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ARENA
2025
CROWN
1:00PM
VS KATS
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VICE
SPORTS




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(PRICE PER TICKET)

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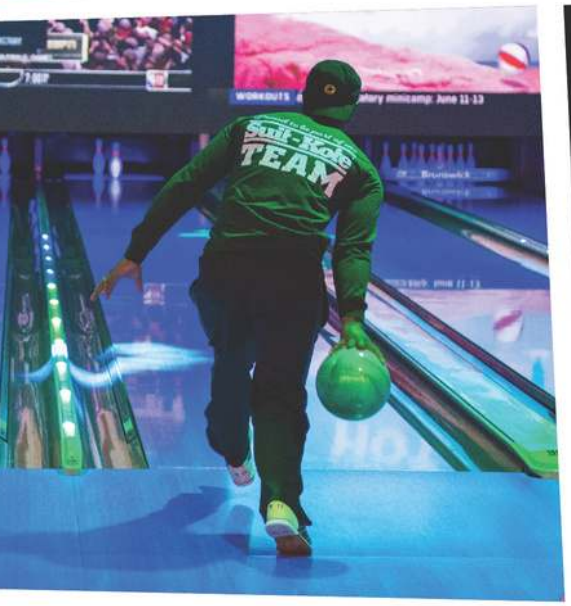
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VS

# ARENA CROWN 2025 CHAMPIONSHIP

## SATURDAY, JUNE 28TH KICKOFF 1:00PM



# ARENA CROWN 2025 GAME PREVIEW

**Arena Crown 2025 – Game Preview**
**Albany Firebirds vs. Nashville Kats**
**Saturday, June 28, 2025 | 1:00 PM | MVP Arena**

**The road to the first-ever Arena Crown ends in Albany. The undefeated Albany Firebirds face off against the battle-tested Nashville Kats in a championship matchup that features the league's top playmakers on both sides of the ball. It's offense vs. defense. Experience vs. momentum. History is on the line as the AF1's two best teams meet in a game built for the big stage.**




Coaching Spotlight

Damon Ware – Albany Firebirds

Head Coach Damon Ware is no stranger to success in Albany. In his first season as head coach of the Firebirds, he has led the team to a perfect 10–0 record and a shot at the inaugural Arena Crown title. Ware has already won two championships in Albany—serving as a key part of the team's title runs in 2021 and 2022—and now looks to add another as the man in charge.
Respected across the league for his sharp offensive mind and calm leadership, Ware has built a team that leads the league in scoring while allowing the fewest points. He enters Arena Crown 2025 as a strong favorite for AF1 Coach of the Year.

Darren Arbet – Nashville Kats
A coaching legend with deep Albany roots, Darren Arbet returns to MVP Arena with a legacy few can match. Arbet spent eight years on the original Albany Firebirds coaching staff in the 1990s as the team's defensive coordinator and fullback/linebackers coach, helping build the foundation of one of arena football's most iconic franchises.
He later went on to become a four-time ArenaBowl champion, two-time Coach of the Year, and was inducted into the Arena Football Hall of Fame in 2011. This season, he took a Nashville team that started 0–2 and transformed it into the #2 seed and a legitimate championship contender. With his experience and proven ability to win big games, Arbet brings a familiar face and a serious challenge back to Albany.

Albany Firebirds (10–0)

Albany has been the class of AF1 all season long, entering the Arena Crown with a perfect 10–0 record. The Firebirds are led by quarterback Sam Castronova, who has totaled 56 touchdowns this year between the regular season and playoffs. His chemistry with a deep group of receivers has made Albany's offense nearly impossible to slow down.

On defense, Ezekiel Rose has racked up 14 sacks, spearheading a relentless pass rush that's disrupted offenses all year. The Firebirds are balanced, fast, and confident—and with home-field advantage at MVP Arena, they are one win away from completing a flawless season and capturing the first Arena Crown title.

Nashville Kats (6–4)

The Nashville Kats are peaking at the perfect time. After starting the season 0–2, they've found their rhythm and stormed into the championship behind explosive quarterback Tyler Kulka, who's dangerous through the air and on the ground. Kulka's ability to extend plays and lead quick-scoring drives makes him one of the most dynamic QBs in the league.

Defensively, Nashville brings one of the most disruptive secondaries in AF1, headlined by Shaun Lewis, who leads the league with 10 interceptions. The Kats defense thrives on takeaways and momentum swings, and their physical style of play has worn down opponents in tight games.

With big wins late in the season and in the playoffs, Nashville arrives in Albany with confidence—and all the tools to pull off a championship upset.

Season Series

These two teams met twice during the regular season, with Albany winning both matchups. The Firebirds pulled away in the second half of each contest, but Nashville kept things tight early and showed they can go toe-to-toe with the league's best.

Key Matchups to Watch

- Castronova vs. Lewis: AF1's top QB takes on the league's interception leader
- Rose and the Albany pass rush vs. Kulka's mobility
- Turnover battle — critical in both prior meetings
- Championship atmosphere — how each team handles the moment

Final Word

The Arena Crown isn't just about a trophy. It's about setting the tone for a new era of arena football. Albany has the record, the firepower, and the home crowd. Nashville brings grit, playmakers, and a dangerous edge. The best of AF1 will be on full display — and one team will walk out as the first-ever Arena Crown champion.

# AF1 League Awards Finalists

Coach of the Year

Damon Ware (Albany)

After leading Albany to a perfect 10–0 season, Ware is widely considered the front-runner. Respected by opposing coaches for his game planning and leadership, he has orchestrated dominance on both sides of the ball.

Darren Arbet (Nashville)

Arbet led a remarkable turnaround after an 0–2 start, guiding the Kats to the #2 seed and a trip to the Arena Crown—without a single player on other year-end award lists. A clear candidate for what he got out of his roster.

Gary Thomas (Southwest Kansas)

Thomas led the Storm to a strong start and a playoff berth. Despite late-season setbacks, his team's early wins and defensive identity earned him recognition.

Assistant Coach of the Year

Terry Foster (Nashville)

The Kats' defense, second in the league in points allowed, reflects Foster's work as defensive coordinator. His unit helped carry Nashville to the championship.

Brandon Sesay (Albany)

Albany allowed just 27.6 points per game—an impressive stat in a high-scoring league. Sesay's defense was consistent and elite from Week 1 through the semifinals.

Jason Scheck (Southwest Kansas)

Known for designing aggressive, turnover-focused defenses, Scheck's group helped the Storm stay in games and secure a playoff spot.

# AF1 League Awards Finalists

## Defensive Player of the Year

**Ezekiel Rose (DL - Albany)**
Rose was a disruptive force all season, recording 12 sacks, 15 tackles for loss, and anchoring the league's best scoring defense. His three-sack performance against Nashville in May was one of the most dominant individual games of the year.

**Kerry Starks (MAC - Salina)**
Starks was central to Salina's playoff push, racking up seven sacks and forcing key turnovers down the stretch.

**Michael Lawson (DB - Southwest Kansas)**
Lawson led the league in total takeaways, posting six interceptions (two returned for touchdowns), seven forced fumbles, four recoveries, and a league-best 82 tackles.

## Offensive Player of the Year

**Dalton Cole (QB - Oregon)**
Despite Oregon missing the playoffs, Cole led the league in passing yards and was top two in most offensive categories.

**Jalen Morton (WR/QB - Southwest Kansas)**
A dual-threat playmaker, Morton was among the leaders in passing and rushing, showing rare versatility and production.

**Duane Brown (WR - Albany)**
Brown led all receivers in touchdowns (30) and averaged more than 90 receiving yards per game. He was a consistent gamebreaker all season long.

# AF1 League Awards Finalists

Rookie of the Year

Josiah King (RB/KR - Corpus Christi)
King contributed in all phases—rushing, receiving, returning, and on defense. He totaled four touchdowns and was a reliable all-around threat.

Dalton Cole (QB - Oregon)
Also a finalist for Offensive Player of the Year, Cole's rookie campaign was defined by big numbers and late-game comebacks.

Jalen Morton (QB - Southwest Kansas)
Morton's dual-threat ability and playoff-clinching performances have him in serious contention here—and for MVP.

Most Valuable Player (MVP)
Sam Castronova (QB - Albany)
The leader of the league's only unbeaten team, Castronova threw a league-best 48 touchdown passes. Though his yardage total ranked third, his efficiency and team success make him a strong favorite.

Duane Brown (WR - Albany)
Brown caught 30 of Castronova's 48 touchdowns and finished just seven yards shy of leading the league in receiving. His impact was undeniable, though he competes with his own quarterback for votes.

Jalen Morton (QB - Southwest Kansas)
Morton led AF1 in rushing yards and rushing touchdowns—both from the quarterback position—while also finishing second in passing yards. His versatility and leadership carried Southwest Kansas all season.




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# ALBANY FIREBIRDS ROSTER

| # | Name | POS | Height | Weight | College |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | Marquel Wade | WR | 5' 11" | 170 lbs | Arkansas |
| 1 | Trevon Shorts | LB | 6' 1" | 220 lbs | Fairmont State |
| 2 | Sam Castronova | QB | 6' 2" | 215 lbs | Bethany |
| 3 | Duane Brown | WR | 6' 0" | 190 lbs | IUP |
| 4 | Robert Mccoy Jr | QB | 6' 2" | 190 lbs | Charleston Southern |
| 5 | Ezekiel Rose | DL | 6' 3" | 310 lbs | West Virginia |
| 7 | Isiah Scott | WR | 6' 3" | 215 lbs | West Virginia State |
| 8 | Drew Singleton | LB | 6' 2" | 235 lbs | Rutgers |
| 9 | Dejon Walden | LB | 6' 0" | 230 lbs | Shorter |
| 10 | Markus Smith | DB | 6' 2" | 205 lbs | Nevada |
| 11 | Mike Lee | DB | 5' 9" | 180 lbs | Kansas |
| 17 | Kyle Chandler | DB | 6' 0" | 200 lbs | Tarleton State University |
| 21 | Darien Townsend | WR | 5' 10" | 180 lbs | Youngstown State |
| 23 | Henry Nell | K | 5' 11" | 200 lbs | International |
| 24 | Tre Wortham | DB | 6' 1" | 200 lbs | UConn |
| 33 | Desmond Maxwell | FB | 6' 2" | 250 lbs | Western Kentucky |
| 53 | Brandon Nicholson | OL | 6' 4" | 300 lbs | Notre Dame College |
| 65 | Sean Brown | OL | 6' 3" | 320 lbs | Mississippi Valley State |
| 69 | Joshua Zacher | OL | 6' 2" | 300 lbs | Duquesne |
| 74 | Colby Byrd | OL | 6' 3" | 300 lbs | Norfolk State |
| 77 | Isaiah Hardy | OL | 6' 5" | 330 lbs | West Virginia |
| 90 | Jamall Hickbottom | DL | 6' 2" | 305 lbs | South Alabama |
| 94 | Marquise Lawson-Greenwood | DE | 6' 6" | 255 lbs | California University/San Bernardino Valley College/Lincoln |
| 98 | Prince Umanmielen | DL | 6' 6" | 278 lbs | East Central/Tarleton State |

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Laura McDonald Photography

# NASHVILLE KATS ROSTER

| # | Name | POS | Height | Weight | College |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | Shaki Holiness | DL | 6' 3" | 260 lbs | University of Massachusetts |
| 1 | Antwane Grant | WR | 6' 1" | 205 lbs | Western Kentucky |
| 3 | Byron Edwards | DB | 5' 10" | 185 lbs | Texas Southern |
| 4 | Jordon Gandy | WR | 6' 4" | 210 lbs | Murray State |
| 5 | Shaun Lewis | DB | 6' 0" | 180 lbs | University of Houston |
| 6 | Nih-Jer Jackson | WR | 6' 3" | 190 lbs | Southeastern Louisiana |
| 7 | Calvin Fance | FB | 6' 2" | 255 lbs | Angelo State |
| 8 | Derrick Maxwell Jr | DB | 6' 0" | 190 lbs | Emporia State University |
| 8 | Isaiah McFarland | DB | 6' 0" | 204 lbs | Kentucky State |
| 9 | Milton Williams III | WR | 6' 3" | 210 lbs | Delaware State |
| 11 | Robert Jones Jr. | WR | 6' 0" | 180 lbs | UCF |
| 12 | Dalton Oliver | QB | 6' 3" | 210 lbs | Kentucky Wesleyan University |
| 17 | Tyler Kulka | QB | 6' 1" | 220 lbs | Lawrence Tech |
| 21 | Kenny Veal | DB | 6' 0" | 195 lbs | Toledo/GVSU |
| 24 | Amos Coleman III | DB | 5' 11" | 185 lbs | Texas A&M Kingsville |
| 33 | Gunner Raborn | K | 5' 9" | 185 lbs | Murray State/Alabama |
| 50 | Derrick Zeigler | OL | 6' 4" | 320 lbs | NW Mississippi |
| 56 | Jaquan Artis | DL | 6' 2" | 243 lbs | Lenoir-Rhyne |
| 66 | Armonti Carey | DL | 6' 5" | 320 lbs | Midwestern State University |
| 71 | Zechariah Thomas | OL | 6' 5" | 315 lbs | Pittsburgh State |
| 74 | Kyle Davis | OL | 6' 2" | 305 lbs | Grambling State |
| 75 | Brey Walker | OL | 6' 7" | 350 lbs | Texas State |
| 90 | Payton Muljo | DL | 6' 6" | 315 lbs | Northern Michigan |
| 92 | Roderick Perry II | DL | 6' 1" | 304 lbs | South Carolina State |

