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JOUR-3120

10/5/2025

Assignment 4: Event Study

Headline:

Big Orange, Boats, and BBQ: Knoxville gets ready for a Southern Event!

By: Benjamin Jones

Knoxville radiated orange all weekend as the mighty Tennessee Volunteers' matchup against the Arkansas Razorbacks brought in more than 100,000 fans into the city. It turned downtown and the known riverfront into one of the most special weekends of the season.

Before the whistle was even blown, the celebration had already started. It started with the Vol Navy, one of the most unique and special traditions in college football. Dozens of boats bobbed under the shine of the sun where fans get burnt, wave numbers of orange flags, and sand Rocky Top to all the echoes of the horns.

"This truly isn't just a form of a tailgating, it is a family that floats," said David "Big Dave" Lee, a Knoxville native who has been boating for a past decade. "I've met people all over from the SEC out here, Once you are tied up to a boat, you're part of a family and community."

The celebration took a spill into Cumberland Avenue and Market Square, where the "Big Orange Block Party" highlighted thousands Friday night. Lots of live band music til nearly midnight as fans from both states took over the streets, taking selfies, dancing, and trying local BBQ from food trucks that are along the Strip.

Downtown businesses took advantage of opportunities and made the best of it. According to Visit Knoxville, many local hotels reported sold out and near-full occupancy, and restaurant sales were said to have gone up 20 percent from the typical October weekend. The city's office of tourism estimates that this overall weekend brought in \$5 million in total activity done.

"There's something about the SEC football factor that transforms Knoxville," said Grace Stanley, who is a current spokesperson for the Visit Knoxville. "It's not only about the game, it's also about showcasing what this city really is and welcoming everyone and be proud of the traditions."

On Campus, many orange tents covered the entire area of Circle Park and Volunteer Boulevard. Students are reunited with alumni, and also experience the Pride of the Southland Marching Band as they drew crowds before even entering Neyland. “When you stand near the river at sunset and hear the “Rocky Top” chants echo from the stadium, it’s truly something else,” said Katy Walsh, who is a current UT senior who plays the clarinet in the Pride of the Southland Marching Band. “It’s not just culture, it’s our culture.”

From the steaming boats to the final fireworks that fire over the Tennessee River, Knoxville reminded the South that there are very few, if any, places that do college football like The Big Orange Country.



Beautiful photo of the Tennessee River and scenes pregame!



Collab photo of multiple boats/yachts anchored up to enjoy time together!

Audio interview with “Big Dave”

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/kloi2o548omz5djrpb3x/6766-Wildberry-Ln-6.m4a?rlkey=e6nyx2am1s6o6lm05u6gygpbj&st=o9zd086w&dl=0>