

Play BALL!

We've all heard the saying, "Pitchers and catchers report." For baseball fans, those rousing words signal not only an end to winter but also the beginning of one of the best times of year — spring training.

February is in an important month for sports in Phoenix. Hundreds of thousands of golf enthusiasts descend on the Valley each year for the WM Phoenix Open, and this year, more than 60,000 NFL fans will be cheering on their favorite football teams as the Super Bowl returns to State Farm Stadium in Glendale for the first time in eight years.

But the excitement doesn't end there. Once the big games are over, the true fun begins as the 15 Major League Baseball teams that comprise the Cactus League take to the field. This year, spring training begins on Feb. 24 and runs through March 28.



Writer Rebecca L. Rhoades



For many fans, the charm of spring training is in its intimacy. Even the upper deck seats are close to the action. The players are more accessible than they are during the regular season. Overall, it's a more relaxed environment than you'll find almost anywhere in major pro sports. *Bridget Binsbacher*

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BASEBALL'S FAVORITE SEASON

Spring training by MLB teams in locations other than their hometowns began in the late 1800s, when teams such as the Chicago White Stockings (now the Chicago Cubs), Pittsburgh Pirates and Cincinnati Reds began traveling to Hot Springs, Arkansas to prepare for the upcoming season. Additional popular spring training locations in the early 20th century included Tulsa, Oklahoma; New Orleans; West Palm Beach, Florida; and even Honolulu, Hawaii.

The Detroit Tigers were the first team to play in Phoenix; they trained at the now-defunct Riverside Park in the 1920s. The New York Yankees also trained in Phoenix when the team was owned by real estate developer Del Webb.

Other teams followed the World Series Champions to the Valley of the Sun during the midcentury. The Baltimore Orioles trained in Yuma. The Boston Red Sox took up

residence at Scottsdale Stadium. The Houston Colt 45s (now the Astros) made their spring home in Apache Junction. And the San Francisco Giants began training in Casa Grande.



In 1954, spring training in Arizona was officially referred to as the Cactus League in response to the Grapefruit League, a selection of teams that played in Florida. Today, teams are equally divided between each location, with 15 teams training in 10 stadiums throughout the Greater Phoenix region.

GET READY FOR SPRING TRAINING 2023

So what can you expect this year? To learn more, *Images Arizona* spoke with Bridget Binsbacker, executive director of the Cactus League.

A Taste of the Cactus League

“Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jacks” isn’t just a line from the famous song, “Take Me Out to the Ball Game.” For years, those were about the only items available at baseball stadiums.

But as fans’ tastes became more discriminating and ballparks added newer and better amenities, the dining options became more creative. And while hot dogs and nachos are still found at any concession, they’re now joined by a variety of regionally influenced dishes.

Here are just some of the taste-tempting treats you’ll find at Arizona’s spring training stadiums.

SALT RIVER FIELDS

Try the Talking Stick Mega Dog, which features a half-pound foot-long hot dog topped with pork and mac and cheese.

SLOAN PARK

Chicago flavor abounds at the Cubs’ park, with Italian beef sandwiches and Chicago-style dogs headlining the menu.

CAMELBACK RANCH-GLENDALE

The four Peaks Patio Bar, a unique outdoor sports bar located in the right-field corner, offers a sausage grill and full bar with wine and spirits. Other popular fan stops are Wok-Off Noodles and Three Amigos Bar.

GOODYEAR BALLPARK

Grab some Ohio flavor with a Skyline chili dog, a Cincinnati favorite. Or, opt for some Sonoran flavor with The Desert Dwell, a beef hot dog garnished with prickly pear salsa. And don’t forget to grab some Montgomery Inn BBQ sauce from the team shop. The restaurant chain has been serving the Cincinnati area since the 1950s.

SURPRISE STADIUM

The stadium’s signature item is the Cactus Corn Dog. This cactus-shaped, beer-battered smoked sausage corn dog is topped with jalapeño honey mustard.

TEMPE DIABLO STADIUM

Multiple stands offer traditional ballpark fare. Stop by the Fresh & Jive Grill Tent for wood-fired pizzas, wraps and loaded tots. There’s even a Greek salsa for something fresh on those hot spring afternoons.