# AF1 STANDINGS

| Rk | Team | GP | W | L | W% | PF | PA | Streak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Albany Firebirds | 10 | 10 | 0 | 1.000 | 675 | 276 | W 10 |
| 2 | Nashville Kats | 10 | 6 | 4 | .600 | 472 | 386 | W 1 |
| 3 | SW Kansas Storm | 12 | 7 | 5 | .583 | 561 | 491 | L 2 |
| 4 | Salina Liberty | 11 | 6 | 5 | .545 | 493 | 463 | W 4 |
| 5 | Billings Outlaws | 12 | 6 | 6 | .500 | 553 | 466 | W 3 |
| 6 | Oregon Lightning | 13 | 5 | 8 | .385 | 461 | 502 | L 1 |
| 7 | Corpus Christi Tritons | 10 | 3 | 7 | .300 | 332 | 497 | L 7 |
| 8 | Washington Wolfpack | 12 | 2 | 10 | .167 | 235 | 701 | L 6 |

# AF1 PLAYOFF STANDINGS

| Rk | Team | GP | W | L | W% | PF | PA | Streak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Albany Firebirds | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | 75 | 44 | W 1 |
| 2 | Nashville Kats | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | 48 | 43 | W 1 |
| 3 | Salina Liberty | 1 | 0 | 1 | .000 | 44 | 75 | L 1 |
| 4 | SW Kansas Storm | 1 | 0 | 1 | .000 | 43 | 48 | L 1 |
| 5 | Billings Outlaws | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 | |
| 6 | Corpus Christi Tritons | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 | |
| 7 | Oregon Lightning | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 | |
| 8 | Washington Wolfpack | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 | |

# FIREBIRDS SCHEDULE

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fri Mar 21 7:00pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | 78 | VS | 20 | | Dodge City, Kansas SW Kansas Storm | Final | W | BOXSCORE |
| Sat Mar 29 6:00pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | 42 | AT | 34 | | Nashville Nashville Kats | Final | W | BOXSCORE |
| Sun Apr 6 6:30pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | 57 | AT | 27 | | Salina Salina Liberty | Final | W | BOXSCORE |
| Sun Apr 13 7:00pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | 62 | VS | 24 | | Billings, Montana Billings Outlaws | Final | W | BOXSCORE |
| Sun Apr 20 6:00pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | 39 | AT | 7 | | Billings, Montana Billings Outlaws | Final | W | BOXSCORE |
| Fri Apr 25 8:00pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | 100 | AT | 12 | | Corpus Christi Corpus Christi Tritons | Final | W | BOXSCORE |
| Sun May 4 4:00pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | 64 | VS | 58 | | Salina Salina Liberty | Final | W | BOXSCORE |
| Sat May 10 7:00pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | 71 | VS | 55 | | Nashville Nashville Kats | Final | W | BOXSCORE |
| Sat May 24 7:00pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | 64 | VS | 27 | | Corpus Christi Corpus Christi Tritons | Final | W | BOXSCORE |
| Sat Jun 14 7:00pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | 98 | VS | 12 | | Everett, Washington Washington Wolfpack | Final | W | BOXSCORE |
| Sat Jun 21 7:00pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | 75 | VS | 44 | | Salina Salina Liberty | Final | W | BOXSCORE |
| Sat Jun 28 1:00pm EDT | Albany, New York Albany Firebirds | | | VS | | | Nashville Nashville Kats | PREVIEW TICKETS | | |

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# JUNE 21ST PHOTO GALLERY



















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# COACH OF THE YEAR FINALISTS



**DAMON WARE**

HEAD COACH

ALBANY FIREBIRDS



**DARREN ARBET**

HEAD COACH

KATS



**GARY THOMAS**

HEAD COACH

STORM




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# ASSISTANT COACH OF THE YEAR FINALISTS



**BRANDON SESAY**

DEFENSIVE COORD.

ALBANY FIREBIRDS



**TERRY FOSTER**

DEFENSIVE COORD.

KATS



**JASON SCHECK**

DEFENSIVE COORD.

STORM



# HEAD COACH DAMON WARE

Damon Ware joined the historic Albany Firebirds in October of 2023 as the Head Coach and General Manager on the same day it was announced the Albany Firebirds are back and are returning to the AFL. Prior to joining the Firebirds, Ware spent the 2021 and 2022 seasons in Albany as the Offensive Coordinator and Assistant Head Coach and won back-to-back National Arena League Championships.

The 2020 shortened season Damon Ware was the Offensive Coordinator with the Omaha Beef. In 2019, Ware spent the IFL season with the Nebraska Danger as their Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Line Coach. In Nebraska, Ware helped lead the Danger to the third-ranked rushing attack in the Indoor Football League, along with the #1 rusher in the league and Rookie of the Year Tommy Armstrong (Nebraska). In 2018, Ware served as Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator for the Cedar Rapids Titans where he led the #1 passing offense in the IFL. Ware's Quarterback Jake Medlock (Florida International) led the Indoor Football League in passing yards per game and passing touchdowns. In 2017, Ware also held the title of Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator for the Colorado Crush.



# HEAD COACH DAMON WARE

Ware was the Head Coach for the Cheyenne Warriors during the 2012-2013 seasons competing in the American Professional Football League. Also, in 2013, Ware was the Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator for Adams City High School. In 2011, Ware was the Head Coach of the Calanda Broncos team in Switzerland. The team finished undefeated in Switzerland, winning the Swiss Bowl national championship. Ware's team finished ranked first in both offense and defense along with the #5 ranking in all of Europe. In 2010, Ware was the Head Coach for the Finland Oulu Northern Lights and led them to the championship game. In 2009, Ware served as the Head Coach/General Manager of the Denver Titans of the American Professional Football League. In 2008, Ware worked as the Quarterbacks Coach at Colorado State University-Pueblo. Ware also served as Head Coach/General Manager for the Black Hills Red Dogs of the National Indoor Football League from 2004-2005.

Ware coached for William Hinkley High School from 1998-2000 and returned from 2002-2003. During his high school tenure, Ware served as a coordinator for offense, defense, and special teams. In his tenure at William Hinkley High School, Ware's teams won two Conference Championships, including the first undefeated conference championship in school history, coached an offensive player of the year, coached a defensive player of the year, and broke the state record with his defensive secondary amassing 28 interceptions with nine returned for touchdowns. In 2001, Coach Ware was honored with the opportunity to coach with the New Orleans Saints of the National Football League (NFL) through the Minority Internship Fellowship program. Ware worked as an assistant wide receivers coach.

For the 2025 season, Damon Ware brings his extensive experience and championship-winning mentality to lead the Albany Firebirds in the inaugural season of Arena Football One (AF1). His leadership, combined with a proven track record of developing top-tier talent and executing winning strategies, positions the Firebirds as strong contenders for the championship. Ware's journey exemplifies his commitment to excellence and his ability to build competitive teams both nationally and internationally.

