



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fall League Returns to Tucson, Reconnecting City with a Historic Baseball Past

PHOENIX – For over a century, the city of Tucson has seen its fair share of baseball.

Some of the greatest names in baseball have passed through on their way to the Major Leagues. High school and college players have started their journeys to the professional ranks here. Spring Training brought Major League Baseball to Tucson and Arizona, while multiple Major League-affiliated teams have called Tucson home.

Tucson was also one of the original host cities when the Arizona Fall League was established in 1992.

Twenty-four years after the league last played in Tucson, the AFL is officially coming back.

Major League Baseball will officially return to Kino Veterans Memorial Stadium for the Tucson Doubleheader on Saturday, Oct. 10, giving the city another chance to watch some of the game's top young talent take the field.

In 1992, Tucson was selected as one of the original host cities. The Tucson Javelinas were a part of the Arizona Fall League for two seasons that included players such as future Rangers Hall of Famer Rusty Greer, University of Arizona alumnus Alan Zinter, and the current Seattle Mariners President of Baseball Operations, Jerry Dipoto.

While the Javelinas finished as runners-up in their final season in Tucson in 1993, they were only one part of Tucson's long history of developing Major League talent. "The Old Pueblo" was host to Minor League Baseball for almost 45 years.

Minor League Baseball came to Tucson in 1969 with the Tucson Toros. The Toros would serve as the Triple-A affiliate for the White Sox, Athletics, Rangers, Brewers, and Astros. With Arizona being rewarded with a Major League franchise in 1995, Tucson would rebrand to the Tucson Sidewinders in 1998, becoming the Triple-A affiliate for the Diamondbacks before rebranding once more as the Tucson Padres in 2011.

Across those teams, Tucson became another stop on the road to the Major Leagues for some of the game's biggest names. Hall of Famers Craig Biggio and Billy Wagner, along with stars such as Curt Schilling and Max Scherzer, all passed through Tucson before establishing themselves as generational talents.





Decades later, Tucson continues to produce players looking to make their own mark on the game.

For Demetrio Crisantes, that connection is especially personal. The Diamondbacks' top prospect grew up in the Tucson area, in nearby Nogales, before being drafted by Arizona in 2022.

"I have a lot of love and support from the community," Crisantes said. "So going back there so they can see me play close to home just means a lot to me"

For Crisantes, his connection with Tucson goes back even further than his own playing career.

"Well, I mean, my mom's from there, so a lot of my teammates are from there," Crisantes said. "You know, we had a travel team that would come up to Phoenix and play some tournaments, the Tucson Champs. So just playing there means a lot to me, going back home in a way."

Crisantes isn't the only player representing Tucson in the Fall League. Red Sox prospect Mason White grew up in Tucson and decided to stay home to play college baseball at the University of Arizona.

"Baseball is a huge part of the community, and being around U of A so much really showed me how to be a good baseball player," White said. "Everyone wants to do it and be a part of it (U of A Baseball). Growing up around it really set the foundation for where I'm at now."

For the Salpointe Catholic alum, bringing the professional game back to the community is perfect for the baseball-hungry environment.

"It's great. I think Tucson's really missing it. I think there are a lot of people excited for it to come back."

Rays prospect Brendan Summerhill, on the other hand, came to Tucson from Chicago after committing to the University of Arizona. His experience has given a different perspective on the baseball community.

"It was kind of a culture shock when I got down there, but in the best of ways," Summerhill said. "Southern Arizona is a hot spot for baseball, and I learned that with the support from the Wildcat community."

Opened in 1998, Kino Veterans Memorial Stadium has hosted Spring Training, Minor League Baseball, and a World Baseball Classic Qualifier. According to Kino Sports Complex Community Engagement Manager Aaron Hodge, baseball has remained central to Tucson's identity.

"Tucson is a baseball city," Hodge said. "Everybody here loves baseball. They loved Spring Training, loved having minor league teams here, loved U of A baseball and softball."





Kino has also spent the past several years working to bring higher levels of baseball back to Tucson, including the Arizona Fall League.

“There’s been a lot of work behind the scenes ... that we’ve been trying really hard for the past few years to bring this level of baseball back,” Hodge said. “Hopefully we can keep aiming for one step up.”

This year's Fall League return also gives Tucson fans a chance to see their own players take the field, with players from Tucson and Southern Arizona competing, including Crisantes, Summerhill, White, and Cade McGee (Salpointe Catholic HS alum).

“You can come out to the park on Saturday, and you’ll see guys who grew up playing baseball in Tucson, one step away from the Major Leagues,” Hodge said. “That’s the ideal environment for that.”

Saturday’s doubleheader kicks off with the Peoria Javelinas facing the Mesa Solar Sox at 11:30 a.m. MST, followed by the Scottsdale Scorpions taking on the Salt River Rafter 40 minutes after the conclusion of the first game.

Tickets are available now at brushfire.com/Arizona-Fall-League.

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