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Dallas-Fort Worth enjoys thaw, but more snow possible Sunday



Photo: Tom Fox/The Dallas Morning News



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Snow surrounds Cowboys Stadium at sunset, site of Super Bowl XLV, after about 4 inches of snow fell since overnight, Friday, February 4, 2011.



By THEODORE KIM / Staff Writer

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Even as the Dallas-Fort Worth area began to thaw from its deep freeze, the region faced the ominous prospect of a wintry mix on Super Bowl Sunday.

North Texas on Saturday woke to another subfreezing morning. But temperatures rose to around 50 degrees by afternoon, giving roads and highways a much-needed thaw.

Major roads were mostly cleared and moving. And drivers appeared to heed warnings that the region's many bridges and ramps might still be treacherous, particularly in the frozen morning hours. Wind chills dipped into the single digits in the early morning.

Around Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, the site of Sunday's game, traffic moved slowly on heavily salted streets.

Treacherous weather ravaged travel and commerce in North Texas for much of the last week. Forecasts offered the potential for yet more bad weather on Sunday. Patches of freezing fog early Sunday could give way later to a rain-snow mix, according to the National Weather Service.

The region also could witness a snow-ice mix Tuesday night into Wednesday, early forecasts show.

For a few hours on Saturday, at least, fans reveled in the pre-game thaw.

"This is like a spring day," joked Judy Henricksen, a 66-year-old Green Bay Packers fan from Au Train, Mich. She and daughter Lori are staying in Arlington and have tickets to the game.

Downtown Dallas sprang to life as people were ready to get out and about after days of cold weather.

Nowhere was this more evident than in and around the Dallas Convention Center, home to the NFL Experience. It was a sea of green, yellow and black.

Lines to get into the NFL Experience snaked all the way down Griffin from the entrance to the intersection at Young. Vehicle traffic crawled along Young back to Union Station.

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Earlier in the week, forecasters called for sunny skies and temperatures in the 60s for Sunday. That outlook gave hope to NFL and local officials that the area would warm up in time for kickoff.

Predictions have since changed. Super Bowl kickoff is just after 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, although Cowboys Stadium will be buzzing with activity all day and well into the wee hours of Monday morning. The region could get up to a half-inch of freezing precipitation.

Schools and offices in many communities have remained closed for most of the week. Shops and restaurants have kept sporadic hours during the snow and ice. Communities from Fort Worth to [Plano](#) have reported dozens of fender-bender accidents and calls for motorist aid this week.

Meanwhile, slick roads have forced the cancellation or postponement of a number of Super Bowl-related parties and events. And at least six people were injured Friday when blocks of ice slid off the roof of Cowboys Stadium.

On Saturday, television cameras showed more chunks of ice falling from the stadium's top. Workers also were seen clearing ice and snow from the rails upon which the stadium's retractable roof slides into place. Lt. Pedro Arevalo of the Arlington Fire Department said its technical rescue team is assisting in the ice removal.

Near the stadium, businesses smarting from a week hampered by foul weather are hoping for a change in fortunes.

Mike Ruegsegger, owner of Bodacious Bar-B-Q, which sits within sight of Cowboys Stadium, closed his restaurant for most of Wednesday and Thursday because of the weather. Super Bowl Sunday, he hopes, will turn out better.

"I can't imagine people spending that kind of money on tickets and not coming," Ruegsegger said. "Personally, from just my little bitty world right here, if we get a good walk-up crowd and the weather isn't so bad — that's what we're hoping for."

Actors and athletes on the red carpet at Saturday's Beach Bowl V at Victory Park in Dallas talked North Texas weather. [Josh Duhamel](#), who is married to Fergie of the Black Eyed Peas, got in town just before lunchtime Saturday. Just in time for the sunshine and above-freezing temps that had been missing for days.

"They were talking like they were snowed under in Dallas," he said of weather reports he's been following. "It's beautiful out."

Actor Hunter Parrish, who grew up in Plano and stars on the [Showtime](#) drama Weeds, also defended Dallas, which has taken a beating in the media.

"We're not used to this, you know?" he said.

Brandon Formby, Jon Nielsen and Mark Norris contributed to this report.

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