

ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex Key Annual Sporting Events

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla.- The ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex is home to more than 300 events each year, accommodating 60 different sports, and drawing athletes from more than 70 countries. Competitors range from the young to the old, from the amateur and highly skilled to the Special Olympian and the weekend warrior. Below are a handful of signature events:

Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend presented by CIGNA (January)

The Walt Disney World Marathon began in 1994 and takes runners along a magical 26.2-mile journey through all four Disney theme parks (Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios and Disney's Animal Kingdom).

Known as one of the top family-destination races, marathon weekend attracts more than 55,000 runners and their families (more than 100,000 people total) to enjoy the weekend's activities – Kids Races, a Family 5K, half marathon, marathon and Health & Fitness Expo.

Tom Shaw Performance Camp (February)

Since 2006, renowned speed and conditioning coach Tom Shaw has trained some of the top NFL players at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex. Notable athletes include Deion Sanders, Super Bowl XLIII MVP Santonio Holmes (Pittsburgh Steelers), 2008 NFL Defensive Player of the Year James Harrison (Pittsburgh Steelers), Calvin Johnson (Detroit Lions), Glenn Dorsey (Kansas City Chiefs), Chris Johnson (Tennessee Titans) and Devin Hester (Chicago Bears).

Atlanta Braves Spring Training (February-March)

On March 27, 1997, the Atlanta Braves exhibition game versus the Cincinnati Reds marked the grand opening of the sports complex. Led by manager Bobby Cox and perennial all-star Chipper Jones, the Braves enjoyed a string of nine straight division titles while at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex, and now feature one of the most promising young teams in baseball.

Cheerleading Worlds Championship (April)

Considered the Super Bowl of cheerleading events, the Cheerleading Worlds Championship features the globe's best cheerleading squads. Participation in the event has grown dramatically from three international teams representing two countries to more than 100 teams (8,500 cheerleaders) from 40 countries.

AAU Boys Basketball National Championships (July)

The tournament features some of the top high school-age players from across the country. Known as a breeding ground for future NBA stars (Lebron James, Dwight Howard, Chris Paul and Dwyane Wade), the event attracts NCAA coaches from the top basketball programs, making it the premier collegiate recruiting event in the nation.

ESPN RISE Games presented by Target (July)

The multi-sport festival anchored by several elite high school sports events including the AAU 17-under Boys Basketball Super Showcase, the Under Armour High School Softball All-American game and the Gridiron Kings, an elite 7-on-7 football event. The event also includes an open division for baseball, basketball, field hockey, lacrosse and track & field competitions.

Disney Wine & Dine Half Marathon Weekend (debuts October 2010)

The Disney Wine & Dine Fall Half Marathon Weekend will make its debut Oct. 1-2, 2010. The nighttime race will take participants through multiple theme parks and will culminate at the Epcot International Food & Wine Festival for an exclusive after-hours party. The weekend will include Mickey's Halloween Family Fun Run 5K, Kids Races and the event's first-ever half marathon two-person relay.

Children's Miracle Network Classic (November)

Since 1971, the PGA TOUR's most magical stop has taken place at Walt Disney World Resort. The Palm and Magnolia golf courses play host to the final tournament of the PGA TOUR Fall Series. Notable winners of the event include Jack Nicklaus, who won the first three Classics ('71-'73), Payne Stewart ('83), Tiger Woods ('96, '99), Vijay Singh ('04), Davis Love III ('08) and Stephen Ames ('07,'09).

Old Spice Classic (November)

The premier pre-season Division I event is an eight-team, 12-game men's basketball tournament that takes place over Thanksgiving weekend and features some of the top collegiate teams in America. Past winners include Arkansas (2006), North Carolina State (2007), Gonzaga (2008) and Florida State (2009). Competing this year will be Notre Dame, Temple, Boston College, California, Georgia, Manhattan College, Texas A&M and Wisconsin.

The Home Depot ESPNU College Football Awards/Disney Spirit Award (December)

The star-studded awards show features the live presentation of nine of college football's most prestigious awards, along with Disney's Spirit Award. The event takes place at Atlantic Dance Hall at Disney's BoardWalk. Disney's Spirit Award has been presented annually to college football's most inspirational figure since 1996, including Tim Tebow in 2008 and Mark Herzlich in 2009.

Pop Warner Super Bowl (December)

Sixty-four of the top youth football teams in the nation compete in this week-long Super Bowl after advancing through regional competitions. National crowns will be won in four divisions based on size and age – Jr. Pee Wee (ages 8-11 yrs.), Pee Wee (9-12 yrs.), Jr. Midget (10-13 yrs.) and Midget (11-15 yrs.). The Pop Warner National Cheer & Dance Championships also takes place, bringing together thousands of cheerleaders from across the country.

Disney's Soccer Showcase presented by Chelsea Football Club (December)

Widely regarded as the leading elite youth soccer tournament in the nation, this event annually attracts the top high school-aged boys and girls soccer players from across the country. The tournament features more than 500 teams (roughly 9,500 athletes). More than 800 college coaches attend, making it *the place* where top college prospects are recruited.