



Rays in the booth

St. Petersburg Times staff writer Tom Jones offers up his thoughts on the Rays broadcast team.

Dewayne Staats, TV Play-by-play



A play-by-play baseball announcer can enhance or ruin a broadcast, and when you're talking about a marathon baseball season, he has a lot to do with whether it's an enjoyable or irritating summer. Rays fans, you have it good. Staats remains one of the best in the business, a true professional who saves the right moments to get excited, is never shy about criticism and, best of all, knows that fans are there to watch the game, not listen to him. The only TV play-by-play announcer the Rays have ever had, Staats returns for his 13th season in Tampa Bay and his 34th in the big leagues. It's hard to imagine anyone else calling a Rays game.

Kevin Kennedy, TV Analyst



Midway through 2009, his first season as a Rays TV analyst, the former big-league skipper became a polarizing figure among Rays followers. Many Rays fans missed former analyst Joe Magrane, and some saw Kennedy's workload (only about 100 games) as a sign that he was mailing it in. Early last season, Kennedy didn't do much to dispel that with way-too-general analysis and a little too much of everyone's pet peeve: "Well, when I managed..." But Kennedy's performance improved as the season progressed, probably because he became more familiar with the team and could speak confidently about it. Kennedy, again, will call about 100 games, and that still seems problematic. He misses too many series, meaning he might be missing subtleties and trends. No question that he knows the game, and he only gets better the more he is around the team.

Brian Anderson, TV Analyst

Anderson fills in well when Kennedy is gone, and it's a shame he's only around for 50 or so games. Being a former pitcher, Anderson brings especially good insight to pitching, but he also has a good grasp of the Rays roster. Best of all, he seems to have to have a comfortable rapport with Dewayne Staats and often shows a great sense of humor. His style is light, but he knows what he's talking about and communicates it well. The Rays are fortunate he's available to do it on a part-time basis because he should be calling 160 games for someone.

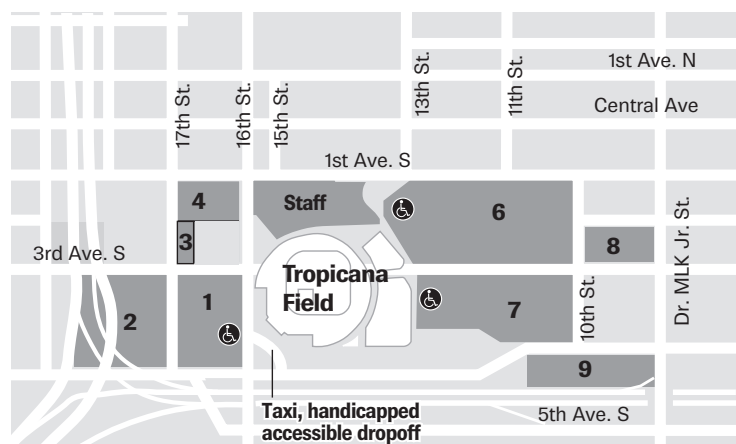
Andy Freed and Dave Wills, Radio

It's impossible to think of one without thinking of the other, so let's talk about both at the same time. They are starting their sixth season together as the Rays' radio voices. They sound alike, talk alike and work well together, never trying to upstage the other. Far too many radio teams around the league feel like two individuals waiting for the other to stop talking so they can start. But Freed and Wills are both great listeners, and it feels like a conversation as they are calling the game — a conversation with each other and with the audience. Neither played in the majors, so they offer a meat-and-potatoes broadcast, but that's meant as a compliment. Radio listeners want meat and potatoes, which means the essentials. Tell us the score often, describe what is happening, call the game. Radio announcers are there to inform, not entertain. Freed and Wills inform, and along the way, manage to entertain, too.

Ricardo Taveras and Enrique Oliu, Spanish radio

Ricardo Taveras and Enrique Oliu return once again to call Rays games on Spanish radio. This will be Taveras' eighth season calling play-by-play, while Oliu, who has been on Rays broadcasts since the beginning of the franchise, is back for his 13th season.

