boasts 12 college football teams**, playing at various levels during the fall football season. Between the University of Florida, Florida State University and the University of Miami, the three teams have combined for eight Division I-A National Championships.

Florida's three NFL teams, the **Jacksonville Jaguars** (www.jaguars.com), **Miami Dolphins** (www.miamidolphins.com) and **Tampa Bay Buccaneers** (www.buccaneers.com) kick off their 16-week



seasons the following weekend and continue through late-December. Though no Florida teams advanced into the playoffs in 2004, the Miami Dolphins and Tampa Bay Buccaneers each have claimed Super Bowl Trophies during their histories. All three teams play in state-of-the-art stadi-

ums that have hosted Super Bowl's in the last 10 years. Miami has been selected to host the 2007 Super Bowl and Tampa will host the 2009 Super Bowl bringing the state's total to 14 since 1967.

Besides the traditional professional sports, amateur sports are a plenty during the month of September. More than \$150,000 in cash, medallions and trophies will be awarded at the **2005 Dance Sport Championships**, (www.usdsc.com) held at Hollywood's Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa, September 6-10. Winners will be crowned in the World Professional Exhibition/Cabaret Championships®, the World Dance Sport Championships Professional Classic Dance Show Division and the World Professional Mambo Championships. ®

More National Champions will be crowned in Sanford, September 15-18, as the **ASA Men's Slow Pitch National Championship** (www.asasoftballevents.org), is contested at the Historical Sanford Memorial Stadium. Historical, you ask? Built in 1926 and renovated twice since then, Babe Ruth made his way onto the field here just five months before his death. Sanford's real historical claim to fame, however, is a much darker tale. In one dugout (pre-renovation of course) stood the legendary Jackie Robinson, scheduled to play an exhibition game in Sanford Memorial Stadium. It was not uncommon in the 1940s, for negro teams to play white Major League teams in exhibition. It was actu-

ally rather common. However, Jackie was playing for a Dodgers minor league team and by the time Jackie got to first base... the uproar was tremendous. Jackie's attempt to break the color barrier would not be allowed to happen in Sanford Memorial Stadium. He was escorted off the field, and he never returned to Sanford. Jackie Robinson did eventually break the color barrier in Florida, in nearby Daytona Beach.

For those in need of some feats of endurance, the weekend of September 17-18 is just for you. **The Orlando Utilities Commission Downtown Orlando Triathlon**, (www.downtownorlandotriathlon.com) races through the heart of beautiful Downtown Orlando on Saturday, September 17. This exciting format will offer both an Age Group Race (1/4 mile swim, 10.6 mile bike, and 3.5 mile run) and a significant Team Relay component where the weekend warrior and recreational cyclist, runner & swimmer can form teams to participate together in this multi-sport race. The event plan calls for the 1/4 mile swim to take place at Lake Underhill, with the 10.6 mile bike and 3.5 mile run portions weaving through the beautiful neighborhoods of Downtown Orlando and finishing at Wall Street Plaza.

Further to the south on Sunday, September 18, **The Escape to Miami Triathlon**, (www.escapetomiamitriathlon.com) an Olympic Distance triathlon with more excitement and a bit more flair can be found. A ferry will bring athletes out on the pristine turquoise waters of Biscayne Bay to Pace Island and the mission is to "ESCAPE TO MIAMI" by swimming the 1.5K distance back to the mainland. Then athletes take a 40K bike ride and a 10K run through trendy Wynwood, Downtown Miami, the Rickenbacker Causeway and Brickell Avenue.

October, 2005

The month of October finds the only ice in Florida when the state's NHL entries, the **Florida Panthers** (www.floridapanthers.com) and **Tampa Bay Lightning** (www.tampabaylightning.com) begin skating and sticking. In the 2005-06 season, the Lightning return to the ice as the reigning Stanley Cup Champion. Both teams play in luxurious surroundings in the Office Depot Center in Sunrise, home of the Panthers and the St. Pete Times Forum in Tampa, home of the Lightning. Also sharpening their skates are Florida's contribution to the East Coast Hockey League (ECHL), the **Florida Everblades**, (www.floridaeverblades.com) playing in the Fort Myers Germain Arena and the **Pensacola Ice Pilots**, (www.icepilots.com) playing in the Pensacola Civic Center.



