

Community Impact Statement: SC Parade of Champions Festival & New Sports Fan Zone

Festival Overview

The Santa Clara Parade of Champions Festival (SCPOC) is proud to share that the addition of a New Sports Fan Zone was made possible in part by a generous \$10,000 grant from the City of Santa Clara. The City's investment allowed the festival to deliver a high-impact, community-centered experience at scale. As part of the City's "Mission Meets the Moment" initiative, our nonprofit festival was selected as the first Community Kickoff Event at Opening Ceremonies in Downtown, bringing the FIFA World Cup Clock, interactive booths, games, giveaways, and live entertainment to celebrate a historic year in Santa Clara sports.

Our 57th Santa Clara Parade of Champions Festival (SCPOC) launched an unprecedented moment as Santa Clara became the only city in the nation to host both a Super Bowl and FIFA World Cup events at Levi's® Stadium in the same year. The Sports Fan Zone served as a perfect complement to our longstanding community tradition, the oldest and most inclusive festival in Santa Clara since 1945.

Attendance and Participation

The 2025 SCPOC welcomed 15,000 attendees, including 2,000 parade participants, transforming Historic Downtown Santa Clara into a vibrant gathering space where youth, families, seniors, professional and youth athletes, nonprofits, and City departments connected in meaningful ways. The Sports Fan Zone helped bridge civic pride, build on global sports momentum, and enhance local community engagement. Residents met professional athletes and mascots from Bay Area teams in one-on-one interactions, creating memorable experiences before and after the parade. Featured guests included five Olympians and elite athletes, including Brandi Chastain, two-time Women's World Cup Champion and Olympic Gold Medalist; Golden State Warriors alumnus and NBC Sports analyst Kelenna Azubuike; and DeJuan Jones, player for the San Jose Earthquakes.

Entertainment, Professional Sports and Community Engagement

Our DJ hyped activities and provided a stage for sports celebrities' speeches and local performances. Professional team activations included interactive games, photo opportunities, prizes, and autograph sessions:

- Mission Meets the Moment Booth with City staff, FIFA World Cup Clock photos, and giveaways
- San Francisco 49ers Youth EDU Foundation with mascot Sourdough Sam
- San Jose Sharks interactive hockey game, prizes, and mascot Sharkie

- San Jose Earthquakes player appearances and Mascot Q
- Golden State Warriors alumni player and NBC Sports analyst appearances

The FIFA countdown clock provided a tangible memory of the anticipated world-class events coming to Santa Clara in 2026, reinforcing the City's brand as a premier sports destination. City departments such as the City Manager's Office, Parks & Recreation, Fire, Police, Library, and Public Works engaged residents in welcoming, interactive ways, fostering trust, awareness of city services, and participation in community initiatives.

Community Impact & Legacy

The Sports Fan Zone created a lasting impact across the Santa Clara community by connecting residents of all ages with the city's rich sports culture and history. Through interactive experiences, hands-on demonstrations, and the SCPOC Sports Legends Museum, the festival sparked meaningful conversations across generations, highlighting a century of champions and inspiring youth to explore sports and community programs.

Beyond entertainment, the festival strengthened civic pride, cross-generational connections, and Downtown business vitality, while providing a high-visibility platform for sponsors, partners, and nonprofit organizations to showcase their programs and services.

Building on its popularity, the 2026 Sports Fan Zone will expand programming and community access, serving as the grand wrap-up of a historic global sports year and further reinforcing Santa Clara as a premier host city for world-class events. The Sports Fan Zone demonstrates that the Parade of Champions is not only a celebration of legacy but a dynamic, community-building engine, inspiring residents of all ages, strengthening community connections, and preparing the city to embrace 2026 with pride, excitement, and continued civic engagement.

Thank you

Ana Vargas-Smith

SCPOC President

NPO founding member

www.scpardeofchampions.org

Watch our highlight video here: