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# Super Bowl

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SUPER BOWL XLIV | TICKETS

## Super Bowl ticket brokers hope for late boost in profits

A drop in corporate dollars at the Super Bowl has left more seats open for regular fans, but what they're willing to pay is a different matter.



The median asking price for a Super Bowl ticket at StubHub.com has dropped to \$2,500 - down from \$3,500 a week ago. MARICE COHN BAND / MIAMI HERALD STAFF

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BY DOUGLAS HANKS  
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It was a bull market in South Florida last time, thanks mostly to the Bears. Now speculators sound bearish, though that will probably change once the Saints come marching in.

Sports puns meet demand curves every year at this time as the erratic, dicey and largely hush-hush market for Super Bowl tickets revs into action. Brokers say ticket sales have been soft so far, thanks to a weak economy and the fact that teams from small cities are playing in the Feb. 7 championship.

Even so, the pricing bubble for Super Bowl tickets seems virtually puncture-proof. The cheapest seats in Sun Life Stadium sold for about \$2,000 apiece Friday even as brokers grumbled about penny-pinching fans from Indianapolis and New Orleans.

"That's the best word I can give you: soft," said Jay Smith, president of Sports Travel and Tours in Hatfield, Mass., which is selling Super Bowl

packages for \$3,900 a head. "People are not banging down the doors." Thousands of tickets were up for grabs this week on ticket exchange websites and online marketplaces such as eBay and Craigslist.

"It's certainly a buyer's market," said Joellen Ferrer, a spokeswoman for StubHub.com, which had about 5,000 Super Bowl tickets for sale this week. In recent days, the median asking prices on StubHub, which pairs ticket buyers and sellers, dropped sharply to about \$2,500 for the Super Bowl -- down from \$3,500 a week ago.

### THE VARIABLES

Projecting how much to mark up a Super Bowl ticket -- face values start at \$500 -- has gotten more complicated this year.

A drop in corporate entertaining at the big game left more tickets available for regular fans. Brokers say they've all but written off the Indianapolis Colts as a significant driver of ticket sales since the team was just in South Florida for the Super Bowl three years ago.

But with the New Orleans Saints playing in their first Super Bowl after 42 years, there's hope that fans will come down from Louisiana even if they haven't bought tickets yet. That could lead to last-minute purchases, and a spike in prices.

Robert Tuchman, an executive vice president at Premiere Global Sports, said South Florida's last Super

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Bowl saw a similar pattern in 2007, when the Colts also contributed to weak ticket sales. But late-buying Chicago Bears fans ultimately sent the market soaring.

Good seats that were selling for \$3,000 on the Wednesday before that game suddenly were commanding \$7,000. "It just skyrocketed," Tuchman said.

"We're really expecting the Saints fans to come," said Michael Lipman, of Miami's Tickets of America, an online brokerage. "And they will come. How much they'll pay is another question."

Lipman expects to sell roughly 1,000 Super Bowl tickets this year.

**EXCHANGING HANDS**

The National Football League sends 75 percent of Super Bowl tickets to the league's 32 teams, which then distribute them to players, coaches, executives and corporate sponsors. The NFL's share of tickets also gets spread out to sponsors, charities, media organizations, local organizers and fans who enter lotteries.

From there, the tickets begin changing hands. Even though NFL rules bar team employees from selling theirs for more than face value, many do, Lipman said. He said he and his staff court financial advisors and agents representing players as potential sources for Super Bowl tickets.

"It really is a relationship game," he said.

For teams that don't make it to the Super Bowl, their players can buy two tickets at face value. For the two Super Bowl teams, their players can buy up to 15. Even so, Lipman said sponsors and other companies with ties to the league are the best sources for tickets -- particularly this year as companies pull back money on sports deals signed before the economy went sour.

"Corporations are selling more tickets these days than buying them," he said.

Prices are keeping even die-hard Saints fans away from South Florida, at least for the moment, travel agents said.

"People desperately want to go," said Karen Peeler Wild, owner of Lagniappe Travel Services in New Orleans. "Once you go online and you see how much they're brokering tickets for, that's a \$10,000 weekend. We can't afford that."

Wild said some clients are driving to South Florida in hopes of finding a cheaper ticket once they arrive. She said she would make the trip just to celebrate in the parking lot outside the game, if not for the NFL's policy of banning tailgating before the Super Bowl.

"If I can't be in the parking lot, why even go?" Wild said. In New Orleans, "they started tailgating Friday for the Sunday AFC championship. They really did."

*Miami Herald staff writer Kathleen McGrory contributed to this report.*



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**dadedude** wrote on 01/31/2010 10:23:41 AM:

About an hour before game time the tickets will be \$20. Wait till then to buy.

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**cynsaints** wrote on 01/31/2010 09:33:26 AM:

With all the restrictions Miami is imposing such as no tailgating why bother to go to Miami. Everyone knows the real party will be on Bourbon St no matter what the outcome. I'll keep my money in my home town, party on Bourbon then the scalpers can keep their tickets. WHO DAT!!!!

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**Bklyn2Miami** wrote on 01/31/2010 09:27:10 AM:

Something is only worth what someone else is willing to pay. If you have a Picasso that no one wants buy, it's worthless.

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**marye** wrote on 01/31/2010 08:57:03 AM:

The Saints will be the winner in this, no matter the outcome. Why buy OVERPRICED tickets when you can see it at home???? By the By the Tim T part will be overlooked. Hey it's my body stay OFF OF IT. Did TT mom explain anything about this time in her life or it this just PR?

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**miamitrev2** wrote on 01/31/2010 05:45:47 AM:

When did they start tailgating for the NFC Championship?

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**TimeRanger** wrote on 01/31/2010 02:11:53 AM:

Personally, I would like to see the Scalpers - aka "ticket brokers" lose their collective azzes on each and every ticket.

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