It's all about the action in Orlando, October 13-16, when the **Dew Action Sports Tour Presented by PlayStation**, (www.dewactionstour.com) takes center stage at the TD Waterhouse Centre. This is the first season-long competitive tour for the action sports of skateboarding (vert and street), BMX (vert, street and dirt) and freestyle motocross. Event-specific specialty competitions such as surfing, in-line skating and "super-moto" competitions will be added based upon local appeal. Each stop features interactive events, video gaming pavilions and competitions, live music and concerts with headline acts. Boasting the largest purse in action sports—a \$1 Million Bonus Pool based on year-end standings—the Dew Action Sports Tour enjoys

the largest network and cable television broadcasting commitment for action sports.

On successive weekends in Florida, the **PGA Tour** (www.pgatour.com) makes a fall swing through the state. Beginning October 17, the **FUNAI Classic at the Walt Disney World Resort** offers a \$4.2 million total purse. The following weekend, the **Chrysler Championship** tees it up at the Westin Innis-

brook Resort in Palm Harbor, ups the ante to a \$5.3 million purse. In 2004, Vijay Singh became the first player to eclipse \$10 million in single-season earnings by winning the Chrysler Championship

You want boats? You want water? Fort Lauderdale in October is the place to find them both. Offering the most comprehensive collection of the finest marine products and services in the world, the **2005 Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show**®, (www.showmanagement.com) October 27-31, will cover six extraordinary sites in the boating capital of the world... on land and in water. The world's largest boat show will feature more than \$1.6 billion dollars worth of boats, yachts, superyachts, sailing yachts, electronics, engines and thousands of accessories from every major manufacturer worldwide.

Plant City, Florida is the home of the International Softball Federation (www.internationalsoftball.com) and with it comes a variety of International Tournaments at Plant City Stadium and Randy J. Larson Softball Four-Plex. **The Slow Pitch World Cup**, a Coed Adult Slow Pitch competition, will be held in Plant City, October 8-10, with teams from five nations competing.

November, 2005

With the beginning of November comes the beginning of the NBA Hoops season in Orlando and Miami. The **Miami Heat** (www.nba.com/heat) and Shaquille O'Neal are coming off one of their most successful seasons in the teams 15+ year history, winning 59 games and advancing to the Eastern Conference Finals. The home of the Heat, American Airlines Arena, is located on Biscayne Bay and is adjacent to the Bayside Entertainment and Shopping Complex. The **Orlando Magic** (www.nba.com/magic) plays its home games in the TD Waterhouse Centre, located in the heart of Downtown Orlando. Grant Hill and

Steve Francis hope to lead the Magic into contention in the Eastern Division in 2005-06.



Adult Flag Football teams have made their way through qualifiers battling the late summer heat and enjoying the cool of the early fall. They do this to advance to the **Sunshine State Games Adult Flag Football State Championships** (www.flasports.com) at Bamford Sports Complex in Davie, November 12-13. More than 25 teams annually compete for the Championship that dates back to 1974.

On November 16, the Hard Rock Live at Universal Studios Orlando hosts the **Central Florida Sports Awards**, (www.orlandosports.org) annual event honoring the past year's top male and female athletes from throughout Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake and Volusia counties. The program features awards that range from amateur honors to recognition for the top professional athlete.

Establishing itself as one of the "toughest annual tickets in South Florida," the **Ford 400** (www.homesteadmiamispeedway.com) is the season-finale for the **NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series** held at the Homestead Miami Speedway Sunday, November 20. The Ford 400 is a night race held under the lights of the speedway, giving it a further big-time event feel. On days leading up to the Ford 400, the Homestead Miami Speedway hosts NASCAR Busch and Craftsman Truck Series races.

Trump International Golf Course in West Palm Beach is one of four Florida golf courses in the Golf Digest Top



100 Golf Courses in the U.S. and plays host to the annual **LPGA Tour ADT Invitational** (www.lpga.com). A \$1 million total purse will be on the line, November 17-20, at the course with special features including waterfalls, man-made lakes and elevations up to 60 feet.

