



## **NFL ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR 2021 NFL DRAFT IN CLEVELAND**

*2021 Draft Activities to Take Place Around FirstEnergy Stadium, Including Free Fan Event*

*Select Prospects, Fans, Legends, Commissioner Goodell, Media and Networks On-Site in Cleveland Following COVID Protocols*

**CLEVELAND [March 22, 2021]** – The NFL announced today that the 86<sup>th</sup> annual NFL Draft will take place April 29-May 1 across iconic downtown Cleveland locations, including FirstEnergy Stadium, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and the Great Lakes Science Center.

A select number of prospects will take the stage in Cleveland while fans, media, NFL Network, ESPN and ABC crews will also be on-site as the league welcomes the new rookie class. Building on the success of last year's virtual Draft, additional prospects will also participate in Draft festivities remotely from their homes around the country.

Club personnel involved in the selection process will be permitted to gather in a Draft Room at a location of their choosing, whether that be their facility or elsewhere while following appropriate protocols.

"We are thrilled to be heading to Cleveland for the NFL Draft, which has become one of the most highly anticipated events in sports" said **PETER O'REILLY**, NFL Executive Vice President, Club Business & League Events. "Just months after executing a safe and successful Super Bowl LV, we look forward to bringing the excitement of our Draft traditions to fans in collaboration with the Browns, Destination Cleveland, Greater Cleveland Sports Commission, the City of Cleveland, and all of our local Cleveland partners."

Set against the backdrop of Lake Erie, the **NFL Draft Main Stage** will serve as the central hub for Draft activities, including where pick announcements will be made by Commissioner Goodell and other special guests. In addition to picks being made in Cleveland, the NFL and clubs will partner to make selections from across the country on Day 3. The **Draft Theatre** will act as the viewing zone for the Main Stage and will seat invited guests, including individuals selected for the exclusive "**Inner Circle presented by Subway.**"

Chosen by each of the 32 clubs to serve as their Draft ambassadors, fans selected to the “Inner Circle” will have a front row seat to the NFL Draft Main Stage to cheer on their team’s picks.

To further the NFL’s efforts in promoting the importance of getting the COVID-19 vaccine when available, and consistent with guidance from the CDC, fans selected to sit in the “Inner Circle” must be fully vaccinated.

Tapping into the spirit of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, headlining acts will perform each day on the Main Stage.

“We are looking forward to officially being on the clock in Cleveland for what has become one of the most-anticipated sports and entertainment events of the year,” said **DAVID GILBERT**, President and CEO of Greater Cleveland Sports Commission. “While we know this event will look different than in the past, we are thrilled about what the NFL Draft will mean to our community coming out of this pandemic. It will showcase Cleveland’s beauty and resilience to a large audience, both safely in-person and worldwide.”

“We are thrilled for Cleveland to host this year’s NFL Draft and celebrate the hard-working and inspiring new Draft prospects, football’s great history, and our fans. It is even more special as we commemorate our 75th anniversary and have the opportunity to showcase the wonderful city of Cleveland to an international audience and to a responsible number of fans and visitors during the weekend,” said **DEE AND JIMMY HASLAM**, Managing and Principal Partners of the Cleveland Browns. “We greatly appreciate the continued collaboration by the NFL, local and state government officials and medical experts who are all focused on creating a memorable and safe experience and we are also extremely encouraged by the state of Ohio’s vaccination rates and advancements that are allowing us to make the progress needed to return to a safe and more normal environment.”

Utilizing learnings and protocols from Super Bowl fan experiences in Tampa, the **NFL Draft Experience** – the NFL’s interactive football theme park – will be free and open to the public around FirstEnergy Stadium during all three days of the Draft. To manage capacity, reservations will be required to attend the free Draft Experience through the NFL OnePass app, which will be available for download the week of March 29.

“Cleveland welcomes the 2021 NFL Draft to our city,” said **MAYOR FRANK G. JACKSON**. “Residents and visitors from around the world will experience Cleveland’s hospitality and see why our city continues to be a destination of choice for large-scale events. We look forward to working with the Cleveland Browns, the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission, the NFL and our other partners to execute a safe, successful event in accordance with health and safety guidelines.”

All three days of the NFL Draft will be broadcast on NFL Network, ESPN and ABC, including two nights of primetime coverage on Thursday and Friday. Further details on NFL Network, ESPN and ABC’s coverage of the 2021 NFL Draft will be announced at a later date.

This year the league will build upon the 2020 Draft-A-Thon, utilizing the 2021 Draft as a platform to bring awareness to issues impacting communities most affected by the pandemic. More information on Draft and Draft-A-Thon will be announced in the coming weeks.

The league will continue to partner with public officials at the state and local levels to help better ensure a safe and successful Draft. Fans attending Draft activities will be required to wear face coverings and adhere to appropriate physical distancing.

For more information on Draft activities, visit [NFL.com/Draft](https://www.nfl.com/draft).

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