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EVERGREEN NOW!
Clocktower HOTEL
ALBANY
ALBANY FIREBIRDS
WK. 8 FIREBIRDS VS LIBERTY
GAMEDAY
SUNDAY, MAY 4TH | KICKOFF 4:00PM ET
AF1

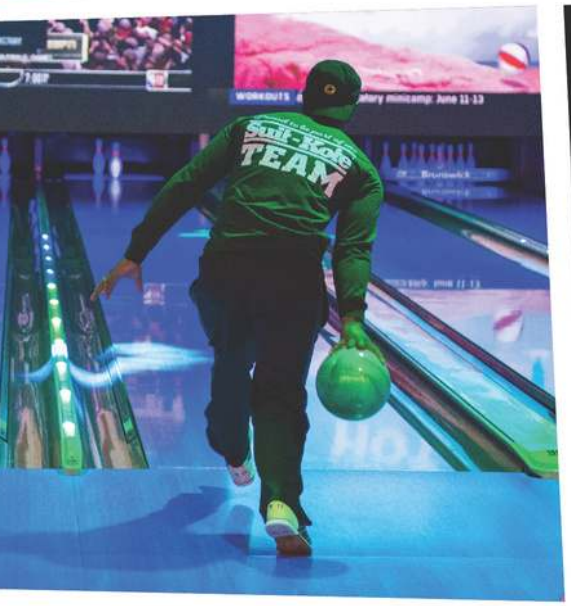
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ALBANY FIREBIRDS VS SALINA LIBERTY

WEEK 8 ARENA FOOTBALL MATCHUP

SUNDAY, MAY 4TH KICKOFF 4:00PM



Albany Firebirds vs. Salina Liberty – Week 8 Matchup
Date: Sunday, May 4, 2025
Time: 4:00 PM
Location: MVP Arena – Albany, NY

Game Preview:
The Albany Firebirds return home to MVP Arena this Sunday to take on the Salina Liberty in a Week 8 clash. Albany enters the game undefeated at 6-0, while Salina sits at 2-4. These teams met earlier this season in Kansas, where the Firebirds secured a convincing road victory. Now back on home turf, Albany looks to stay perfect and continue building momentum as the season progresses.
The Firebirds:

Albany has remained unbeaten thanks to its balance across all phases of the game. QB Sam Castronova (#2) has efficiently led the offense, distributing the ball to playmakers like WR Marquel Wade (#0) and WR Duane Brown (#3). The offensive line has kept the pocket clean, and the ground game continues to move the chains when needed.

Defensively, Albany has been outstanding. DL Ezekiel Rose (#5) brings power and speed up front, while LB Trevon Shorts (#1) leads the unit with leadership and intensity. The secondary, featuring DB Markus Smith (#10) and others, has made life difficult for opposing quarterbacks each week. As a unit, the defense has been disciplined, physical, and opportunistic—keeping opponents out of sync and off the scoreboard.



.Player Spotlights:

- Sam Castronova (QB #2): The field general continues to deliver, managing the game with precision and creating big plays in key moments.
- Ezekiel Rose (DL #5): A disruptive force on the line, Rose has consistently pressured quarterbacks and stopped the run game.
- Marquel Wade (WR #0): One of the league's most dynamic receivers, Wade continues to produce explosive plays and is a reliable target in all situations.

Salina Liberty:

Despite their 2-4 record, Salina is not to be underestimated. Their defensive leader, Henry Kellogg, leads the entire league in sacks with 6 and will be a challenge for Albany's offensive line. The Liberty will be looking to bounce back and steal a win on the road, so the Firebirds will need to be sharp in all phases.

Gameday Highlights:

- Star Wars Themed In-Game Activities: Celebrate with themed fan experiences, contests, and entertainment throughout the game.
- Costume Encouragement: Fans are encouraged to arrive early and wear their favorite Star Wars costumes to join in the fun!
- Family-Friendly Fun: Concessions, interactive games, and more for fans of all ages—MVP Arena is the place to be this Sunday!