December 2005

The inaugural **Atlantic Coast Conference Football Championship Game** (www.theacc.org) will be played in Jacksonville's ALLTEL Stadium, Saturday, December 3. The winner receives a berth in a Bowl Championship Series Game and possibly the National Championship Game. The game will also be played in Jacksonville following the 2006 season, with the possibility of playing the game at ALLTEL Stadium through the 2008 season.



Florida's finest senior athletes, age 50 and over, display their talent at the **2005 Florida Senior Games State Championships**, (www.flasports.com) held in The Villages. The annual competition saw close to 3,000 senior athletes compete in 24 sports and activities in 2004. Every other year, the Florida Senior Games State Championships is a qualifier for the National Senior Games. Over 400 Floridians traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for the 2005 National Senior Games and collected 193 individual medals and two team medals. Senior athletes qualify for the State Championships at 20 local qualifiers held around the state.

The **14th Annual Lou Groza Collegiate Place-Kicker Award**, (www.lougrozaaward.com) held December 6 in Palm Beach County is named for National Football League (NFL) Hall-of-Fame kicker Lou Groza, who played 21 seasons with the Cleveland Browns. Groza won four NFL championships with Cleveland and was named NFL Player of the Year in 1954. Nicknamed "The Toe," Groza was one of the first people to truly make kicking an art form, and he helped usher in to football the idea that a player could be used exclusively for kicking. Each December, a sold-out awards banquet that draws people from all over the country honors the three finalists for the award, and witnesses the presentation of the Award to the year's winner.

The **Champs Sports Bowl** (www.fcsports.com) in Orlando kicks off the Florida College Bowl season with its annual showdown on December 27 featuring teams from the ACC and Big 12 Conferences. The 16th annual game will kick off at 5:00 p.m., and will be televised nationally by ESPN. This will mark the first time since moving to Orlando in 2001 the game will be played after Christmas Day.

January 2006

Florida boasts five college bowl games, tied with Texas for the most bowl games in the country, and they bring visiting fans to Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa and Miami. To kick off 2006, bowl games will be played on Monday, January 2, leaving Sunday, January 1 for NFL games. The day begins with Tampa's **Outback Bowl** (www.outbackbowl.com) at 11AM and follows at 1PM with the **Capital**



One Bowl (www.fcsports.com) in Orlando. Both games feature teams from the Big 10 and Southeastern Conference. Jacksonville's **Mazda Gator Bowl** (www.gatorbowl.com) begins at 1PM with a matchup between Atlantic Coast Conference and Big East Conference teams. In 2006, the **FedEx Orange Bowl**, (www.orangebowl.org) one of four games in the Bowl Championship series, will be played on Tuesday, January 3. In 2004, the FedEx Orange Bowl was the site of the National Championship Game between Southern California and Oklahoma. Each of the Florida bowl games has plenty of pre- and post-game activities for fans of the teams who travel to the games.

The **Millennium International Tennis Championships** (www.atptennis.com) at the Delray Beach Tennis Center is a part of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) International Series. The six-day tournament features a 32 competitor singles draw and a 16-team doubles draw featuring men's players from around the world. Belgium's Xavier Malisse was the 2005 singles champion defeating Jiri Novak of Czechoslovakia. The tournament atmosphere is noted for the best in food, drinks and networking in Palm Beach County.

January marks the opening of **Palm Beach Polo's Stadium**, (www.palmbeachpolo.com) situated on South Shore Boulevard in Wellington. Palm Beach Polo counts 15 polo fields among its world-class facilities. Tournament play is at its peak in the winter season from January through April. The Stadium provides box seating for 3,000 spectators. Overlooking the International Field #1, it hosts many high-goal games including the 40-goal Generosity Polo Cup in March.

February 2006

The NASCAR season opens at the World Center of Racing, the **Daytona International Speedway** (www.daytonaintlspeedway.com) with a week of events dubbed, "Daytona SpeedWeek." After a week of preliminary races, it all comes to an end with the annual **Daytona 500**. More than 200,000 race fans pack the Speedway for the 200-lap race around the world famous tri-oval track. For the NASCAR racing fan, this is as good as it gets.

