

Taylor Swift's Tour Saw 20K Tickets Given Away for One Show

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Some 20,000 tickets were given away to fill seats at a May stop on Taylor Swift's Reputation Tour a year ago, according to numbers that have come to light due to a feud between the Santa Clara Stadium Authority and the San Francisco 49ers organization over the operation of Levi's Stadium. The figures were reported by the San Francisco Chronicle, and add a new wrinkle to a tour that has become something of a Rorschach test in the ticketing industry.

TicketNews reported on free tickets being distributed through an unrelated venue in early May 2018, one of several instances where rumors of seat-filling on the tour swirled despite it eventually being the highest-grossing tour of the year. Loyalty Club members of the Mountain Winery were entitled to a pair of free tickets for the Friday, May 11 performance at Levi's Stadium – just for replying via email to the offer.

Mountain Winery declined to answer how many tickets were being distributed in this fashion, but thanks to the Chronicle's reporting, we know that the town took a big bath on the tour stop due to the giveaway, which was necessary to fill the stadium to a level which satisfied the contract signed with Swift's management.

"We made over \$3 million on the first show and lost over \$2 million on the second show," Santa Clara Mayor Lisa Gillmor told the newspaper. After selling some 50,000 tickets for the first show on sale at the venue (Saturday, May 12), the second show was added along with second and even third shows in several markets "due to unprecedented demand." That second show, however, sold under 30,000 tickets, necessitating the freebie dump.

It is unclear whether or not the Levi's Stadium stop was an outlier in terms of the poor sales that led to the giveaways. Early reports of poor sales based on a combination of sky-high prices and flooding markets with additional shows were drowned out by a chorus of stories regarding how well the tour did, financially. But based on the methodology of so-called "slow ticketing" (Put tickets on sale far in advance, price as high as the market will bear when your biggest fans are buying, then kick tickets out the back door to fill the building when everything stagnates and the date approaches with a half-full house), it's unlikely the city of Santa Clara stands alone in having taken a bath on at least one of the "Reputation" stops.

<https://www.ticketnews.com/2019/04/taylor-swift-promoters-20000-tickets-free-2/>