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Ticketless Giants fans looking to party in Arizona

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An army of Giants fans is heading to Arizona to support their team this weekend - with or without the coveted Super Bowl tickets. While some have plunked down thousands of dollars for seats, many more are going just to be at the party.

"We think Giants fans are much more likely to show up in big numbers than fans of any other team," said Mark Moran, chief executive of Dulcinea Media, an Internet research firm in Manhattan. "With the exception of Green Bay, Giants fans are the most loyal in the NFL. That's why there is a 40-year waiting list for season tickets."

Greg Aiello, a spokesman for the NFL, said a large swath of Arizona's population is composed of transplants from the metro area, so there is already a base of local Giants support.

He pointed to an NFL theme park and other events to keep ticketless fans occupied during the weekend.

But those who insist on actually attending the game should be prepared to pay upward of \$5,000 on Web sites like eBay or TicketsNow - and that's for the cheap seats. Super Bowl tickets are not sold through the traditional box office and those that the NFL puts up for sale are snatched up instantly by season ticket holders or winners of a summertime league lottery.

While ticket scalping is legal in Phoenix, Sgt. Joel Tranter of the Phoenix Police Department said it's highly unlikely anyone will be selling tickets at the stadium on game day, as they all would have been bought up beforehand.

For those fans who don't make it to the game, there will be plenty of extravagant, corporate-sponsored parties to make New Yorkers feel right at home.

"Almost all the calls I'm getting from people trying to buy party tickets and order bottle service are from New Yorkers with corporate spending accounts," said Marc Lotenberg, chief executive of 944 Magazine, the official lifestyle magazine of the 2008 Arizona Super Bowl Host Committee.

While Lotenberg and others didn't know of any parties expressly for Giants fans, 944 is hosting a four-day Super Bowl party in Scottsdale that will feature performances by 50 Cent, Wyclef Jean, and Paul Oakenfold. Many of the guests at that party, where tickets start at \$100, will likely be New



Yorkers without game tickets, Lotenberg said.

Which fans have the upper hand?

HOTEL PRICES: GIANTS FANS

With hotel rates for Super Bowl weekend averaging about \$500 per night in Phoenix, New Yorkers will feel they are paying what's typical. Patriots fans, on the other hand, will be yearning for the \$175 per night average hotel rate to be found in Boston.

BAR HOPPING: PATRIOTS FANS

Phoenix bars close at 2 a.m. by law, just like in Boston. It's the New Yorkers accustomed to drinking until 4 who could be left thirsty.

WEATHER: GIANTS FANS

Average February highs in the Big Apple are 41 degrees, meaning New Yorkers will be slightly more used to the balmy 69 degree average temperature for a Phoenix February. Boston's average makes it up to only 39.

TICKET SCALPING: GIANTS FANS

New Yorkers hoping to score last-minute tickets are more comfortable paying cash for tickets outside a stadium. Scalping is discouraged by stricter Massachusetts laws.

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