Keys to Victory:

- Win Up Front: Control the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball to neutralize Salina's defensive pressure.
- Stay Efficient on Offense: Albany's high-powered offense will need to continue spreading the ball and capitalizing in the red zone.
- Defensive Consistency: The Firebirds' defense must keep applying pressure, force mistakes, and limit Salina's opportunities.



PARTY BEFORE KICKOFF!

GET READY TO KICK OFF GAME DAY IN STYLE AT THE ALBANY FIREBIRDS PRE-GAME BLOCK PARTY! STARTING TWO HOURS BEFORE SELECT FIREBIRDS HOME GAMES ON SOUTH PEARL STREET OUTSIDE MVP ARENA, ENJOY LIVE MUSIC, FOOD TRUCKS, VENDORS, AND EXCITING ACTIVITIES FOR FANS OF ALL AGES.

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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
6	Derrick Jones	DB	6' 2"	185 lbs	Ole Miss
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
13	De'Jahn Warren	DB	6' 1"	185 lbs	Jackson State
15	Jonathon MacCollister	DL	6' 4"	265 lbs	Central Florida
17	Deandre Wallace	WR			
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' 3"	240 lbs	Western Kentucky University
53	Brandon Nicholson	OL	6' 4"	300 lbs	Notre Dame College
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
99	Harold Love	DL	6' 3"	340 lbs	Bethune Cookman

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SALINA LIBERTY ROSTER

#	Name	POS	Height	Weight	College
	Bailey Hale				
	RJ Jarrett	JLB	6' 1"	190 lbs	Delta State University
0	Edward Smith Jr.	WR	5' 9"	170 lbs	Fort Hays State University
1	Kerry Starks	LB	6' 2"	235 lbs	University of Louisiana - Monroe
2	Tracy Brooks	RB	5' 8"	210 lbs	Central Alabama
3	DeWayne Autrey	DB	6' 1"	198 lbs	South Houston High School
4	Kyle Chandler	DB	6' 0"	200 lbs	Tarleton State
5	Freddie McGee III	DB	5' 9"	180 lbs	Eastern Michigan
6	Larry Beavers	WR	6' 0"	179 lbs	
7	Shaq Bond	DB	6' 0"	210 lbs	Utah State
8	Malik Honeycutt	WR	6' 3"	190 lbs	Murray State University
9	Jamario Benson	ATH	6' 0"	208 lbs	Holmes Community College/ Bethune-Cookman University
10	Jacoby Papillion	DE			
11	Luis Gonzalez	RB	6' 1"	225 lbs	University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
11	Rakeem Cato	QB			
12	Henry Kellogg	RB	6' 3"	250 lbs	
14	Javin Kilgo	QB	6' 4"	205 lbs	Midwestern State University
16	Dezmon Epps	WR	5' 10"	180 lbs	Idaho University
25	Isiah Gomez	K	6' 0"	195 lbs	UC Davis
25	Nathaniel Heilig	K			
40	Travis Taylor	DE	6' 2"	233 lbs	Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College/ Murray State University
55	Toree Boyd	OL	6' 4"	315 lbs	Howard University
60	Somadina Okezie-Okeke	OL	6' 2"	325 lbs	North Carolina Central University & Kennesaw State University
70	Alekisanita Tapa	OL	6' 5"	319 lbs	
72	Jeremy Martin	OL			
75	Anthony Kennedy	DL			
94	De'Vontae Drayton	OL	6' 6"	355 lbs	Phoenix College
99	Tavis Malakius	DL	6' 2"	295 lbs	UNLV

AF1 STANDINGS

Rk	Team	GP	W	L	W%	PF	PA	Streak
1	Albany Firebirds	6	6	0	1.000	378	124	W 6
2	Nashville Kats	5	3	2	.600	209	171	W 3
3	Corpus Christi Tritons	5	3	2	.600	204	217	L 2
4	SW Kansas Storm	7	4	3	.571	269	279	L 1
5	Billings Outlaws	5	2	3	.400	207	203	L 3
6	Salina Liberty	6	2	4	.333	186	239	W 2
7	Washington Wolfpack	6	2	4	.333	173	311	W 1
8	Oregon Lightning	6	1	5	.167	199	281	L 3

