

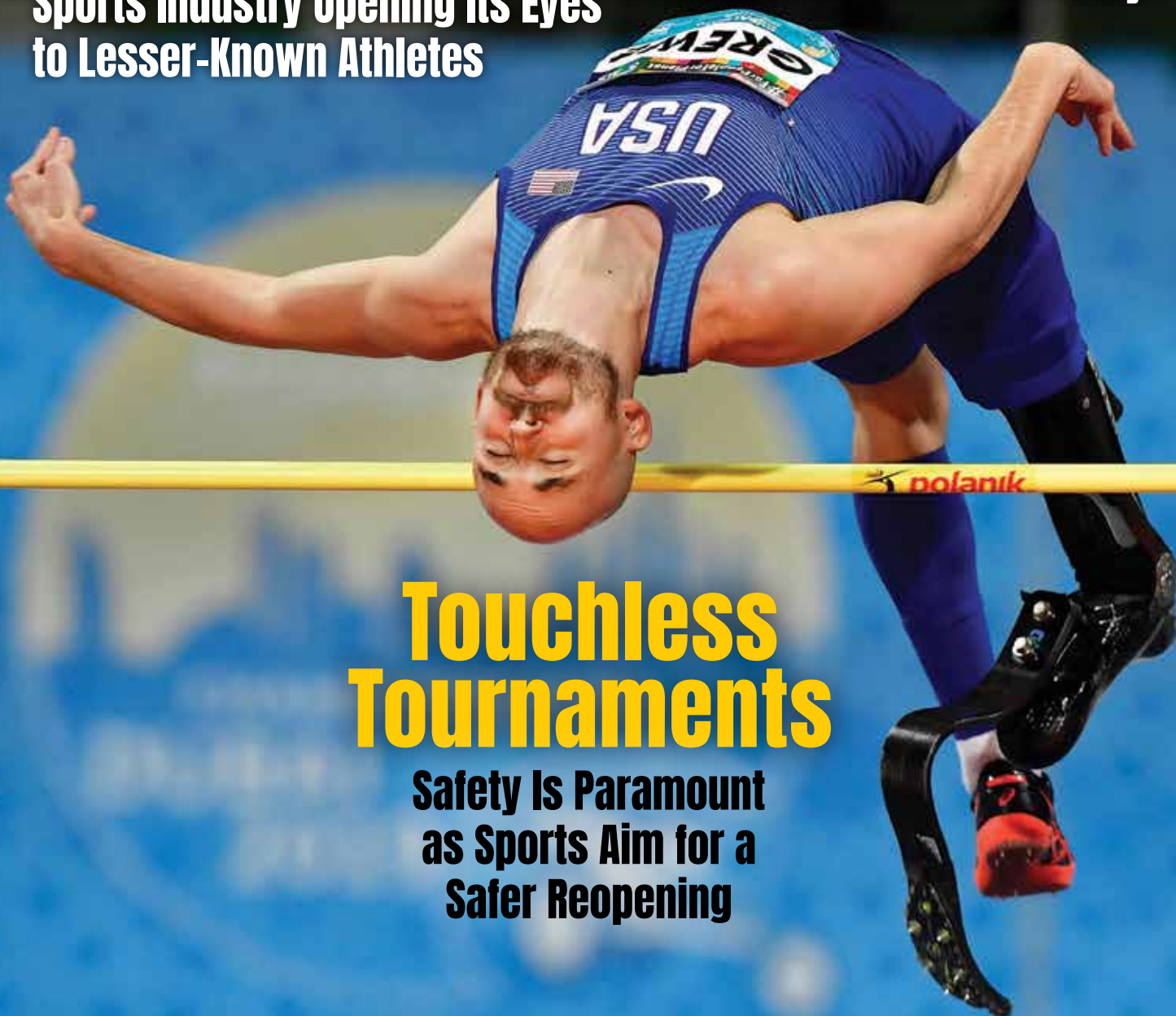
SportsPlanningGuide.com • 2021

## Adaptive Sports Aim for Inclusiveness

Sports Industry Opening Its Eyes  
to Lesser-Known Athletes

## State Guides

Featuring Hundreds  
of Tournament-  
Ready Venues



## Touchless Tournaments

Safety Is Paramount  
as Sports Aim for a  
Safer Reopening



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OF OUR NATIONS HEROES



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# SPG

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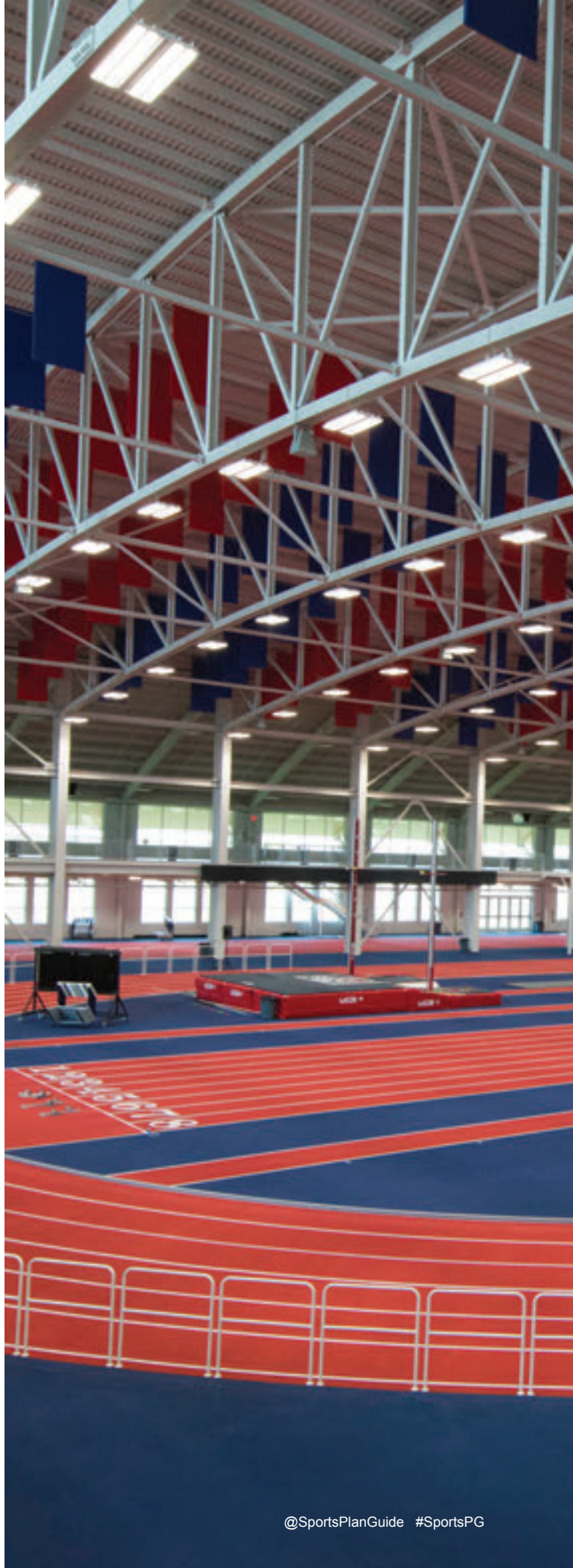
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(Photo by International Paralympic Committee)







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Photo courtesy of Liberty University

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## ALWAYS ONLINE

Visit [SportsPlanningGuide.com](https://SportsPlanningGuide.com) for updated stories and event ideas and sign up for our bi-weekly InSite on Sports e-newsletter.



## Welcome to the 2021 Sports Planning Guide... Where Relationships Begin

**W**elcome to the 2021 *Sports Planning Guide*. This year, we are prouder than ever to be on the front lines, helping the sports tourism industry as it undergoes the most massive shakeup in its history. In only a few short months, the world of sports tourism came to a standstill, pivoted and moved forward with a new energy. The ramifications to sports organizations and DMOs are yet to be determined, but key point indicators suggest there will be a rapid post-vaccine recovery of most tournament sports, albeit with possible protocol modifications and eligibility requirements.

For most of the summer, working in the sports world was like flying down the tracks of a runaway train. The unknowns were many and frustrating for everyone, but the industry flexed. You created protocols and schedules that allowed athletes to continue to pursue their dreams, whether that meant operating in a bubble with no spectators, fewer teams or even virtually. It was hard work, but make no mistake, the world woke up quickly to the monetary and social values of sports in America, and everyone, from spectators to local governments, wants them to return as soon as possible.

Are you prepared? The economic impact has, and will continue to affect staffing of organizations and DMOs, bid availabilities, venue availabilities, travel capabilities and much more. After months of reaction to the unknown, we now are in a stage of regrouping and planning for the new future of sports tourism in America.

Make no mistake, this is going to be fun and better than ever.

Plus, the pandemic has ushered in an era of creativity and an opportunity for growth for many sports. One of the many feature articles in this year's SPG focuses on sports that thrived through the crisis. Outdoor sports with their natural social distancing prospered. Golf courses were sold out for much of the summer. Lakes and rivers were filled with boaters, water skiers and anglers all enjoying the outdoors more than ever.

The world of Zoom meetings has broadened our abilities for engagement and allowed face-to-face meetings to continue. SPG embraced the technology early with a social media series called "Road Trips with Dan" that allowed us to help our DMOs stay visible to all of our tournament-planning audience. If you'd like to do a Road Trip with Dan, give us a call and we'll showcase your sports or destination.

Finally, our editors at SPG have worked diligently this year to keep you all abreast of news and developments in our industry. We hope you enjoy this year's edition of SPG and that you'll continue to look to us for help in selecting your tournament locations. This year's guide features several state guides plus articles about adaptive sports, volunteer management and sports tourism trends that will help you in your planning.

**Dan Davis Maloney**  
Director of Business Development

# SPG

**SportsPlanningGuide**

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# ADAPTIVE SPORTS



Photo courtesy of International Paralympic Committee

World ParaAthletics Championships



# AIM FOR INCLUSIVENESS



## ***Sports tourism industry opening its eyes to positive attributes of lesser-known athletes***

**By Jamaal Brown**

**T**raditionally, sports organizations host events that enable participants to compete in athletic competitions. Those with disabilities though, often struggle to find arenas in which they can compete.

With approximately 61 million people with disabilities living in the United States, adapted sports organizations (also known as adaptive sports or parasports) are often seeking ways to expand athletic inclusion for participants with disabilities. One such way is to host a symposium, like the recently held 2020 Adapted Sport Leadership & Business Symposium, which took place October 15 and featured more than 850 sport leaders logging into the remote session.

Dawna Callahan, founder and chief executive of All In Sport Consulting, organized the Adapted Sport Leadership & Business Symposium (LABS) with the aim of gaining momentum by fostering unity, inclusion and excellence in the adaptive sport industry. LABS brought adapted leaders from a variety of sports industries to lead educational discussions regarding sports, disability and the adaptive sports movement.

“Most of the current adapted sport conference and professional development offerings are specific to industry professionals and focus on technical skills such as fitting a racing chair, officiating a boccia match, or marketing specific adapted sport programs,” Callahan said. “With LABS, I wanted to invite and engage both sport leaders within and outside the community. In order to advance the movement, we need to be inclusive by bringing in sport brokers so they can learn more about the adapted sport movement – what the needs are, how to host events for athletes with disabilities, what the challenges are related to access and expensive adapted sport equipment, and other similar issues.”

LABS invited attendees – ranging from adapted sport leaders, disability advocates to national governing bodies, professional associations and grant organizations – to the cost-free virtual conference where diverse leaders and influencers discussed cutting-edge industry topics about the adapted sports industry. Important topics included creating successful partnerships, pursuing equitable and inclusive opportunities in the region, and economic impact of the parasports industry.



## CREATING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS TO BUILD SUCCESSFUL EVENTS

At LABS, event organizers shared insights on what it takes for organizations to create effective partnerships to build successful adapted sports events at national and international levels. In order to host successful events for athletes with disabilities, developing successful strategic partnerships is critical.

Visit Fort Wayne has collaborated with Turnstone, a nonprofit organization based in Fort Wayne, Indiana, that promotes empowerment for people with disabilities through therapeutic, educational, wellness and recreational programs. Effective and strategic partnerships between Turnstone CEO Mike Mushett and Visit Fort Wayne President/CEO Dan O'Connell is key, as they strategize to host events and attract participants to Fort Wayne competitions.

"Fort Wayne is a very sports-oriented community. Visit Fort Wayne has a lot of expertise in putting together bids, bringing events to town, and it was a natural partnership," said Mushett during the conference. "Dan and I put our heads together early on and started to go to work on how to identify and bring events for athletes with disabilities in the community. We have experienced a lot of success."

How do these organizations successfully host adaptive sports events? According to O'Connell, Visit Fort Wayne and Turnstone organize strategic plans to attract participants in the following areas:

- ▶ First, we work with Turnstone to strategize together on what events fit in their facility, our calendar, our hotel community to decide what to bid on to host.

- ▶ Second, we do provide some resources (\$5K - \$10K) to Turnstone to host or bid on events. If additional funds are needed, Turnstone has been able to raise them.
- ▶ Third, they organize a Local Organizing Committee (LOC), usually many of their staff, board members and key players (police, college staff, venue staff) to plan the event.
- ▶ Fourth, we try to attract participants by doing websites, post blogs, sometimes send postcard mailers to increase attendance. Increased attendance helps the event as well as the community when larger number of visitors arrive to participate.
- ▶ Lastly, we both ensure participants are properly informed, treated well with our Hoosier Hospitality and enjoy both the competition and the camaraderie with their family and friends.

Since the therapeutic sports and recreation program started in 1996, Turnstone has presented athletes with disabilities the opportunities to participate in a variety of recreational and competitive activities, including wheelchair basketball, indoor rowing, adaptive golf, sled hockey and more.

"At the end of the day, it's about the community and tourism and having an economic impact in the community," Mushett said. "As event organizers, especially in the world of disability and Paralympic sport, we needed to upgrade the quality of events that we put together that they were marketable to sponsors and to the community and would garner community support. Measuring the economic impact on the events that they bring to the community creates marketing and sponsorship tool to use for future events. That's critical."

## EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Another LABS panel topic delved into equity and inclusion, discussing how event planners pursue equitable and inclusive opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the adaptive sports industry. With a commitment to inclusion for people with disabilities, sports-related nonprofit organizations aim to create a hospitable environment for disabled athletes.

Providing accessibility and inclusion to various sporting events has become increasingly vital for organizations and individuals with all abilities. In 2019, the Richmond Region has teamed up with Sportable, an adaptive sports club in Central Virginia, to host the first RVA Adaptive Sports Festival, an event aimed to attract people with physical disabilities and visual impairment to various recreational and competitive sports programs.

"The Richmond Region serves as a host destination for all types of sporting events showcasing the talents of athletes of all abilities," said J.C. Poma, director of sports relations for Richmond Region Tourism. "Through our partnership with Sportable, we have not only been able to host adaptive sports events, but we have been able to make important strides in educating our hospitality community about creating inclusive environments for people with physical and visual impairments."

Since its establishment in 2005, the Richmond, Virginia-based organization's mission is to provide sporting opportunities to enhance the lives of people through adaptive sports programs. By committing to accessibility and making inclusion part of Sportable's brand pillars, the



Photo courtesy of Visit Fort Wayne



Photo courtesy of International Paralympic Committee

organization aims to “free athletes to see beyond their disability, build peer relationships and reducing social isolation and facilitate physical and attitudinal change in their community.”

“We consider ourselves to be a very athletic community and we have a big participation sports town,” said Hunter Leemon, executive director of Sportable. “If we are going to be a community that represents that for everyone, then it’s our job to make sure everyone has a seat at the table. It’s important because it elevates the status of our mission, our work and what our athletes do.”

Sportable offers a workshop of Adaptive Sports 101, where young athletes with disabilities can participate in sessions that feature Paralympic Games as well as athletes’ accomplishments and achievements through multimedia contents. Through the education program, athletes will obtain hands-on experience by learning basic rules and participating in activities such as goalball, sitting volleyball, and wheelchair basketball.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ADAPTED SPORT EVENTS

All In Sport Consulting, a Denver-based consulting firm, has partnered collaboratively with Stitch Marketing Research and Huddle Up Group to conduct its study of the economic impact of the adapted sport industry across the United States. This study revealed that adapted and para sport-related tourism events nationwide are likely to reach in the range of \$80.5 million to \$134.2 million annually.

This study marks the first time these organizations measured the value of the para sports tourism industry. The purpose of the study is to provide an increased understanding of economic trends through budget data from U.S.-based adapted sports entities that shapes the overall market.

“We know the growth of the adapted sport industry has been dramatic over the last decade or so but there’s never been a formal study conducted to measure its true economic footprint,” Callahan said. “We want to change that and put a stake in the ground this year to help us move from anecdotal

to concrete evidence about both the current economic picture and future outlook.”

To conduct the survey that ran through September 2020, 262 organizations were asked to participate in a study led by this research group. The data from 55 organizations were collected and included in the final report.

As the new generation’s interest in traveling for sports events continues to rise, the sports tourism industry continues to be one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the tourism industry. One thing the sports tourism market frequently excludes, however, is the para sports industry. By working with the research team, the group wants to provide baseline information to help understand the value of para sports in the tourism space.

“The sports tourism industry has largely ignored the para sports segment of our industry,” said Jon Schmieder, founder and chief executive officer of Huddle Up Group. “With the exception of a small parasports organizations, the para market has not been well represented at the traditional meetings revolving around sports tourism. We wanted to set a baseline with this study the value of para sports and the events that are put on by para sports focused organizations.”

## HOPEFUL FOR FUTURE OF ADAPTIVE SPORTS LEADERS

The LABS conference is an important part of the symposium that provides interaction and engagement between panelists and audience concerning sports issues and movement in the adapted community. Callahan hopes LABS members who are not engrained in the community discover ways to reach out in their community, invite adaptive sports leaders to engage with adapted sport and be inclusive of the adapted community.

“I hope that all LABS attendees – those who have been in the industry for 20 years and those who may have had their first exposure to the movement during LABS – come away with more insight as to how we as sport leaders can better support athletes with disabilities,” Callahan said.

The LABS leadership and advisory committee plans to host an in-person event in October of 2021. **SPG**



# Aiming for a Recovery in 2021



*While nobody has a blueprint for navigating through COVID-19, Al Kidd, CEO of Sports ETA, the national trade association for sports tourism, has put his decades of business experience to use in managing through these unprecedented times. This interview, conducted in early November, captures what the organization has done to help its members stay informed and emerge intact when the pandemic has subsided.*

**Sports Planning Guide:** How do you best summarize 2020?

**Al Kidd:** There's three things that have happened during this time:

- 1) Reaction phase – this started with, OMG, what happened, followed by readjustments, furloughs and trying to figure out guidelines for reopening.
  - 2) Recharge phase – this focused on professional development and diversification. This is where education flourished. We jumped in very quickly to find services and products that would make a difference. One of the things we did was establish a virtual distribution network called SEEN – Sports Events and Entertainment Network – to aid our members during this time.
  - 3) Relaunching phase – this is what we're in right now, but it looks like we'll be in this until the middle of next year.
- SPG:** What has to happen before we get a significant, widespread return to play of amateur sports?
- AK:** We're getting some sporadic openings around the country, but there's a couple factors at play in order for us to have a significant return-to-play. The first thing is there needs to be a common alignment with state opening guidelines. States that don't have restrictions right now are getting business from states that do. There needs to be an evening out. Number two, there

needs to be a comfort from youth and their parents in traveling in groups. Sports is primarily a group gathering, and right now there continues to be big restrictions on those taking place in most places. We're going to have to come up with ways that allow more people to gather in groups. Number three is the renormalization of high school sports. This includes reestablishing the "old season." By shifting sports seasons, we put major compression on the ability to have travel sports in those areas. In many states, athletes are not allowed to do travel and interscholastic at the same time. This also impacts college recruiting.

Once those three elements come back, we'll start to move back into a widespread reopening of sports tourism and reestablishing of large events.

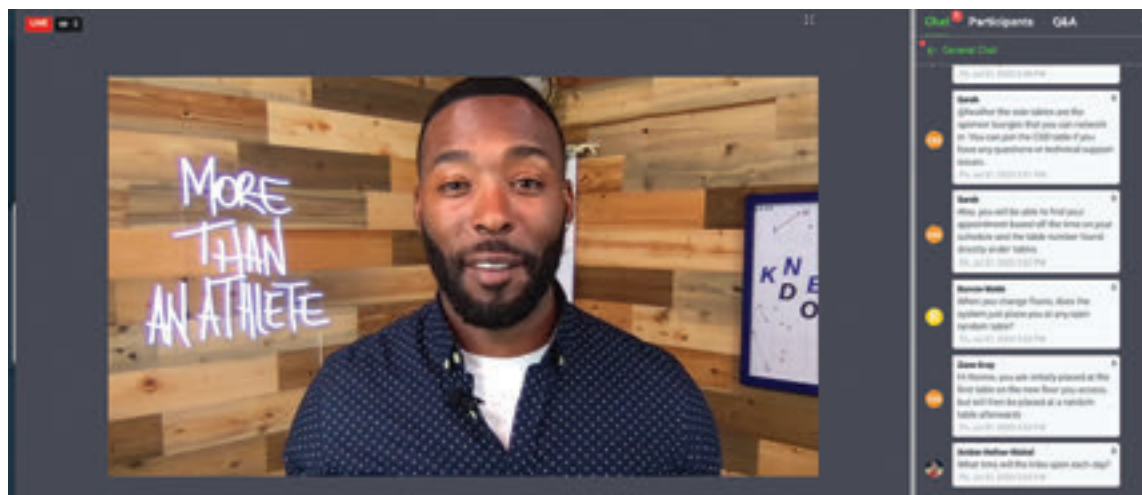
**SPG:** The pivot to education you spoke of was critical, as a lot of people were looking for direction. How did you ramp up an educational platform in this new environment?

**AK:** We had been planning a virtual event before COVID hit and our intent was to announce it at our spring symposium. So when we did our virtual event last year, we had already done some planning.

When we made the determination to switch to a virtual conference this year, we thought it was important to be the first.

**"Sports is primarily a group gathering, and right now there continues to be big restrictions on those taking place in most places."**

*-Al Kidd, Sports ETA*



Andrew Hawkins

Photo courtesy of Sports ETA

We're the national trade association. We minimized the risk by controlling the production costs and we were very pleasantly surprised that we had nearly 400 people attend the August virtual symposium. As much as anything, this event was an opportunity to regather. It was as much therapeutic as it was business being conducted.