Ware holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Science/Psychology and a Master's degree in Organizational Leadership.

# BRANDON SESAY

Defensive Coordinator

Brandon Sesay, Defensive Coordinator for the Albany Firebirds in Arena Football One (AF1), brings a championship mindset, extensive playing experience, and a deep commitment to the Albany community. A former Offensive and Defensive Lineman at Texas Tech, Sesay has been a vital part of every Albany arena football franchise since 2018, playing a key role in securing ArenaBowl 32 and contributing to back-to-back championships in 2021 and 2022. Off the field, his Champ Camp inspires local youth with football skills and life lessons, solidifying his legacy as a player, mentor, and beloved figure in Albany football.

# ARTHUR HOBBS

Defensive Backs Coach

Brandon Sesay, Defensive Coordinator for the Albany Firebirds in Arena Football One (AF1), brings a championship mindset, extensive playing experience, and a deep commitment to the Albany community. A former Offensive and Defensive Lineman at Texas Tech, Sesay has been a vital part of every Albany arena football franchise since 2018, playing a key role in securing ArenaBowl 32 and contributing to back-to-back championships in 2021 and 2022. Off the field, his Champ Camp inspires local youth with football skills and life lessons, solidifying his legacy as a player, mentor, and beloved figure in Albany football.

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## TONY BOWICK

Offensive Line

Brandon Sesay, Defensive Coordinator for the Albany Firebirds in Arena Football One (AF1), brings a championship mindset, extensive playing experience, and a deep commitment to the Albany community. A former Offensive and Defensive Lineman at Texas Tech, Sesay has been a vital part of every Albany arena football franchise since 2018, playing a key role in securing ArenaBowl 32 and contributing to back-to-back championships in 2021 and 2022. Off the field, his Champ Camp inspires local youth with football skills and life lessons, solidifying his legacy as a player, mentor, and beloved figure in Albany football.

## GABE YOUNG

Strength & Conditioning

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## JORDAN GOOCH

Fullbacks

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## SEAN JOHNSON

Scouting Director

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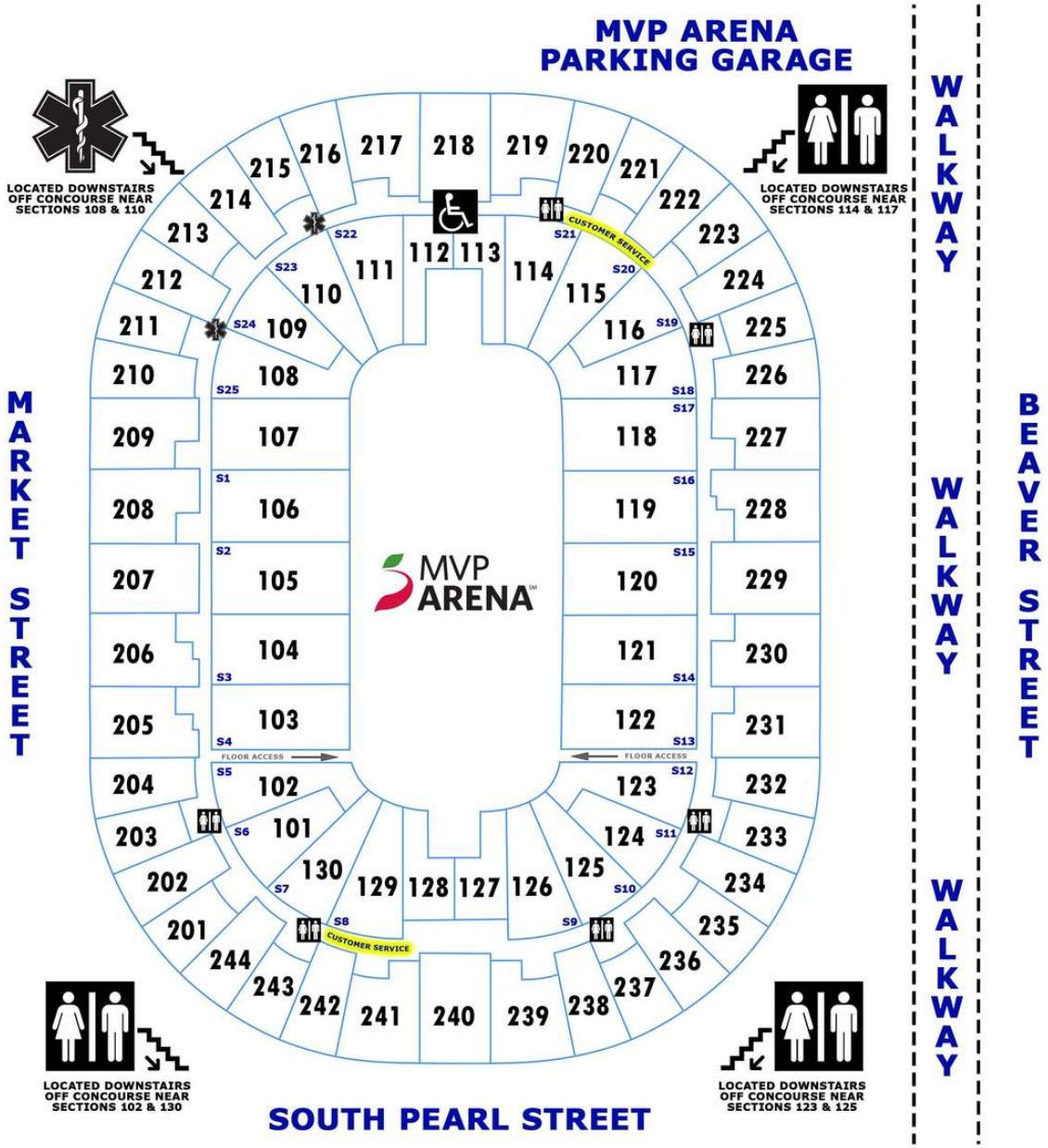
# FIREBIRD FOCUS