FIREBIRDS PREVIOUS GAMES

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

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FIREBIRDS SCHEDULE

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

APRIL 13TH PHOTO GALLERY

















APRIL 13TH PHOTO GALLERY

















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REMAINING

HOME SCHEDULE

SALINA LIBERTY

MAY 4TH
4:00PM

CORPUS CHRISTI TRITONS

MAY 24TH
7:00PM

NASHVILLE KATS

VICE TV

MAY 10TH
7:00PM

JUNE 14TH
7:00PM

4 HOME GAMES LEFT!

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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

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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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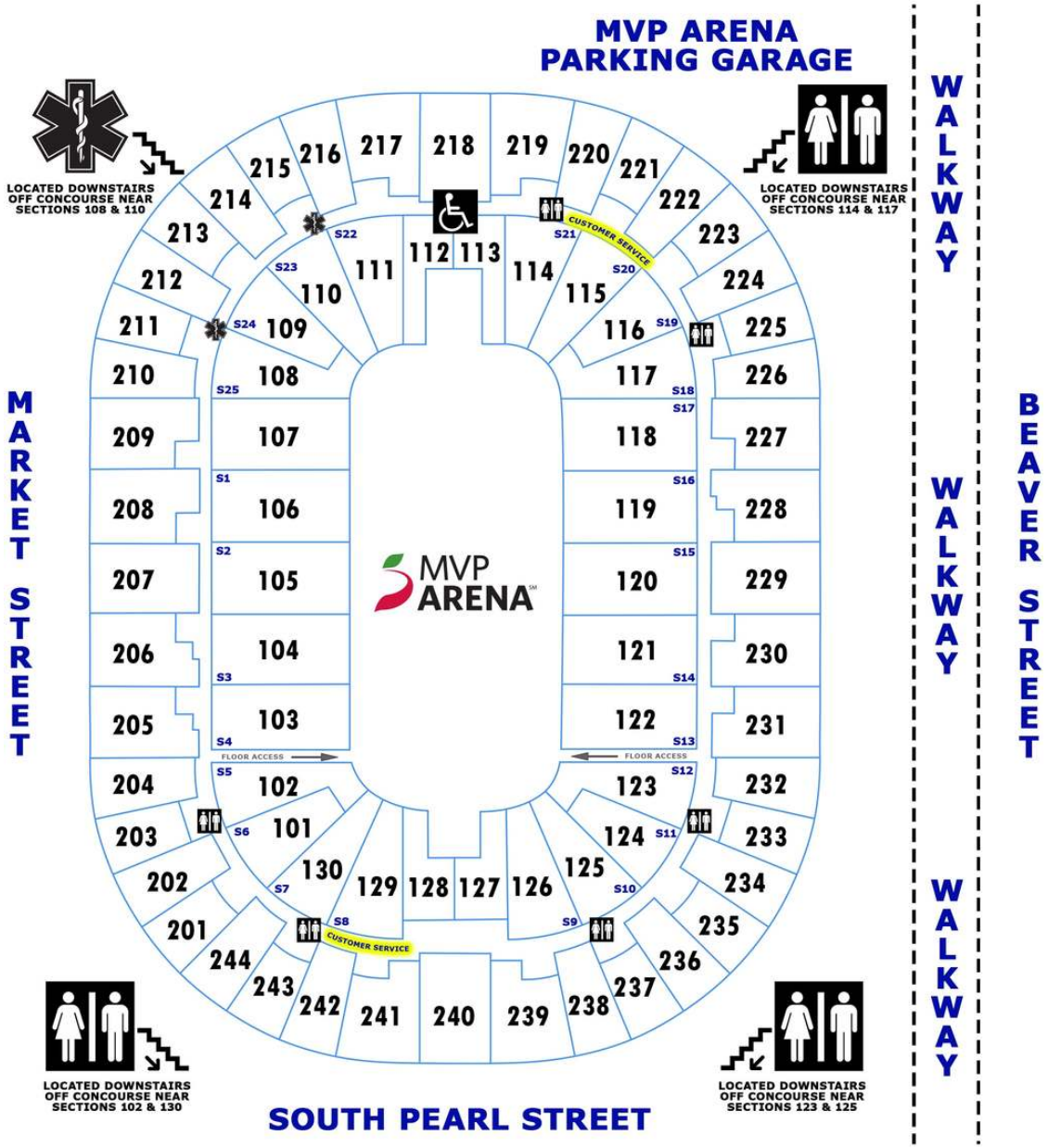
FIREBIRD FOCUS