A lot of people, both inside and outside the industry, took advantage of the education we offered, but one thing we did early on was recognize that we were not funded to be an original developer of primary content or research so we aggregated in masse.

**SPG:** How does this change going into 2021?

**AK:** Right now, we're full-speed ahead. We have secondary dates for our April symposium if we need to reschedule. We're still planning on having our educational forum, 4S Summit, in El Paso in October.

We are developing programming for next year that will include at least one additional virtual b2b marketplace. We're looking at adding a virtual educational summit in February. We're also planning to offer a virtual facilities and services industry marketplace that brings together suppliers like flooring companies, lighting companies with facilities in a robust marketplace for services and equipment.

We intend to combine virtual and live as hybrid events into the future. I don't anticipate us peeling that back, there's value

to both. We're also developing community groups around various aspects of the business. I'm so excited about that shift.

**SPG:** When will you decide on the status of your in-person events for 2021?

**AK:** Right now, we have two events – our women's event in conjunction with the NCAA Women's Final Four, which takes place end of March, and we have our symposium slated for April 26 in Birmingham. I'm in conversation with a lot of leaders in

tourism and I'm hearing more and more the first quarter is being cancelled. There's no question we want to be the first in-person event out of the blocks. We will be driven by what we're allowed to do and what's safest for our members.

**SPG:** Not a lot of businesses can go a year-plus without revenue. Where does the fallout begin from the NGBs and major rights holders?

**AK:** There appears to be the high potential of significant governance changes in our amateur sports world. They are going to need to do some

thinking of how they create a sustainable business as the inability to stage significant live events is having a dramatic effect on major sports.

Obviously, there's some major headwinds with the Olympic Governing Bodies. On the business side for the Olympics in particular, the jury is still out on how that's going to roll out. There's still a lot of questions as to the delivery of the event. In terms of the NGBs individually, almost all of them have had cutbacks and

**“There's no question we want to be the first in-person event out of the blocks. We will be driven by what we're allowed to do and what's safest for our members.”**

*-Al Kidd, Sports ETA*

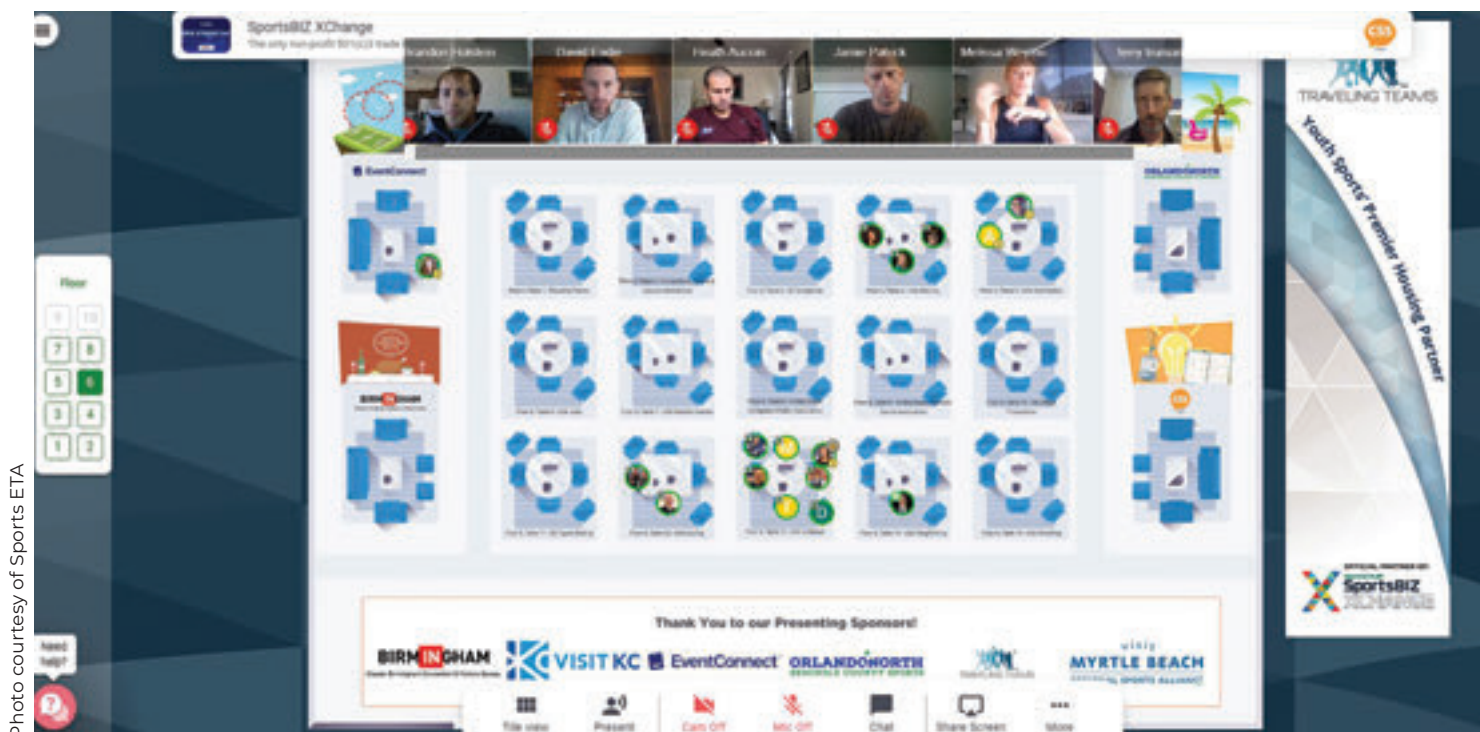


Photo courtesy of Sports ETA

Virtual SportsBIZ XChange Event



they live primarily on events which have been scaled back or cancelled. The other part of their revenue is membership, which is also down.

In regards to NCAA, I think another year without the Final Four will put a severe financial strain on the organization. It's all about when we can safely get back to play.

When you think about rights holders and event developers – these are small businesspeople and they're feeling the brunt of this. The strength of youth sports is that it's a cottage industry, but that's also its weakness. The most important question they're asking is what can they do that will create some revenue that will sustain the organization until they're able to fully reopen.

**SPG:** Looking forward, how does that affect the financial health of hosting organized events?

**AK:** A major consideration for the industry is some of the income streams that were previously established around hosting fees, rights fees and rebates from hotels; they might have to go back and rediscuss that. With budget reductions at CVBs and sports commissions, there's a question if they have the financial resources to deliver. The numbers that we're seeing are that more than 50% of budgets are cut and 40% of those are cut by more than 50%. There's a reduction in the amount of money they are able to give and the whole financial picture may get reshuffled. People are going to have to work in tandem, but in all likelihood the economics appear to be changing.

There has been a steady growth in the last few years from destinations owning and operating events. Our research showed over 50% of destinations have owned and operated events. This pandemic is going to accelerate diversification of income streams. Now, owned and operated may be one of those, and it has to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis because every event is not going to make a profit. From my personal experience it takes a couple years to establish some traction where you have predictable revenue. It is certainly one of the revenue streams people are looking at.

**SPG:** Switching to recovery, in past recessions, from a travel industry standpoint, sports was the tip of the sphere in coming back first. Does that same thing happen again, or has there been some structural damage that would prohibit this?

**AK:** Right now, those that have recovered have been outliers. Until I get the data that "these things are happening," I'd be remiss to lead a parade that's not ready to start. We're going to have to experiment. We're going to have to coexist with COVID. At some point, when some of the issues are resolved and we have a clearer path, I absolutely believe that sports will be one



Photo courtesy of Sports ETA



Photo courtesy of Sports ETA

of the top, if not the top ways that brings tourism back in a big way. The pent-up demand from athletes, the frustration from parents is real.

**SPG:** What have we learned from COVID? Is there a silver lining?

**AK:** First, we don't control the game. Once we get to a point when sports are back, we need to create comfort for people traveling. All indications are that it starts with local, then regional, national and finally international large group gatherings being the last to open.

If there is a silver lining, it's that there are destinations willing to take a chance. We talked ourselves into doing nothing but in order to come out of this more fully, we're going to have to take some chances. There's going to be people who win and people who lose. I'm very encouraged that more destinations are taking a chance and as long as they are tracking the data and staying inbounds, I'm really encouraged that we have a bunch of people willing to do this.

Sports will be one of the early mechanisms for tourism. **SPG**



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# TOUCHLESS TOURNAMENTS

Venues move toward a safer reopening

By Zoe Strozewski

**A**tending a sporting event is inherently not conducive to social distancing and personal cleanliness. Those in attendance have to share space with countless other people, as well as concession stands, restrooms, seats and an immeasurable amount of other touch points. Suffice to say, there are countless opportunities to contract an illness.

As sports leaders and venues have reopened after the devastating COVID-19 pandemic triggered mass closures in 2020, perhaps the main question to consider is how people can be kept safely apart and healthy in an environment built for them to be together. The answer to that question may reside in the creation of a “touchless” experience, where person-to-person encounters are minimized and replaced with contactless alternatives.

## MAJOR VENUES LEAD THE WAY

Arenas such as Sacramento's Golden 1 Center, Seattle's CenturyLink Field, and Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium transitioned to cashless paying before COVID-19 became an issue of national concern. This type of development, while innovative at the time, may become the new norm in order for a consistent and safe return to sports. Other venues may need to implement contactless features in order to reopen with confidence, such as foot pull bathroom doors, in-app food ordering and sensor faucets with 20-second timers.

A new technology, the iR37, is a contactless solution for venues looking for a first line of defense against the virus. This touchless, infrared thermometer system has the capability of taking guest temperatures in seconds and granting or denying entry based on whether they fall within a safe threshold.

Ian Jones and Shawn Tilstra are managing partners at I.S. Partners, where they sell technology to sports entertainment venues. The duo has been working on the sale of the iR37 since the COVID-19 outbreak created a need for a safe and easy way to monitor temperatures at venue gates.

"Before COVID-19, we were selling technology solutions to enhance the fan journey," Jones said. "Once the pandemic hit, all that stopped. So, one of our partners introduced the iR37 to us and gave us the opportunity to sell it throughout North America."

While the iR37 was already in the works prior to COVID-19, its development was expedited and supplemented with extra features because of the pandemic. What sets the technology apart from other touchless infrared thermometers is that it's not just a thermometer. The iR37 is an entire software system that integrates with a variety of technologies that venues may already have in use.

Therefore, it can automatically track unsafe temperatures, provide verbal results to the user, and notify staff members that a potentially sick person is attempting to enter the venue. Additionally, the system's facial recognition, sensor and camera technology, and ability to carry out all of its services

while users are wearing a face mask make it very valuable in a time when even brief exposure can be deadly.

The iR37 can be mounted on stadium turnstiles, doors, and walls, as well as merged with payroll and timecard systems.

Because the tablet-style thermometers are operatives of an entire system, none of the venue's information could be accessed from the device even if it was stolen. Jones and Tilstra expect to see the versatile system implemented in industries outside of sports entertainment, such as dining, hospitals, and higher education.

"This is an easy way for those institutes to implement a tool that gives a visual relaxation appearance, but also gives the administration the tool behind the curtain to make sure they're doing the right thing," Tilstra said.

Jones said that the iR37's ease of use is a large attraction to their customers, especially as the world's new and scary normal requires fast and drastic change. Additionally, it allows venues to be preventative rather than reactionary.

Outside of the iR37's touchless temperature measuring, Tilstra and Jones believe that COVID-19 will cause sports venues to move toward a more touchless experience in totality.

"I think it's a natural progression of where we were pre-COVID on some fronts. We have this world of on-your-phone technology already," Tilstra said. "This seems to be just enhancing that thought process."



iR37 tablet-style thermometer



Kian Zhang via Unsplash

Extra caution is being taken at events across the world.





Alyssa Ledesma via Unsplash

Amateur sports need a consistent set of protocols to host safe events.

## COVID'S INFLUENCE ON AMATEUR SPORTS

The world of amateur sports tournaments requires a less drastic transformation than professional sports, but a consistent set of protocols nonetheless when it comes to a safe reopening, according to Jason Parker, the founder and CEO of EventConnect, a tournament and event management platform.

"It essentially is one solution for an event organizer to run their registration, data collection, housing management, reporting, selling of merchandise, their on-site app, and their scheduling and scoring all in one system," Parker said.

While EventConnect was around long before the COVID-19 pandemic became an issue of international concern, its usefulness has increased due to newly needed safety measures. Additionally, Parker's position at the forefront of many sports tournaments has given him a unique perspective when it comes to reopening at an amateur level.

"Something that event organizers and the local communities are trying to create is some level of safety protocols that will lower the concern level so that the events can still attract traveling teams to participate in them," Parker said.

Amateur tournaments without reliable and available information can suffer from organizational and timing woes, commonly causing participants to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Parker believes EventConnect's emphasis on communication can help teams arrive exactly when they're

needed, even when games go over or under time. Therefore, crowds could be mitigated and the chance of an outbreak at the venue could be reduced.

"The software is really driven around how to connect everybody into the event on one singular platform, which allows that high level of communication to take place," Parker said. "That's always been a problem at amateur events."

For example, a traveling volleyball team staying at a hotel near the tournament venue can use the EventConnect communication portal and app push messaging to receive notifications about when the previous game on their court has been completed and when they should be arriving.

"They can get on the field or the ice or the ball diamond without having to have that interaction or the crossover of both teams and families being at the location at the same time," Parker said.

While the world awaits the COVID-19 vaccine, Parker believes the sports tourism and entertainment industry will fully reopen and venues will need to look for additional ways to make being there safer, following the example of professional sports arenas. His firm looks to continue to provide a high level of communication and convenience for the amateur sports population in this time of uncertainty.

"I think the connected experience can deliver a much better overall experience for families, which is ultimately our mission-to create a better experience for the actual athletes," Parker said. **SPG**



# Competing

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# COVID-19 Reboot: Five Strategies to Emerge Stronger than Ever

By Dale Neuburger




Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4



**W**inston Churchill, near the end of World War II, is credited with saying, “never let a good crisis go to waste.” Others in the political realm have made similar statements over the years. But I think that few in the sports tourism industry would embrace this philosophy today, as it is clear COVID-19 has inflicted substantial social and economic damage that will take years to repair.

So, don’t manage this crisis – instead, solve it through an aggressive approach that focuses on both internal capabilities and external outcomes.

Let’s look at five strategies that will enable your business to emerge stronger than ever.

## #1 Build Your Capabilities

The pandemic has created an opportunity for individual growth and preparation, including:

- ▶ Professional advancement through academic coursework and CEUs
- ▶ Adjacent skill development that broadens and deepens work capabilities
- ▶ Certification, compliance and training programs that bring additional proficiency

With many employees working from home with additional scheduling flexibility, it is the ideal time to prepare for the changing demands, post-pandemic. With good time management, you can kickstart your career and be more valuable than ever. Some of your far-off plans for the future can be accommodated now, providing a renewed sense of enthusiasm for your work.

And, while you are building your job-related competencies, don’t forget to use this timeframe to improve your physical fitness, with a regular exercise program that enhances your health and well-being. Mental health can be a byproduct of a healthy lifestyle of physical activity.

## #2 Become More Tactical

Every organization in the sports tourism industry had a strategic plan, but I doubt that any had authored a SWOT analysis that included “global pandemic” in the listing under “Threats.”

What is the lesson from this? Very simply, our best long-term plans are less certain than we may have previously understood. The traditional five-year window for strategic planning may bring a false sense of security in our rapidly changing and tech-centric world.

During the pandemic, consider how much our knowledge of the coronavirus changed from January to April; or, from April to August. Plans made at the beginning of 2020 would have changed several times due to the more localized circumstances of restaurant regulations and hotel closings. Clearly, even a one-year planning cycle appears to be too long with so many “twists and turns” occurring on a regular basis.

Instead, think of a series of short-term tactical plans that are anchored in a well-defined strategic direction. Choose a three-month planning window that allows you to change course with a higher level of flexibility. Your goal should be to remain as nimble as possible, making adjustments to current conditions. Maintaining your strategic focus while simultaneously adjusting to newly available information is not necessarily easy within an industry that plans events and activities years in advance, but it represents the new reality of how we need to change and adapt.

istock.com/HAKINMHAN



### #3 Think and Act Like an Underdog

For successful DMOs, it may be difficult to remember the struggles that were necessary to reach the pinnacle of success. In particular, the “tried and true” methodologies that have produced important achievements over the years can become so ingrained within organizational culture that innovation and fresh approaches can be sidelined.

Taking on the character of an underdog includes some or all of the following:

- ▶ Celebrating small victories, but always retaining the desire to do more and to do better
- ▶ Establishing achievable goals and, after accomplishment, setting new goals that necessitate focus and determination
- ▶ Communicating frequently with your customers and clients, and never taking their business for granted
- ▶ Retaining the personal touch that values relationships, not just contracts and bookings
- ▶ Fighting “bigness” and always looking for ways to prevent unnecessary bureaucracy

The underdog mentality is team-focused and can be a source of great strength in bringing together the entire employee group. It represents an attitude of continued hunger for success, rather than the complacency that can emanate from previous victories.

### #4 Play to Win

After we emerge from the restrictions of the pandemic, there clearly will be some winners and some losers. Some of the cities that had previously enjoyed great success may find that they were paralyzed by inaction that was the byproduct of uncertainty. On the other side, there will be cities that embraced the uncertainty, found new solutions, and emerged stronger than ever. Which will you be?

Simply, the cities that thrive during uncertain times will be those that play to win, instead of those that play not to lose. They are the cities that constantly played offense, rather than playing defense. Or even worse – those that played the “prevent defense” that invariably loses games on Sunday afternoons in the NFL.

Playing to win has some or all of the following characteristics:

- ▶ Creating a results-oriented and aggressive approach to all of your event attraction and bidding activities.
- ▶ Modeling the mindset and intensity of successful coaches and campaign managers, whose only metric is winning the game or winning the election
- ▶ Focusing on a plan that everyone can embrace and that includes realistic and achievable goals
- ▶ Creating discipline around spending that ties directly to strategy so that money is spent only on activities or services that can lead directly to victory
- ▶ Refusing to compromise on your objectives so that there is a clear distinction between winning and losing, with no “moral victories”

Playing to win is an attitude, backed up by sound policies that reward aggressiveness. Once it is instilled within the employee group, it is contagious and creates an environment where success is an expectation, not just a hope or a dream.

### #5 Communicate the Essence, not the Brand

We know the sports tourism industry is highly competitive, and thus, creating differentiation becomes a critically important element of success. However, we also understand that strengths and weaknesses are relative, not universal, as cities compete against a varying group of cities, depending on the event.

Cities spend considerable sums of money to create distinctive brands, but the taglines and logos inherent in the process rarely achieve traction. Consider this: with the exception of Las Vegas (which has more successfully defined its essence than any other American city), can you recollect the brand of any city in the country? Perhaps, for some our largest cities like Houston, Chicago or Phoenix? While those cities may create mental images from previous visits, this is not the same as their brand.

So, recognizing that city brands are so spectacularly unsuccessful, a city can communicate its distinctiveness through some or all of the following methods:

- ▶ Consider that the sports events that you choose to attract send a message about your city. Cycling and canoe/kayak events project a green image, while Formula One and e-sports are fundamental to showcasing your city as a center of information technology.
- ▶ What do you want to be known for, or how would you like to be viewed externally? If your goal is to illustrate that your city values social inclusion, then events for physically and intellectually disabled individuals should be a priority.
- ▶ What are the primary goals of the Mayor, the City Council, and the business community? Once you understand their key objectives, attracting events that are complementary to their plans helps to reinforce the most important community messages.

The pandemic provides the opportunity to re-define who you are, what you do, and why people should care about you. It is a time to invest in smart research to choose events that are “winners” for your city, not just economic impact and room night drivers. If there is a single and overarching message to all of us in the sports tourism industry, it is that our efforts must produce results that truly impact communities and resonate for years to come. We must be able to demonstrate our value to the community, not just an increased level of tourism dollars. That is when we truly win! **SPG**

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



*Veteran sports executive and nonprofit leader Dale Neuburger directs the overall business direction and management of Burson Cohn & Wolfe Sports Practice in North America.*

*Neuburger brings an impressive blend of experience in intercollegiate athletics, where he managed world-class athletic facilities as Assistant Athletic Director for Indiana University. He led*

*the nation's first and most successful sports commission, Indiana Sports Corporation, including the relocation of the NCAA to Indianapolis and the execution of a three-decade championship hosting agreement for its major events. And, he has created a successful sports management consulting company that has been honored for three consecutive years with the NASC/Sports ETA “Superior Service Award” for exemplary support of the sports events and tourism industry and outstanding contributions to the advancement of the profession.*

# LEADING THE RECOVERY

The letters 'SPG' are rendered in a large, bold, red 3D font. They are positioned on a dark, rectangular base. A bright white spotlight shines down from above, creating a circular pool of light on the base and highlighting the letters. The background is dark and slightly textured.

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# SURVIVING THE PANDEMIC

*These sports are successfully stepping up their efforts to move forward amid COVID-19*



Fezbot2000 via Unsplash

**By Jamaal Brown**

**T**he postponement or cancellation of sporting events due to COVID-19 has had a major effect on numerous individuals, communities and sports organizations across the United States. While the country faced uncertainty amid the pandemic, several sports business groups have created innovative solutions, enabling them to maintain some semblance of normalcy.

Getting involved in recreational or competitive activities safely is the main goal for leaders at all levels. With various organizations finding ways to adapt to the new normal, event organizers established their own guidelines that would assist individuals to compete, host or watch events.

## FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING IN GOLF

While many sports placed operations on hold at the beginning of the outbreak, the golf industry bounced back strong, having seen an uptick in demand, with the National Golf Foundation's report noting clubs across the U.S. have reopened their courses. As courses have stepped up their safety measures, NGF also reported that member courses have flourished due to increased participation, which went up from approximately 6 percent in May to 20 percent in August. As 2020 comes to a close, Golf Datatech, a market research firm based in Orlando, reported almost a 26 percent jump in rounds played versus a year ago.

Because of the industry's ability to control physical separation within the social distancing recommendations, local government officials endorsed organizers to reopen courses with precautionary measures on the course. Randy Ballinger, director of Golf Courses at Walnut Creek Golf Complex in Marion, Indiana, spoke about how his organization instituted guidelines to revive the course and promote safety practices for golfers.