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EVERY WEEK ON YouTube

# ARENA MAP



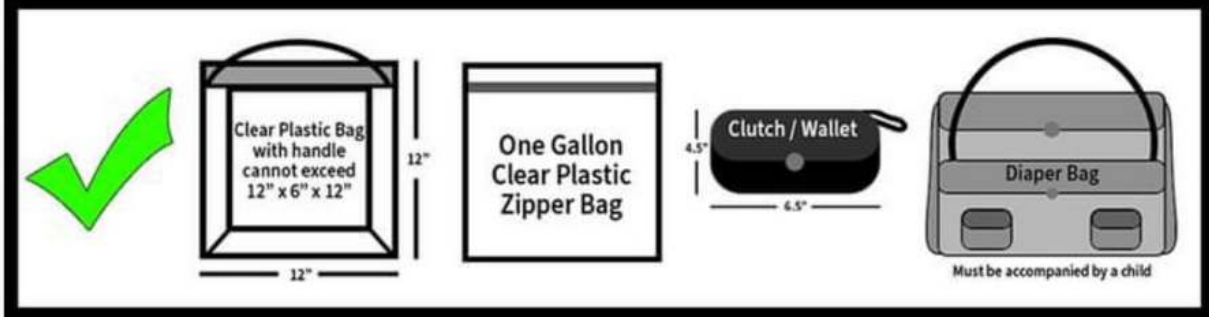

*Any Questions? Visit: https://www.mvparena.com/plan-your-visit/faqs*
*Connect With Us: Phone: 518-487-2000*
*Executive Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:00pm*

# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

AF1 ARENA FOOTBALL ONE

## MVP ARENA℠ BAG POLICY

**CLEAR** PLASTIC, VINYL OR PVC BAGS NO LARGER THAN 12" x 6" x 12"
OR
SMALL CLUTCH BAGS NO LARGER THAN 4.5" x 6.5" (DOES NOT NEED TO BE CLEAR)







ANY BAG THAT DOES NOT FIT THE PERMITTED BAG REQUIREMENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED

## ALL ITEMS ARE SUBJECT TO SEARCH

PROHIBITED BAGS CANNOT GO IN CLEAR BAGS
EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE FOR MEDICALLY NECESSARY ITEMS AFTER INSPECTION
DIAPER BAGS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A CHILD

## PARKING FOR FIREBIRDS GAME

**GREEN-HUDSON GARAGE**

45 HUDSON AVE, ALBANY NY

www.parkalbany.com



# FIREBIRDS IN THE COMMUNITY

At the Albany Firebirds, community lies at the heart of our organization. We are dedicated to fostering a strong bond with the community we call home. Our commitment goes beyond the field, extending into the neighborhoods and streets that surround us. We believe that by actively engaging with our community, we not only enhance the fan experience but also contribute to the well-being of the place we proudly represent.



## INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

Our involvement in the community is not just a checkbox on our to-do list; it's a core part of our identity. From youth outreach programs to community events, we actively seek opportunities to make a positive impact. Whether it's supporting local initiatives or collaborating with schools, we strive to be more than just a sports team. By embracing the spirit of community, we aim to create lasting connections that transcend the boundaries of the game.



## FLAMES APPEARANCE REQUESTS

Want to bring the Albany Firebirds spirit to your event? We welcome appearance requests! Whether it's a school assembly, charity function, or community gathering, our Flames are ready to share the excitement and camaraderie that defines our team. Simply submit your request,and let us join you in making your event a memorable experience. It's all part of our commitment to being an accessible and engaged presence in the communities we proudly represent.




## SPIKE APPEARANCE REQUESTS

Want to add some extra excitement to your event? Invite your favorite mascot! Whether it’s for a birthday party or a community event, Spike is ready to bring his rockin’ energy and team spirit! Submit your request, and let’s make your event a memorable one.

*Submit Your Requests Here: https://www.firebirdsaf1.com/community*

# FIREBIRD FLAMES









# FIREBIRD FLAMES





Clocktower
HOTEL



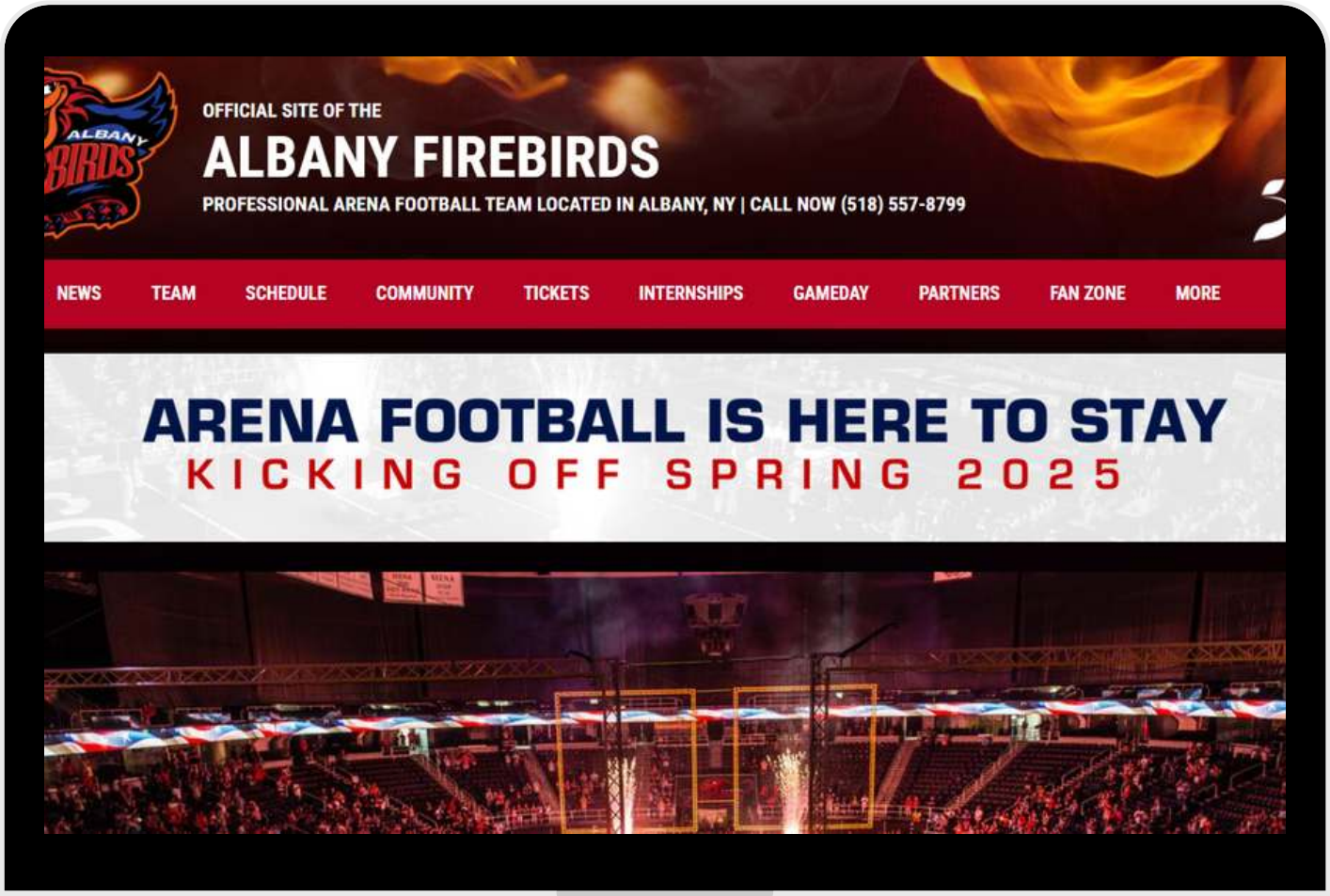
BOOK YOUR STAY 518-785-0000

transfinder FIELD

# FIREBIRD FLAMES








# DON'T FORGET TO FLY ON OVER AND VISIT OUR NEST AT FIREBIRDSAF1.COM

# FIREBIRDS SCHOOL VISIT AT
# STEPHEN AND HARRIET MYERS MIDDLE SCHOOL










FIREBIRDSAF1.COM/COMMUNITY

# Bring Your Team, Feel the Fire

## Group Tickets for All Ages!




COMPANY OUTING? CHURCH GROUP? SCHOOL TRIP? SCOUT TROOP?
BRING YOUR CREW AND ENJOY DISCOUNTED TICKETS, RESERVED SEATING, AND UNFORGETTABLE FAN EXPERIENCES

