



average consumer.

Your best option is to purchase tickets on the secondary market from a licensed, reputable ticket broker.

## Who Has All The Super Bowl Tickets?

Below you will find the distribution breakdown of the 76,877 tickets for last year's game in Jacksonville (numbers are approximate).

Receiving Party	Percentage of Tickets Received	Number of Tickets Distributed
National Football League (NFL)	25.2%	19,373 tickets (includes 1,000 lottery-distributed tickets)
AFC Championship Team	17.5%	13,454 tickets
NFC Championship Team	17.5%	13,454 tickets
Host Venue Team	5%	3,844 tickets
All Other Teams	34.2%	26,292 tickets

All teams distribute their allotment of Super Bowl Tickets to players, coaches, family, friends, and staff. The individual venues have the option of selling seats to suite holders or club seat holders. The NFL keeps the largest shares of tickets, which are distributed to advertisers, athletes, sponsors, NFL staff, and VIP's. The AFC and NFC champions also distribute to their own players, families, coaches, donors, supporters, suite and club seat holders -- and then sell remaining tickets. Some of these extra tickets are sold at a profit to tour operators who include them in packages with hotel rooms, transportation, and hospitality. All these packages are sold to fans at inflated prices.

By the time the teams are determined, about two weeks before the big game, Super Bowl tickets are printed and then distributed in phases, with lottery tickets delivered in the first or second week of January. The host team is typically the second group to receive tickets, followed by the rest of the league. Of course, no one knows who the AFC and NFC champions will be, and that group of tickets (comprising 35% of the total) is held until the week after the championship games. Once the teams are identified and tickets are printed, it is generally eight or nine days before the big game. Over the years, the NFL has not distributed Super Bowl tickets until just days before the game, and at that point they require guests (with ID) to pick up their Super Bowl Tickets up in the host city.

This essay is not meant to discourage you, so read on. If you're not Donald Trump or [Lindsay Lohan](#) ... just an average guy who dreams about a once in a lifetime chance to go to the Super Bowl ... there are options.

## The Secret Life of Super Bowl Ticket Brokers

If you haven't figured it out by now, I am a ticket broker. My company's customers are from all walks of life. We take a lot of phone calls from people looking for [Super Bowl tickets](#), and we are always happy to educate our callers on techniques to obtain one of sports' toughest tickets.

Many of our customers ask questions about the mysterious world of Super Bowl Tickets, like:

- Where do you get your Super Bowl Tickets?
- If Super Bowl tickets aren't released until a week before the game, how can you sell them now?
- How do you decide on prices for Super Bowl Tickets?
- Why are tickets so expensive?
- How can a regular guy like me get Super Bowl Tickets?
- How can I get Super Bowl Tickets at Face Value?

Ticket prices in the secondary market are affected by many factors, including the host city; venue, weather, fan loyalty, and team match up.

## Location, Location, Location

Locations such as tropical climates and luxurious locales definitely send Super Bowl Ticket prices over to the high side. A resort-like or destination city such as Las Vegas draws more attendees, thus increasing demand and price. The Super Bowl, like the Kentucky Derby, is a global party, and many jet setters are far more interested in the party around the Super Bowl Football Game, rather than the actual game itself.

2004's Super Bowl in San Diego was a fabulous destination, but without real regard for the teams actually playing in the Super Bowl. It was an easy commute by private jet, limo, or deluxe motor coach from LA, Hollywood, and Vegas. I superbly enjoyed working from my hotel room with a view of San Diego Marina, and delivering tickets to customers in the California ocean breeze.

The following year I found that many folks in Houston were not big Panther or Patriot fans, so tickets were about as hot as Anna Nicole Smith. And to reinforce my theory, [Playboy Party tickets](#) were actually scarcer than Super Bowl Tickets!