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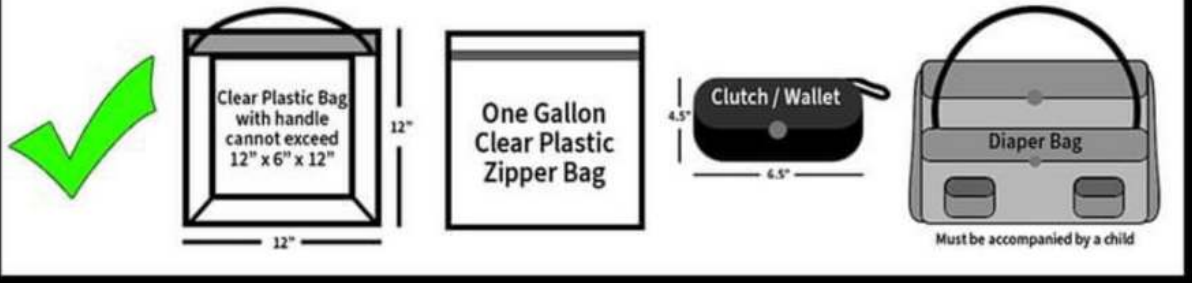


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FIREBIRDS IN THE COMMUNITY

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



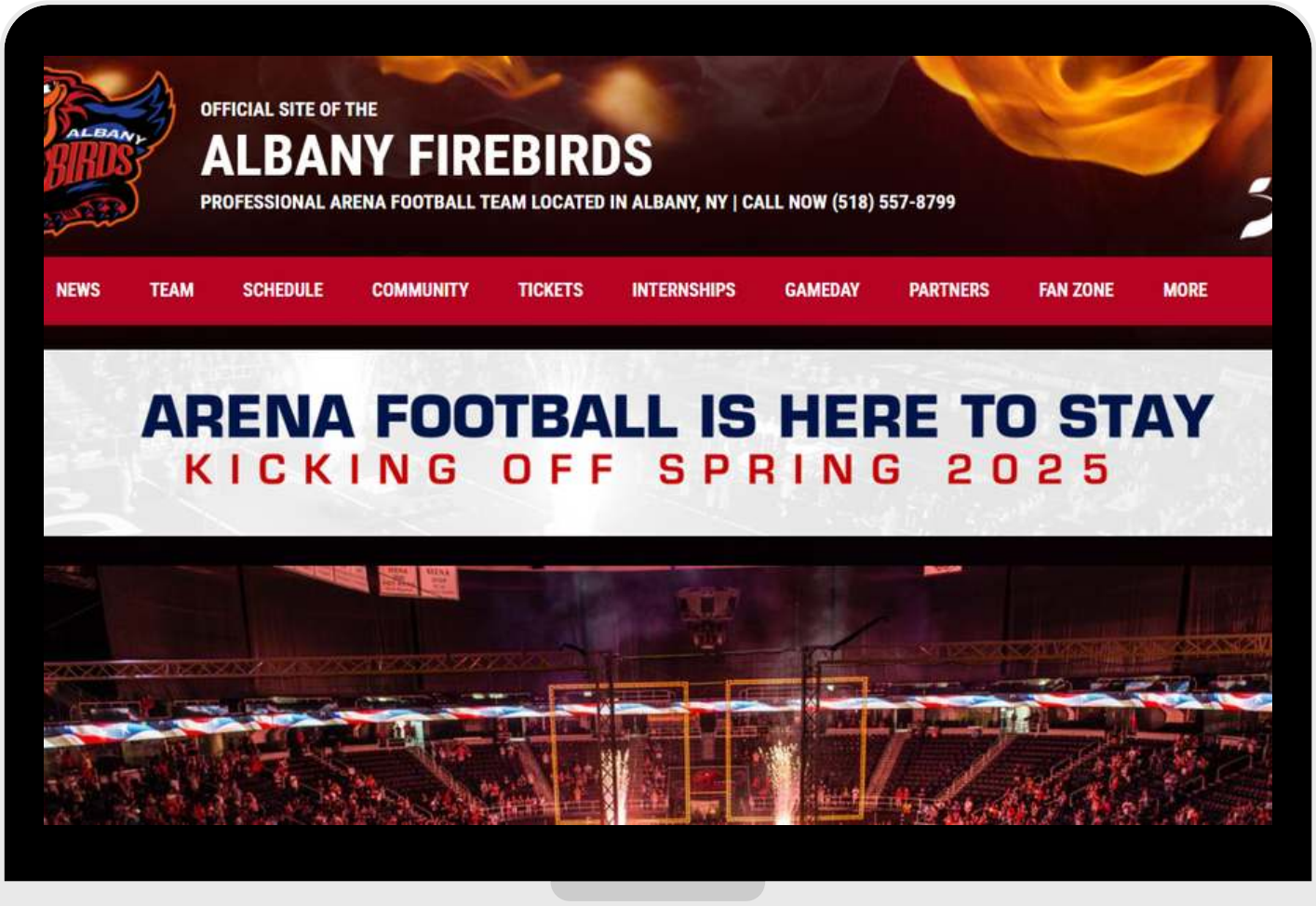
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FIREBIRD FLAMES