**CALL TODAY TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT**
**518-557-8799**

# FIREBIRDS SCHOOL VISIT AT
# THOMAS O'BRIEN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY









FIREBIRDSAF1.COM/COMMUNITY

# OWNERSHIP GROUP



## MIKE KWARTA
## CO-OWNER

Former owner of Tech East Fire & Water Restoration and current General Manager of BELFOR Property Restoration Albany, Mike's leadership and experience have been instrumental in shaping the Firebirds' legacy



## ANDY GUELCHER
## CO-OWNER

Co-owner of Mohawk Chevrolet, Andy brings a strong business acumen and deep community ties to the Albany Firebirds ownership group.



## RICH SZESNAT
## CO-OWNER

Rich, whose family owns Constantine Construction, adds local expertise and a commitment to Albany's success as a key part of the Firebirds ownership team.

# CORPORATE FRONT OFFICE



## JACOB LABREE

### Chief Executive Officer

Jacob brings over a decade of senior management experience across hospitality, insurance, and business sales. He has a proven track record of driving growth, operational excellence, and team success. From leading restaurant operations across the Albany to Queensbury region to serving as Director at a major life insurance company, Jacob has consistently delivered results through strong leadership and customer-focused strategies. As CEO, his versatile expertise positions him to lead with vision and achieve exceptional outcomes.



## JEFF LEVACK

### Team President

Jeff Levack, a prominent figure in Capital Region sports and media, takes on the role of Team President for the Albany Firebirds in Arena Football One (AF1). With decades of experience in media and a championship-winning track record, Jeff has been a key presence in every Albany Arena Football franchise since 2018. As the former Team President of the Albany Empire, he helped lead the team to back-to-back National Arena League (NAL) championships in 2021 and 2022. Currently, Jeff hosts a daily radio show on Capital Region Fox Sports 95.9/980, bringing his deep knowledge and passion for local sports to the airwaves. Now, with his sights set on replicating past success, Jeff aims to guide the Firebirds to another championship in 2025.


FLOCK U
ALBANY FIREBIRDS
COACHES SHOW
EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 6:00PM
VARIOUS RESTAURANTS ACROSS THE CAPTIAL REGION
Let's Go Firebirds!
Proudly supporting Capital Region sports.
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# CORPORATE FRONT OFFICE



## BEN NELSON

### Director of Media

Ben Nelson, a Capital Region native and Colonie Central High School graduate, is entering his 2nd year as Director of Media for the Albany Firebirds in Arena Football One (AF1) and his 5th season working in arena football. Ben's journey from a social media intern with the Albany Empire in 2021 to leading media for the Firebirds highlights his creativity and dedication. Along the way, he served as Lead Graphic Designer and managed social media for the Albany Empire, Interned and worked with the media team at the Albany Patroons, Director of Digital Media at the Orlando Predators in 2023. Now back in Albany, Ben leverages his passion for local sports and media to elevate the Firebirds' presence in AF1.



## NICK VENNARD

### Director of Gameday Operations and Community Relations

Nick Vennard, a graduate of Colonie High School, is entering his second year as Director of Gameday Operations for the Albany Firebirds. With a Bachelor's in Sport Management and Marketing from Oneonta and an Associate's in Exercise Science, Nick combines his education with experience as a former lacrosse captain and 14-year football player. He has worked with the National Lacrosse League and Perfect Game Collegiate Baseball League, enhancing his sports management expertise. Passionate about fan engagement, Nick focuses on creating memorable game-day experiences and ensuring smooth operations, leaving fans with lasting memories at MVP Arena.



## JOSEPH NARE

### Account Executive, Ticket Sales & Service

Joseph Nare, entering his second year as an Account Executive for Ticket Sales & Service with the Albany Firebirds, holds a degree in business economics and finance from Utica University, where he also played varsity football. With a strong business foundation and a passion for sports, Joseph applies his skills to streamline ticket sales and service operations, enhancing fan engagement and contributing to the team's growth and success.

# CORPORATE FRONT OFFICE



## GIULIANA CAPPARELLO

### In-Game Show Manager

Giuliana Capparello, a Fonda, New York native, is a passionate sports industry professional with a degree in Sport and Recreation Management from Russell Sage College. Her journey into sports management includes impactful roles with the Amsterdam Mohawks baseball team and Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, where she developed a comprehensive skill set in game day operations, sports communication, and fan engagement. She is also currently serving as an assistant track coach at Hudson Valley Community College. With a strong sense of community and a talent for balancing multiple roles, Giuliana excels in fostering and creating unforgettable game-day experiences.



## BRIAN RHATIGAN

### In-Game Show Host

Brian Rhatigan, also known as Back 9 Bri, is entering his second year as the Albany Firebirds In-Game Show Host. As the hype man, he brings energy and excitement to the role, engaging fans and elevating the game-day experience. He loves seeing the fans get excited and thrives on creating a dynamic, high-energy atmosphere that amplifies the energy of the game.