"Our golf packages were pretty slim early on, we are getting some now but we did discourage some packages early because of the uncertainty and because we did not want to bring people into our area from areas where infection rates were bad and where golf courses were forced to close," Ballinger said. "We were able to open and stay open with specific guidelines from our national association and the Indiana Golf Course Owner Association. We were proactive in writing best practices for opening with safety and the Governor approved with our practices. We have continued these practices."

Additionally, leading organizations – such as the United States Golf Association, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, the National Golf Course Owners Association, the PGA of America, the PGA Tour, the LPGA and the Club Managers of Association of America – announced the establishment of Back2Golf, an industrywide program that provides safety recommendations for golfers getting back to the game. These organizations have implemented details of the three-phase guidelines for participants to follow.

The industry-supported organization led by example in taking action towards goals and urging participants to follow prevention guidelines for returning to a recreational event safely.

Months after golf organizations resumed operations worldwide, club managers gradually relished its success

in reopening. This year, Walnut Creek, hosted a First Tee program that offered youth golf sessions to inspire young athletes to develop more interest and embolden their parents to participate in a recreational and competitive sport.

"It was a terrific success. We now have one of the best golf professionals in the state giving lessons this year so that has helped spark more interest in kids and ladies and occasional players," Ballinger said. "Early on we did space tee times out more and with that and the increased play, online tee times have more than doubled from last year. People are booking online and reserving carts to be sure of being able to ride."

The reopening of businesses that sell golf balls, irons, wedges and gloves for outdoor social distancing recreational activity had already skyrocketed golf equipment sales. Golf Datatech released a report in late October and reported more than \$1 billion of golf equipment sales in 2020's third quarter, making it the highest Q3 on record and the best quarter since 2008.

## ENJOYING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Despite restrictions, outdoor enthusiasts find ways to enjoy nature and its health benefits by going outside and participating in various forms of recreational activities such as hiking, camping, fishing, biking and more.

According to the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), a membership-driven trade organization that specializes in analyzing data and information for the outdoor industry, the number of people participating in recreational activities has grown since March's shutdown. The OIA's report says activities such as running and bicycling have become a safe and favorable option for consumers.

Participation in outdoor activities like running can have a positive impact on physical and mental health in the midst of



Courtney Cook via Unsplash



a public health crisis. One of the most significant benefits of outdoor recreation is that it gives participants, who seek to manage and reduce stress in their daily lives, the ability to maintain good physical and mental health through workouts or exercises in the surrounding natural spaces.

American Trail Running Association (ATRA), a nonprofit corporation based in Colorado, has revealed its RunRepeat study displaying that average athletes who typically worked out or played sports 1-2 times a week have increased their exercise by 88 percent. Although mountain, ultra-running and trail running are trendy leisure-time physical activities among runners, the level of interest in Fastest Known Time grows among trail enthusiasts who are eager to compete with others, chase a competitive goal and set a new record on trails through FKT.

"Many of our constituents in the trail running, mountain running, and ultra-trail running space are posting Fastest Known Times or going after FKTs as there aren't as many trail races as in the past due to the restrictions from COVID-19," Nancy Hobbs, executive director of the ATRA, said. "I believe the participation in trail running is increasing on a recreational level as well. More people are exploring the outdoors and this is a wonderful, healthy endeavor during the pandemic."

As more people are eager to spend more time in nature, a recently formed organization of 650 nonprofits, outdoor businesses and land managers created Recreate Responsibly, an initiative aimed at providing appropriate health and safety practices for consumers. In efforts to advocate safety, this group shares how-to-stay-safe guidelines to individuals, families and communities.

"The outdoor industry understands why Americans are clamoring for the many health benefits for getting outside, and we are hard at work to ensure they can access the outdoors safely," said Lise Aangeenbrug, executive director of OIA. "We strongly believe that 'together we are a force' should be the motto for protecting the outdoors, and it is great to see so many national groups come together to shape the conversation about responsible recreation during this public health crisis."

Subsequently, the demand for outdoors equipment is exceptionally high, as more consumers are seeking a getaway from the pandemic and buying outdoor sports equipment for activities closer to home. As of June 2020, the NPD Group, a market research company, had seen a significant increase in year-over-year sales of leisure and recreational products, including bicycles (63%), paddle sports (56%), golf equipment (51%), camping gear (31%) and binoculars (22%).

Another outdoor sport that has thrived is fishing, which has drawn a host of people seeking to get active while being outdoors. In Minnesota, for example, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reported a 27 percent spike in fishing license sales in 2020, with 440,000 people buying licenses in time for the fishing season opener.

## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL SPORTS FITNESS INDUSTRY

While the virus has devastated the \$194 billion fitness industry, exercise remains top priority for many. Throughout 2020, gyms and fitness centers have been hit



Robson Hatsukami Morgan via Unsplash

hard by the outbreak, which severely limited access to their facilities. To overcome the risk of patrons contacting the virus, companies sought innovative ways to keep their fitness businesses relevant by offering services where patrons can exercise through digital channels at home.

Instead of attending brick-and-mortar gyms, fitness businesses around the world provide workout classes online as an alternative for customers. To stay fit and physically active at home, some of the major fitness brands such as NordicTrack, Planet Fitness and Peloton offered customers the opportunity to take workout classes through a variety of online platforms like YouTube or Zoom.

Consumer spending on at-home exercise equipment like stationary bikes and treadmills from several fitness companies has accelerated enormously. Peloton sales reportedly have leaped 232 percent to \$757.9 million (compared to last year with \$228 million) and possesses more than 1 million subscribers for streaming classes.

According to the data conducted by wellness technology platform Mindbody, 73 percent of participants who exercise daily use pre-recorded video compared to 17 percent in 2019 and 85 percent of those use livestream classes per week, compared to 7 percent of last year.

In addition to online classes, some clubs also offer outdoor fitness classes for those who do not plan to go back to gyms. As long as people wear masks and maintain more than 6 feet of social distance, fitness professionals designed creative and interactive workout ideas and programs that could tailor to participants' needs or preferences, including Yoga, Zumba, High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) or boot camp.

## THE INDUSTRY WILL RECOVER

While indoor sports have certainly suffered in 2020, the pandemic has also shaped increased customer demand amid the shutdown of public spaces (such as gyms, facilities or arenas).

Organizations have laid out key social-distancing and reopening strategies that will help resume operations and bring customers back to the new normal.

As dire as the pandemic has been for the industry, sports facilities are still being built (one such example is a \$53 million indoor sports arena in downtown Spokane, Washington), which provides a beacon of light amid the darkness and shows that sports, regardless of the damage wrought by COVID-19, will go on. **SPG**



# EDGE THE COMPETITION

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# Volunteer Management: A Quick Guide for Sporting Events

By Cassandra Smallman

**V**olunteers make up the majority of the workforce for all type of sporting events, from fundraising marathons and community football games to large events like the Olympics. Volunteers are the face of your sporting events and they are the people your athletes and spectators will interact with the most, making them an integral part of the experience your event offers. Because of this, volunteer management is essential to any sporting event's success.

Confused and unprepared volunteers can not only negatively affect your event operations but your team's reputation as well. That's why it's important to prioritize your volunteer management and ensure your volunteers are equipped with all the information and tools they need to deliver an amazing experience. This quick guide will walk you through how to create and manage a winning team of volunteers.



Here is a quick overview of what we'll cover:

- ▶ Create clear volunteer roles and responsibilities.
- ▶ Match volunteers to the right roles.
- ▶ Train your volunteers ahead of time.
- ▶ Maintain engagement levels.
- ▶ Show recognition to high-performing volunteers.

Ready to enhance your volunteer management strategy and put on more successful sporting events? Let's get started!

## CREATE CLEAR VOLUNTEER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are a lot of moving parts involved in running a sporting event, from athlete registration and event setup to managing the front gate and selling refreshments. All these moving parts require a team of trained volunteers to ensure that the event runs smoothly.

To properly place volunteers, you first need to create detailed role descriptions and defined qualifications. This can be a time-consuming task; however, once you have created all these roles in a volunteer management solution, you can reuse them over and over again, adjusting things as required.

Here is a list of details to consider when creating volunteer roles and responsibilities:

- 1. The Role Title** - A straightforward and descriptive title
- 2. Description** - A general description of what the role is on a high level
- 3. Responsibilities** - A list of all primary duties and responsibilities of the role
- 4. Skill Qualifications** - A list of skill requirements that includes detailed physical requirements and prior experience
- 5. Certifications** - A lists of any certificates or background checks required for the role

## MATCH VOLUNTEERS TO THE RIGHT ROLES

Next up is taking those well-defined roles and responsibilities and translating them into your volunteer sign up process to help you easily match the right volunteers to the right roles. Your online volunteer sign-up form should collect all the information you need to do a preliminary screening of your volunteers.

This information should cover:

- ▶ Basic Personal Contact Information
- ▶ Availability
- ▶ Skills
- ▶ Interests
- ▶ Certifications
- ▶ Any Preferences

All your form fields should sync up with the role requirements you have created in your volunteer management solution. By doing this, you will be able to filter your applications by roles quickly.

Look for a solution that offers best-match technology, which assists in this process by recommending the best matches for each role based on your preset requirements. Assigning volunteers to roles they are both interested in and qualified for will help your sporting event go smoothly and will ensure that you retain those volunteers for your next event as well.

## TRAIN YOUR VOLUNTEERS AHEAD OF TIME

No matter what type of sporting event you're holding, it is imperative that you equip all volunteers with the necessary health, safety, and emergency training. Volunteers should know what to do when something happens.

Scheduling mandatory training shifts for volunteers is a good way to track if (and when) a volunteer received training. You can choose to run in-person or online sessions depending on what is convenient for you and your team. Training should also include important information like:

- ▶ Volunteers' responsibilities.
- ▶ Who to contact in case of emergency.
- ▶ The code of conduct volunteers should follow.

Consider equipping volunteers with a mobile app for event day, allowing them to access all their training documents, event information, and schedules to ensure they have everything they need to thrive.

## MAINTAIN ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

As a volunteer manager, you will want to have a direct communication line with all your volunteers throughout the event day. Intuitive event technology solutions make engaging with your volunteers easy with two-way and general broadcast communication features from a convenient mobile app.

Don't forget to stay in touch with your volunteer leading up to the event and after it's done. This keeps everyone informed and engaged in what is going on with your organization. Keep your organization's emails clear and simple, and avoid sending emails to volunteers that aren't relevant to them. Consider sending a monthly newsletter or communication emails that keep volunteers informed of any upcoming volunteer opportunities.

## SHOW RECOGNITION TO HIGH-PERFORMING VOLUNTEERS

Once your event is over, don't forget to thank all your hardworking volunteers for dedicating their time and effort to your organization's event or cause. Make sure to send out personalized thank-you messages to all volunteers at the end of the event. You may even consider offering your volunteer a little thank you gift or lunch to show appreciation.

It never hurts to make a special effort and recognize your top-performing volunteers with a special public thank you or award. A top-performing volunteer could be someone who completed the most hours worked or the volunteer that went above and beyond to make your event a success.

So, now that you know how to manage your sporting event volunteers, it's time to get to work and start planning your volunteer program! We hope that this guide will help you as you work on planning your next sporting event. **SPG**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



*Cassandra Smallman is a passionate content creator dedicated to fostering positive impact through thought leadership in both the Nonprofit sector and live events industry. You can find her work at [www.initlive.com](http://www.initlive.com) or on LinkedIn and Twitter.*





Site InSpections



Merritt Truax Indoor Center at  
Oregon State University in Corvallis

Photo courtesy of Visit Corvallis

## WEST REGION

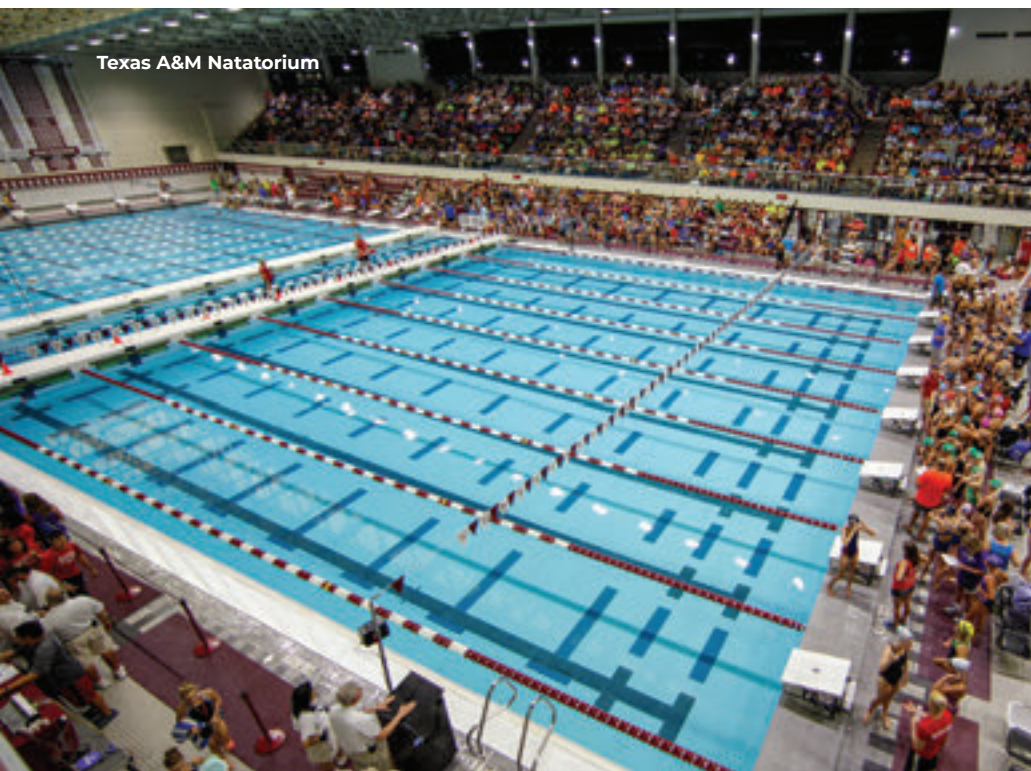
**T**he West Coast of the United States is blessed with pristine weather and impressive landscapes. It is also home to a variety of fabulous tournament-ready fields along with pools, arenas, stadiums and waterways. Each destination featured in this section offers beautiful facilities and a dedicated staff of experts who will help your tournament run seamlessly.

- 33** College Station, Texas
- 34** Round Rock, Texas
- 36** Abilene, Texas
- 38** Reno, Nevada
- 40** Bakersfield, California
- 42** Redding, California
- 44** Corvallis, Oregon
- 45** Seattle Southside, Washington
- 46** Snohomish, Washington
- 49** Yakima, Washington
- 50** Tucson, Arizona
- 52** Tulsa, Oklahoma



# COLLEGE STATION, TX

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College Station is located in the middle of the Dallas-Houston-San Antonio triangle and is in the center of 87 percent of all of Texas' population. United and American Airlines fly into College Station's Easterwood Airport from Dallas and Houston. If you can't make one of those connections, the Austin or Houston airports are both about an hour-and-a-half drive from College Station!

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- Visit the **George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum** for an intimate look at the life of the 41st president or spend an afternoon learning about our nation's military history at the **Museum of the American GI**.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

**Veterans Park & Athletic Complex**  
*Softball, football, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, archery, lacrosse, kickball, quidditch*

Home to countless championships and millions of spectators throughout the years, Veterans Park & Athletic Complex is without a doubt the place to Compete in College Station. Veterans Park & Athletic Complex is an award-winning outdoor facility that sprawls across 150 acres and features nine grass fields, four synthetic turf fields and five diamonds.

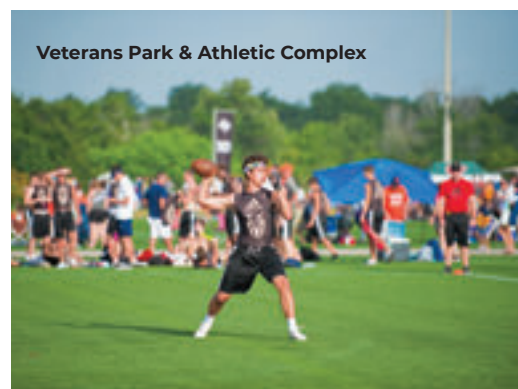
**Texas A&M Natatorium**  
*Swimming, diving, water polo*

The Texas A&M Natatorium, host of the 2018 SEC Swimming & Diving Championships, is a world-class swimming and diving facility that offers its athletes an eight-lane, 50-meter pool with graduated depths of 7-9 feet. The competition pool includes two moveable bulkheads, an electronic timing system and an

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Compete College Station is by far a superior group to work with. They truly understand and walk out the "customer first" mindset. Their attention to excellence is unmatched and they are always ready to pivot in order to better serve the athletes and their families if necessary. Their work ethic is second to none and all the while they embrace you as family. We wish we could produce events here every weekend!"

— Cindy Cowart, Cowart Sports Events, Inc.



underwater viewing window. The Natatorium also boasts a state-of-the-art dive well with platforms ranging from one to 10 meters.

**E.B. Cushing Stadium**  
*Outdoor track & field*

Redefining the norms of track & field stands E.B. Cushing Stadium. Opened in April 2019, this "Cushy" \$39.8 million stadium boasts an IAAF certified Beynon track surface, a nine-lane oval, a nine-lane sprint & hurdle straightaway and an initial seating capacity of 2,200. E.B. Cushing Stadium features numerous hospitality amenities, official's quarters and a cutting-edge press box fit for full broadcasts.



## COMPETE COLLEGE STATION

Dominique Powell  
979-260-9898  
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# ROUND ROCK, TX

KNOWN AS THE “SPORTS CAPITAL OF TEXAS,” ROUND ROCK HAS CLEARLY MADE A NAME FOR ITSELF AS ONE OF THE TOP DESTINATIONS FOR SPORTS EVENTS IN THE COUNTRY

Round Rock Multipurpose Complex



Centrally located within Texas, Round Rock sits just 15 miles north of Austin. From outdoor adventures to historic landmarks to professional sports tournaments, there's plenty to do between games. Come see what all the hype is about and stay at any of Round Rock's fine lodging accommodations.

## **FACILITY SPOTLIGHT** **Round Rock Multipurpose Complex** *Soccer, football, lacrosse, Ultimate, rugby, quidditch*

Located within Old Settlers Park, the Round Rock Multipurpose Complex is an elite sports facility that has hosted several major events, including the US Quidditch Cup and USA Ultimate College D-1 Championships. It features four natural grass multipurpose fields and one natural grass championship field, four synthetic turf multipurpose fields and one synthetic turf championship field.

## **Round Rock Sports Center** *Basketball, volleyball, wrestling, table tennis*

The Round Rock Sports Center has welcomed numerous sports events. Some of those events have included the USA Deaf Basketball National Tournament, the iSET College Table Tennis National Championships and the USA Judo Senior National Championships. The facility boasts 82,800 square feet of indoor space, with more than 47,000 square feet of flexible, playable space that can be configured in several different

layouts. It has a total capacity of 3,053, with seats for more than 1,400 spectators.

### Old Settlers Park

**Golf, soccer, tennis, sand volleyball, cross-country, baseball, softball**

A Round Rock classic, Old Settlers Park is a well-known sports destination for local and national athletic events. The 645-acre park includes a 20-field baseball complex, a five-field softball complex, seven soccer facilities, two football fields, 12 tennis courts, two sand volleyball courts, one aquatic center and a professionally designed disc golf course.

### Dell Diamond Baseball

Home of the Round Rock Express—the Triple-A affiliate to the Houston Astros—Dell Diamond is a fan favorite among athletes and spectators. The stadium is designed to give guests an amazing, up-close view of the action. Not only is it the site for minor league baseball games, but it also plays host to amateur sporting events.

### Dragon Stadium

**Football, track & field**

Dr. R.L. Peters Jr. Field at Dragon Stadium is a great spot for a football or track & field tournament. The venue features a regulation football field and a track. The stadium has several state-of-the-art amenities, as well as concessions stands and plenty of parking.

### Kelly Reeves Athletic Complex

**Football, soccer**

Located in north Austin, the Kelly Reeves ISD Athletic Complex is a convenient walk from nearby restaurants, accommodations and attractions. The facility hosts high school soccer and football games, as well as regional and international athletic events. There is seating for 11,000 spectators, with 5,500 seats on each side.



#### ROUND ROCK CVB

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GoRoundRock.com

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Want to know how Round Rock got its name? Discover a piece of history by visiting **The Round Rock at Brushy Creek**.
- ▶ Spend a day wandering the streets of **Round Rock's Downtown Historic District** and get a glimpse of life during the city's modest beginnings.
- ▶ Experience **Kalahari Resorts & Conventions** where you can enjoy a variety of attractions all under one roof.
- ▶ **Round Rock Premium Outlets.** Hop next door to Bass Pro Shops to experience the great outdoors without leaving the comforts of air conditioning and delicious food from Uncle Buck's Fish Bowl and Grill.
- ▶ Catch a game at **Dell Diamond** to see the Round Rock Express hit a home run.
- ▶ You can't leave without trying the signature food of the city: **Round Rock Donuts**.



Round Rock Sports Center

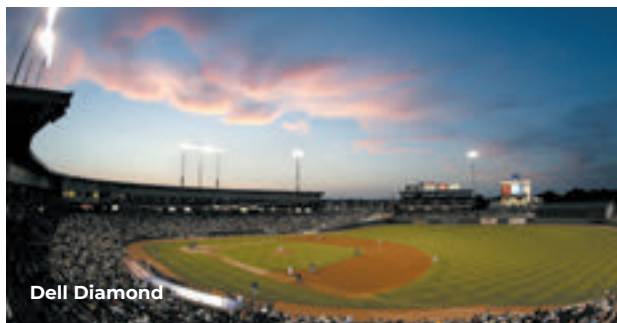


Champion Fields Complex

### PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"It was an easy decision to bring the WCLA's here to Round Rock. Between meeting the staff and knowing how completely comprehensive this venue was, it was an easy selection. They have the turf, and they have the grass which is great for teams because of course, they want the best of everything. The staff here has just been so accommodating with everything that they don't even have to be accommodating about."