AMERICAN FAMILY FIELDS OF PHOENIX

Savor a taste of Wisconsin with cheese curd cheeseburgers or Bratchos (nachos with bratwurst and cheese). Or, snack on some cheese curds while enjoying your favorite craft brew.

HOHOKAM STADIUM


Ike’s Love and Sandwiches offers some of the best nontraditional ballpark plates in the Cactus League. Sample the Mark McGuire sandwich, made with turkey, jack cheese and bacon or the Go A’s sandwich with roast beef and jack cheese. The Vegan Pilgrim features a vegan-style turkey and cranberry for a festive flavor.

PEORIA SPORTS COMPLEX

Craft burgers, foot-long bratwursts and beef-loaded nachos are just a few of the stadium’s tasty treats. Try the Frito Pie Hot Dog, a chili dog topped with crunchy Fritos, at Balboa Park Bistro located at the stadium’s concourse.

SCOTTSDALE STADIUM

A VIP experience at the Charro Lodge includes patio-style seating and all-inclusive food and drinks. Local businesses — including The Vig, Grimaldi’s Pizza and Cold Beer and Cheeseburgers — provide the delectable dishes.




ENJOY
wine, beer and a light meal from a soul pleasing view.

RAVENS VIEW
WINE BAR

Mountain & Golf Views. Dog-friendly patio. Cooler High Desert Temperatures.

42016 Old Mine Road • Cave Creek
Across from Outlaw Course of Desert Mountain
480-378-3755



Home & Garden Decor, Pots, House Plants & Gifts

Caligos

480-488-7463
6061 E. CAVE CREEK RD. Suite #3
Tuesday - Saturday 10:00am - 5:00pm

Q: WHAT DOES SPRING TRAINING MEAN TO THE VALLEY?

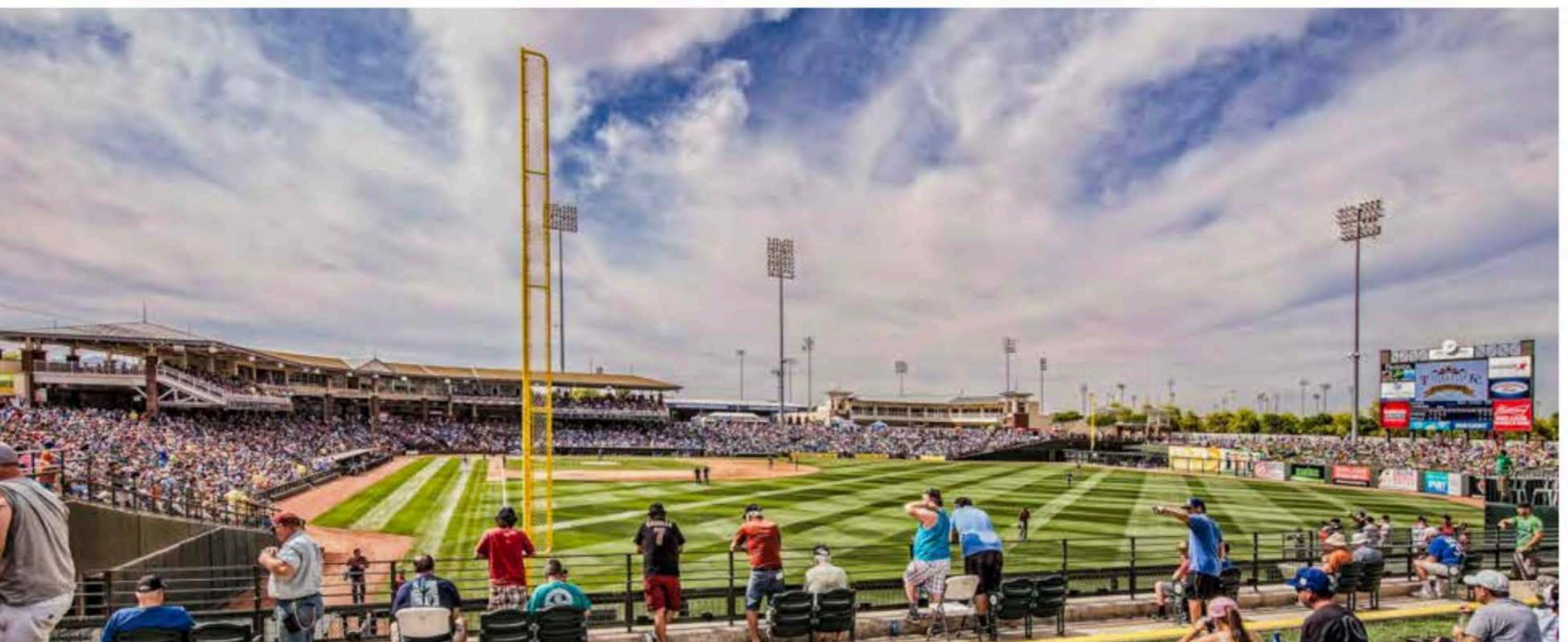
A: I believe that the Cactus League is a source of pride for all Arizonans. And it is a significant source of revenue. Spring training games don't count, but the money they generate does.

