

# UCF Football's #1 Fan

Spectrum stadium, previously known as Bright House Network stadium is celebrating its 10-year anniversary on the UCF campus. The home of the Knight's football team for a decade, one fan hasn't missed a moment.

by **Dimitrios Tzamaras**

Through the sweltering heat, torrential downpours, heartbreaking losses, thrilling wins and even a battle with cancer, Brian Stanley has seen it all. Quite literally, the man affectionately known as Knight Fan Stan, has not missed a single University of Central Florida home football game in over a decade. "When football season comes around, I tell my wife, 'I'm not going to any weddings, no birthdays,' because she knows, come hell or high-water, I'm going to the UCF game," Stan said. That passion and determination is what makes Knight Fan Stan such a recognizable figure at UCF games. Well, that and his signature signs. "Every day is a great day to be a UCF Knight" and "Nobody better than UCF students" are his most well-known signs.

If you've been to a UCF home game, there's a good chance you've seen him in the student section getting the crowd going. "His energy is contagious. You have the cheerleaders . . . He doesn't want to over step his boundaries, but he just loves UCF athletics," Andrew Murray, a UCF alumnus who befriended Knight Fan Stan during his time at UCF, said.

In 2010, Stanley gave Murray and 1000 other students T-shirts, signifying him as members of the "Knight Fan Stan army." Joseph Schavio, a friend of Murray's whom Stanley refers to as "Knight Fan Genius Joe" said he still has his shirt and the memories that come along with it. "I would never throw that out," Schavio said. It hasn't always been easy for Knight Fan Stan. After a colon cancer diagnosis in 2015, Stanley endured chemo treatments through the 2016 football season. "I have a few pictures from that season. I looked like a mad scientist because I was losing my hair on top, but it was still scraggly on the bottom," Stanley said. He would get chemo therapy on Tuesdays, with a port pumping medicine through him for 48 hours until removed on Thursdays. "In fact, at my first chemo treatment, my doctor said, 'You need to go home and rest and take it easy,'" Stan said. "And I said, 'Oh no, UCF is playing a game tonight.' It was a Thursday night game." Despite his health issues, Stanley still cheered the Knights on and got the students

into the action. "I maybe pushed myself a little too much and got a bit winded, but I am a strong Christian. If it's meant to be, it's meant to be, but I'm going to die trying," he said.

Now cancer free and back at full strength, Stanley is still pumping up the crowd with his signs. "I never really want the focus to be on me, because that's not what it's about. It's about the fans, the students, the players. I'm just the cheer guy. I'm just one facet of game day," Stanley said. "My main goal is to create memories. I let people take the signs and take pictures of them with, so it's something that they look back on." Despite the annual turnover on the field with new players, coaches and more students populating the student section on a yearly basis, one thing has always remained constant at UCF's on campus stadium: Knight Fan Stan. "We used to have a joke like that scene in Lion King," Murray said. "When Mufasa tells Simba that everything the light touches is their kingdom; well that's the same thing with Knight Fan Stan. Anything the light touches with UCF Athletics is Knight Fan Stan's kingdom."



Knight Fan Stan poses for a photo in front of University of Phoenix Stadium in Arizona. He was in attendance for the Knight's monumental Fiesta Bowl win over Baylor in 2014. The Knights would finish the year in the top 10 of the AP poll. Photo courtesy of Knight Fan Stan via Facebook.