

Skyway 10K organizers hope to make race an annual event

By [Joey Knight](#)



Thaddeus Foster, board member for the Armed Forces Families Foundation, discusses this weekend's Skyway 10K at a press conference Thursday morning outside Tropicana Field. [JOEY KNIGHT | Times]

As some readers have indicated, Sunday's inaugural Skyway 10K isn't the first race ever held across the bridge. A similar event was staged in January 1987, shortly before the Sunshine Skyway's dedication and a few months before it opened to traffic.

But this weekend's race *is* the first Skyway 10K benefiting the Armed Forces Families Foundation. And on Thursday, race organizers reaffirmed they hope to make it an annual event.

"That is the goal," Skyway 10K spokesman James Judge said at a brief press conference outside Tropicana Field.

"This is the inaugural run and we would like to make this an annual event, really something that the Tampa Bay community can come around and support."

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Calling the race "an incredible challenge logistically," Judge said this year's event was capped at 7,000 runners to make it manageable and give it a better chance at being pulled off smoothly.

"Next year, as we see how this one plays out, if we're able to add more runners we would like to do that."

Judge said runners from 40 states and four countries registered for the event, which begins with the ceremonial firing of a howitzer on the southern foot of the bridge shortly after 6 a.m.

Spectators won't be allowed on the bridge, but anyone can observe via a Jumbotron-style screen that will be set up at a race expo in Lot 7 of Tropicana Field. Those who stay home also can watch the race between 6 and 7:30 a.m. on 10News WTSP. The expo is free and open to the public.

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If inclement weather arrives, race directors would decide on whether to continue the event, though Sunday morning's forecast currently calls for clear skies and temperatures in the low-50s.

"This has been a monumental undertaking," Judge said. "It's a major interstate (275) and it's the Skyway Bridge, so it wasn't an easy task. It's taken a lot of planning, but we're excited to do it, we're very thankful and grateful to everyone."

Other race-day reminders:

- * The northbound lanes of the bridge will be closed Sunday from 4 a.m. to 10 a.m. The southbound lanes will remain open, but will stay only southbound (meaning it won't be converted for traffic to go both ways).

- * Fourth Avenue South near Tropicana Field will not be available for public access between MLK and 16th Street South from approximately 3 a.m. until 11 a.m., as the traffic flow will be reversed for the busing of race participants.

- * All proceeds benefit the Armed Forces Families Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that "utilizes 100 percent of funds to give back to local communities to support military families," according to the [Skyway 10K website](#).

- * Speaking of the Skyway 10K website, all race results will be posted there promptly as the race concludes.