— Lauren Rossi, Event Manager  
US Lacrosse



Dell Diamond



# ABILENE, TX

CENTRALLY LOCATED ON INTERSTATE 20, ABILENE OFFERS ITS OWN  
TWIST ON TEXAS TOURNAMENT HOSPITALITY



Dodge Jones Youth Sports Center



Taylor County Expo Center

Abilene is directly accessible from east and west along the road from Fort Worth to El Paso via Interstate 20. If you're flying in, Abilene Regional Airport (ABI) is serviced by American Eagle flights to and from Dallas-Fort Worth and United Airlines through Houston.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Go on safari with a visit to the **Abilene Zoo**, home to more than 250 species including lions, black rhinos, monkeys and more.
- ▶ Stroll Abilene's charming downtown to find Texas history at **Frontier Texas!** plus arts venues, craft beer and dining options.
- ▶ The **PrimeTime Family Entertainment Center** is a fantastic one-stop-shop for family fun.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

**Dodge Jones Youth Sports Center**  
*Basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, multipurpose indoors*

With four regulation-sized basketball courts, eight regulation-sized volleyball courts, professional hardwood court flooring and state-of-the-art technology and equipment, this facility has everything you need to host an awesome indoor sports tournament. Take a quick 3-D tour at [Abilenevisitors.com/sports](http://Abilenevisitors.com/sports).

**Lake Kirby Softball and Baseball Complex**

*Baseball, softball, fishing, boating*

Catch a ballgame at Lake Kirby Park, home to both a baseball and softball complex, as well as a picnic shelter, playground, restrooms, public boat ramp and fishing pier. This facility features two lighted little league baseball fields, two lighted senior league baseball fields and four lighted softball

fields, with seating for 150 spectators available on each field. The Texas West Little League Baseball and Softball State Tournament has called the park home since 2015.

**Taylor County Expo Center**  
*Multipurpose outdoor*

The Taylor County Expo Center has entered the final phase of a \$55 million renovation and expansion, bringing exciting new facilities to host equine and athletic events. The expansive space has a new covered outdoor arena, livestock barn and horse stalls. Work on the coliseum is projected to be completed at the end of 2020.



## ABILENE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Debi Schultz, Director of Sales & Sports  
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[www.abilenevisitors.com/Sports](http://www.abilenevisitors.com/Sports)





## HERE, HUSTLE HAS ITS REWARDS. ON AND OFF THE FIELD.

When it comes to game time, our team always has your back. From heightened health and safety standards to a variety of venues to all the action you could ask for after the game, we're doing everything we can to ensure Reno Tahoe remains a safe, exciting, and unique destination for your next event—whether it's one month or one year from now. So why wait? Hustle up.

Contact Shelli Fine, Director of Sports Development at 775.827.7790 or [sfine@renotahoeusa.com](mailto:sfine@renotahoeusa.com)

**RenoTahoe**  
Visit [RenoTahoe.com/Sports](http://RenoTahoe.com/Sports)





# RENO, NV

THIS PICTURESQUE REGION IN NEVADA IS HOME TO A VARIETY OF ATTRACTIONS AS WELL AS SOME OF THE FINEST SPORTS FACILITIES IN THE COUNTRY

Reno-Sparks Convention Center



At the crossroads of two major highways, Reno Tahoe is just a half-day's drive from anywhere in Northern California, and a full day's drive from major hubs like Southern California, Las Vegas, Phoenix, and Salt Lake City.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Reno-Sparks Convention Center *Multipurpose*

Just south of downtown Reno and minutes from the Reno-Tahoe International Airport is the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. This modern venue features more than 600,000 square feet of single-level exhibition and meeting space with recently upgraded technology and award-winning service. The center has hosted events such as the USA Gymnastics Boys Nationals, Summer National Fencing

Championships, Junior National Volleyball Championships, USA Taekwondo National Championships and Jam On It AAU basketball tournaments. Choose from one of five massive exhibit halls to host your event. The facility contains meeting rooms that can be used for registration, coaches meetings or trophy ceremonies. With more than 15,000 hotel rooms nearby, ranging from AAA Four Diamond resorts to boutique hotels, your rooming options are plentiful and rates affordable.

## Reno Events Center Multipurpose

Located in the entertainment center of downtown Reno, the magnificent Reno Events Center offers 118,000 square feet of space for sporting events, conventions or meetings.

This flexible 7,000-seat multipurpose arena in downtown Reno offers 56,000 square feet of space for events that range from top-flight entertainment to a variety of conventions and conferences. The center has been the home of multiple NBA G-League showcases as well as World League Volleyball competitions.

## Golden Eagle Regional Park Baseball, softball, soccer, football

Located to the east of Reno in Sparks, Nevada, this complex is one of the premier youth baseball venues in the country. Children of all ages will feel like major leaguers as they compete on beautiful artificial turf, all-weather fields.

The complex is made up of 12 championship-caliber diamonds, high-end Musco lighting, fabulous playing surfaces and a variety of food options. Built in 2008, Golden Eagle covers more than 100 acres and features more than 1.4 million square feet of artificial turf, making it the largest of its kind in the country.

The complex houses four Little League fields, two Babe Ruth fields, six adult softball fields with adjustable fencing and three full-size football/soccer fields.



### RENO-SPARKS CONVENTION AND VISITORS AUTHORITY

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[www.visitrenotahoe.com](http://www.visitrenotahoe.com)



## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ A short drive from downtown Reno, **Lake Tahoe** is a nature lovers paradise for hiking, biking, kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding and more.
- ▶ Full of excellent coffee shops, bars, restaurants and shopping, the **Midtown District** is an eclectic neighborhood that is enhanced by dozens of murals.
- ▶ The **Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum** is a 67,000-square-foot science museum downtown that appeals to all ages and interest with its variety of interactive exhibits and exhibitions.
- ▶ In addition to an exciting water park with fun for all ages, **Wild Island** has go-karts, miniature golf and a bowling alley.



Golden Eagle Regional Park



## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Triple Crown Sports has seen increasing success in the Reno Tahoe area over the last four years. The RSCVA sports staff, our hotel partners and all the area's sports facilities have gone above and beyond for TCS and our tournaments. The sports properties that Reno Tahoe hosts are not only successes on the field, but off the field as well. Our athletes and their families truly enjoy the destination as they can come and seriously compete on first-rate fields, then relax after the competition in a world-class setting. The Reno area is a great destination for our growing national event business."

— Katrina Maestas, Western World Series Director,  
Triple Crown Sports



Lake Tahoe



# BAKERSFIELD, CA

BAKERSFIELD HAS GIVEN RISE TO COUNTRY MUSIC AND THE BAKERSFIELD SOUND AS WELL AS A NEW GENERATION OF TOP-NOTCH SPORTS FACILITIES

Mechanics Bank Arena, Theater & Convention Center



Bakersfield is located at the juncture of California State routes 99 and 58, and is accessible via Interstate 5. If you're flying in, Meadows Field (BFL) is Bakersfield's main airport, located about 10 miles north of downtown. Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is 120 miles away.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Mechanics Bank Arena

**Basketball, football, hockey, multipurpose indoor, wrestling**

As the present home of the Bakersfield Condors of the American Hockey League, the Mechanics Bank Arena has hosted NCAA Division I basketball contests in the past and can be used to accommodate many indoor tournaments, events and concerts, including the 2019 boys and girls high school state wrestling championships. The venue seats up to 10,225 with 17,000 square feet of floor

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Why Bakersfield? That's easy. It's a perfectly-sized modern city with state-of-the-art facilities, a large inventory of clean, family-oriented hotel rooms, dozens of welcoming restaurants, and a city leadership that values our championships and supports us in every way possible. Bakersfield is a tremendous host."

— John T., California Interscholastic Federation

Kern County Soccer Park



Mesa Marin Sports Complex



space. Mechanics Bank Arena also houses the Bob Elias Kern County Sports Hall of Fame. Attached to the arena is the Mechanics Bank Theater and Convention Center, which features a 17,480-square-foot exhibit hall as well as a 3,000-seat theater.

**Mesa Marin Sports Complex**  
**Basketball, multipurpose outdoor, pickleball, skating, soccer, softball**

Spanning across 15 acres, this multipurpose complex features four lighted softball fields, a 1,040-square-foot restroom and concession

building, spectator bleacher seating and ample parking.

### **Kaiser Permanente Sports Village** **Baseball, football, soccer, softball**

With construction and renovations done throughout most of this decade, Kaiser Permanente has become one of the premier facilities throughout the region. The complex boasts 12 soccer fields, four youth football fields, a playground, concession stand, restrooms, walking trail, two ponds and ample parking.

### **Kern County Soccer Park** **Soccer**

Spread across 86 acres with parking for more than 5,000 vehicles available, Kern County Soccer Park is a main fixture on any sports planner's soccer list. The park is home to 24 regulation-sized soccer fields, with four snack bars, eight built-in restrooms and RV parking. The fields are lighted and a central

headquarters building is available for use during the many tournaments this park hosts.

### **California State University,** **Bakersfield** **Multisport**

Home to Roadrunners athletics, CSUB features top-of-the-line athletic facilities including the Icardo Center, Hardt Field, Roadrunner Softball Complex, John S. Hillman Memorial Aquatic Center, Barnes Beach Volleyball Complex and the John Antonino Sports Complex. Home to the men's and women's basketball as well as volleyball programs, the Icardo Center is a 44,000-square-foot facility that can seat 3,495.



#### **VISIT BAKERSFIELD**

**Matt Billingsley**

**Sales Manager**

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[www.visitbakersfield.com](http://www.visitbakersfield.com)

### **POPULAR ACTIVITIES**

- ▶ If you're into country western music, a trip to **Buck Owens Crystal Palace** is a must.
- ▶ Jump around at the **BLVD Temblor Flight Fit N Fun**, where 17,000 square feet of wall-to-wall trampolines make for group parties.
- ▶ Experience the lore and tastes of Spain's Basque country oceans away in California, where **boardinghouse cuisine** reigns supreme.
- ▶ Bakersfield's only high ropes challenge course and outdoor rock-climbing facility can be found in the **Condor Challenge at CALM**.





**VISIT  
BAKERSFIELD**  
THE SOUND OF *Something Better*

**WE KNOW THE  
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A  
SPORT AND A GAME!**

#### **LOCATION:**

- Within a four hour drive of 90% of California's population
- Commercial airline service via Bakersfield's Meadows Field
- Located near Interstate 5 and State Highway 99

#### **VALUE:**

- Nearly 6,000 hotel rooms- with rates regularly 40% below the state average
- Central location reduces travel costs for attendees
- Complimentary event planning assistance
- Low venue rental fees

#### **FACILITIES:**

- 24-field soccer complex
- Three Olympic-sized pools
- 10,000 seat multi-purpose arena
- Specialty venues including water sports lakes, racetracks, BMX tracks and more!

**(866) 425-7353 • VisitBakersfield.com**



# REDDING, CA

A MEDLEY OF RENOWNED FISHING, KAYAKING AND HIKING TRAILS  
PAIRED WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART SPORTS FACILITIES MAKE REDDING  
A PREMIER DESTINATION FOR SPORTS EVENTS IN THE GOLDEN STATE



Located in Northern California, Redding is easily accessible from I-5 and can be reached from most states by car. If traveling by air, Redding Airport features daily flights from Los Angeles and San Francisco. Sacramento International Airport is approximately a two hour drive away.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Big League Dreams Sports Parks

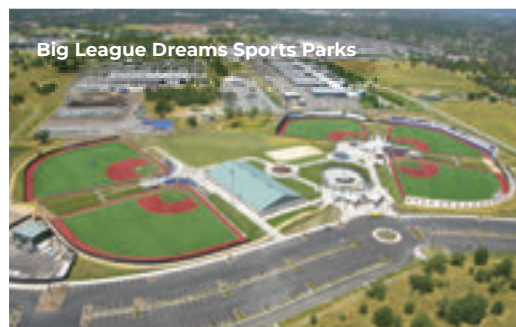
**Baseball, softball, soccer, hockey, volleyball, roller derby**

At Big League Dreams Sports Parks, the name says it all. This facility in Redding is dedicated to giving the average youth or adult player the chance to have the feeling of playing in the big leagues by creating smaller replicas of famous ballparks, such as Boston's Fenway Park, New York's Yankee Stadium and Chicago's Wrigley Field. The facility's 20,000-square-foot

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"For athletes of all ages, and their families, we have so much to offer here, and it's such a unique and beautiful setting. We are here to help in every way we can, so teams, families, and spectators have an amazing experience here in Redding, both on and off the field!"

– Sabrina Jurisich, Sports Commissioner,  
Redding Convention & Visitors Bureau



climate-controlled field house is equipped for hockey, soccer and volleyball leagues. The baseball and softball playing fields feature stadium-style seating with the capacity to seat 200 spectators. Other amenities at the sports park include batting cages, a playground and Stadium Club Restaurant. The facility played host to top tournaments from USA Fastpitch Softball, All Star Tournaments Fastpitch, TMS Softball, All World Sports Baseball and more during the 2019 season.

### California Soccer Park *Soccer, lacrosse, rugby, football*

A nonprofit sporting facility connecting communities, enriching lives and inspiring families, teams and athletes through high quality experiences, California Soccer Park fosters respect, competition and accountability. The soccer park is devoted to delivering excellence through innovation in a safe environment for athletes, featuring a 22-acre facility with four NCAA sized lighted synthetic turf fields for year-round play, paved walkways, elevated seating, 2,000-square-feet of covered seating with ceiling fans and a full-service restaurant. There is a small entrance fee on game days and during tournaments. Pets, food and drinks are not allowed inside the park, but water is provided for athletes. The facility was the host site for some top tournaments in 2019, including the Whiskeytown Quickdraw 3v3 and The Smash Cup '19, the latter of which partnered with Nor-Cal Think Pink. All four fields were recently replaced and upgraded.

### Redding Aquatic Center *Swimming, rowing, boating, paddleboarding, diving*

A leading destination for aquatic sports, Redding Aquatic Center offers a variety of classes and practice facilities, including the Kid's Sailing Camp, a course designed to give a general knowledge of the marine world through study and hands-on sailing experience. The Shasta Rowing Association is dedicated to the education of the art of Olympic-style rowing, featuring rowing courses for children and adults. For first-time divers or anyone looking to improve their headfirst entry, the aquatic center offers diving lessons focusing on forward diving techniques from the deck and one-meter diving board. Private swim lessons and various special events are also held throughout the year.



#### REDDING CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Sabrina Jurisich, Sports Commissioner  
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www.VisitRedding.com

### POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Explore world renowned exhibits and get up close and personal with the wildlife at **Turtle Bay Exploration Park**.
- ▶ Awaken your inner geologist and explore ancient formations when you undergo a tour at the **Lake Shasta Caverns National Natural Landmark**.
- ▶ The **Sacramento National Recreation River Trail** offers stunning views as you wind around the Sacramento River.
- ▶ **McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park** features vast forests and five miles of lake shoreline in the shadow of the Cascade Range.
- ▶ Uncover beautiful crystal-clear waters and the history of the California Gold Rush at the **Whiskeytown National Recreation Area**.

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# CORVALLIS, OR

WITH A PENCHANT FOR REDEFINING ITSELF AND ITS FUTURE,  
CORVALLIS IS A HUB FOR INNOVATION, ON AND OFF THE FIELD



Corvallis is located about 10 miles west of Interstate 5, while state Route 99 drives right through it. If you're flying in, **Portland International Airport (PDX) is the closest major airport, located northeast of Corvallis. The Eugene Airport is also available as a closer, regional, airport option.**

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Make a splash and catch a gorgeous Oregon summer sunset at **Otter Beach Waterpark**, part of the Osborn Aquatic Center.
- ▶ Learn what early life was like in Oregon at the **Corvallis Museum**, where hands-on art projects, storytelling and artifacts immerse you in the 19th century way of life.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Oregon State University *All*

As the largest university in the state, Oregon State University features some premier athletic facilities. From Reser Stadium, home of the school's football team (seats 43,363) to Gill Coliseum (seats 9,604) which plays host to basketball, gymnastics, wrestling and volleyball competitions. The campus can host an array of indoor and outdoor sports like tennis, indoor rock climbing, and ultimate Frisbee, just to name a few.

### Alsea Falls Recreation Site *Trail running, mountain biking, BMX, fishing*

Located in Oregon's Coast Range, the site of the Alsea Falls XC Race provides a gorgeous natural backdrop in the titular falls for hikers, runners and bikers. The Fall Creek trailhead provides more than 12 miles of trails specially made for mountain bikers, though hikers are welcome to explore as well.

### Corvallis Parks & Recreation *Soccer, disc golf, softball, swimming, water polo, pickleball, ultimate*

Corvallis Parks & Rec has you covered for all your sporting needs. Notably, the Crystal Lake Sports Complex features an impressive display of outdoor fields, with 10 soccer fields that can be used for lacrosse, ultimate Frisbee or rugby and nine little league baseball fields. Parks & Rec also operates the Osborn Aquatic Center which features an Olympic-sized 50-meter pool with a moveable bulkhead that divides the pool between its eight lap lanes.



### VISIT CORVALLIS

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# SEATTLE SOUTHSIDE, WA

FABULOUS SPORTS COMPLEXES, FAMILY-FRIENDLY PARKS AND COLLEGE-LEVEL GYMNASIUMS INVITE PLANNERS AND TEAMS TO ENJOY UNFORGETTABLE SPORTING EVENTS AT SEATTLE SOUTHSIDE



From world-class sports facilities to thrill-filled activities, Seattle Southside provides traveling sports teams the chance to explore Seattle's backyard. Not only is Seattle Southside a beautiful locale that will appeal to anyone, it has plenty to do for family members of all ages.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- **At The Museum of Flight**, visitors can hop in the pilot's seat and see what it's like to soar through the sky through surreal and exciting flight simulator rides.
- **iFLY Indoor Skydiving** makes the dream of flight a reality with indoor skydiving in a vertical wind tunnel. iFLY is safe for kids, challenging for adults, exciting for teens, and realistic for skydivers.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Starfire Sports Soccer, rugby

One of the largest synthetic-turf soccer complexes in the nation, Starfire Sports is the home of numerous soccer and rugby teams, including the practice field of the Seattle Sounders FC and home to Major League Rugby team, Seattle Seawolves. Featuring five grass fields, two indoor FieldTurf fields and seven outdoor FieldTurf fields, the complex's main stadium also has a capacity of 4,500 spectators.

### The City of Des Moines Basketball, volleyball, tennis, cross country, fishing, water sports

With a plethora of walking and running trails, beach access and a marina offering wet and dry moorage for 840 recreational vessels, Des Moines Beach Park has outdoor and indoor space ideal for smaller youth sports teams and events. Listed on the Register of Historic Places, Des Moines Field House is

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Seattle Southside does a great job for us. They've helped us with getting information on different activities going on during March so we can give our attendees the information on where to go, what to do and have a good time."

— Jeff Lovell, President and Executive Director of the Automotive Service Association



an ideal location for basketball tournaments, featuring a gym with 4,000 square feet and a capacity of 225 guests.

### North SeaTac Park Softball, baseball, basketball, BMX racing, disc golf

With 160 acres and three different baseball and softball fields available for rent from March to October, North SeaTac Park also features an outdoor basketball court, walking and running trails, a BMX track and a disc golf course.



### SEATTLE SOUTHSIDE REGIONAL TOURISM AUTHORITY

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# SNOHOMISH COUNTY, WA

EXPLORE SNOHOMISH COUNTY'S DIVERSE LANDSCAPE AND HISTORY TO  
FIND THE PERFECT FACILITY FOR YOUR UPCOMING TOURNAMENT

Angel of the Winds Arena



Located just north of Seattle, Snohomish County is directly connected to Interstate 5. Paine Field Everett Airport, just 10 miles from downtown Everett and 7 miles from Lynnwood, has commercial air service with Alaska and United Airlines. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is just 45 miles south of Snohomish County.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

**Angel of the Winds Arena**  
*Basketball, cheerleading, dance, Endurocross, figure skating, gymnastics, martial arts, roller derby, basketball, volleyball*

This 10,000-seat multipurpose arena features two NHL-ice sheets that can be converted into a 57,000-square-foot space for hosting trade shows and special events. The Edward D. Hansen Conference Center is equipped with three 900-square-foot meeting rooms and an 11,000-square-foot ballroom

that can be arranged into a number of different configurations. The Angel of the Winds Arena was awarded the 2012 International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) prestigious Venue Excellence Award. In February 2020, Fed Cup - The World Cup of Tennis was held at the venue.

**Meadowdale Playfields Sports Complex**  
*Soccer, softball, lacrosse, Ultimate Frisbee, baseball*

Meadowdale Playfields Sports Complex plays home to many USSSA Adult Softball, Baseball



and Fastpitch tournaments throughout the year. The softball complex was one of the locations for the 2019 NSA Northwest Girls Fastpitch World Series on July 26-28. The complex features three lighted adult/youth softball/baseball fields and two lighted multipurpose turf fields which are lined for soccer, lacrosse and fastpitch/baseball, the facility is equipped with concession stands, a .67-mile walking trail, basketball court, play structure, picnic facilities, pond, restrooms and parking.

### Walt Price Fitness Center at Everett Community College

**Basketball, gymnastics, martial arts, volleyball**

This 49,000-square-foot fitness center offers a gym with a basketball court and retractable bleacher seating for up to 2,250 spectators, four team locker rooms, two coaches meeting rooms, concession area and a multipurpose room. The college has over 1,600 parking spaces available. Upcoming tournaments include the 2021 NWAC Men & Women Basketball Championships in May and the

2021 USAGymnastics XCEL Gold, Platinum, and Diamond State Championships in April.

### Lake Tye Park

**Baseball, lacrosse, skateboard, soccer, softball, triathlon, wakeboard**

Located on the shores of Lake Tye in Monroe, this community park covers 64 acres and a 42-acre recreational lake. This beautiful multipurpose space features two baseball/softball fields, a full-sized soccer field, concessions, a serene beach area, picnic area, restrooms, a 1.5-mile walking/biking loop, pedestrian boat launches, a children's play area, skatepark and a parking lot for approximately 200 vehicles.



### SNOHOMISH COUNTY SPORTS COMMISSION

Tammy Dunn, CSEE  
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www.snocosports.org

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Visit **Funko Headquarters** in downtown Everett, one of the leading innovators of licensed pop culture products you can expect to see vinyl figures, action and plush toys, apparel and more.
- ▶ Spend your afternoon shopping at **Seattle Premium Outlets** in Tualip, where an upscale collection of more than 130 designer names awaits your every need.
- ▶ Spend a day at **Arena Sports Mill Creek** bowling, playing arcade, laser tag, rope course & zipline, climbing wall and playing virtual reality games.
- ▶ Dive into the history of the Tualip Tribes by taking a trip to the **Hibulb Cultural Center**. This center is approximately 23,000 square feet and features a 50-acre natural history preserve.