As a side comment, Houston and New Orleans' future as future Super Bowl locations are questionable right now in my mind – after Katrina, I don't think the SuperDome will ever smell the same – and neither will the AstroDome, or Reliant

Stadium. The thought of what has occurred in the SuperDome this week is somewhat frightful and surely it will affect the future of that venue. The “refugees” had many opportunities to flee their city as ordered to do, and evacuate before Katrina made her way into the city.

Last year’s Jacksonville setting quickly shifted my locale expertise with the fierce loyalty of fans. While we here in the South sometimes liken SEC Football to a religion, the Eagles all out command for tickets was stronger than any I’d ever seen. While the loyalty of the the Eagles se fans was intense, unfortunately this drove the prices beyond reach for many people. In addition, there were many tour operators who preyed on the passion of these ticket seekers. In the streets of Jacksonville I saw many Super Bowl Dreams decimated by unethical tour operators, the frenzy for tickets, and inflated prices.

## **VERSUS**

The teams also have a lot to do with the price of the tickets. Certain teams come from much larger cities than others; have a history in their market, and a strong following and loyal fan base. In Houston two years ago, the Panthers were not a strong draw. At only nine years young and from Charlotte, North Carolina, the Panthers had nowhere near the established fan base like that of the Philadelphia Eagles. The Eagles are obviously well established, in a city with a long and deeply rooted history in America.

Last year in Jacksonville, Super Bowl Ticket prices soared higher than other years largely due to the Eagles willingness to pay high prices. There were stories of fans mortgaging homes to see their beloved Eagles play in their first Super Bowl in some 20+ years.

## **How Do You Like Detroit?**

The average temperature that time of year is 26 degrees. [Ford Field](#) normally only holds 65,000 people but the minimum requirement of the NFL for Super Bowls is 70,000 and supposedly they are adding 5,000 seats to meet those criteria. Detroit is not really a destination during the winter months, when compared to a city like San Diego, but I doubt the cold weather will deter the Eagles or Steelers fans if they make it into the big game. As a former resident of Birmingham, Michigan, I am really looking forward to seeing Detroit put up some really top-notch hospitality and professionalism. We’ve worked many Detroit events and have even enjoyed some press there due to our Super Bowl expertise.

## **The Super Bowl Ticket Pricing Formula**

Here is our analysis of recent Super Bowl Ticket Prices, including:

- Location
- Venue Capacity
- Team Match Up
- Final Scores
- Prices (based on “Get In” or “Anything Available” ticket prices)

Year	City, State	Venue Name	Capacity	Final Score	Average Ticket Price
2005	Jacksonville, FL	Alltel Stadium	76,777	New England 24, Philadelphia 21	\$3,250
2004	Houston, TX	Reliant Stadium	69,500	New England 32, Carolina 29	\$2,000
2003	San Diego, CA	Qualcomm Stadium	71,000	Tampa Bay 48, Oakland 21	\$1,750
2002	New Orleans, LA	SuperDome	72,000	New England 21, St. Louis 17	\$500
2001	Tampa, FL	Raymond James Stadium	72,000	New England 21, St. Louis 17	\$500
2000	Atlanta, GA	Georgia Dome	71,000	St. Louis 23, Tennessee 16	\$1,200
1999	Miami, FL	Joe Robbie Stadium	75,000	Denver 34, Atlanta 19	\$900
1998	San Diego, CA	Qualcomm Stadium	71,000	Denver 31, Green Bay 24	\$2,500

Super Bowl Ticket prices are affected by the capacity of the stadium or number of seats. Logically, one thinks that the greater number of seats available, the lower the prices. However, this is not what we saw last year. If you look at the breakdown above, note that Alltel Stadium had more seats than any prior games, yet had a higher price. I think this is explained by the extreme fanaticism of Philadelphia Eagles fans... exemplified by demand simply trumping supply.

The 2002 Super Bowl game stands out above others on the list, with day-of ticket prices actually running at face value or less. This occurred after the 9/11 tragedy in New York. This was the first Super Bowl game after 9/11 and security for national events was unprecedented. Remember, people were wearing gloves just to get their mail!