The most recent economic study of a full Cactus League season came in 2018, when Arizona State University researchers estimated an overall impact of \$644.2 million. In the COVID-shortened 2020 season, ASU reported an estimated \$363.6 million in economic impact. The Cactus League did not commission a study in 2021.

From an economic impact perspective, ASU researchers have called the Cactus League a mega event on par with the Super Bowl — but one that happens every spring. We have commissioned another study for the 2023 season, and with tourism rebounding, I expect a return to pre-COVID economic impact.

Q: HOW DOES SPRING TRAINING DIFFER FROM THE REGULAR SEASON?

A: For many fans, the charm of spring training is in its intimacy. Even the upper deck seats are close to the action. The players are more accessible than they are during the regular season. Overall, it's a more relaxed environment than you'll find almost anywhere in major pro sports. It really is a celebration of the game, so it's no surprise that six out of 10 fans come from out of state to experience it (that's according to recent ASU economic impact studies).



Q: ARE THERE ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS THAT FANS CAN EXPECT THIS YEAR?

A: For fans, the biggest development has been an earlier start to the season. When MLB pushed the start of spring training into February, it created an opportunity for more local fans to attend before the influx of out-of-state visitors, which occurs in mid-March. The demand for tickets isn't as strong in the early weeks, but the weather is just as beautiful. We want to make sure Valley residents know about that opportunity to enjoy baseball during the best time of year in Arizona.



Q: THE 2021 AND EVEN 2022 SEASONS WERE STILL OVERSHADOWED BY COVID. WHAT RESPONSE ARE YOU SEEING FROM THE TEAMS REGARDING THE 2023 SEASON.

A: Everyone I speak to is excited about the prospect of a “normal” spring training season. It seems like it has been forever since we had one of those — and that is a reason to celebrate.

Q: WHAT DO YOU HOPE FANS WILL TAKE AWAY FROM THE 2023 SEASON?

A: For out-of-state visitors, I want them to take away priceless memories of their time in the Grand Canyon State. I hope that their experiences — before, during and after the games — would make them want to return again and again. And ASU studies show that about a third of out-of-state visitors had attended spring training for at least five seasons. Generations of baseball fans have fallen in love with Arizona, and they return year after year.



For local residents, I want them to enjoy the games with friends and family — and I hope they understand that the heavy investment in spring training facilities by the host municipalities and the tribal community has created a major economic benefit for the state.

cactusleague.com



Know Your Teams

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

Stadium: Salt River Fields, 7555 N. Pima Road, Scottsdale
2022 Season Results: The D-Backs finished 74-88, placing fourth in the National League West.
Rookie to Watch: Corbin Carroll, outfield

CHICAGO CUBS

Stadium: Sloan Park, 2330 W. Rio Salado Parkway, Mesa
2022 Season Results: The Cubs finished 74-88, placing third in the National League Central.
Rookie to Watch: Matt Mervis, first base

