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### Bryant-Denny Stadium

The city of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, holds a very special place in its heart for Bryant-Denny Stadium. This stadium has witnessed a great deal of history. This stadium has witnessed everything, including coaches, athletes, and national championship teams. The first Bryant-Denny Stadium construction began in September of 1929. The stadium's original name, "Denny Stadium," was given in honor of the former president of the University of Alabama, George H. Denny. But after the Paul "Bear" Bryant coaching tenure, the stadium would be given a new name in 1975, becoming "Bryant-Denny Stadium." In light of everything said, Bryant-Denny is a really special location that is also highly distinctive in its own right.

So, what does this place mean for the people that visit it? What do the events held there say about those that attend? To answer that question, it is important to address both the insider and the outsider view. I have the opportunity to attempt to see things as both an insider and outsider. It is important to know that I have been to events at the stadium. To get further insider information, I conducted an interview with two attendees of Bryant-Denny Stadium. I will refer to them as Rita and Lance and use their stories to advance my research. On the other hand, pulling from articles will expand my outsider perspective.

At any given football game located at this stadium, you can find a variety of people there to enjoy the game. If we take a look into the statistics, we see that 59% of college football fans are male and 41% are female. Also, 70% of college football fans are between the ages of 18 and 49 (<https://www.colormatics.com/>). From my own observations, I've found that many people of different age, race, and gender attend these games in Tuscaloosa. While at a game, I could see families with small children, men and women older in age, and many college students around me. Although, I must say that the majority of fans in the crowd were middle aged men. I asked Rita, "What kind of people have you noticed at Bryant-Denny Stadium when you have been in attendance?" She described to me a similar experience to the one I had when I was there. She said, "I've seen men and women from age two to eighty-two, people just out looking to have a fun time. Of course, where I was sitting was mostly filled with students." This further proves that football games at the stadium are for almost everyone. While most people that watch football from home are very interested in the sport, people that visit the stadium don't have to be avid fans to go to a game and have a good time. I believe the draw for those people have to do with the activities and the environment of gameday in Tuscaloosa. It is not just a one time visit for many, and the events make everyone want to come back for more.

So, what do those in attendance experience at Bryant-Denny on a day like that? It is so much more than just watching the athletes compete against each other. On the surface, it is just a game with concessions, but with the band and the lights, it is a whole experience. Fans are there to cheer on their team, and they do it with a lot of passion. Furthermore, it is clear that all the people working behind the scenes on the event work very hard to make things fun for the visitors. From the food and beverages to the sing along songs, everything the fans need is there

for them to enjoy. Other special activities are listed in the article “7 Alabama Game-Day Traditions Every Crimson Tide Fan Should Know” (<https://fanbuzz.com/>). Here, we are reminded of chants and songs that really keep the fans. Patrick Pinak writes, “No Alabama football game is complete without the singing of the fight song ‘Rammer Jammer.’” Personally, I know how fun it is to shout “Rammer Jammer” at the end of a big win. This as well as a big “Roll Tide” at every Crimson Tide first down shows the pride and excitement that the fanbase feels when their team is doing well. I asked Lance, “What is it that makes going to an Alabama game so fun?” He explained, “It’s the electric energy and the way everyone is cheering all at the same time. Seeing the action live and with all those other people makes it fun. The beer doesn’t hurt either.” I can’t deny what he said. Alcohol consumption is a huge part of Saturdays in Tuscaloosa. Because Alabama football games are just as much social events as they are sporting events, attendees take the opportunity to have a beer or two or ten. All the fans are really worried about is the outcome of the game and enjoying their time. It gives them the perfect chance to leave behind any troubles or worries of everyday life and escape from them for the day.

Bryant-Denny Stadium has a great design for the countless football games in the past and the future. The stadium is made to give the most fans the best view of the game. The structure itself is built around the events to be had there. Another important aspect of its structure is exactly how many fans it can fit. Bryant-Denny Stadium currently has a capacity of 100,007. That makes it number eight in the United States for largest stadium (<https://en.wikipedia.org/>). So, the shape, structure, and capacity all create the environment for roaring crowds and the echo of the songs played throughout. Also, the new LED lights were a recent addition to the stadium, and they have been a big hit. They not only look very cool as they flash with the music but they

make you that much more excited about the game. “Last Saturday at Bryant-Denny Stadium the fans were able to get their money’s worth in terms of the atmosphere and play. The long awaited debut of the lights did not disappoint either as it was able to add a new facet to the gamely experience,” (<https://tdalabamamag.com/>). When I asked Rita, “What was your favorite part of the stadium?” she said, “Definitely the red and white lights. You can feel the whole stadium get hyped up when they come on.” There is no doubt that the physical aspects of Bryant-Denny play a part in the quality of the experience and the participation.

But is the nice stadium what keeps people coming back for more? From my observation, it is so much more than that. I see how the stadium creates the opportunity for people to come together. It provides a place and a time for those in crimson and white to forget about their differences and support a common team. The values that I see here mainly include community and being supportive of our team. While everyone going to the stadium don’t have the same background or appearance, they are all there for the same thing. In the article, “Why do colleges go crazy for football?”, the author talks about the appeal of attending college football games in general. “Football helps build a really strong sense of community, and that’s sort of built into American culture,” (<https://www.dailyuw.com/>). It is said that competition is a major part of American Culture, and it makes sense that so many Americans would want to watch and care about a competition like this. The loyalty that some fans have reminds me of the patriotism some have for their country. Lance is quoted, “My favorite part of going to an Alabama football game is the opportunity to win and be with other guys on my side. You could literally hug a stranger after a win and it wouldn’t be weird.”

In conclusion, Bryant-Denny Stadium is more than just a building to watch sporting events. It is a special place that means so much to the Alabama fanbase and the city of Tuscaloosa. Anyone who has attended an event at Bryant-Denny Stadium can say that the atmosphere and energy inside the stadium takes a person to another level of fulfillment. Whether it is an Alabama football game, high school state championship game, cheer competition, or University event, Bryant-Denny Stadium has held a high level of respect and excitement from all of its attendees. This is truly a place for everyone. From the young to the old and everything in between, anyone can enjoy the happiness that comes from the events at the stadium. The fun traditions and atmosphere make any event worthwhile to attend. The songs and chants as well as the socialization that takes place are memorable and exciting. As the fourth largest stadium in the SouthEastern Conference, it has plenty of seats for any event. Most importantly, it brings people together and strengthens the community.