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Phone: (425) 309.2744



PNW SPORTS

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY**  
SPORTS COMMISSION

Made possible in part by assistance from the Snohomish County TPA Fund

[SnoCoSports.org](http://SnoCoSports.org)

# YAKIMA VALLEY, WA

WASHINGTON'S WINE COUNTRY HAS YIELDED AN INCREDIBLE CROP OF TOURNAMENT-READY SPORTS FACILITIES AND EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YAKIMA VALLEY



Yakima Valley SunDome



Proposed Sozo Arena

The Yakima Valley is mainly accessible from north and south via Interstate 82. If you're flying in, Alaska Airlines offers connecting flights from Seattle/Tacoma to the Yakima Air Terminal.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ More than 40 organic commercial crops are grown throughout the Yakima Valley, so a trip to leaf through some of the valley's farms and produce is sure to be a hit.
- ▶ The Yakima Valley's celebrated arts scene is on display with tasting rooms, museums, local galleries and more found throughout the valley.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Yakima Valley SunDome

#### Multipurpose

With a convenient location in Central Washington, the 57,000 square-foot Yakima Valley SunDome is easily accessible from essentially anywhere in the state and in the Pacific Northwest. This multipurpose, indoor facility is an ideal venue for tournament planners, where 8,000 spectators can attend tournaments, events and concerts. The SunDome, located on the grounds of State Fair Park and Event Center, underwent a renovation in 2020 replacing all the arena seating and adding a new state-of-the-art video scoreboard system. The facility hosts numerous WIAA State High School Championships each year, including volleyball, basketball and dance & drill.

### Sozo Sports Complex

#### Basketball, futsal, pickleball, multipurpose indoor and outdoor, soccer, lacrosse

The Sozo Sports Complex, in its fifth year

of existence, continues to work toward the building an 80,000 square arena. The Sozo Arena will hold up to four futsal courts, eight basketball courts and 16 volleyball courts. The complex is currently home to 15 multipurpose outdoor fields, including four synthetic turf fields, making it a powerhouse for any competition in Washington state or the Pacific Northwest. Sozo has hosted dozens of events since its opening in 2016, including soccer, football, lacrosse, volleyball, pickleball, basketball, and running events. Sozo is also home to the Yakima Valley Sports Commission, who has its offices at the complex.



### YAKIMA VALLEY SPORTS COMMISSION

Rich Austin, Director of Sports Development  
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rich@yakimasports.org  
YakimaSports.org



# TUCSON, AZ

WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF SUNSHINE YEAR-ROUND, TUCSON IS AN EXCELLENT PLACE TO HOST A TOURNAMENT, NO MATTER THE SEASON

Kino Sports Complex



Interstate 10 runs through the heart of Tucson on the way from Phoenix to El Paso, while I-19 runs due south from Tucson on the road to Mexico. If you're flying in to town, Tucson International Airport (TUS) is located about eight miles south of the city.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

**Kino Sports Complex**  
*Baseball, football, soccer, rugby, multipurpose*

As the former MLB Spring Training home for both the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Chicago White Sox, this massive multiuse venue is state-of-the-art and one of the finest facilities in Arizona. From the centerpiece, Kino Veterans Memorial Stadium, which seats 11,500, to the recently developed South Complex, which has increased the overall area of Kino Sports Complex to more

than 300 acres, the venue is top-notch. With this impressive expansion, Kino has surpassed the current major facilities in the Phoenix metropolitan area, making it a prime destination for regional and national tournament events.

Branching out from its baseball roots, the facility is home to FC Tucson, USL League One and WPSL teams, and hosts MLS preseason training and matches.

Rugby competitions are also Kino's forte, including the 2019 USA Rugby Collegiate 7s National Championships.

## Tucson Convention Center

**Indoor football, hockey, multipurpose indoor, volleyball**

Located in downtown Tucson, this center includes nearly 9,000 seats in its arena and offers 205,000 square feet of meeting space. With a recently approved \$65M renovation plan, the center is soon going to see some exciting improvements, including upgrades to the arena and other important infrastructure.

## Sporting Chance Center

**Basketball, multipurpose indoor, volleyball**

Home to many tournaments, leagues, camps and clinics, this 40,000-square-foot fantastic indoor venue is a tournament planner's dream. The facility has a flexible design that can be configured to hold up to eight volleyball courts or five basketball courts. The Center hosts the annual Arizona Middle School Basketball Championships in the spring.

## Oro Valley Aquatic Center

**Swimming, synchronized swimming, water polo**

As a premier venue for competitive meets

throughout the region, the Oro Valley Aquatic Center is open year-round and filled with family-friendly amenities for competitors and guests. The center features a 25-yard recreation pool and an Olympic-sized, 50-meter competition pool, complete with a Colorado Time System, touch pads and a scoreboard. The center also has a splash pad, concession stand, shaded areas and bleacher seating.

## Lincoln Softball Park

ADA-accessible and with a walking path that surrounds its fields, the Lincoln Softball Park is a great place to catch a game—and a gorgeous Arizona sunset. The park features eight softball fields and two soccer fields. The facility hosts the annual Tucson Invitational Games softball tournament through the month of March.

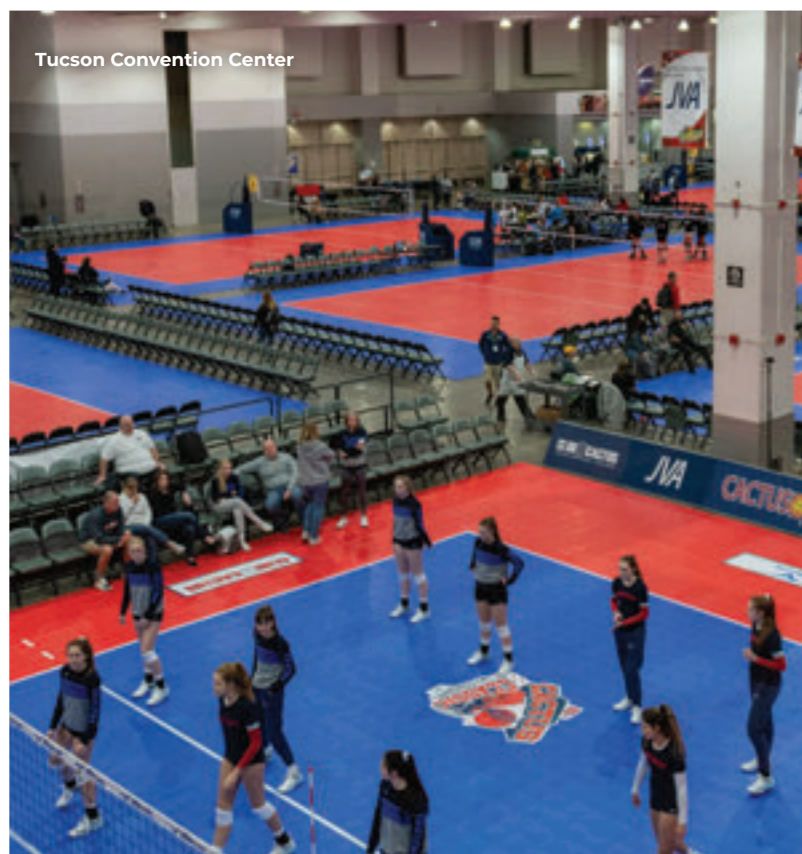


### VISIT TUCSON

Luchie Javelosa, Sports Sales Manager  
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LJavelosa@visittucson.org  
VisitTucson.org/Sports

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ The **Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum** is a one-of-a-kind experience that combines a zoo, natural history museum, art gallery, botanical garden and aquarium.
- ▶ From fine dining to funky platters, **The Best 23 Miles of Mexican Food** in the country can be found in Tucson.
- ▶ Explore more than 350 aircrafts on display at the **Pima Air & Space Museum**, home to the Arizona Aviation Hall of Fame since 1991.
- ▶ Hike through the wilderness or in the mountains when you visit the east or west sides of **Saguaro National Park**.
- ▶ Marvel at one of the oldest European structures in Arizona by visiting the **Mission San Xavier del Bac**.





# TULSA, OK

A SERIOUS SPORTS DESTINATION WITH TOP ATTRACTIONS, RESTAURANTS AND A DIVERSE CULTURAL SCENE



Tulsa boasts world-class attractions, top-rated sports facilities and a tremendous array of cultural options. This cosmopolitan city is also easily accessible as it can be reached via I-55 and I-44 as well as from I-57. Tulsa International Airport flies nonstop across the country to such cities as Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Utah and Orlando, among others.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

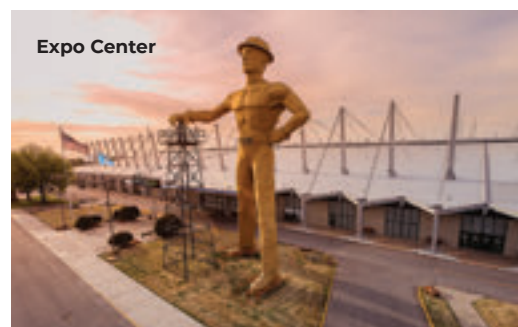
**Cox Business Convention Center**  
**Wrestling, basketball, volleyball, cheer/dance, Cornhole, conventions**

Easy to get to and located in the Arena District in downtown Tulsa, the 310,625-square-foot Cox Business Convention Center is a clean and modern award-winning venue that offers flexible spaces for both small and large events. The center is within walking distance of more than 2,000 hotel rooms and is surrounded by vibrant music, art and culinary scenes. This multifaceted center has hosted arena soccer

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"I can't say enough about the support we get here from the local community, the ticket sales are outstanding, and we see continued growth year over year. The Tulsa Sports Commission does a fantastic job supporting this event behind the scenes. And our administrators, our coaches, and more importantly our student athletes, are very excited to be associated with Tulsa and to have this championship here."

— Bob Burda, Big 12 Sr. Associate Commissioner, Communications from Big 12 Wrestling Championships



games, Central Hockey League contests and the Missouri Valley Conference men's basketball tournament title game.

**BOK Center**  
**Hockey, wrestling, basketball, eSports, concerts**

This 19,199-seat multi-purpose arena was designed to accommodate arena football, hockey, basketball and concerts. Opened in 2005 at a cost of \$196 million, the BOK Center (which is short for Bank of Oklahoma Center) sports a long HD ribbon screen that

wraps around the three-level seating arena. Its second floor is an exclusive carpeted level with a complete bar, press areas and 37 luxury suites, each with 15-22-inch seats and furnished gathering and kitchen areas.

## Expo Square

**BMX, wrestling, cheer/dance, fencing, volleyball, bull riding, equestrian**

Every year, millions of visitors experience one of the best event complexes in the country, which features the River Spirit Expo, Exchange Center, Central Park Hall and the Pavilion. River Spirit Expo is one of the largest clear-span buildings in the world (it measures 448,000 square feet) and includes an upper and lower level, providing expansive square footage and event versatility. The Exchange Center offers a successful event environment and covers more than 58,000 feet, has three meeting rooms and drive-through doors. One of the most unique venues in Tulsa, Central Park Hall covers 43,000 square feet, has two meeting rooms, two ticket offices and has hosted trade shows and conventions, home and garden shows and

more. The Pavilion is Tulsa's historic art deco arena, which is known for being the ideal venue for concerts, entertainment and horse shows.

## Mohawk Sports Complex

**Soccer, football, lacrosse, field hockey, archery, cross country**

This impressive venue is one of the state's premier sports complexes. Mohawk features 17 international size fields, 10 lighted fields, a natural turf surface with advanced irrigation and drainage systems, plenty of spectator seating and a modern concession building. It also features a team warm-up area between fields and designated tournament headquarters and meeting room space.



### TULSA SPORTS COMMISSION

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## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Voted *USA Today's* Best New Attraction of 2019, **Gathering Place** is a world-class riverfront park designed to welcome all to a vibrant and inclusive space.
- ▶ Home to the Tulsa Drillers baseball team since opening in 2010, **ONEOK Field** is located in the historic Greenwood district.
- ▶ Opened in 1927, the **Tulsa Zoo** is home to more than 1,500 animals from nearly 450 species and covers 85 acres. In 2005, the zoo was named America's Favorite Zoo by Microsoft Game Studios.
- ▶ The **Oklahoma Aquarium** in Jenks is a 72,000-square-foot facility that is home to the world's largest exhibit of bull sharks along with more than 500 species and 10,000 animals.



## Tulsa, Oklahoma inspires visitors.

Anchoring **Route 66**, where East meets West, Tulsa's slice of the Mother Road is riddled with stop-worthy sites along this historic highway. Speaking of historic, Tulsa's **art deco architecture** is among the nation's best, and offers tours to see it all. Don't miss **John Hope Franklin Memorial Park**, the 'most important monument to visit in the U.S.', or the 'best new attraction in America' in Tulsa's **Gathering Place**. The wide-open outdoor spaces paired with Tulsa's approachable size make this city the perfect escape, when the time is right. **Learn more on VisitTulsa.com.**







Site InSpections



Mecklenburg County Sportsplex

Photo courtesy of Alex Cason/Mecklenburg County Sportsplex

## SOUTH REGION

**T**he Southern area of the country is a great place to compete in sports, be it inside or outside. From football and basketball to a rowing competition and an equestrian event, there is something for everyone in the South. Home to fabulous facilities and superior accommodations and attractions, planners will find these destinations primed and ready to host.

- 78 Wilmington, North Carolina
- 80 Mooresville, North Carolina
- 81 Cabarrus County, North Carolina
- 82 Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
- 84 Nash County, North Carolina
- 86 Haywood County, North Carolina
- 88 Greensboro, North Carolina
- 90 Hickory, North Carolina
- 92 Greenville-Pitt County, North Carolina
- 94 Pigeon Forge, Tennessee
- 104 Beaufort-Port Royal, South Carolina
- 106 Spartanburg, South Carolina
- 109 Irmo Chapin Recreation Center, South Carolina
- 110 Columbia, South Carolina

- 112 Aiken, South Carolina
- 114 Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
- 128 Orange County Convention Center, Florida
- 130 Lake County, Florida
- 132 St. Augustine, Florida
- 136 Pasco County, Florida
- 138 Bradenton, Florida
- 148 Stafford County, Virginia
- 150 Hampton, Virginia
- 152 Williamsburg, Virginia
- 154 Virginia's Blue Ridge
- 156 Lynchburg, Virginia
- 159 Richmond Region Tourism, Virginia
- 160 Martinsville, Virginia
- 162 Virginia Beach, Virginia
- 164 Decatur, Alabama
- 166 Gulf Shores/Orange Beach, Alabama
- 168 Huntsville, Alabama
- 170 Foley, Alabama
- 171 St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana



# 2021 ARKANSAS GUIDE

## Arkansas's Lakes Are Incredible

With 600,000 Acres of  
Lakes, Arkansas Is an  
Outdoor Utopia

## Arkansas Is Ideal for Biking

The Natural State Is  
Ready to Host Your Next  
Cycling Event

Photo courtesy of Arkansas Tourism

**SPG**  
A Premier Travel Media publication  
[www.SportsPlanningGuide.com](http://www.SportsPlanningGuide.com)



# Welcome to **ARKANSAS**

**On behalf of Arkansas Tourism and the Arkansas Sports Team we'd like to welcome you to The Natural State for your next sporting event.**

Centrally located in the mid-South, with a moderate climate year-round, Arkansas is a beautiful, affordable destination for sporting events. An easy drive from anywhere in the south or mid-west with great interstate connectivity, we are also home to two major airports – Clinton National Airport (LIT) in Little Rock and Northwest Arkansas National Airport (XNA) in Bentonville. Once you arrive, you will find many reasons why The Natural State works well for groups of all sizes. We hope that your team has time to take a break from playing to seek out adventure in Arkansas. We offer an exciting contrast of fast-paced and laid-back, urban and scenic, business and pleasure, all with genuine hospitality you just can't find anywhere else.

Need help planning? Arkansas Sport Team members put the “pro” in professional (or proficient) when it comes to hosting events. The Arkansas Sports Team is comprised of 13 destinations scattered throughout Arkansas with members who represent cities with a wide array of facilities so you can be sure to find the perfect location for any event. From Texarkana to Jonesboro, monster truck rallies to baseball tournaments, and everywhere and everything in-between, Arkansas is the natural choice for sports!

Sincerely,  
Jessica, Shelby, and the Arkansas Sports Team



**JESSICA LEDBETTER**

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Arkansas.com

# Arkansas is a Natural For Biking Competitions

*Whether it's fat tires, skinny tires, mountain, paved or gravel grinder trails and routes, The Natural State is ready to host your next event*

By David Bodle





**W**ith Arkansas's varied terrain being ideal for all levels of competition and new trails and routes being added every year, it's understandable why Arkansas is a world-class cycling destination. Along with some great rides, there are communities across the state ready to add their support.

The League of American Cyclists has designated Fayetteville, Rogers and Washington County, Little Rock, North Little Rock and Conway as official Bicycle Friendly Communities. Bentonville, Fayetteville and Hot Springs have been recognized by the International Mountain Bicycling Association as Ride Centers and Northwest Arkansas as a Regional Ride Center for its world-class amenities.

## Mountain Biking in Arkansas

In its most recent listing, the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) shared that Arkansas has 1,210 mountain trail miles. From their top 20 Arkansas mountain trails list, 16 are ranked intermediate or intermediate/difficult and located throughout the state from Hot Springs to Prairie Creek to Arkadelphia and beyond. These four were ranked difficult:

Located in Northwest Arkansas's Mount Nebo State Park, near Dardanelle, the **Chickalah Valley Loop Trail** features great rock work, jumps, drops and marvelous views. **The Ledges** is a Black Diamond/Difficult trail for advanced riders. Carrying the humble name of **Best Trail Ever** is one of the Fitzgerald Trails. The Fitzgerald Mountain trail in Springdale deserves mention for its stretches of dirt and boulders knit together for some challenging trails. **Schroen Train** is the most technical of the Slaughter Pen Trails system. Like Arkansas's entire mountain trail system, the developers and builders took what the local geology offered and created amazing mountain trails.

IMBA recognizes five Arkansas trails as Epic Trails. These trails promise a "true backcountry riding experience," which is physically and technically challenging, at least 20 miles in length (Arkansas's Epic Trails exceed 20 miles) and 80



Syllamo Bike Trail

percent single track.

**Womble Trail** is an epic mountain bike trail and a key element of the annual Ouachita Challenge. **Syllamo Trail**, Mountain View is a series of loops that interconnect for a 50-mile single-track ride. From the lake's south side **Lake Ouachita Vista Trail (LOVIT)** features climbs that lead to spectacular views of the lake. Located in Kingston, **Upper Buffalo Headwaters**, Peddigrew in the heart of the Ozarks, is 40 miles surrounding the mountain's highest peak. **Ouachita National Recreation Trail** is remote, rugged and possibly the longest mountain bike trail in Arkansas.

The first in a collection of Arkansas State Park Monument Trails opened in 2019. It is a project of the nonprofit Arkansas Parks and Recreation Foundation and funded through



Lake Ouachita Vista Trail



Mount Nebo Mountain Biking



private donations, including a \$2 million grant from the Walton Family Foundation. IMBA along with Adventure Projects, Inc created the initial Mountain Bike Trail Project Monument Trails. The funding supported the opening of the first Monument Trail at Hobbs State Park.

Innovative building techniques by some of the nation's best builders along with Arkansas's unique terrain are making the MTB project, Monument Trails world-class mountain biking destinations. The Hobbs State Park Monument Trail in Rogers complements the Hidden Diversity Trail System and raises the level of mountain biking. Mount Nebo State Park Monument Trails in Dardanelle is second and features a 25-mile Monument Trail system. Pinnacle Mountain State Park near Little Rock has almost a dozen trails and is the third Monument Trail system. Four of the trails are rated difficult and very difficult.

## Road Cycling in Arkansas

Arkansas's beautiful, natural scenery lends itself quite nicely if road cycling is more your style. The **Razorback Regional Greenway** is a 72-mile round trip primarily off-road, shared-use trail connecting the downtowns of Fayetteville, Johnson, Springdale, Lowell, Rogers and Bentonville. The ride is suitable for all skill levels and the surface is skinny-tire friendly.

The **Arkansas River Trail** is an 88-mile loop through the diverse geographies of Central Arkansas's metropolitan area, including Little Rock, North Little Rock, Maumelle and Conway. The shared use trails provide opportunities for all fitness levels and interests. More than 5,000 acres of federal, state and local parkland were used to create the trail.

In Rogers a natural surface bike park, **The Railyard**, has a variety of elements that will suit riders of any skill level. Unique to Arkansas and attracting visitors from adjoining states, the slope style park is a cross between BMX and mountain biking. Each of the four lines has an expanding difficulty level. A paved trail to Lake Atalanta Park and an off road to Lake Atalanta or Pleasant Ridge trails depart from The Railyard.

## Arkansas Events

Throughout the year, Arkansas communities and organizers host more than two dozen mountain bike events and more than 15 road events. Throughout the bicycling world, the majority of events have been cancelled or postponed until 2021. Here are just a few to get you thinking about 2021 and beyond.

Level 2 Certification of the IMBA is a regional event hosted in Bentonville with additional events taking place in Rogers. Entrances to mountain and paved trails from The Railyard

Hobbs Mountain Hidden Diversity Trail System



Little Rock Big Dam Bridge



are a nice addition to any competition.

Rogers Cycling Festival features several road races and mountain bike events around downtown Rogers. The event draws competitors and enthusiasts from throughout the central region with races for the high-level rider and fun, family rides, too. USA Cycling has sanctioned a three-race Omnium option for competitive cyclists. You have to love the name Big Dam Bridge 100, Arkansas's largest cycling tour. Elevated 90 feet above the Arkansas River the Big Dam Bridge connects more than 14 miles of riverside trails in Little Rock and North Little Rock. The Big Dam Bridge is 14-feet wide and 1,226 feet in length.

Looking for more information? Visit online at [arkansas.com/cycling](http://arkansas.com/cycling). While you're there, download the Arkansas Cycling Guide. It's the perfect place to discover cycling in The Natural State. **SPG**



# Arkansas's Lakes are a Joy to Experience

*With Arkansas's mild year-round climate and 600,000 acres of lakes, water sports and recreation are popular activities for all ages*

By David Bodle



Lake Catherine Canoe Club  
All photos courtesy of Arkansas Tourism



**R**egardless of where your event takes you in Arkansas, there's certain to be a lake nearby with all the vacation amenities you'll require. Here are a few activities groups will love.

