

SUPER BOWL XLVI

By: Michael Raines

During the ten-day Super Bowl XLVI celebration, downtown Indianapolis saw an estimated 1.1 million guests take to the streets for a city-wide party that featured concerts, exhibits and the now-famous zip-line. Nestled in the southwest corner of downtown, Victory Field, home of the Indianapolis Indians, did its part to make visitors feel welcome, hosting a bevy of Super Bowl-related events including the Celebrity Beach Bowl and the Dan Patrick Show radio program.

To accommodate DIRECTV's annual Celebrity Beach Bowl, a flag football game featuring former National Football League stars and current A-list Hollywood celebrities, Victory Field's outfield was covered with a tent so large it is typically used as a temporary airplane hangar capable of housing a Boeing 767. Millions of pounds of gravel were trucked on to the outfield as a foundation and about over a million pounds of sand was poured to create the Beach Bowl's playing surface.

The area where Indianapolis Indians fans have seen the likes of Andrew McCutchen, Alex Presley and Gorkys Hernandez flash the leather was suddenly being patrolled by cranes and dump trucks. "At first, it was pretty freakish," Indians Head Groundskeeper Joey Stevenson told the Indianapolis Star. "You work on the field 18 hours a day all through the spring and summer, from March to November, to keep it alive and then it's destroyed in a few days."

Construction of the tent began in early January and was still being finished in the days leading up to the February 4th event. In addition to the gravel and sand, the tent was filled with specially-made bleachers and suite areas, a four-screen overhead scoreboard, LED ribbon-boards and other amenities, all adding to the extravagance of the event.

Also adding to the extravagance was the guest list, which featured celebrities including actors Neil Patrick Harris and David Arquette, model Kate Upton, sports correspondent Erin Andrews and IndyCar driver Marco Andretti.

The roster also included former NFL players Joe Montana, Warren Moon, Deion Sanders, Desmond Howard, Barry Sanders and Terrell Owens, who has recently taken his talents to the Arena League.

The contest was highlighted by rapper Snoop Dogg's two touchdown catches, garnering him the game's MVP award.

Photo by Pat Lovell



Photo by Pat Lovell

"VICTORY FIELD STOOD IN THE NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT"



Photo by Pat Lovell

Post-game, The Fray put on a concert at the event, playing songs off the GRAMMY-nominated band's new album, *Scars and Stories*. The concert wrapped up at about 4:30 p.m. and shortly thereafter another transformation took place as the structure was changed into an upscale nightclub which was home to an invite-only party jointly hosted by Mark Cuban's HDNet and Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning. The party featured a concert by pop superstar Katy Perry.

In addition to these highly-publicized events, Victory Field's tent also hosted the post-game party of the New England Patriots on Super Bowl Sunday. The party was attended by Patriots players and special guests and featured appearances by DJ

Pauly D, of Jersey Shore fame, and LMFAO, who also guest-starred in Madonna's Super Bowl halftime show down the road at Lucas Oil Stadium earlier in the night.

Although it certainly garnered the most attention, the tent was not the only place one could find Super Bowl-related activities inside Victory Field. The Dan Patrick Show, a nationally-syndicated radio show, was broadcast live from the centerfield PNC Plaza each morning leading up to the big game.

The set up of the Dan Patrick Show illustrated the sheer opulence of Super Bowl week, featuring a temporary radio studio with leather arm chairs for guests and co-hosts, hundreds of pieces sports memorabilia on the walls and an RV

parked behind the studio to serve as the show's green room.

Other Dan Patrick Show amenities included a partial football field and goalpost, a barn housing a basketball hoop and a makeshift go kart track, all set up on the center field concourse. The event drew hundreds of fans daily, who gathered in PNC Plaza to watch the show and possibly get an autograph from the star-studded lineup of guests.

Dan Patrick made a point to call out Indiana Pacers president Larry Bird -- challenging him to a shoot-off in the barn -- but Bird was unable to make it to the show and instead called in for a phone interview.

Despite Bird's no-show, many celebrities and sports personalities made their way to Victory Field to make an appearance on the Dan Patrick Show, including former



Colts coach Tony Dungy, Patriots owner Robert Kraft, actor Adam Sandler, *Sports Illustrated* football writer Peter King, model Kate Upton and NFL quarterbacks Matthew Stafford, Cam Newton and Tim Tebow.

In addition to the celebrities who visited, Victory Field stood in the national spotlight as the Celebrity Beach Bowl and the tent itself garnered media attention as part of Super Bowl week. The tent was an attention-grabber that was covered by several news outlets, including a front-page article on MiLB.com, and the Beach Bowl was the focus of many celebrity-watch and gossip websites. Cities as far away as Boston and Seattle carried the stories.

Despite the national media attention, the peculiarity, the

extravagance and everything else that made Victory Field a hit during Super Bowl week, when the New York Giants had won the big game and all the celebrities had gone home, it was time for the Vic to get back to baseball.

Within a week after Super Bowl XLVI, everything from the Dan Patrick Show had exited Victory Field's concourse. No more football field, no more barn, no more studio, no more go kart track.

But returning was the plaza's merchandise trailer, and the speed pitch inflatable and Rowdie's Water Gun Fun game would follow as PNC Plaza began to reclaim its gameday appearance.

On the field, the tent came down even faster than it went up. Dump trucks once again roamed the outfield, replacing tons of dirt as bulldozers began the process of getting the playing surface back to level.

"When someone tells you they'll be putting a million pounds of sand and 1,700 tons of gravel on the field, you start to get a little worried," Stevenson told MiLB.com before the event, but added that he saw it as a challenge and felt confident that he and his crew could get the field back to playability before the Tribe's home opener on Friday, April 13. "I can see the light at the end of the tunnel."