CHICAGO WHITE SOX

Stadium: Camelback Ranch-Glendale, 10710 W. Camelback Road, Phoenix
2022 Season Results: The White Sox finished 81-81, placing second in the American League Central.
Rookie to Watch: Oscar Colas, outfield

CINCINNATI REDS

Stadium: Goodyear Ballpark, 1933 S. Ballpark Way, Goodyear
2022 Season Results: The Reds finished 62-100, placing fourth in the National League Central.
Rookie to Watch: Spencer Steer, infield

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS

Stadium: Goodyear Ballpark, 1933 S. Ballpark Way, Goodyear
2022 Season Results: The Guardians finished 92-70, placing first in the American League Central.
Rookie to Watch: Bo Naylor, catcher

COLORADO ROCKIES

Stadium: Salt River Fields, 7555 N. Pima Road, Scottsdale
2022 Season Results: The Rockies finished 68-94, placing fifth in the National League West.
Rookie to Watch: Ezequiel Tovar, shortstop

KANSAS CITY ROYALS

Stadium: Surprise Stadium, 15930 N. Bullard Ave., Surprise
2022 Season Results: The Royals finished 65-97, placing fifth in the American League Central.
Rookie to Watch: Drew Waters, outfield

LOS ANGELES ANGELS

Stadium: Tempe Diablo Stadium, 2200 W. Alameda Drive, Tempe
2022 Season Results: The Angels finished 73-89, placing third in the American League West.
Rookie to Watch: Logan O'Hoppe, catcher

LOS ANGELES DODGERS

Stadium: Camelback Ranch-Glendale, 10710 W. Camelback Road, Phoenix
2022 Season Results: The Dodgers finished 111-51, placing first in the National League West.
Rookie to Watch: Miguel Vargas, infield

MILWAUKEE BREWERS

Stadium: American Family Fields of Phoenix, 3805 N. 53rd Ave., Phoenix
2022 Season Results: The Brewers finished 86-76, placing second in the National League Central.
Rookie to Watch: Sal Frelick, outfield

OAKLAND ATHLETICS

Stadium: Hohokam Stadium, 1235 N. Center St., Mesa
2022 Season Results: The Athletics finished 60-102, placing fifth in the American League West.
Rookie to Watch: Zack Gelof, third base

SAN DIEGO PADRES

Stadium: Peoria Sports Complex, 16101 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria
2022 Season Results: The Padres finished 89-73, placing second in the National League West.
Rookie to Watch: Eguay Rosario, infield

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS

Stadium: Scottsdale Stadium, 7408 E. Osborn Road, Scottsdale
2022 Season Results: The Giants finished 81-81, placing third in the National League West.
Rookie to Watch: Kyle Harrison, left-handed pitcher

SEATTLE MARINERS

Stadium: Peoria Sports Complex, 16101 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria
2022 Season Results: The Mariners finished 90-72, placing second in the American League West.
Rookie to Watch: Emerson Hancock, right-handed pitcher

TEXAS RANGERS

Stadium: Surprise Stadium, 15930 N. Bullard Ave., Surprise
2022 Season Results: The Rangers finished 68-94, placing second in the National League West.
Rookie to Watch: Josh Jung, third base

25 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN PROPERTY VALUATION



**on the
mark
APPRAISAL**

Mark Kaegi

Owner, Certified Residential Appraiser
Carefree Resident Since 2003

602.361.3938
MarksAppraisal@cox.net

Specializing in custom luxury homes, horse property and residential property measurements. Serving Carefree, Cave Creek & Scottsdale.

The Meading Room
AT CAVE CREEK

20% OFF
FIRST BOTTLE PURCHASE

**WAIT,
WHAT IS
MEAD?**

Fermented honey. Yep, that's it! This ancient libation is one of the oldest and most unique beverages around, and you can taste it right here in Arizona. Made by mother/daughter duo, Barbara & Kylie, and always fermented with fresh ingredients. Stop by for a tasting, a bottle, or one of our always popular green chile margaritas.

www.themeadingroom.com

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS IN CAREFREE!



Minerals - Fossils - Jewelry - Desert Gifts

480-488-3782

NO. 11 SPANISH VILLAGE | CAREFREE | DESERTTREASURES.AZ.COM