

NEWS

## The center of it all

by Amanda Snyder

**From the Fall Classic returning for the second-straight year to the final curtain call at the Spectrum, the sports complex will be bustling all weekend.**

If thinking about taking a camping trip, forget the Poconos. Just pitch a tent in one of the parking lots surrounding the sports complex. Over the course of four days, Friday through Monday, all four buildings and pro teams are in action.

Citizens Bank Park is expected to draw the biggest crowds with Games 3 through 5 — if necessary — of the World Series over three-straight nights beginning at 7:57 p.m. Oct. 31. At the same time, this week marks the final acts at the Wachovia Spectrum, as Pearl Jam sings the last goodbyes to the 42-year-old arena with shows Friday and Saturday nights.

If that is not enough, the Eagles are hosting the New York Giants 1 p.m. Sunday at Lincoln Financial Field. Toss in Sixers and Flyers games at the Wachovia Center and the area is about to turn into the neighborhood that never sleeps. The Sports Complex Special Services District (SCSSD) is prepared for the chaos.

"The sports complex is facing a busy weekend ahead and SCSSD remains focused on working with stakeholders to protect community interests," Shawn Jalosinski, district executive director, said via e-mail earlier this week.

The district stays in daily contact with community directors and meets with stadium operators, the city's Managing Director's office, police, SEPTA, and any other entity involved with the stadium area each month to cover topics such as events, traffic and security.

"The monthly meetings are supplemented with more specific meetings as needed, such as World Series planning," Jalosinski added.

Residents are kept informed through calendars highlighting each event, its estimated attendance and the expected "neighborhood impact alert" level, which will be medium for Friday with 25,000 to 50,000 in attendance and high through Monday with more than 50,000 spectators. There also is an auto-call system that reaches out to the residents with prerecorded reminders and updates, such as schedule changes, Jalosinski said.

The start time of Eagles and Flyers games were adjusted last month to avoid a possible conflict with the World

Series. On Oct. 13, the NFL swapped Sunday's Eagles home game with the Minnesota Vikings-Green Bay Packers match-up, making the former a 1 p.m. start as opposed to 4:15.

"It will still be a busy day, but not nearly as challenging thanks to the proactive communications and planning change," Jalosinski said of the Eagles.

Three days later, Comcast-Spectacor announced Monday's Flyers game against the Tampa Bay Lightning would move up two hours to 5 p.m.



The rain didn't deter Pearl Jam fans as they filed into the Spectrum Tuesday night for the first of four concerts slated to close out the 42-year-old arena (Photo by Sabrina Jacot).

**With all that's** going on security and service from SEPTA will be bumped up — that is, if Transport Workers Union Local 234 does not strike.

Sunday, union workers at the Sheet Metal Workers Hall, 1301 S. Columbus Blvd., authorized a strike if a contract is not reached by week's end, which would disrupt subway, bus and trolley service.

"We're hopeful we're going to get a contract in the next few days," SEPTA spokesman Richard Maloney said Monday. "There's no reason we can't come to an agreement before the first pitch."

While it's hard to say if terms will be reached by Saturday, there is still a long way to go, Local 234 Vice President Allison Cooper said. A strike date has not yet been set, but could be as early as Sunday as SEPTA and the union continue negotiations that began March 15.

"If we don't have a contract by the end of the week, regardless, very close doesn't count," she said.

During an average playoff game, 5,500 travelers use SEPTA. Even with the additional flocks of fans heading to and from the sports complex, SEPTA can handle the numbers, Maloney said. An announcement of additional trains will be revealed later this week.

The Philadelphia Police Department is well-aware of the multitude of events and have been meeting this week to ensure they are prepared, even if transit strike comes to pass, Lt. Frank Vanore of the Police Public Affairs Unit said.

"We know Sunday is probably going to be the most complicated day," he said referencing the Eagles games prefacing Game 4 of the World Series. "It'll be one, long continuous day, but we'll be prepared."

With a sweep, the Fall Classic could end Sunday. Whichever day the 2009 champs are crowned, police will be ready to address the outcome — good or bad. For the National League Championship Series, state police on horseback and City officers deployed to specific areas kept celebrating fans in check and everything went fairly smooth, Vanore said, noting no serious vandalism came about, although there was an issue at Broad and Shunk streets.