### Beaver Lake

Located in the Ozark Mountains of Northwest Arkansas, Beaver Lake is a manmade reservoir with 487 miles of shoreline. With a wide variety of trees, natural caves and soaring limestone bluffs, the scenery is spectacular. An array of recreational facilities around the lake has attracted millions of visitors since its completion in 1966.

Swimming beaches, picnic areas, hiking trails, boat launching ramps and seven full-service marina concessions welcome visitors. There are 12 developed parks around the lake, each with modern campsites. Resort and hotel/motel accommodations are nearby. A popular stop for national bass tournaments and other fishing tournaments assure the casual angler there are fish to be had.

### Greers Ferry Lake

Sixty miles north of Little Rock, you'll find Greers Ferry Lake, a reservoir formed by the Greers Ferry Dam. The reservoir is actually two lakes connected by a water-filled gorge called the Narrows. The two lakes have a combined shoreline of 340 miles. In the 1800s, the valley town of Higden was constantly flooded. The land was purchased and the town was moved to high ground nearby. The valley was then allowed to flood and a dam was built and the reservoir formed.

The lake provides a wide variety of recreational activities to visitors and residents. Boating, fishing, cliff diving, swimming and scuba diving are popular. A favorite year-round fishing spot for rainbow trout is the cool water that comes from under the dam. Camping at the lake and along the Little Red River is available.

### Lake Dardanelle

The 34,000-acre Lake Dardanelle has Lake Dardanelle State Park on two sides: one in Russellville and the other in Dardanelle. Both provide picnic facilities, boat ramps, pavilions and playgrounds. At the Russellville area site, there's a visitor center with six aquariums on display, natural and cultural displays and a gift shop.

Nearby is a covered barrier-free fishing pier. There's also a fishing tournament weigh-in pavilion that speaks volumes to the lake's quality of fishing. As with all Arkansas state parks, the staff at Lake Dardanelle State Park offers interpretive programs. There are nature talks and guided hikes, kayaking and lake tours and demonstrations. There's also camping and an outdoor amphitheater for evening slide shows and movies.

### Lake Ouachita

A reservoir created by damming the Ouachita River in 1953, Lake Ouachita is both the largest Arkansas lake with more than 690 miles of shoreline and one of the state's most popular. Located near Hot Springs, Lake Ouachita State Park is surrounded by the picturesque Ouachita Mountains. The park's visitor center has exhibits and interpretive programs, including guided hikes, eagle cruises and kayak tours.

Lake Dardanelle



Lake Ouachita tour with Stacy Hurst, cabinet secretary of the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism





The clean, cool water brings anglers looking for largemouth and smallmouth bass, crappie, walleye, bream, catfish and striped bass. Scuba divers can explore rare jellyfish and sponges that are found in very few freshwater lakes. Swimming, boating and kayaking are also popular with rentals and supplies for the latter are available at the marinas. Campsites are available with many on the water and eight cabins overlooking the lake.

## DeGray Lake

A reservoir on the Caddo River, the dam construction was completed in 1972, resulting in DeGray Lake's 207 miles of shoreline. In 1974, DeGray Lake Resort State Park was opened. Near Hot Springs and Little Rock, the lake is accessible on the eastern shore just eight miles from Arkadelphia along Scenic Byway 7. The 96-room lodge offers stunning views of DeGray Lake along with first-class lodging and amenities. Eighty-one campsites and three Rent-A-Yurts complete the accommodation options.

An 18-hole golf course complex, disc golf, lodge swimming pool, indoor hot tub and fitness room are available. World-class mountain biking trails are close by, while hiking trails and horseback riding are available in the park. Swimming beaches and bicycle rentals are other DeGray offerings. Finding the lake's trophy-winning stripers, crappie, largemouth bass and catfish begins at the full-service marina for bait and tackle, fuel and boat rentals including kayaks. The park's staff provides great interpretative programs, including sunset cruises, snorkeling trips, guided hiking or birding tours and more.

## Lake Catherine

A small 1,940-acre lake created in the 1920s with the building of the Remmel Dam, Lake Catherine soon became a popular tourist destination due to its proximity to Hot Springs. The Remmel Dam is listed on the National

Register of Historic Places. Lake Catherine State Park is located on the lake.

There's a full-service marina at the park with year-round boat rentals available and open in the summer for fuels, snacks and bait. There is a launch area adjacent to the marina along with picnic areas and playgrounds. A well-marked Falls Branch Trail hike passes the Falls Creek Falls. Cabins overlook the lake and have access to a private fishing pier. The park also has campsites, six primitive tent sites, a Rent-A-Camp and Rent-A-Yurt. The park's staff offers hikes, lake tours and other interpretative programs. Seasonal guided horseback rides are available.

Bull Shoals Lake in northern Arkansas provides world-class trout fishing and great hiking trails. In the southwestern region of the state, Millwood Lake's boat lanes through submerged timber and marshes make for serious bass fishing. Norfolk Lake near Mountain Home has great fresh water fishing, along with every other popular water sport. Surrounded by the Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge, Lake Jack Lee is a popular south-central Arkansas birding, fishing and camping destination.

Lake Maumelle is just 10 miles from Little Rock and is a popular fishing, boating, canoeing and kayaking destination. The oldest Corps of Engineers Arkansas project, Nimrod Lake in western Arkansas, is a popular fishing destination. Lake Hamilton, near Hot Springs, is a destination with a variety of accommodations and recreational opportunities. Just north of Murfreesboro, Lake Greeson provides wonderful scenery and recreation in each of its 15 parks. Lake Chicot is adjacent to the Mississippi River and at 20 miles in length is Arkansas's largest natural lake.

Ready to get your toes wet in one of Arkansas's wonderful lakes? Start planning your visit at [arkansas.com](http://arkansas.com). **SPG**



# ARKANSAS SPORTS

The sales section of Arkansas Tourism, in collaboration with the Arkansas Association of Convention and Visitors

Bureaus, promote The Natural

State as a prime sports destination in the United States. Professional, collegiate, interscholastic, amateur and youth events are all welcome. Arkansas is home to outstanding destinations, sites and venues that enhance recruiting efforts and support events coming to the state. Sports tourism enhances the quality of life for residents of Arkansas and presents a welcoming place to visit and play for visitors. The 13 partners of Arkansas Tourism share a common goal of assuring sporting events will achieve their greatest success.



# BENTONVILLE

KNOWN AS THE MOUNTAIN BIKE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD, BENTONVILLE IS A TOWN WHERE PROGRESS MEETS HISTORY AND SPORTS AND ARTS MEET INNOVATION.

## Bentonville Tiger Athletic Complex



## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. Bentonville Community Center Pool, fitness center, basketball

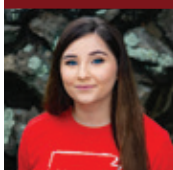
This 80,000-square-foot community center is home to a natatorium with a leisure pool and multiple water slides, a competition quality pool, pool party room, gymnasium, fitness center with more than 80 pieces of fitness equipment, indoor running track, locker rooms and community banquet rooms.

### 2. Memorial Park Baseball, softball, tennis, biking

Memorial Park is home to several sporting facilities, including a tennis complex with 12 lighted courts, five lighted baseball fields, six lighted softball fields and four T-ball fields. The soccer complex has seven lighted soccer fields and two multi-purpose fields. It has two basketball courts, four lighted sand volleyball courts, one multiuse skate and bike part, and an aquatic center featuring an Olympic size pool and a separate diving pool with a water slide. The park is also connected to the Slaughter Pen Hollow mountain bike trail system via the Ravine Trail.

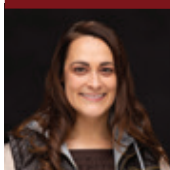
### 3. Bentonville Tiger Athletic Complex Baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball, soccer, track, skateboarding

This complex has numerous facilities, including Bentonville Tiger Stadium, a college-like stadium, and indoor practice facility. It seats 6,000 people and it covers 232,000 square feet. Tiger Arena features three courts, one arena and two auxiliary gyms with a hardwood surface. There is also a track/soccer stadium; championship softball field; Philips Park, a 40-acre facility home to Bentonville High School and American Legion baseball teams.



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# CONWAY

WITH MORE THAN 1,200 HOTEL ROOMS, CONWAY HAS PLENTY OF SPACES FOR YOU TO REST YOUR HEAD AFTER ENJOYING A LONG DAY AT A TOURNAMENT.



Conway Station Park

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. Conway Station Park Baseball

A top park in the state, Conway Station Park is home to eight fields with a 225-foot fence, while the final field features a 350-foot fence, giving sluggers an impressive challenge to aim for. This massive park is also equipped with its own concession stand, heated/cooled bathrooms, maintenance shed, and a beautiful pond.

### 2. City of Colleges Park Softball

The gorgeous layout of this lovely award-winning park in Conway allows enough room for five entire softball fields. After being completed in 2009, City of Colleges Park has become known as one of the top softball parks in the area. It also features a playground for children to enjoy. This park is also home to Central Baptist College, St. Joseph High School, and Homeschool softball.

### 3. Conway Tennis Center Tennis

This beautiful tennis center has eight courts where lessons, leagues, events and reservations are available for players to hone their tennis skills. If a reservation is made, the Conway Tennis Center even rents out ball machines for a small fee. The center is made up of eight courts surrounding two smaller buildings with bathrooms and lounging areas.

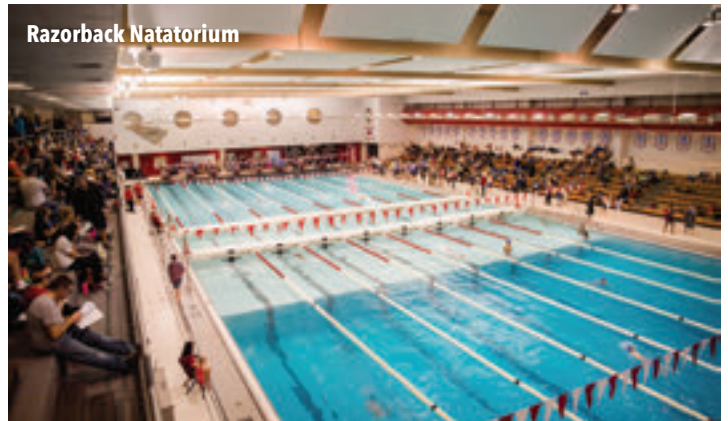


#### CONWAY CVB

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# FAYETTEVILLE

FAYETTEVILLE IS MORE THAN A CITY. IT'S AN EXPERIENCE. WITH A SLEW OF BIG-TIME SPORTS, FAYETTEVILLE IS A GREAT PLACE TO HOLD A TOURNAMENT.



Razorback Natatorium

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. Kessler Regional Park Soccer, baseball, mountain-biking, hiking

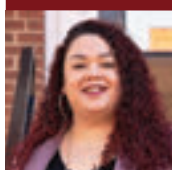
This regional park is home to six lighted soccer, four lighted baseball fields, and two restroom/concession buildings. On its 620 acres, the park is also home to historic Kessler Mountain. The park operates as a regional sports park with popular areas for mountain-bikers and hikers, with more than 10 miles of natural-surface trails.

### 2. Baum Walker Stadium Baseball

Large enough for more than 10,000 visitors, Baum Walker Stadium is home to the University of Arkansas baseball team. This stadium won Baseball America's poll of best college facilities in 1998 and took second in the same poll five years later. Baum Walker Stadium has hosted five NCAA Regionals and a NCAA Super Regional and has undergone three renovations including the enclosure of hitting and pitching cages and adding 2,600 chair back seats.

### 3. Donald W. Reynolds Razorback Stadium Football

Donald W. Reynolds Razorback Stadium houses the University of Arkansas football team. Following a major \$110 million renovation project prior to the 2001 season, the stadium's capacity was increased to 80,000. The east concourse is "Championship Alley" with displays of conference championships, the 1964 national title and every football letterman. The south end zone concourse is "All-American Alley" and is dedicated to Razorbacks All-Americans.

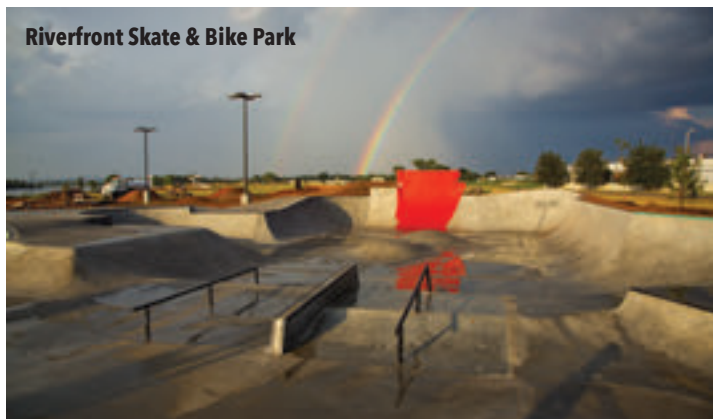


#### EXPERIENCE FAYETTEVILLE

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# FORT SMITH

WHEN YOU AREN'T ENJOYING A SPORTING EVENT, YOU CAN RELIVE HISTORY THROUGH STORIES AND RE-ENACTMENTS OF OUTLAWS, LAWMEN AND SOLDIERS IN FORT SMITH.



## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. Ben Geren Regional Park

**Soccer, softball, tennis, volleyball, disc golf, biking**

This picturesque park is home to the largest disc golf course in the area, 12 soccer fields, 10 softball fields, six lighted tennis courts, three sand volleyball courts, and plenty more. This regional park has its own 7.4 miles of paved biking trails and 14.10 miles of rough trails for mountain bikers. Torrairie Lake is also on the property and covers almost 42 acres of the park.

### 2. Fort Smith Convention Center

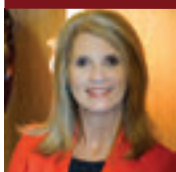
**Volleyball, dance**

Located at the center of historic downtown Fort Smith, the convention center resides within minutes of more than 3,400 hotel rooms and just steps from the best shopping, dining, attractions and live entertainment in the city. The convention center offers 116,800 square feet of practical and flexible event coordinating space, and is also home to the ArcBest Corporation Performing Arts Center. The center contains a 40,000-square-foot exhibit hall, eight standard meeting rooms, planning/event services and more.

### 3. Riverfront Skate & Bike Park

**Skateboard, bikes**

Still freshly finished from the Fall of 2018, this 12,000-square-foot park is perfect for people of all talent levels. The park features a great view of the Arkansas River, pump tracks, a 12-foot vertical wall, a Plexiglas wall, art as skating apparatuses, and more. The Riverfront Skate & Bike Park even has a bridge that connects it to the Greg Smith River Trail. This park is great for beginners and even more advanced level skaters and bikers.

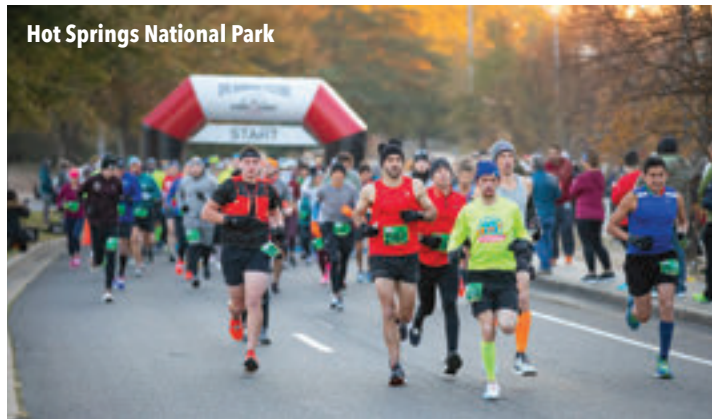


#### FORT SMITH CVB

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# HOT SPRINGS

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## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. Bank OZK Arena

**Basketball, concerts**

This arena seats 6,300 but has multiple purposes. Bank OZK Arena hosts various sporting events such as the Arkansas Activities Association's High School Basketball Championship, and also hosts concerts. The arena was opened with a concert by Tony Bennett in 2003 and has hosted the Great American Conference's Women's Volleyball Championship since 2013.

### 2. Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort

**Racing**

This massive resort, which is one of the largest hospitality investments in the history of the state, features some of the finest thoroughbred racing in the area, a 4-star hotel and spa, multi-purpose event center, a massive gaming area and more. The expanded casino is on schedule to open in early 2021 with an additional 28,000 square feet of slots, table games and a new high limits area.

### 3. Majestic Park

**Baseball, softball**

A baseball complex specifically designed for youth baseball and softball tournaments, Majestic Park features five fields. Three of the fields are 225 feet to center field, lighted, and fenced with turf infields and stationary mounds. The other two fields are 200 feet and 400 feet to center field and are also lighted and fenced. Majestic Park is clean, and its dugouts are covered. This park is one of the best in its area with covered grandstand seating and a covered playground.



#### VISIT HOT SPRINGS

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# JONESBORO

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Joe Mack Campbell Sports Complex

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. Craighead Forest Park

**Basketball, hiking, disc golf, softball, volleyball, fishing**

This 770-acre park opened in 1937 and in the last 20 years, the park has gone through numerous renovations improving the playgrounds (4) and RV campgrounds (41 spaces). Craighead features many popular outdoor activities such as basketball, hiking, disc golf, softball, volleyball, mountain biking, camping and fishing.

### 2. Joe Mack Campbell Sports Complex

**Baseball**

The Joe Mack Campbell Sports Complex is home to 14-stunning baseball fields. Right off Interstate 555, this complex has fields that accommodate athletes from 7U to 14U leagues. Ten of the 14 fields have turf infields and manicured grass outfields for 7U-12U teams. The complex also has its own batting cages for ball players to practice their swings before games. Spectators can enjoy watching the ball games in designated picnic areas around the complex.

### 3. Southside Softball Complex

**Softball**

The Southside Softball Complex hosts the Mountain Dew Grand Slam Classic, the oldest youth tournament in the state of Arkansas. The complex has six batting cages and 10 softball fields, split between four pavilions. The softball complex also has two large and fully equipped concession stands for athletes and spectators to enjoy food at the ballpark. The fields are available day or night with updated lighting system installed in 2018.

# LITTLE ROCK

THE NATURAL STATE'S CAPITAL CITY, LITTLE ROCK IS HOME TO FABULOUS SHOPPING, IMPRESSIVE ART GALLERIES AND SOME OF THE FINEST DINING IN ARKANSAS.



Jack Stephens Center

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. Rebsamen Tennis Center

**Tennis**

The Rebsamen Tennis Center is a tennis player's utopia. Open year round, the tennis center offers 17 lighted courts, three lighted backboards and is a past recipient of the USA's National Public Facility of the Year Award. Rebsamen hosts Adult and Junior Arkansas tournaments, and the tennis center has hosted USA Southern Region tournaments and an annual USA Men's Pro Circuit Tournament.

### 2. Jack Stephens Center

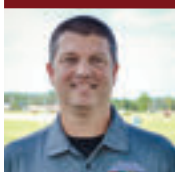
**Basketball, wrestling**

The \$25-million Jack Stephens Center is a state-of-the-art 5,600-seat, multi-purpose arena at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. The Stephens Center hosts the school's men's and women's basketball, women's volleyball, the Boy's and Girl's State High School Wrestling Tournament, regional dance and cheer competitions, and the U.S. National Baton Twirling Championships.

### 3. Burns Park

**Soccer, lacrosse, tennis**

At 1,700 acres, Burns Park is Arkansas's largest municipal park. The Burns Park Soccer Complex boasts 17 irrigated fields with tournament lighting on seven fields and 1,500 parking spaces. The complex has hosted several US Youth Soccer Region 3 Tournaments and the 2008 USYS National Tournament. The Burns Park Tennis Center has 24 lighted outdoor courts, six lighted indoor courts and has hosted state and regional tournaments and a Davis Cup Tournament!



## JONESBORO PARKS AND RECREATION

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# NORTH LITTLE ROCK

NATURAL BEAUTY MIXED WITH A BUSTLING SOCIAL AND DINING SCENE MAKES NORTH LITTLE ROCK A FABULOUS DESTINATION FOR TOURNAMENT PLANNERS AND ATHLETES.



## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. North Little Rock High School

**Football, baseball, basketball, softball, wrestling**

North Little Rock High School opened multiple new facilities in the 2015-16 school year, including a brand new 5,000-seat stadium and track which is utilized for football. Along with the stadium is a fitness center, locker rooms, a weight room and a wrestling room.

### 2. NorthShore Park

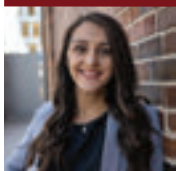
**Baseball, softball, tennis**

Northshore Park is a 3.3-acre park in a residential area in North Little Rock. The park has a playground as well as open grass spaces for picnics or outdoor events. There is also a baseball backstop ready for athletes of all ages to play baseball, softball or kickball. Along with the ball field, the area also holds one tennis court on the grounds. The park has miles of trails perfect for runners.

### 3. Burns Park

**Soccer, golf, baseball, tennis, frisbee, BMX**

The premier soccer complex of the South, Burns Park Soccer Complex contains 17 irrigated fields located between White Bayou and the Arkansas River. The complex features tournament lighting on one quadrant, Stadium Field, pavilions and 1,500 parking spaces. Sitting on 135 acres of preserved wetland, Burns Park is home to three-mile hiking and biking trails, trees and plenty of scenic beauty. The 1,700 acres of Arkansas' largest urban municipal park offers two 18-hole golf courses, a baseball complex, softball complex, Bonzai BMX track, the Burns Park Soccer Complex, a tennis center, playgrounds, camping and a seasonal amusement park.



## NORTH LITTLE ROCK CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

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# PINE BLUFF

THIS ARKANSAS DELTA CITY IS EXPERIENCED IN HOSTING A VARIETY OF SPORTING EVENTS. BE SURE TO ENJOY THE MANY MUSEUMS AND ATTRACTIONS PINE BLUFF HAS TO OFFER.



## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. Pine Bluff Aquatics Center

**Swimming**

Located in the heart of Pine Bluff, the \$11 million 36,000-square-foot center offers first class facilities including an eight-lane, 25-yard short course competition pool with water maintained at 82 degrees, state-of-the-art timing scoreboard, a therapy pool, water sports area, and can accommodate up to 1,600 people.