## **What to Look for in a Super Bowl Ticket Broker**

Before you go with the broker who has the lowest price, you should examine indicators of a broker’s credibility and reputation, such as time in the business, office location (do they operate with a cell phone only?), participation in organizations such as the NATB or BBB, eBay feedback, etc. Do they have a professionally done web site and is it current and update? Is the broker licensed by their state and do they abide by any applicable state laws?

Buy from a broker licensed by a state regulating secondary market ticket sales, such as Georgia or Illinois. That gives you an avenue of recourse if there are any problems, and you will find a much higher quality ticket purchasing experience due to the guidelines these brokers follow.

You should expect to pay market value at time of purchase and will be locked in at that price the day the transaction occurs. You should expect to know what the guarantees are associated with your purchase. You should expect to pick your tickets up in the host city, and most brokers will not guarantee availability until the day of the game. Local and late pick up is standard operating procedure for most brokers due to the late distribution of the actual printed Super Bowl tickets.

If a ticket “broker” insists on cash payment, buyer beware. Unethical brokers may have lost their charge card merchant privileges and operate on a cash basis, which gives the buyer no protection from a credit card company or recourse if there is a problem later.

If you are buying directly from a ticket broker, choose a member of the National Association of Ticket Brokers ([www.natb.org](http://www.natb.org)). The NATB is an organization that has implemented some regulation to the ticket brokerage industry by setting forth a code of standards and ethics for all members to follow. They require all of their members to support Super Bowl ticket orders with a 200% guarantee. That means if for some reason they fail to deliver the tickets to you, you are due a refund equivalent to 200% of the purchase price.

Some brokers offer only a 100% guarantee, which means that if the market price is higher than your original purchase price, the broker may fail to deliver - so they won't lose money on the deal. The customer will have to come out of pocket even more money at that moment to purchase a ticket. The NATB instituted a 200% guarantee to protect consumers from that very situation forcing the brokers to do the right thing and either take the loss and deliver tickets or take the loss by refunding 200%.

## **What are the Risks?**

If you are dealing with an *authorized* seller of NFL Super Bowl packages, you have decreased concern regarding delivery of or the authenticity of your tickets. These sellers have been selected either by the NFL or one of the Championship teams to market Super Bowl packages. The price for these packages rolls the operator's costs for the hotel, tickets, and hospitality into one so it is impossible to know exactly what you are paying for Super Bowl tickets.

Just about anyone can create and promote a Super Bowl package, which gives fans little faith that a hotel room or Super Bowl tickets even exist until you arrive

in the host city. Last year I saw many disheartened Eagles fans stuck watching the Super Bowl from a hotel bar.

Last year in Jacksonville, with unprecedented demand and prices rising beyond expectations, busted orders were commonplace. (Busted Order = tickets are not delivered as contracted at time of purchase). Many people who purchased tickets to the game were stranded – left to watch the Super Bowl from a bar TV somewhere in Jacksonville and uneasily hoped for refunds from unprofessional ticket hustlers.

## **The Lock of the Year**

If you want to lock a price on Super Bowl tickets and avoid the stress of watching prices each week, you can buy Super Bowl tickets today. Checkout the listings on [eBay](#), [StubHub](#), or with a licensed, experienced ticket broker such as [AlphaTickets.com](#). Brokers will generally give you pricing options, guaranteeing certain sections based on your price tolerance and seat desires.

Remember that a price you are quoted on one week may change the next. Don't expect any broker to honor a Super Bowl Ticket price quote, unless you've got something in writing stating that the quote is good for a certain amount of time. Tickets do trade for well above face value, and based on the factors I've outlined, could become quite expensive.

Now that the NFL season is almost underway, prices for Super Bowl tickets will start their usual pattern of fluctuation. Changes will occur with consumers buying patterns, as well as the fame and fortune of each team.

You, the fans, are now armed with some knowledge you might not have had before – the secrets of Super Bowl Ticket Brokers. Use this information to protect your investments, and make your dreams come true.

-- Allen Raines