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Parking lot vendors carve out some space

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The mottos of the two biggest online parking vendors in sports sum up the scene for the 150,000 fans expected to converge on Indianapolis this week.

ParkWhiz: You have guaranteed seats. Why not guaranteed parking?

Click and Park: Your Space is Ready When You Are

Chicago-based ParkWhiz handles online reservations at 12,000 spaces across 27 parking locations within a mile of Lucas Oil Stadium. The company brokered sales at nearly 7,000 spaces near last year's game in Arlington, Texas.



Aashish Dalal, co-founder and CEO of ParkWhiz, said the average cost of parking at a privately owned spot his company controls near Lucas Oil Stadium is about \$160, up 14 percent compared with last year's game at Cowboys Stadium. Dalal said most consumers will seek a non-tailgate/standard parking spot, where pricing ranges from \$39-\$129 and is averaging \$99, 22 percent higher than comparable spots last year.

The lot owner sets the prices and can adjust them in real time as the event draws nearer. ParkWhiz acts as a broker, much like StubHub does with ticket sales for events. It adds a 10 percent service fee and receives a 15 percent cut from the base rate from the parking vendors. There are no contracts. Fans can print out receipts at home, or for lots that have eTickets technology, can scan their smart phones at the lot.

Dalal said his company has partnerships with more than 500 independent parking providers near almost 100 sports or entertainment venues in major league markets.

Click and Park, the NFL's exclusive Super Bowl parking vendor, is another online parking reservation system that allows event attendees to reserve and pay for their parking online. The Orlando-based company will operate a total of 15,007 off-site spaces in 13 areas for the league, according to Fred Laughlin, vice president of management services at Indianapolis Downtown Inc., the city's not-for-profit organization charged with marketing the city center.

After service and shipping fees, parking rates in Click and Park spaces range from \$76 for a standard passenger car to \$341 for a bus or motor coach. As of Jan. 24, 40 percent of the NFL's spaces had been reserved, according to Don Jordan, vice president of operations for SP Plus Gameday, Click and Park's parent company.

As in previous years, the NFL forbids tailgating in any of its lots, which Dalal said creates an opportunity for independent lot operators, many of whom are churches or retailers looking to capitalize on the market's demands. "It's nice to be able to get in town a couple days early and just park and set up your party," he said. "For a lot of fans, the parking spot is where they'll be watching the game from."

Dalal said three-day RV reservations range from \$400 to \$1,000, with the average space costing \$575 (down 29 percent). Tailgate spots are leasing between \$100 and \$500, with the average cost at \$188 (up 28 percent).

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