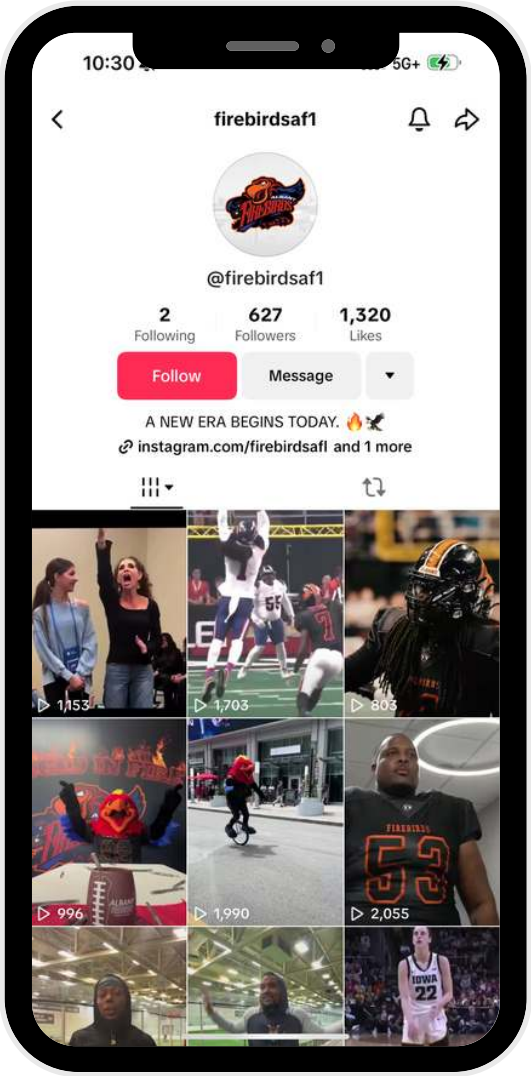
## MICHAEL FORST

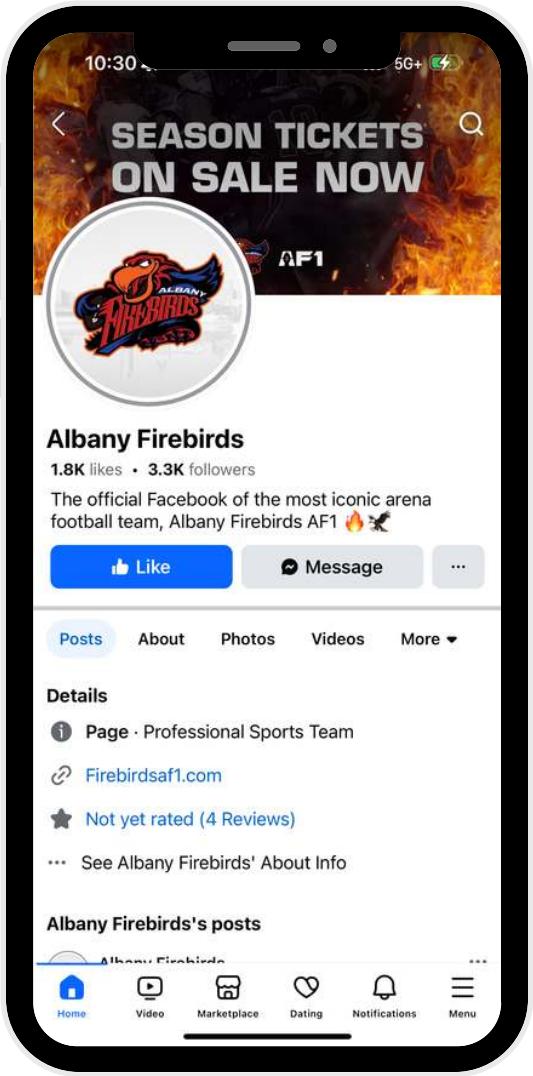
### Official Team Photographer

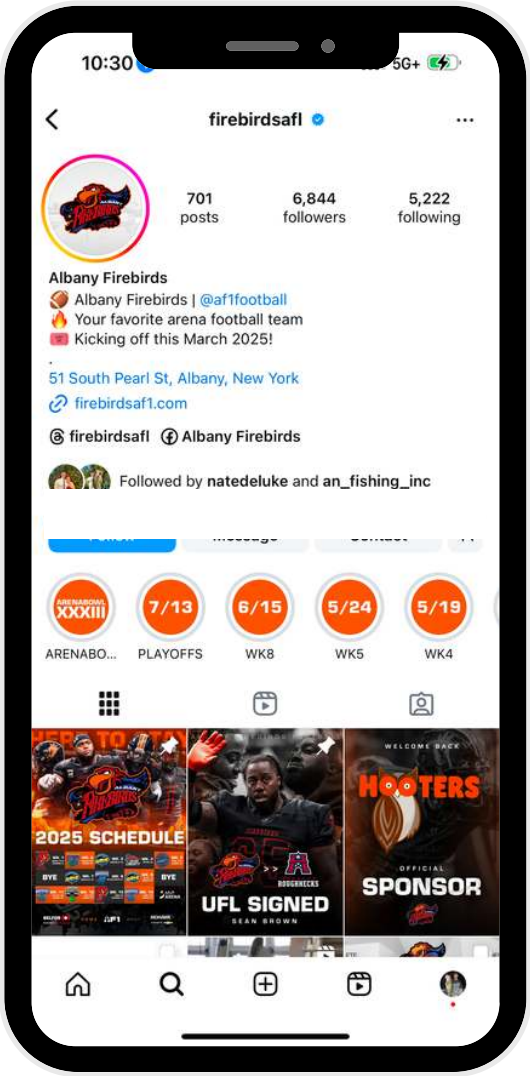
Michael Forst is a graduate of Colonie High School and is currently attending SUNY Polytechnic Institute, MIchael began his journey with the Firebirds as an intern during the team's return season in 2024. attending every home game and covering the team throughout their season, including ArenaBowl 33. His dedication and commitment to his craft led to his promotion to Official Team Photographer for the 2025 season. He is passionate about his work and takes great pride in documenting the legacy of one of arena football's most legendary teams, bringing the Firebirds' unforgettable moments to life for fans and the community.

# FOLLOW THE FIREBIRDS 24/7

## Turn on Push Notifications and Stay Up-To-Date



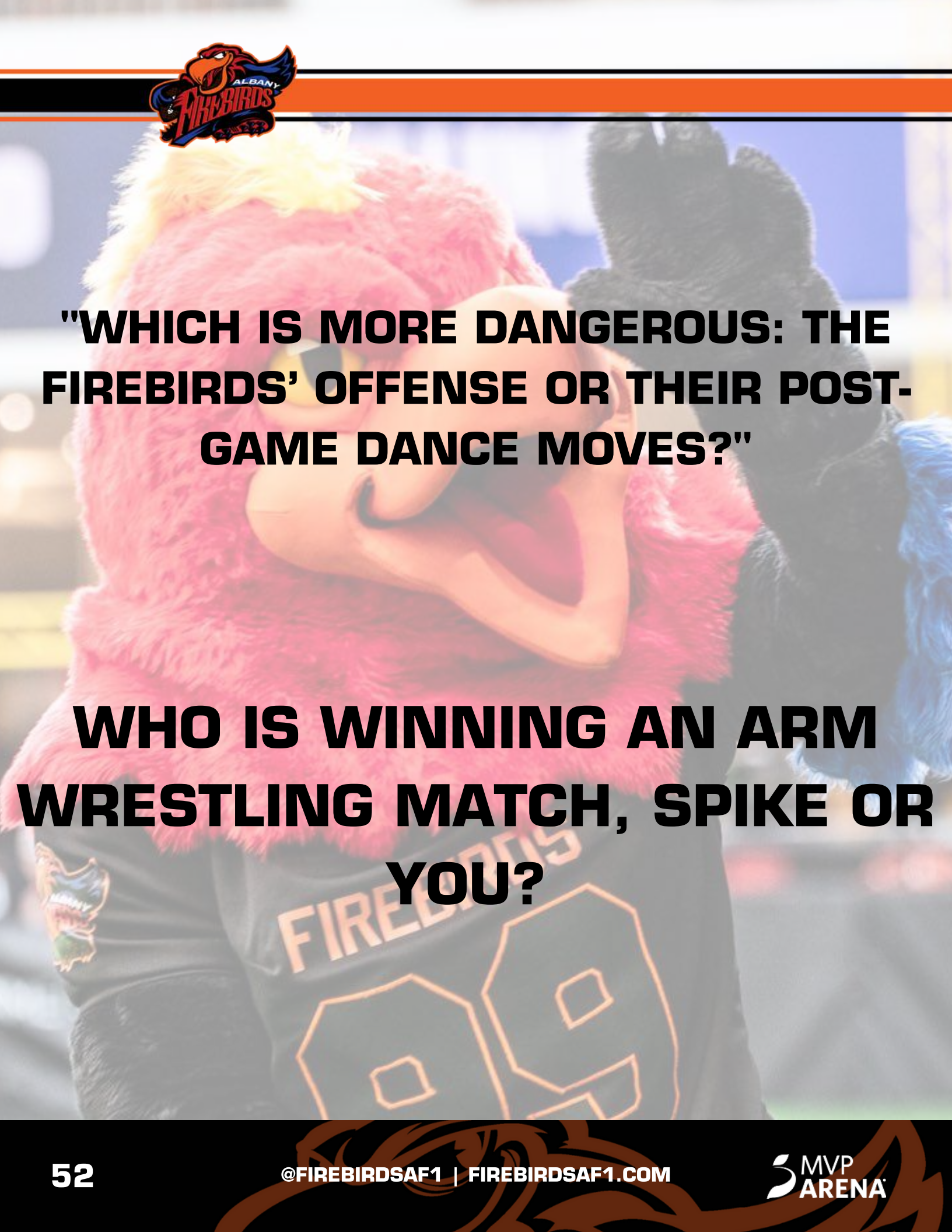




# STAY CONNECTED

## Breaking News, Schedule Info, Stats and Scores

## Game action photos and so much more



"WHICH IS MORE DANGEROUS: THE FIREBIRDS' OFFENSE OR THEIR POST-GAME DANCE MOVES?"

WHO IS WINNING AN ARM WRESTLING MATCH, SPIKE OR YOU?


FIREBIRDS
2


FIREBIRDS
3


F150
ZR2

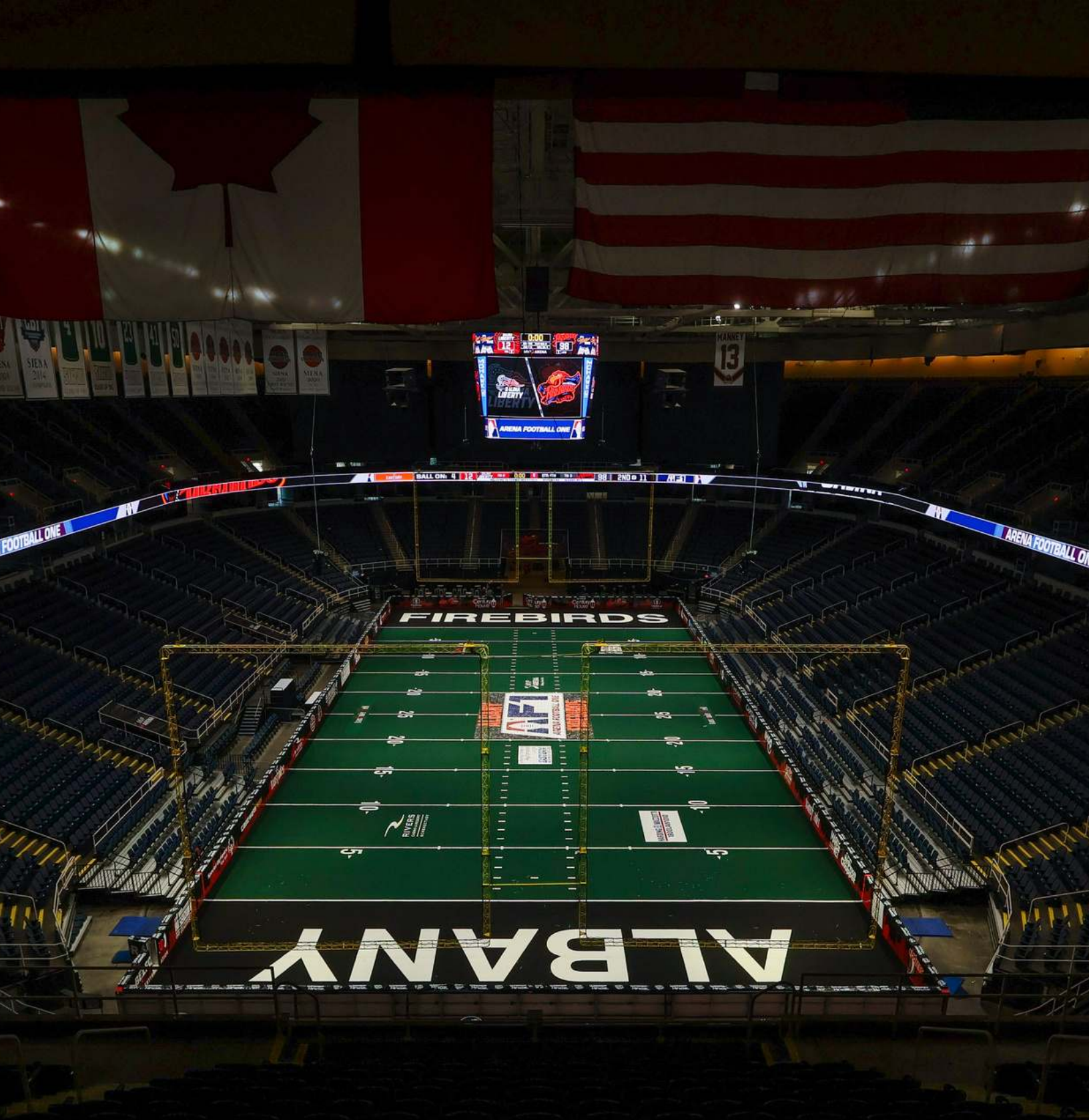



FIREBIRDS
21




ALBANY
FIREBIRDS
ARENA
2025
CROWN
FIREBIRDS
AM980
95.8FM
CAPITAL DISTRICT


NASHVILLE
KATS
ARENA
2025
CROWN


FIREBIRDS
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