The State of Florida is host to two of the Arena Football League's most successful franchises, the **Orlando Predators** (www.orlandopredators.com) and **Tampa Bay Storm** (www.tampabaystorm.com). Between the two teams, they have won seven ArenaBowl Championships and their 2006 seasons begin in February. The Predators play their home games at the TD Waterhouse Centre, aka, "The Jungle." As one of the toughest places for visitors to win, "The Jungle," hosts an average of 13,000 fans per game. The Storm calls the St. Pete Times home in downtown Tampa.



March 2006

With the coming of March, it means one thing to Baseball fans everywhere. **Major League Baseball Spring Training** (www.mlb.com) begins in 17 locations throughout the state. Florida is home to 18 Major League teams during the month of March and over 1.5 million fans attended spring training games during the 2005 season. Maybe it's the cozy atmosphere of the stadiums, or the chance to see Major League All Stars up close and personal. There's also the warmth of the Florida sunshine when the rest of the country is still trying to thaw out. Whatever it is, Florida Spring Train-

ing has become a traditional pilgrimage for baseball fans across the U.S.

The world's best golfers, the **PGA Tour**, (www.pgatour.com) begins the month of March on the southern end of the peninsula and works its way north as the month progresses. The PGA Tour begins its annual Florida swing with the **Ford Championship at Miami's Doral Golf Resort and Spa**. The following week, it's the **Honda Classic at The Country Club at Mirasol** in Palm Beach Gardens. Up next is the **Bay Hill Invitational** at the Bay Hill Club & Lodge in Orlando and the month closes out with **The Players Championship** at the TPC at Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach. Golf fans have a great chance to see Florida's best golf courses and the world's finest golfers in various locations throughout the state during the month of March.

As March winds down Miami's Tennis Center at Crandon Park becomes a hotbed of professional tennis with the **Nasdaq-100 Open**, (www.nasdaq-100open.com) March 22-April 2. The only combined 12-day Tennis Masters Series event on the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and Sony Ericsson Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Tour calendar, the NASDAQ-100 Open features the world's top-ranked pros - 96 men and 96 women in singles competition, and 32 men's teams and 32 women's teams in doubles action. Roger Federer and Kim Clijsters worked their way through the bracket to win the 2005 Singles Championships.

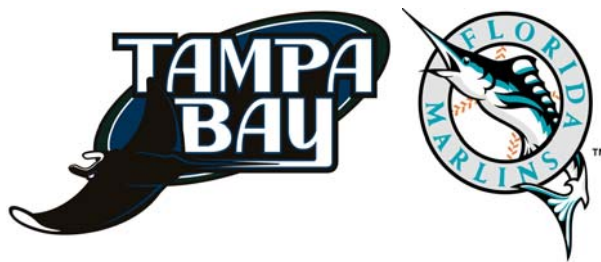
For those who feel the need for speed, the Gainesville Raceway and the **National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Gatornationals** (www.gainesvillraceway.com) is the place to be March 16-19. Long considered one of the fastest tracks on the NHRA circuit, it was from this legendary launch point that drivers clocked the first 260-, 270- and 300-mph Top Fuel runs.

March Madness finds its way to Florida, March 16-18, as the **Jacksonville Veteran's Memorial Arena** (www.jaxevents.com/jacksonvillearena) hosts first and second-round games of the **NCAA Basketball Division I Tournament**. The new arena, with a capacity of 16,000, sits just outside of downtown Jacksonville and is neighbors with ALLTEL Stadium and the Baseball Grounds of Jacksonville. Several venues in Florida have been previous hosts of NCAA Basketball Tournament action including the St. Pete Times Forum in Tampa, TD Waterhouse Centre in Orlando, the Tallahassee-Leon County Civic Center and American Airlines Arena in Miami. In 1999, the Final Four paid a visit to the Tropicana Dome in St. Petersburg.