### 2. Taylor Field Baseball Stadium

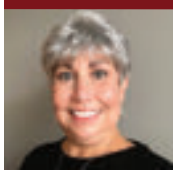
**Baseball**

Taylor Field Baseball Stadium is a regulation-size baseball field featuring a U-shaped grandstand that holds 1,800 seats behind home plate. The stadium was constructed in 1939 and is listed on the National Register of Historic places. It seats 2,400 and reaches 315 feet to the right and left field foul poles, 360 feet in left centerfield, and 390 feet to the deep corner in centerfield.

### 3. Pine Bluff Convention Center

**Basketball, gymnastics, wrestling, boxing**

Home of the world-renowned King Cotton Holiday Classic basketball tournament, this impressive center features a 23,000-square-foot arena with tiered seating for up to 7,600. Recent upgrades include the latest in audio visual technology such as overhead communications module with live video feed, replay, and broadcast, 12-foot videoboards, 18-foot digital scorer's table, NCAA-approved lighting, renovated restrooms and dressing rooms, and adjoining concourses with flat-screen monitors and concession stands.



## EXPLORE PINE BLUFF

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# ROGERS

THIS VIBRANT OUTDOOR COMMUNITY FEATURES GLISTENING LAKES, MUSEUMS OVERFLOWING WITH ARTWORK, AND A VARIETY OF RESTAURANTS FOR ALL TASTES.



Veterans Memorial Park

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. Rogers Regional Sports Park *Softball, baseball, kickball*

Rogers Regional Sports Park features six baseball/softball fields. Each field has a water fountain in every dugout and a designated warm-up area for each team. The park has a central concession stand and is linked to the Rogers trail system.

### 2. Veterans Memorial Park *Soccer, baseball, softball, football, quidditch, lacrosse, rugby, kickball*

Veterans Memorial Park features two baseball fields, two softball fields, five grass multi-purpose fields, and one turf multi-purpose field. Amenities include grills, pavilions, picnic tables, sand volleyball courts, a pond, and the park is connected to the Rogers trail system.

### 3. Beaver Lake *Fishing, boating, swimming, scuba diving, kayaking*

Beaver Lake, a 28,370-acre freshwater lake, is located in the beautiful Ozark Mountains and is a popular place to boat, fish, scuba dive, canoe, wake board, kayak and swim. It is also nationally renowned for bass fishing and has become a destination for fishing tournaments. The lake features a 487-mile natural coastline as well as caves and lovely groves of trees and limestone bluffs. There are more than 2,000 acres of campground and more than 650 individual campsites. Ten miles from the lake, Rogers has 21 hotels for groups of all sizes.

# RUSSELLVILLE

SITUATED NEAR THE ARKANSAS RIVER, THIS CITY OFFERS 14 PARKS, SOCCER, SOFTBALL AND BASEBALL COMPLEXES AND PLENTY OF OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES.



Lake Dardanelle State Park

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. Russellville Soccer Complex *Soccer, hiking*

Russellville Soccer Complex has multiple soccer pitches for tournament play and plenty of open space for outdoor activities. The park has a 1.1-mile trail that can be used for running and walking. The path is also paved so it's ADA accessible. The soccer complex added lights in 2017.

### 2. Lake Dardanelle State Park *Fishing, hiking, camping*

This park is located in two areas on Lake Dardanelle, a 34,300 acre reservoir on the Arkansas River. It features a fishing pier, boardwalk trail and visitor center with five aquariums and the Lakeview Room meeting facility. There are 57 campsites in the Russellville area of the park. The park is also a National Park Service-certified site on the Trail of Tears water route.

### 3. M.J. Hickey Park *Baseball, softball, swimming*

The park is home to a seven-field baseball complex that features three lighted pavilions, one with restrooms, 10 picnic tables and a 50-meter municipal swimming pool. The baseball and softball fields all feature benches, group barbecue grills and picnic tables so fans can eat heartily while enjoying the action.



#### VISIT ROGERS

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#### RUSSELLVILLE TOURISM & VISITORS CENTER

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# SPRINGDALE

ENJOY A WIDE VARIETY OF SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND FLAVORS IN THIS SCENIC TOWN, ALONG WITH A MULTITUDE OF HISTORICAL SITES AND CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS.



The Jones Center

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. C.L. "Charlie" and Willie George Park *Baseball, softball, football, soccer, tennis, walking*

This park features several amenities including one lighted football field, three lighted tennis courts, four artificial turf baseball fields with concessions, six soccer fields, a dog park, a paved walking trail, two pavilions, play structures and a splash pad open daily.

### 2. The Jones Center *Skating, swimming, fitness*

This state-of-the-art 220,000-square-foot recreation, community and event center is located in the heart of Northwest Arkansas. This massive facility houses a year-round ice arena, junior-Olympic-sized lap pool, activity pool with a slide, world-class bike park, basketball court, fitness center, indoor track, conference center and chapel/auditorium. Also located in the center is a cafe with a menu designed in collaboration with local partners.

### 3. Arvest Ballpark *Baseball*

Arvest Ballpark is an award-winning outdoor baseball stadium which opened in 2008. It is home to the Northwest Arkansas Naturals, the Class AA affiliate of the Kansas City Royals. The stadium features 6,500 seats for fans in the grandstand seating bowl with room for several thousand more on the outfield berms. The stadium also features wide expanses for non-baseball staging and a parking lot equipped with ample power for festival needs.



## SPRINGDALE ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION COMMISSION

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479-872-2222  
bill@chamber.springdale.com

# TEXARKANA

UNIQUE IN THAT IT STRADDLES TWO STATES, TEXAS AND ARKANSAS, THIS CITY HAS A WIDE ARRAY OF RESTAURANTS, SHOPPING AND A BUSTLING NIGHTLIFE.



Ed Worrell Memorial Baseball Park

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### 1. Ed Worrell Memorial Baseball Park *Baseball*

Ed Worrell Park in Texarkana has 115 acres of recreational land area with amenities including seven lighted baseball fields, running/jogging trails, parking, restrooms and two concession stands. It features concessions, off-street parking and is located near the Texarkana Regional Airport.

### 2. Ermer Dansby Pondexter Sports Complex *Baseball, softball*

The Ermer Dansby Pondexter Sports Complex is home to five fields, a walking trail, playground, a huge pavilion, concession stand, air-conditioned bathrooms, plenty of shade for a picnic, and lots of parking. Guests appreciate the digital scoreboards courtesy of Youth Scoreboards of Arkansas as well as the convenience of using debit/credit cards at the concession stand. Players and coaches enjoy the playing surface, new lights and 200-foot tournament fences.

### 3. Texarkana Arkansas Convention Center *Conventions*

Nestled in southwest Arkansas, just one mile from the Texas border in Texarkana, the Arkansas Convention Center is the premier location for events in its area. Its 10,000-square foot state-of-the-art facility was newly constructed in 2014, and is conveniently located on Interstate 30, just miles from I-49 south. The ballroom can be divided into four breakout rooms and it features a brightly lit gallery space that connects the four rooms.



## CITY OF TEXARKANA ARKANSAS

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# 2021 NORTH CAROLINA GUIDE

## Tar Heel State Is an Esports Leader

NC Is Filled With Arenas and Venues Perfect for Esports Events

## An Outdoor Utopia

National Forests Abound With Recreational Opportunities

**SPG**

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SportsNC and its winning team of partners invite you to choose North Carolina for your future sporting event. Anchored by Visit North Carolina, North Carolina Amateur Sports, and the North Carolina Sports Association, SportsNC channels the expertise of local sports commissions and authorities, chambers of commerce, and convention and visitors bureaus into helping you create tailored experiences and ensuring that every tournament, game and trip is a success.

With world-class indoor and outdoor venues, top professional and collegiate teams, and exciting vacation destinations, North Carolina builds the action from your arrival to beyond the final whistle. As your dedicated partner, we will work with you to create unforgettable events and experiences that drive attendance, interest and success for athletes, families and fans.

From amateur events to international championships, North Carolina can provide the perfect location for any sports activity. Situated in the center of the Eastern seaboard, North Carolina is an easy drive for the nearly 39 million potential event participants who live within 300 miles of our mountains, Atlantic coastline and Piedmont landscapes. With international and regional airports, extensive rail service and well-maintained highways, travel to, from and around North Carolina is fast and convenient.

For more information on the wide variety of sports-friendly communities and award-winning venues in North Carolina, please contact [info@sportsnc.com](mailto:info@sportsnc.com).

We look forward to seeing you here soon.

Yours in Sports,

The SportsNC Team  
<https://www.sportsnc.com>



**Dry Falls, a 65-foot waterfall in the Nantahala National Forest, just northwest of Highlands, NC**

Photo courtesy of Visit North Carolina



**Croatan National Forest  
Havelock Trail Over Water**

Photo courtesy of Visit NC



©iStock.com/bgblue

# NORTH CAROLINA

**74** Home to Top Esports Competitions

**76** Excellent National Forests



**Site InSpections**

**78** Wilmington

**80** Mooresville

**81** Cabarrus County

**82** Mecklenburg County

**84** Nash County

**86** Haywood County

**88** Greensboro

**90** Hickory

**92** Greenville-Pitt County

**ON THE COVER:**

Climbing the Looking Glass Rock in  
Pisgah National Forest

Photo courtesy of Meredith Travel Marketing



**Disc Golf Competition at Durham Bulls Athletic Park**

Photo courtesy of NC Amateur Sports



# NORTH CAROLINA IS A LEADER IN ESPORTS COMPETITIONS

*State is filled with arenas and venues that are perfect for hosting esports events*

By Jason Paha

**W**ith the Covid-19 pandemic forcing society to alter its traditional ways of operating, SportsNC members are getting creative with their venues.

From dodgeball on an ice rink to disc golf in minor league baseball parks, North Carolina's venues are being utilized like never before.

One nontraditional sport the Tar Heel State is embracing is esports, as more than a dozen North Carolina universities, colleges and communities now feature esports clubs. Along those lines, multiple North Carolina venues that were built for more classic sporting events have opened for esports tournament competition in recent years. Here are some of those:

## **RALEIGH MAJOR SIX TOURNAMENT**

Last held in 2019, the Raleigh Major Six Tournament took place at the Raleigh Convention Center. The largest Rainbow Six esports event, this tournament gathered 16 of the best Rainbow Six teams from around the world to compete for a prize pool of \$500,000. The event was so popular, VIP and general admission tickets for the six-day competition were sold out.

The tournament, which is comprised of competitors playing Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege, a game featuring an online community of more than 40 million registered players, was the direct result of Raleigh's strategic effort to put the city on the

Bojangles  
Entertainment  
Complex

Photo courtesy of Visit Charlotte

map as a premier global esports destination. With more than a dozen developers and programmers in the region, nationally recognized video game design programs at North Carolina State and Wake Tech, the gaming industry in Raleigh is thriving.

The Raleigh Convention Center, located in the heart of downtown Raleigh, is home to more than 500,000 square feet of space including 20 versatile meeting rooms, a grand 32,000-square-foot ballroom, a mezzanine and a sweeping 150,000-square-foot exhibit hall. Another Raleigh arena that may host esports events is the 19,700-seat PNC Arena in west Raleigh. Home to the NHL's Carolina Hurricanes and the North Carolina State men's basketball team, PNC Arena hosts an impressive array of major sports, concert tours and events every year.

### **DBAP GAMING CHALLENGE**

Durham hosted the inaugural DBAP Gaming Challenge at Durham Bulls Athletic Park. The home to the Durham Bulls Triple-A minor league baseball team, the park seats 10,000 and is considered one of the finest parks in minor league baseball. Opened in 1995, the \$18.5 million ballpark features a number of unique elements, including a left field fence dubbed the Blue Monster, which is reminiscent of Fenway Park's Green Monster in Boston.

The park also has the distinction of being the first minor league baseball facility to host an esports tournament. The DBAP Gaming Challenge unfolded over three days and was fueled by a community of sponsors. The challenge brought together gamers of all ages as they competed for cash and bragging rights while playing games like Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare, Rocket League and Super Smash Bros. The event also featured a myriad of exhibitors and live music.

Located on the campus of North Carolina State University, James T. Valvano Arena at William Neal Reynolds Coliseum is one of the most historic arenas in the country for college athletics. It recently completed a \$35 million renovation and is primed to host esports competitions.

### **TRIANGLE ESPORTS TOURNAMENT**

This competition is a grassroots expo based out of North Carolina's Triangle area (Duke University in Durham, the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University in Raleigh). The tournament is dedicated to creating a safe esports ecosystem while helping the community by working with local gamers and tournament organizers.

TEC directly benefits local communities as all proceeds from the events help fund digital inclusion and literacy efforts in North Carolina offered by local nonprofits Kramden Institute and the Triangle Literacy Council. By partnering together, TLC and Kramden have helped thousands across the area become digitally literate, employable and equipped with technology tools.

The 2020 edition of the tourney took place at the Herbert C. Young Community Center in Cary. This venue contains several areas for recreation programs, special events and meeting rooms. The center houses a double gymnasium

on the lower level for athletic programs and the large, flat space can be used for special events, performances and meetings. The upper level features two meeting rooms with an adjacent kitchen for catering.

### **CAROLINA GAMES SUMMIT**

This hybrid festival of industry speakers, video game tournaments, product promotions, exhibition booths and educational sessions was held in January of 2020 at the Maxwell Center in Goldsboro.

The popular event enables fans to experience the latest games before they are released while also letting them compete against gamers from across the country. Patrons enjoy their favorite platforms including arcade, computer, console, mobile and VR games with both tournament and free play options available.

The Maxwell Center opened in 2018 and in its first year, more than 50,000 guests attended more than 200 events. The center consists of two sprawling wings totaling 66,000 square feet. Its quality rental areas include a 14,500-square-foot ballroom, multiple smaller size rooms, pre-function and post-event space in lobbies and halls and a 9,500-square-foot outdoor courtyard.

### **CHARLOTTE ESPORTS**

A Charlotte-based organization that provides quality LAN tournaments and competitive teams, Charlotte esports also hosts online tournaments, local competitive leagues and global esports coverage.

With Charlotte angling to be the next major hub for professional esports, and with the city being home to facilities like Bojangles Coliseum (an 8,600-seat multipurpose arena) and the Spectrum Center (an NBA arena that seats more than 19,000 and can be expanded to more than 20,000), Charlotte esports is poised to take advantage of the growing esports market.

One of the teams in the Charlotte esports family, the Charlotte Phoenix, are a professional esports organization that was founded in 2019. The Phoenix have competed in several video game and pro leagues including Call of Duty, League of Legends and Rocket League.

### **GREENSBORO PARKS AND RECREATION TOURNAMENT**

While much of the sports world has struggled to adapt to Covid-19, the social distancing involved with esports has helped it thrive amid the pandemic. One such example of this is the Greensboro Parks and Recreation hosted an esports tournament in June 2020. The NBA2K Tournament for PlayStation and Xbox was the department's first esports tournament. Residents played at home on their personal gaming consoles and the tourney involved separate competitions for ages 7-11, 12-15 and 16 and older.

"It's a current trend in parks and recreation," said Quentin Jones, Warnersville Recreation Center supervisor and tournament planner. "We are happy to bring it here to Greensboro. We hope this will be the first of many more. We hope we can work it out where we could do a league with the recreation centers." **SPG**



# LEAFY OASES

## The national forests of North Carolina abound with recreational opportunities

By Randy Mink

**A**t a time when people are looking for fresh air and elbow room, North Carolina's national forests extend the options beyond well-traveled national parks and seashores. Though lacking a marketing push that would propel them onto bucket lists, these vast public lands reward travelers with endless opportunities for quiet walks in the woods, rollicking raft rides on whitewater rivers, and even panning for gold.

Pisgah, Nantahala, Uwharrie and Croatan national forests all beckon the adventurer eager to commune with Mother Nature. Here are brief looks at what each wilderness empire offers:

### PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST

With two tracts of land in the mountains of western North Carolina, Pisgah National Forest is easily accessible from Asheville, Blowing Rock, Linville Falls, Grandfather Mountain and other tourist hotspots along the Blue Ridge Parkway, one of America's great scenic byways. It's a kingdom of mile-high peaks, heavily forested slopes, cascading waterfalls, rivers for rafting and hundreds of miles of hiking trails, including part of the Appalachian Trail. Mountain biking is a Pisgah specialty, and several outfitters offer rentals and guided rides.

U.S. Highway 276, which runs for 37 miles between Brevard and Waynesville, is part of Forest Heritage National Scenic Byway and leads to various attractions, both natural and manmade. The Cradle of Forestry in America Historic Site, 14 miles north of Brevard, showcases original log buildings on the rustic campus of Biltmore Forestry School, the nation's first such school, which was started in 1898 by Carl Schenk on land owned by tycoon George W. Vanderbilt. At the Forest Discovery Center, visitors can see a movie about the school and birth of science-based forest management, enjoy hands-on exhibits, ride a firefighter helicopter simulator and go "underground" to see which animals live under the forest floor.

The Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education and Bobby N. Setzer State Fish Hatchery, also north of Brevard via U.S. 276, produces brook, rainbow and brown trout for release in some 60 local streams. Visitors strolling along the 50 large tanks, called raceways, can observe and feed the fish. Other features include a film on wildlife conservation, wildlife exhibits and aquariums with fish, amphibians and reptiles.

Looking Glass Falls is one of the most popular waterfalls in North Carolina. A walkway from the parking lot leads down to the falls, whose name comes from Looking Glass

Photo courtesy of Visit North Carolina



Sunset Camping at Badin Lake,  
Uwharrie National Forest

Rock, a huge granite monolith that glistens like a mirror, or looking glass, when water freezes on its side in winter.

Sliding Rock, also reachable via U.S. 276, is a natural waterslide with sheets of cold water that plunge daredevils 60 feet into a seven-foot-deep pool. It's staffed with lifeguards in summer, and personal flotation devices are available for rent.

Pisgah National Forest surrounds 6,684-foot Mount Mitchell, the highest summit east of the Mississippi River. The peak, part of Mount Mitchell State Park, is a five-mile drive from the Blue Ridge Parkway. From the parking area, it's a short but steep hike (100 feet) to the top. The wilderness park, north of Asheville, has camping, hiking trails, picnic areas, a museum and a lookout tower with stunning views. The summit of 5,721-foot Mount Pisgah, visible for miles around and also close to the parkway, is a moderate-to-strenuous climb from the parking lot.

Another Pisgah National Forest crowd-pleaser is Roan Mountain, located 18 miles north of Bakersville. The series of ridges boasts the largest naturally occurring rhododendron garden in the world, a vision in bright pink come mid-June.

## NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST

North Carolina's largest national forest, adjacent to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, anchors the state's far southwestern corner with over 528,000 acres of protected high mountain wilderness near Cherokee and Bryson City. Within the forest, the Nantahala River flows through a gorge that sees only a few hours of sun at mid-day. Nantahala is Cherokee for "land of the noon-day sun."

More than a quarter-million visitors each year come to go rafting or kayaking in Nantahala River Gorge, one of the world's premier whitewater destinations. Outfitters like Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC) do guided raft adventures on the crystal-clear river and have helped Olympians train. In addition, NOC operates thrilling zip line canopy tours. Also in the forest, three picturesque reservoirs are nestled among the mountains, offering boating, water-skiing, fishing, swimming and camping.

The national forest has more than 200 miles of developed hiking trails, including 52 miles of the Appalachian Trail. Horseback riding and mountain biking are big as well.

The area claims dozens of waterfalls, including 411-foot Whitewater Falls, the highest falls in the East. It's accessible via a steep one-mile trail from the overlook. At Glen Falls, the river plunges over a 50-foot ledge, providing a spectacular show.

Much of Nantahala National Forest can be enjoyed from the highway. Both the Waterfall Byway and Cherokee Skyway (a 51-mile stretch known as the "mini Blue Ridge Parkway") wind through hardwood forests, across mountain ridges and alongside river gorges.

Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, near Robbinsville, preserves one of the largest stands of old-growth trees in the eastern United States. Part of Nantahala National Forest, it is a paradise for walkers, with trails that lead beneath giant trees, some more than 300 years old and 100 feet high. The largest tulip poplars exceed 20 feet in circumference and heights of 100 feet. At the center of an easy two-mile trail is a plaque commemorating Joyce Kilmer, a World War I hero and author of the famous poem "Trees." ("I think that I shall never see/A poem lovely as a tree...").

## UWHARRIE NATIONAL FOREST

Covering more than 50,000 hilly acres in the Piedmont region of central North Carolina, Uwharrie is one of America's smaller national forests. Its ecosystems are closely related to those of the Smoky and Blue Ridge ranges to the west, but the pine-forested mountains are significantly lower.

Situated east of Charlotte and south of Greensboro, the forest is traversed by the Uwharrie, Yadkin and Pee Dee rivers. Outfitters such as Uwharrie Hoof & Paddle offer canoe, kayak and stand-up paddleboard rentals. The Uwharrie River, with long pools of flat water and occasional Class I and II whitewater rapids, is ideal for beginners. Wildlife visible along the shores might include otter, deer, osprey, wild turkey and great blue heron. Badin Lake Recreation Area, on the western edge of the forest, has two large campgrounds and water activities like swimming, fishing, boating and paddle boarding.

Major hiking paths running through the forest include the 20-mile Uwharrie National Recreational Trail and 10-mile Dutchman's Trail, both of which begin 10 miles west of Troy and are somewhat strenuous. Points of interest include old homesteads and graveyards. The short and easy Denson's Creek Trail, a 2.3-mile loop, starts two miles east of Troy. Also available are mountain biking and equestrian trails, plus trails for dirt bikes, ATVs and four-wheel-drive vehicles.

As home to the first large gold rush in the United States, the area abounds with mining history, and you'll see ruins of old mines on today's national forest land and in surrounding Montgomery County. Tourists enjoy panning for gold in the Uwharrie River and other streams, and Uwharrie Trails General Store in Troy has the needed supplies for amateur prospectors.

## CROATAN NATIONAL FOREST

Located south of New Bern, the only true coastal national forest in the East consists mostly of pine and swamp hardwoods. Bordered on three sides by coastal rivers and the Bogue Sound, it contains saltwater estuaries, bogs, waterfowl nesting areas and public beaches. Visitor amenities are limited, but there are 40-site campgrounds with shower buildings at Neuse River/Flannery Beach (with two miles of bike trails) and Cedar Point recreation areas.

Alligator and osprey habitats can be seen along the White Oak River and other waterways. Wildlife watchers also may spot black bear, river otter, deer, bobcat, mink and the occasional bald eagle or falcon. Croatan National Forest is home to the carnivorous Venus fly-trap, which traps insects in its leaves and digests them.

