

The ESPN Club at Disney's BoardWalk: Where to Catch the Big Game While at Walt Disney World

by Sue Kulick, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Where can you combine the best of NFL football and Mickey Mouse? Only at Walt Disney World, of course! My husband and I really look forward to football season every year, and root quite arduously for our favorite team. Our latest Disney trip took us away from our rec room two sundays in a row, and while we were planning on DVR-ing the game, we knew it wouldn't be the same. We would know the outcome before we ever got a chance to watch. What to do?

The solution: watch the game at Disney! And not just from the comfort of our room ... no! We were going to head over to BoardWalk and watch it in the ESPN Club!

This would be a totally new adventure for us, and we weren't sure what to expect. The game started at 4:00 pm, so we drove over to BoardWalk at about 3:30 and arrived about 15 minutes later. We parked and walked to the club. When we arrived, it was pretty packed. The ESPN Club doesn't accept reservations, and we were told we had two choices. We could either go into the bar area and wait for a table or seats at the bar to open, or we could wait in line on the restaurant side for a table to open. We opted for the restaurant side. Our game began while we were still in line, and they showed it on a TV above the waiting area.

The line moved pretty quickly. Sports fans that were there for the 1:00 pm NFL game finished up with their tables and moved out. This opened most of the tables for those of there for the 4:00 pm game. We were soon seated at a table near the front…near the 90-square-foot, high definition TV showing the game!

The Club is decorated with all sorts of sports memorabilia. And in case the game you want to see is not on the big screen, you can probably catch it on one of the other monitors in the club ... 100 of them!

We planned to have dinner here, but we started out with traditional football fare ... a pitcher of beer and wings! They have all the traditional appetizers, including nachos and cheese fries. If you are feeling less traditional, there are things like black bean and spinach dip and clam chowder.

We watched the first half of the game, and we really enjoyed the

camaraderie. Many sports fan were there for the same reason, and even though we were not all on the same side, we were all having a great time.

For dinner, my husband had a cheese steak sandwich and I had a Southwestern burger. They held the jalapenos for me and served it with a generous side of fries. If I'd been feeling more health conscious, I could have ordered cucumber salad as a side dish. Other sandwich choices included a chicken sandwich with sun-dried tomatoes, pesto, and goat cheese; and a pulled pork sandwich with cole slaw and barbecue sauce. There are two meal salads available. If you wanted something more substantial, the dinner menu included salmon, ribs, rigatoni, and sirloin steak. The dinner menu is rather limited, as the restaurant sticks to more sports-oriented fare. The food was plentiful and delicious.

After dinner, we switched to diet soda (we had our car, of course) and watched the second half of the game. There was no pressure to leave, or to order more food or alcoholic beverages, and our wonderful wait staff kept our soda glasses filled. They also good naturedly put up with a lot of activity as the game progressed!

If you want to see a big game there, plan on arriving at least a half-hour to an hour early and plan on waiting for seating. When planning your time, keep your travel time in mind. You don't want to be too late and miss the first part of your game! Sunday afternoons and playoff days are very crowded. Dinner prices are on par with Disney pricing, ranging from about \$10 for a sandwich to about \$25 for an entree. Appetizers run in the \$8-\$12 range. The Club accepts the Disney Dining Plan.

Unfortunately, our team was NOT the winner that day. But we felt like winners, after having enjoyed a great meal at a fun place. It's nice to know that you can see a sporting event while at Disney, and not feel like you are missing out on the magic!

About The Author: Sue Kulick is a resident of the Pocono Mountains and an avid Disney fan. She and her husband, Steve, live in a log home with their Golden Retrievers, Cody and Belle and their cat Tigger.

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