

Disney's Original Value: All Star Sports

by Maureen Austin, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Back in the early nineties, Disney was finding increasing success in keeping guests on property by expanding resort options. However, Mickey and crew had yet to really attract more budget conscious travelers and saw those folks seeking accommodations elsewhere off Disney property. The answer? Disney's own brand of value, economical lodging. In 1994, All Star Sports opened its doors, offering guests looking for big points on value while at the same time, staying in the "magic."

All Disney resorts built prior to Sports had an array of amenities including dining, pools and recreation as well as theming that was uniquely Disney. All Star Sports fits that mold just as well, and throughout the sprawling 1900-plus room resort there is no shortage of food, fun and first rate Disney theming.

Nestled in the Animal Kingdom resort area, All Star Sports boasts larger than life sports icons and specific sports themes within the resort. At the heart of the resort is Stadium Hall. You'll begin your sports adventure here when you check in for your stay. Also located in Stadium Hall is Sport Goofy Gifts and Sundries- to pick up merchandise, snacks and those things you forgot to bring. While the resort does not offer a full service restaurant, everyone is sure to find something to appease the appetite at the End Zone Food Court. You'll find offerings for breakfast, lunch and dinner, as the food court is open from early mornings to late nights. Pizza can also be ordered from room service should you wish to order in. Transportation via motor coach to all Disney parks and other areas originates at the bus stop located outside Stadium Hall. Bus service can be slower or faster, depending on the time of year or even the time of day. Make sure you allow a sufficient amount of time to get to your destination- especially if you are trying to reach another resort from All Star Sports.

Rooms at All Star Sports are organized into two categories. A Preferred room booking provides you close access to main areas - rooms are located in the Surfs Up! section, near Stadium Hall and the main pool. The rooms are identical to "standard" rooms in other buildings. This does tend to be a noisier part of the resort due to, among other things, its proximity to the main pool area. Guests looking for action on the quieter side might do better in other sections.

Standard rooms will be found in all other sections of the resort, with views overlooking courtyards, other buildings or parking lots. Football

fans will find themselves at home in the Touchdown section, with huge footballs and goalposts in the courtyard. Home Run Hotel will have the baseball fans right at "home" and tennis enthusiasts will "love" the Center Court section. Basketball fans aren't left out either by way of the Hoops Hotel section. All of these areas have amazing icons bigger than the sport (well, almost!) itself!

Room size is about 260 square feet, which is the smallest room plan of all Disney resorts. Rooms feature 2 doubles or a king bed. Disabled guests can be accommodated in the king beds as most of these rooms have facilities such as roll in showers. Storage space is limited, to maximize floor space. Bring along over the door shoe organizers or organizers that can be placed on hangers. Other features of the room include clock radio, TV, small dresser and a small table and chairs. A fridge is available for a nominal fee.

Ready for a swim? Not to disappoint, look no further than Surfboard Bay, located near Surfs Up! or try out the Grand Slam pool near Home Run Hotel. Pool hours vary by season and towels are usually not provided, so remember to bring some from your room.

2006 rates range from \$79 to \$137 and for 2007, rack rates start at \$82 going up to \$141. Be sure to inquire about any possible discounts or special package offers for the time of your stay.

About The Author: Maureen Austin is co-owner of Ears to You Travel and a proud Florida native. Born in South Florida and having lived all over the state, she enjoys writing about the Sunshine State's many attractions and natural beauty.

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