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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.

COROPRATE 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.


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COROPRATE 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.

COROPRATE 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.



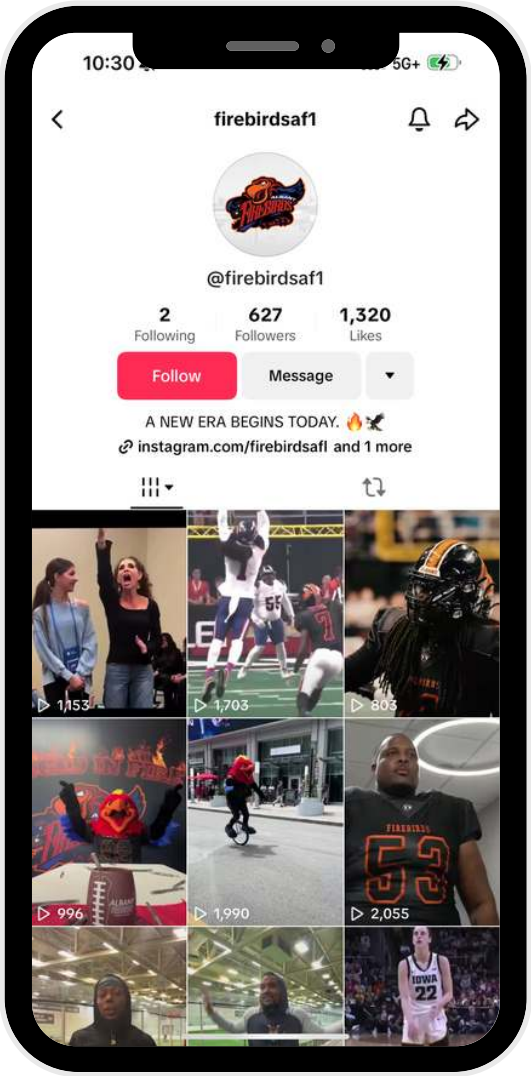
MICHAEL FORST

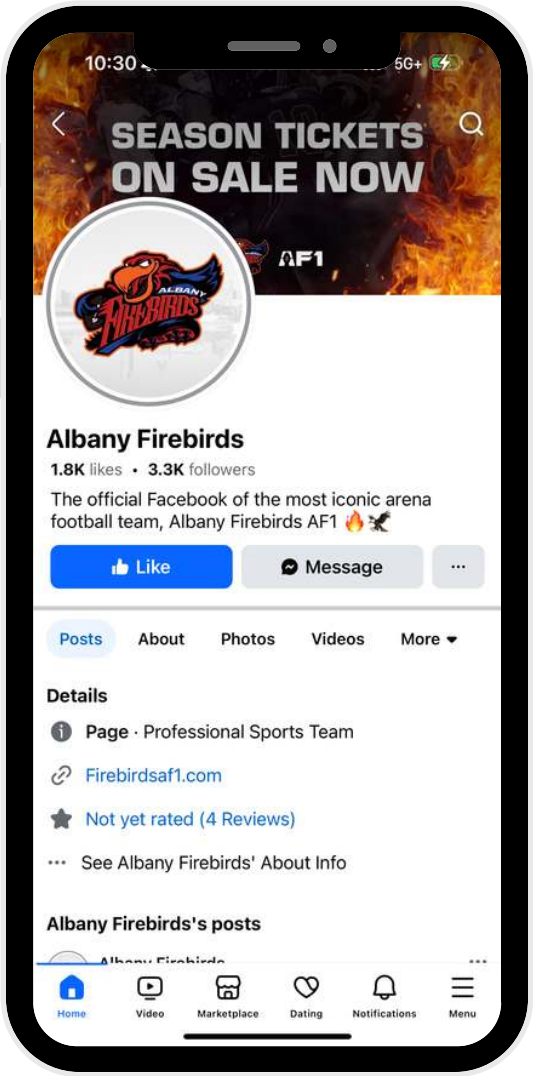