As for the World Series, the difference between a possible repeat at home or in New York is huge, he added.

“It would change things significantly because Sunday you have another 50,000 people coming from the sports complex,” Vanore said.

Before baseball enthusiasts take over, the district group will host its children’s Halloween party for its residents at the American Swedish Historical Museum, 1900 Pattison Ave. Residents will partake in pumpkin and face painting, raffles, dancing and more. Meanwhile, Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) will hold its third annual Mutt Strut in FDR Park, which is the home of the museum. The dog walk and adoption festival that benefits the nonprofit dedicated to saving homeless, abandoned, and unwanted animals is happening the same time as the Halloween party: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday.

The Mutt Strut is not expected to be tangled up in the long list of activities happening later that day, but participants are encouraged to arrive early.

“I think we’re sort of expecting that our event is happening early enough in the day,” PAWS Executive Director Melissa Levy said. “It shouldn’t be impacted too much by the rest of the day.”

The Strut includes a 1.5-mile walk around FDR Park. Participants may register online or on Saturday and may walk with or without a dog. Parking is available in the park and the event also offers microchipping and grooming for animals, in addition to a dog-costume contest.

Thirty adoptable dogs will be on hand and easy to spot wearing bright orange “Adopt me” vests, Levy said adding the four-legged friends will be walking with staff or walkers who rented the dogs for the afternoon.

“It’s a fun, additional element of the day, but more importantly an opportunity for the adoptive dogs to get out and enjoy the event and meet potential adopters,” she said.

A slew of events will add to the southbound flow of traffic this weekend, even those looking for a party who don’t have World Series ticket in hand or aren’t willing to fork up \$310 to \$25,000 a pop for one through StubHub.

McFadden's Restaurant and Saloon at the ballpark will hold a Monster Mash Bash 8 to 11:30 p.m. Friday with a costume contest and live entertainment. The Wish List Foundation is hosting a fundraiser from 3 to 5 p.m. Saturday to benefit the Yellow Ribbon Club in Marlton, N.J., and the Gift of Life Family House in Northern Liberties. As always, the eatery hosts Eagles game-day specials, along with open-bar packages and live music for the Phillies games, but details are still being worked out, Mark Maggi, McFadden's director of marketing and special events, said.

The bar is open to the public for Games 3 and 5, but after 5 p.m. Sunday, it will only be accessible to ticket-holders in order to clear out Eagles traffic, Maggi said.

With help from the police, safety will not be an issue, he added.

"We get a lot of assistance and thankfully so ... It's just a normal operation on a higher scale," he said. "We just need to be prepared on all levels. It's a fun environment, great to be here [and] it's safe."

Meanwhile, at Chickie's & Pete's, 1526 Packer Ave., Phillies PA announcer Dan Baker will call all the Yankees Stadium games. To enter the sports bar during the games, a \$30 voucher that can be put towards merchandise, alcohol or food must be purchased at the door, but it must be used that night, Autumn McHugh, a catering sales associate at Chickie's, said. The establishment also is offering a World Series package for \$75, which covers all-you-can-eat selections from the regular menu. It goes from the first pitch to the last out of the game and can be booked in advance. Some restrictions, such as seafood are excluded.

The fun could continue well beyond Monday night if and when the Phillies eliminate the Yankees from the series, especially at sporting goods stores. NLCS merchandise has been flying off the shelves at Modell's, 15 Snyder Ave., since the Phillies went back-to-back as National League champs. Associates are stocking the place with World Series items, as well as a Phillies T-shirt to benefit cancer research, the store's Assistant Manager Charles Murphy said.

The store is prepared thanks to having a similar experience last year and, if a repeat occurs, the shop would remain open until 2 a.m. the morning after a win with all the world-championship products ready to go with purchases thus far equal and possibly exceeding last year's, he said.

"Last year when they won the World Series, we were open until 3 to 4 a.m., then we opened up at 5 a.m.," Murphy said adding that there were extensive lines awaiting the reopening of the doors.