Parking day of game



Source: City of St. Petersburg, Tampa Bay Rays

Times

Parking costs

Game type	General parking Lots 2, 6, 7, 8, 9	Prepaid & general parking Lots 3, 4
Diamond/Platinum	\$20	\$25
Gold/Silver	\$15	\$20
Bronze	\$10	\$15

Free parking

Once again, vehicles with four or more passengers can park free in team-controlled lots for all Bronze and Sunday games. For all other games, the first 100 cars with four or more people can park for free up to one hour before game time. Free parking is not available in VIP, permit, prepaid or reserved parking areas.

Permits/ reserved parking

Lots 1 (Red), 2 (Yellow) and 6 (Light Blue)

Disabled parking

Lots 1, 6 and 7 (accessible drop-off area located at Gate 4, across 16th Street from Lot 1)

RV parking

Lot 8

More details

Visit raysbaseball.com (under the Tropicana Field tab, click Directions and Parking)

What's new at the Trop

- There's a new five-category pricing structure for tickets (Diamond, Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze), which includes increases for games against the Yankees and Red Sox as well as weekend games and games that include postgame concerts or premium giveaways.
- All Friday home games will be "Friday Fests," with the first 10,000 fans receiving a collectible T-shirt presented by tbt*. There will also be postgame fireworks, drink and food specials, special prize giveaways, etc.
- There will be a new public address announcer, Greg Kalil from Seminole. He has nearly 20 years of on-air radio experience and has filled in as PA voice at Al Lang Field for both Rays spring games and minor-league games.
- There's still free parking for vehicles with four or more passengers for Bronze and Sunday games. But for all others, the first 100 cars with four or more are free up to an hour before game time. The lots cost \$10 to \$20.
- There are new food options, from seafood to Cajun food, at Fresco Fish Taco (at First Base Food Court) and Ti Dave's Po'Boys (Right Field Street)
- There will be wine bars positioned in the first- and third-base sides of the concourse, with a rotating selection (\$9-\$11 per glass).
- There's a Cuban sandwich (\$5) available from vendors as well as 14 locations in the stadium.
- There will be a new official hot dog at the Trop, with details to come.

Joe Smith, Times staff writer

Rays minor-league system

Director, minor-league operations: Mitch Lukevics
Asst. director: Chaim Bloom
Administrator: Giovanna Rodriguez

Triple A

DURHAM (N.C.) BULLS
Manager: Charlie Montoyo
Coaches: Xavier Hernandez, Dave Myers
Phone: (919) 687-6500
Web: durhambulls.com

Double A

MONTGOMERY (ALA.) BISCUITS
Manager: Billy Gardner Jr.
Coaches: Bill Moloney, Ozzie Timmons
Phone: (334) 323-2255
Web: biscuitsbaseball.com

Advanced Class A

CHARLOTTE STONE CRABS
Manager: Jim Morrison
Coaches: Neil Allen, Joe Szekely
Phone: (941) 206-3501
Web: stonecrabsbaseball.com

Class A

BOWLING GREEN (KY.) HOT RODS
Manager: Brady Williams
Coaches: R.C. Lichtenstein, Manny Castillo
Phone: (270) 901-2121
Web: bghotrods.com

Short-season Class A

HUDSON VALLEY (N.Y.) RENEGADES
Manager: Jared Sandberg
Coaches: Jack Giese, Reinaldo Ruiz
Phone: (845) 838-0094
Web: hvrenegades.com

Rookie

PRINCETON (W. VA.) RAYS
Manager: Michael Johns
Coaches: Wuamner Rincones, Marty DeMerritt
Phone: (304) 487-2000
Web: princetonrays.net

Gulf Coast League

GULF COAST LEAGUE RAYS
Manager: Joe Alvarez
Coaches: Darwin Peguero, Dan DeMent, Hector Torres
Phone: (941) 206-3501
Web: milb.com