Official Team Photographer

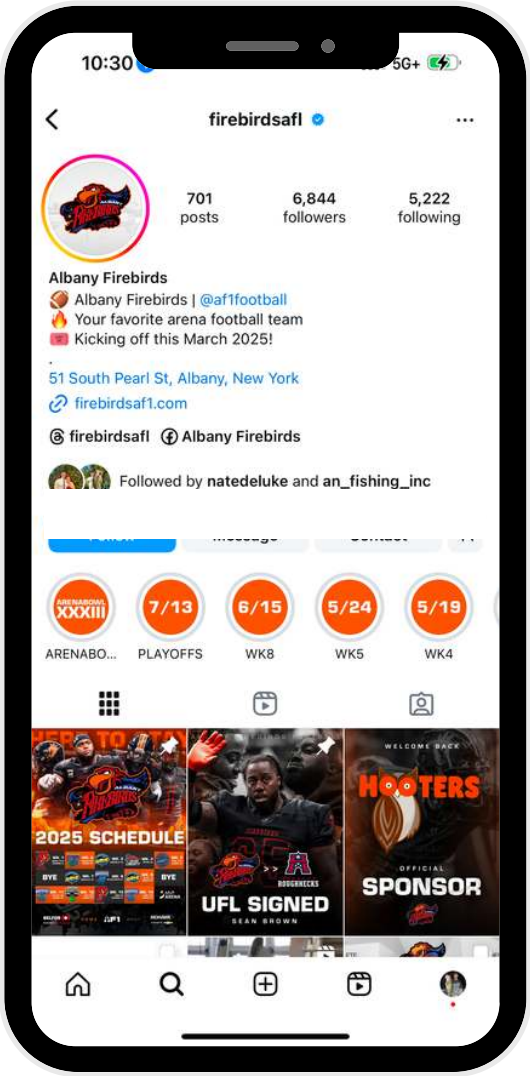
Michael Forst is a graduate of Colonie High School and is currently attending SUNY Polytechnic Institute, MIchael began his journey with the Firebirds as an intern during the team's return season in 2024. attending every home game and covering the team throughout their season, including ArenaBowl 33. 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

