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Cardinal Stadium In Louisville: A Must-See For Sports Fans

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Any tourist and/or sports fan visiting Louisville should have Cardinal Stadium near the very top of their bucket list.

From 1998 to 2018, the stadium was called “Papa John’s Cardinal Stadium.” In the summer of 2018, the school [renamed it](#) to “Cardinal Stadium” after Papa John’s owner John Schnatter admitted to using a racial slur.

Located in Louisville, Kentucky, Cardinal Stadium is home to one of the best college football atmospheres in America. The venue, which has undergone several major renovations over the past two decades, has a maximum capacity of just over 60,800

Coming off their second straight losing season, the Cardinals are a giant +25000 longshot to win next year’s national championship game over at [Caesars sportsbook in Arizona](#), though DraftKings gives Louisville better odds at +15000.

History & Traditions Of Cardinal Stadium

The current Louisville Cardinals’ venue replaced the old Cardinal Stadium that was also located in Louisville. The old Cardinal Stadium served as the football team’s home field from 1957 to 1997, before the current one opened in 1998.

The old Cardinal Stadium was also the home for the short-lived Louisville Raiders of the United Football League, the Louisville Bats minor league baseball team (their current home venue is Louisville Slugger Field), the NCAA men’s soccer team (they now play at Lynn Stadium) and the school’s baseball team (home games now played at Jim Patterson Stadium).

The current Cardinal Stadium is located right on the school’s campus. In their first season at the new home field, the Cardinals won five of six games played at Cardinal Stadium.

Head coach John Smith led the team to a 7-5 record, and the season ended with a 48-29 loss to Marshall in the Motor City Bowl game.

Cardinal Stadium has been one of the best NCAA home advantages since the venue opened its doors 24 years ago. It’s not just the winning that makes Cardinal Stadium a must-visit for sports fans and tourists, but also its traditions.

When players are introduced, they come out of the Howard Schnellenberger Football Complex and touch the statue of football legend Johnny Unitas, who played collegiate football for the Cardinals. Unitas was a three-time NFL Champion with the Baltimore Colts and part of their Super Bowl V championship team.

Injuries cut Unitas' final collegiate season short, and he wasn't selected until the ninth round (102nd overall) by the Pittsburgh Steelers in the 1955 draft. It would be with the Colts, not the Steelers, where Unitas grew into a football icon.

At some home games, the team mascot will parachute down into the playing field. When the team makes its way towards the field on gameday, the school band will play the "Fight U of L" song as a way to fire up the players and the fans.

Finally, whenever the Cardinals emerge victorious in a home game, the players conduct a "victory lap" around the field and provide high-fives to fans.

Upcoming Events At Cardinal Stadium

Tourists coming to Kentucky should plan a trip for the fall in order to maximize their experience at Cardinal Stadium.

The Cardinals football team has six home games scheduled for the upcoming 2022 season. The times for all of these contests will be announced later on.

Their home opener will take place against the Florida State Seminoles on Friday, Sept. 16. Eight days later, the Cardinals will play host to the South Florida Bulls.

Following a two-game road stretch, the Cardinals will return home for three consecutive home games. They'll host the Pittsburgh Panthers on Saturday, Oct. 22 before welcoming the Wake Forest Demon Deacons one week later on Oct. 29.

On Nov. 5, Louisville will then play host to the James Madison Dukes, who are coming off an impressive 12-2 season that saw them reach the NCAA Division I Semifinal. The Dukes fell to the North Dakota State Bison 20-14 in that game.

Finally, Louisville's last scheduled home game will take place against the NC State Wolfpack on Nov. 19. The Cardinals regular season concludes with a road game on Nov. 26 against the Kentucky Wildcats.

Photo by Kirk Thornton on Unsplash

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