As far as name recognition goes for a high school track meet, there's not other more recognizable name than Jacksonville's **Bob Hayes Invitational Track & Field Meet** (www.bhitm.org). Held at Raines High School, it is the largest one-day High School Track and Field Event in the United States, named after the one-time "World's Fastest Human." A native of Jacksonville, Bob Hayes won the 100 meter dash gold medal in the 1964 Olympic Games and later starred in the NFL for the Dallas Cowboys.

April 2006

Once the spring training season ends in Florida, there's still plenty of pro baseball to be found. The two-time World Series Champions **Florida Marlins** (www.floridamarlins.com) take their swings at Miami's Dolphins Stadium and the **Tampa Bay Devil Rays** (www.devilray.com) play in the air-conditioned comfort of the Tropicana Dome in St. Petersburg. During the Marlins and Devil Rays 81-game home schedule, each face some of the finest Major League opposition. Minor League baseball can also be found in 12 Florida locations with the Single A **Florida State League** (www.minorleaguebaseball.com) from April through September. Many of the teams play in the



spring training stadiums once the big-league teams leave town. The **Jacksonville Suns**, (www.jaxsuns.com) an affiliate of the Los Angeles Dodgers, play at the Baseball Grounds of Jacksonville in the Double A Southern League.

The **Bausch & Lomb Tennis Championships** (www.blchamps.com) is a premier women's professional tennis tournament, part of the worldwide Sony Ericsson WTA Tour. In 2006, the tournament returns for a 27th year to the picturesque oceanfront resort of Amelia Island Plantation April 3-9. Each year, the tournament features the top players in the game and is one of the most anticipated stops on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour for both players and fans. The singles competition includes a 56 main draw and 32 qualifying players with a 16-team main draw doubles competition vying for \$585,000 in prize money.

For the fourth time since 2001, Florida will host the **World Cup of Flag Football** (www.iff.net) when teams from 15 countries pay a visit to Panama City for the 7th Annual World Cup of Flag Football, March 30th-April 2nd. Past Florida cities hosting the World Cup of Flag Football have been Miami, Davie and Cocoa.

June 2006

With the coming of the summer months, the thoughts of many turn to **Fishing in Florida** (www.myfwc.com). The state is a prime location with three million acres of freshwater lakes and 12,000 miles of



streams and rivers. From those waters over 250 different species of freshwater fishes have been collected. National Fishing and Boating Week is held annually, the first Saturday in June each year, through the following Saturday. The Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission presents a variety of programs throughout the state including fishing clinics where children go through five mandatory skill stations: Casting, Knot Tying, Fishing Tackle, Good Angler, and Touch Tank. After approximately one hour of instruction, the children will receive a free rod and reel (compliments of local sponsors while supplies last), and at most clinics, will have the opportunity to fish.

Florida's Annual Olympic-style Sports Festival, the Sunshine State Games, (www.flasports.com) was created for amateur athletes of all ages and skill levels. Over 7,000 of Florida's finest amateur athletes will compete in the five-day Festival, June 14-18 and features competition in 25 sports in Miami-Dade County at the 2006 Summer Games. This grassroots level competition has been the beginning for many of Florida's champions including Olympic swimmers Ryan Lochte and

Brooke Bennett, world champion boxers Roy Jones, Jr. and Antonio Tarver, track & field Olympic gold medalist Jearl Miles-Clark and current NFL wide receivers Anquan Bolden and Peter Warrick.

July 2006

The **Great Outdoor Games at Disney's Wide World of Sports** (www.espn.com) is tentatively set for July 2006. This four-day competition features competition in timber events, target sports, sporting dog events and all-terrain vehicle racing. Competitors qualify at various events around the country and venture to the Orlando area for the finals, which are televised nationally on ESPN.

On any given day in Florida, it's a good chance a sporting event of some kind of sports activity is being contested in Florida. The state boasts a wealth of stadiums and venues with a variety of amenities to accommodate sports fans of all ages and make their sports experience most enjoyable. To find out more about sports in Florida, please contact the Florida Sports Foundation at www.flasports.com or call (850) 488-8347.

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Information for this press release was gathered from the web sites listed.