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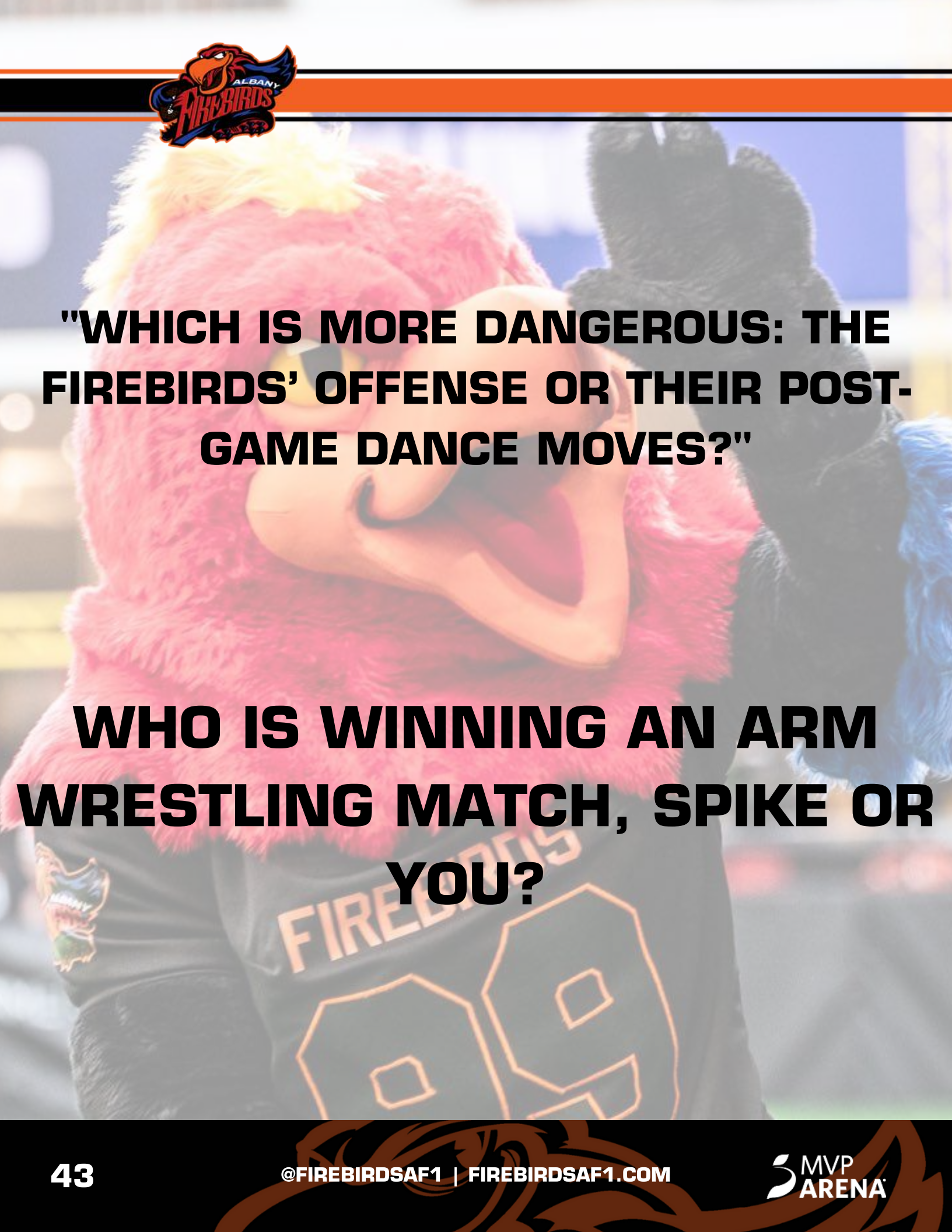






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Breaking News, Schedule Info, Stats and Scores
Game action photos and so much more



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

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


Riddell
FIREBIRDS
33


ALBANY
FIREBIRDS
3