The 100-mile, water-based Saltwater Adventure Trail, which nearly circumvents the forest, invites explorers to navigate the coastal tidelands. The forest has eight sites for launching a motor boat, canoe, kayak or stand-up paddle board. Great Lake, surrounded by centuries-old cypress trees, is a popular place to paddle, and there's fishing for crappie, perch and bullhead. White Oak River Outfitters in Maysville rents canoes and kayaks and offers guided tours of area waters.

Hikers can sample the swampy wilderness on two loops of the Tideland National Recreation Trail, which features boardwalks and smooth gravel paths through forest and marsh areas. Interpretive signs tell the story of the landscape and how it is constantly changing. Benches along the way provide rest stops. Take time to watch the herds of fiddler crabs scuttling back and forth to the water's edge. **SPG**



# WILMINGTON, NC

WILMINGTON AND ITS ISLAND BEACHES HAVE BECOME A SOUGHT-AFTER DESTINATION FOR SPORTS PLANNERS THANKS TO A VARIETY OF VENUES AND PLENTY TO SEE AND DO BEFORE AND AFTER THE EVENT

Althea Gibson Tennis Complex



The major east/west interstate artery, I-40, leads to Wilmington and Beaches, which is located halfway between New York and Florida. The destination is also served by Highways 17, 74/76, 117 and 421. Interstate I-95 is 73 miles away.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Althea Gibson Tennis Complex at Empie Park

#### Tennis

The Althea Gibson Tennis Complex has 24 lighted hard courts, a clubhouse and restrooms. Courts are open for public play, while the City of Wilmington offers recreational programs throughout the year, and the Greater Wilmington Tennis Association uses the courts for tournaments and league play.

Ogden Park



Wilmington Convention Center



## Cape Fear Regional Soccer Complex

### Soccer, lacrosse, running

This soccer complex offers seven full-sized soccer fields for challenge and classic soccer leagues, adult leagues and other soccer tournaments. Home to the Cape Fear Soccer Club, this complex also offers the opportunity for other events such as lacrosse and running races.

## Legion Sports Complex

### Football, soccer, baseball, tennis

With more than four acres of paved parking,

this great complex includes Legion Stadium/Jurgenson-Gabriel Field (which hosts football and soccer matches on artificial turf), the Legion Back Field, Buck Hardee Field (baseball), four lit tennis court and the Robert Shipp Pool.

### **Olsen Park** **Baseball, softball**

This city park has five lighted baseball/softball fields along with concession stands and a picnic shelter. It is used to host regional and state athletic tournaments.

### **Long Leaf Park** **Baseball, tennis, sand volleyball, basketball, equestrian**

Located in central New Hanover County, Long Leaf Park includes four Little League baseball fields with lights, four lighted tennis courts, a sand volleyball court and a full-sized basketball court with lights.

### **Wilmington Convention Center** **Cheerleading, dance, gymnastics, martial arts, badminton, volleyball, eSports**

The Wilmington Convention Center is the largest convention center on the North

Carolina coast and can host sports events for up to 2,000 people. The convention center has a 30,000-square-foot exhibit hall, 12,000-square-foot ballroom, 5,784-square-feet of meeting space, 15,000-square-feet of pre-function space, ticket office, concessions and an attached parking deck.

### **Ogden Park** **Tennis, baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, football, skating**

Enjoy the outdoor experience provided at Ogden Park, which features three picnic shelters, restrooms, a playground, an off-leash dog park and more. Tournament planners will enjoy nine tennis courts, three baseball fields, one softball field, a full-size basketball court, three soccer/football fields and a youth football stadium, which are all equipped with lights.



#### **WILMINGTON AND BEACHES CVB**

John Sneed, CSHP  
Vice President of Sales and Services  
910-332-8757  
JSneed@wilmingtonandbeaches.com  
SportsWilmington.com

## **POPULAR ACTIVITIES**

- ▶ Step back in time when you get onboard the **Battleship NORTH CAROLINA**, a WWII-era vessel that faced fierce combat in the Pacific Theater.
- ▶ Climb along the Adventure Reef, witness an albino alligator, wonder at baby sea turtles or feel the smooth skin of a gliding stingray at the **North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher**.
- ▶ The **Jungle Rapids Family Fun Park** features water slides, a wave pool, lazy river, rock climbing, go-karts and more awesome family fun.
- ▶ Get outdoors at **Greenfield Lake Park**, where biking and walking trails, tennis courts, an outdoor amphitheater and boat and kayak rentals all await your next workout.

## **BIKE RACERS & SAND CHASERS**



From IRONMAN North Carolina to Carolina Cup paddle races on the World SUP Tour, Wilmington's hosted many diverse events. Our welcoming year-round weather, breathtaking beaches and spacious riverfront are fan favorites. For planners in search of space best suited for socially-distanced sporting events, we're here for you when the time is right.

From our venues to our walkable River District and three island beaches, consider a fresh possibility in North Carolina and at the coast.

**SportsWilmington.com • 800.650.9064 ext.125**

**Wilmington.c.**  
River District & Island Beaches



# MOORESVILLE, NC

LOCATED 25 MILES NORTH OF CHARLOTTE ON BEAUTIFUL LAKE NORMAN WITH EXCEPTIONAL SPORTS VENUES AND ATTRACTIONS OFF THE FIELD TO MAKE ANY EVENT ONE THEY WILL LOOK FORWARD TO EVERY YEAR



When driving, Mooresville is located off Interstate 77. I-85 is located south of Mooresville, while I-40 is located north of Mooresville. For those traveling by plane, the closest major airport is Charlotte Douglas International Airport.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Get in touch with your wild side at the **Zootastic Park** and **Lazy 5 Ranch**.
- ▶ Fulfill your need for speed at **Pit Indoor Kart Racing** and **GoPro Motorplex**.
- ▶ Adventure through the outdoors at **Lake Norman State Park**.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Talbert Recreation Center

**Basketball, wrestling, volleyball, gymnastics, martial arts**

This 26,000-square-foot facility offers two regulation basketball courts and has hosted basketball, gymnastics, martial arts and wrestling events.

### Edgemoor Park

#### Tennis

This state-of-the-art tennis facility offers seven lighted courts, including a championship court with bleachers and a hitting wall. Edgemoor also has free Wi-Fi, a state-of-the-art playground and two shelter areas. Edgemoor Park has hosted numerous USTA events.

### Mazeppa Park

**Baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse**

This sports complex features a regulation-sized baseball field, three softball fields

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"For 7 years now we have partnered with Leah and her staff to host successful lacrosse tournaments. In my mind Mooresville offers a lot to families with the restaurants, hotels, and beauty of Lake Norman."

— Trent Brown  
Carpetbagger Lacrosse



with portable pitching mounds and 300 foot fences and lights. Six full size soccer fields, two are artificial turf and four are grass and all six have lights. Mazeppa Park also features a 5-mile mountain bike trail.

### Cornelius Road Park

**Softball, baseball, tennis, lacrosse, soccer**

Cornelius Road Park features four baseball and softball fields with dirt infields, portable pitching mounds and 250 foot fences. The park also contains three multipurpose fields for lacrosse and soccer. Six lighted tennis courts, a disc golf course and a walking trail round out this facility.



## VISIT MOORESVILLE

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Executive Director  
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visitmooreville.com

# CABARRUS COUNTY, NC

ONE OF THE TOP MOTORSPORT DESTINATIONS IN THE COUNTRY, CABARRUS COUNTY ALSO FEATURES PLENTY OF GREAT RESTAURANTS, VENUES AND ATTRACTIONS



Frank Liske Park

Just outside of Charlotte is a motorsport fan's dream destination: Cabarrus County. The closest major airport to Cabarrus County is Charlotte Douglas International Airport, which is located 20 minutes southwest of the county.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Cabarrus is home to the **Charlotte Motor Speedway** and several NASCAR racing teams. A motorsports lovers paradise, the Speedway hosts multiple major events including the 2021 Coca-Cola 600.
- ▶ **Concord Mills Mall** is where visitors can get plenty of shopping done with a number of popular brands and stores to choose from including Adidas, Aeropostale, Coach and Forever 21.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### West Cabarrus Turf Complex *Brand new and game-day ready*

West Cabarrus High School Turf Complex is home to three new turf fields including one stadium and two practice fields. Ready for competition, all fields feature T°Cool® evaporative cooling technology and are equipped with lights. These versatile fields are lined for soccer, football, and tic-marked for lacrosse. With three additional stadium fields, Cabarrus County offers a total of six turf fields. All include the same features and are located near each other as well as top attractions and hotels.

### Carolina Courts *Basketball, volleyball, pickleball*

Carolina Courts is Charlotte's premier basketball, volleyball and pickleball facility. This massive indoor facility features 48,000 square feet of available space for various sporting tournaments and event needs.

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"The Team at Cabarrus County CVB have been amazing to work with. With each of our events in Cabarrus County, they have been more than helpful and accommodating from start to finish. Cabarrus County CVB is among the best support team we deal with in the country."

— Kevin Williams  
President



Cabarrus Arena & Events Center

The facility can host large basketball and pickleball tournaments as it features seven full-size basketball courts and 17 possible pickleball courts.

### Cabarrus Arena & Events Center *Consumer shows, sporting events*

Cabarrus Arena & Events Center in Concord is one of the best places to host events in the county. This huge arena can host weddings, banquets, business meetings, the Cabarrus county fair, and plenty of shows and exhibitions. The facility has more than 140,000 square feet and hosts more than 150 events on nearly 300 event days each year.



## VISIT CABARRUS

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# MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NC

HOME TO A DIVERSE POPULATION OF MORE THAN 1 MILLION RESIDENTS, THIS THRIVING COUNTY, WHICH IS HOME TO CHARLOTTE AND ITS PRO TEAMS, IS ABLE TO HOST ANY SPORTS TOURNAMENT

American Legion Memorial Stadium  
(Opening Spring 2021)



With such bustling cities as Charlotte, Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill and Pineville in its boundaries, Mecklenburg County is filled with great amenities and attractions. The county can be reached via I-77, I-85, I-277 and I-485 and it also houses the Charlotte Douglas International Airport.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Mecklenburg County Sportsplex Soccer, football, rugby, lacrosse, field hockey

The Sportsplex in Matthews, 12 miles southeast of Charlotte, is one of the premier athletic facilities in the region as it is home to 11 multiuse fields featuring permanent lighting. Nine fields feature synthetic turf while two fields sport natural grass. Two fields have been installed with football goalposts and only the nine synthetic fields are permanently lined for soccer. They can also

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"The Sportsplex at Matthews is one of the finest venues in the South Region. The Sportsplex has served as the home of the USL Championship Charlotte Independence for the past three years. The facility, along with their outstanding staff, is recognized across the USL as one of the best places to play and train."

— Rich Posipanko, Director of Operations,  
Charlotte Independence  
Professional Soccer Team



Mecklenburg County Sportsplex



Mecklenburg County Sportsplex

Alex Cason

be temporarily lined for other sports including rugby, lacrosse, football and field hockey.

The Sportsplex also contains a 5,000-capacity stadium with a natural grass field, public address system, lights, videoboard, conference room and a balcony overlooking the field. It also houses locker rooms (for home, away and officials). The locker rooms are equipped with lockers, showers, an athletic training room and restrooms. The conference room can be used for meeting space, VIP space and team space. The Sportsplex offers 1,600 parking spaces, event staff, and off-duty officers.

## American Legion Memorial Stadium Football, lacrosse, soccer

This 9,500-seat stadium in the Elizabeth community of Charlotte is located on a complex along with the Grady Cole Center and was the first major spectator sports facility erected by the city of Charlotte. Opened in 1936, Memorial Stadium was the first stadium in Charlotte that could accommodate thousands of visitors.

In 2019, Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation broke ground on a \$31.7 million renovation to the stadium, which will be the new home of the USL Championship Charlotte Independence. The renovation will add new concourse buildings, a memorial, a new scoreboard and other amenities. Historical elements of the stadium, such as the stone wall and ticket booths, will be preserved.

Memorial Stadium has hosted a multitude of local civic events for the community throughout its storied history, from ice shows to beer festivals, making the venue one of the

most recognized and well-visited facilities in the city. The Charlotte Hounds of Major League Lacrosse called Memorial Stadium home from 2012 to 2018. The venue has also hosted several big-name concerts throughout its history including Christina Aguilera, Jimmy Buffett, Hootie and the Blowfish, Pearl Jam and Lynyrd Skynyrd.

### MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION – MEMORIAL STADIUM

Aaron Cheeks  
980-722-2263  
aaron.cheeks@mecknc.gov  
www.parkandrec.com



### MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION – SPORTSPLEX

Matt Whirley  
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matthew.whirley@mecknc.gov  
www.parkandrec.com



## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ **Greenways and Nature Preserves in Mecklenburg County** has 30 miles of nature trails, 7,600 acres of natural resource management, 52 miles of developed greenways and is home to 210 parks and facilities on approximately 21,000 acres of parkland.
- ▶ A shrine to the history and heritage of NASCAR under one roof, the **NASCAR Hall of Fame** features evolving exhibits and interactive experiences.
- ▶ One of the world's finest outdoor facilities, the **U.S. National Whitewater Center** features whitewater rafting, biking, zip lines, live music and craft brews.
- ▶ **Carowinds Amusement Park** features world-class roller coasters, shows and attractions.

# GET ACTIVE IN CHARLOTTE!

Plan your next tournament in Mecklenburg County, home to some of the best facilities in North Carolina. The Mecklenburg County Sportsplex features 11 multiuse fields and a 5,000-capacity stadium while historic American Legion Memorial Stadium is undergoing a \$31.7 million renovation that will transform it into one of the finest, most modern stadiums in the region.

Photo credit: Alex Cason




## CONTACT US TODAY!

980-722-2263 (Memorial Stadium)  
980-314-7539 (Sportsplex)  
www.parkandrec.com






# NASH-ROCKY MOUNT, NC

NASH-ROCKY MOUNT IS YOUR PREMIER DESTINATION FOR FIRST-CLASS SPORTS EVENTS AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURE IN THE TAR HEEL STATE



Rocky Mount Sports Complex

Garry E Hodges



Rocky Mount Event Center

Gerry Brabham



Nash County Miracle Park

Nash-Rocky Mount is easily accessible by both land and air. If you're flying in, Raleigh-Durham International Airport is located 60 miles to the west and primarily serves the Raleigh, Durham and the Research Triangle region of North Carolina. If you're driving, Interstate-95 runs through the heart of the county to the west of Rocky Mount, while U.S. Route 64 runs east and west on the way to or from Raleigh.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

**Rocky Mount Sports Complex**  
*Soccer, baseball, softball, disc golf, basketball, volleyball, lacrosse, football*

Nash-Rocky Mount's leading sports facility, Rocky Mount Sports Complex is dedicated to providing the highest level of customer service by offering first-class facilities, outstanding staff and a professional level of maintenance. This 143-acre facility is home to an assortment of recreational programming.

The complex includes six youth baseball fields, four interchangeable baseball and softball fields, one championship baseball field, eight soccer/lacrosse fields, a football field, a professional disc golf course, two outdoor basketball courts, outdoor volleyball courts, picnic shelters and a walking trail.

**Rocky Mount Event Center**  
*Cheerleading, dance, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, pickleball*

Rocky Mount Event Center is the ultimate sports tourism, events and entertainment

destination in North Carolina. The facility opened in the fall of 2018 and has eight basketball courts and 16 volleyball courts.

This 165,000-square-foot, multimillion-dollar facility is dedicated to providing spectacular event, tournament and competition experiences.

### Rocky Mount Athletic Stadium Football

Part of Rocky Mount Sports Complex, Rocky Mount Athletic Stadium seats more than 5,000 spectators and features a natural grass playing field, team field house, large press box and elevated coaching areas. Further amenities at the stadium include an upgraded athletic training facility, a private locker room, weight training area and the Vernon T. Bradley, Jr. Practice Field.

### Nash County Miracle Park at Coopers Baseball, softball

The anticipated Grand Opening for this park will be in the spring of 2021. It has two 225' baseball fields and two 300' softball

fields. This park also has a state of the art All Inclusive playground, two soccer fields, two basketball courts, walking trail, and a special events lawn.



#### ROCKY MOUNT SPORTS COMPLEX

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#### ROCKY MOUNT EVENT CENTER

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#### NASH COUNTY RECREATION & SENIOR SERVICES

Thomas Gillespie, Parks & Recreation  
Director, CPRP, CYSA  
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Thomas.Gillespie@nashcountync.gov

### POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ The **Imperial Center for Arts and Sciences** gives you a close-up look at alligator and crocodile skulls, while its galleries feature more than 400 works of art from around North Carolina.
- ▶ Explore the region's only beer incubator and tour seven on-campus breweries at **Rocky Mount Mills**.
- ▶ Catch a live show at **The Rocky Mount Event Center**.
- ▶ Hike the walking trails at **City Lake** on your quest to find an exotic waterfowl.
- ▶ All of your boating and fishing needs can be met with a trip to **Tar River Reservoir**.



Plan your next tournament in Nash County at one of our many professionally built tournament facilities. Whether you are in need of six youth playing fields, four softball/multipurpose fields, one championship baseball field, eight soccer/lacrosse fields, or eight basketball/sixteen volleyball courts, we have you covered.

**Contact us today!** 1104 Falls Road, Rocky Mount, NC 27804 | 800.849.6825





# HAYWOOD COUNTY, NC

THIS LOVELY PORTION OF THE COUNTRY OFFERS A TRUE AUTHENTIC OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE FILLED WITH ADVENTURE, FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES AND UNIQUE EVENT LOCATIONS

Blue Ridge Parkway



Haywood County, home to the Great Smoky Mountains, is located 20 miles west of Asheville, 20 minutes east of Cherokee and two hours and 30 minutes from Atlanta. Haywood County resides around 30 minutes from the Asheville Regional Airport, which offers daily flights across the country.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Lake Junaluska

**Running, swimming, canoeing, paddleboarding, golf, tennis, sand volleyball**

Nestled in the Great Smoky Mountains of Western North Carolina, Lake Junaluska is a tranquil body of water that covers 200 acres amid a peaceful mountain setting. Groups can savor the beauty of the Lake Junaluska walking trail that wraps 2.3 miles in a loop. The trail includes the Rose Walk, which features more than 200 hybrid tea, grandiflora and floribunda roses, the tranquility of the Frances

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"The NC Smokies is a great place for hosting our annual event. All of our participants enjoy staying in the mountains, exploring the national park and parkway. They especially love the fresh mountain air and open space."

— Matthew Bounds, SOWO Partners



Asbury Trail. An on-site golf course is perfect for a tournament while visitors can also get competitive with a game of tennis, pickleball, basketball, sand volleyball and mini golf.

## Maggie Valley Festival Grounds

**Concerts, festivals, car shows, archery, grass volleyball, 3v3 soccer**

These grounds, which reside in the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains, are a perfect venue for events and festivals. Over the years, the venue has hosted a wide range of events from arts and crafts festivals to major concerts.

### **Smoky Mountain Event Center** *Horse shows, dog shows, barrel racing, Cornhole, timber-sports, car shows*

Comprised of two large exhibit halls, a covered regulation size arena, a livestock barn, 30 box stalls and beautiful grounds with Smoky Mountain views, these versatile facilities satisfy a range of client needs. The center covers 15,000 square feet and contains a full-service kitchen, concession stand, restrooms and roll-up doors on both ends of the building. It also houses propane heating, a PA system, a dance floor and available stage, sealed concrete floors, ceiling fans, electrical outlets along facility walls and various ceiling outlets and paved handicapped-accessible parking.

### **Lake Logan**

#### ***Running, biking, swimming, concerts, festivals, conferences***

Located in a pristine valley near the Blue Ridge Parkway, Lake Logan is a 300-acre sanctuary that houses lakeside cabins featuring decks with incredible views, fireplaces and kitchenettes. Six cozy cabins

comprise a log cabin village with lake views and the Eastside Cabins are made up of white clapboard with spacious porches. The Retreat house, with a full kitchen, is ideal for small groups of up to 14.

### **Blue Ridge Parkway**

#### ***Cycling, hiking, trail running***

The first national rural parkway to be designed for a leisure-type driving experience, the Blue Ridge Parkway's varied topography and numerous vista points offer easy public access to spectacular views of Appalachian rural landscapes and forested mountains. Considered one of the best drives in the country, the parkway connects Shenandoah National Park in Virginia with Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina.



#### **VISIT NC SMOKIES**

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visitncsmokies.com

### **POPULAR ACTIVITIES**

- ▶ The most visited park in the country, **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** encompasses 522,419 acres and is internationally recognized for its mountains, waterfalls, biodiversity and forests.
- ▶ Considered by many to be America's Favorite Drive, the **Blue Ridge Parkway** passes beautiful topography and picturesque vista points.
- ▶ **Dale's Wheel Through Time Museum**, in Maggie Valley, is home to the world's premier collection of rare American motorcycles, memorabilia and a distinct array of unique American automobiles.
- ▶ Scenic Lake Junaluska is home to the **Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center**, which hosts a variety of events.

# DITCH THE FAKE ZOOM BACKGROUNDS.

GATHER IN THE NC SMOKIES

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Maggie Valley • Waynesville • Lake Junaluska • Canton • Clyde

EMBRACE  
UNUSUAL



# GREENSBORO, NC

WITH ITS FAMOUS GREENSBORO COLISEUM COMPLEX AND OTHER FACILITIES, GREENSBORO IS WILLING AND ABLE TO HOST ANY SPORTS TOURNAMENT THAT COMES ITS WAY

Greensboro Coliseum Complex



Three major thoroughfares in the Piedmont region (I-85, I-40 and I-73) all intersect in Greensboro, making it easy to travel here by car. If coming by air, Piedmont Triad International Airport is 12 miles west of central Greensboro.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

**Greensboro Coliseum Complex**  
*Basketball, gymnastics, figure skating, wrestling volleyball, roller derby, football*

The Greensboro Coliseum Complex is a multibuilding facility with eight different venues that offer the unique opportunity to host nearly any sporting event one could imagine. The main staple, the Greensboro Coliseum, can seat anywhere from 4,500 - 22,000 people depending on the need and has hosted NCAA and ACC Men's and

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"A heartfelt thank you to Henri Fourrier and our primary contact Brian Ambuehl at the Greensboro CVB office for seeing the incredible value in youth sports. From the very beginning, their insight and service have been a guiding force in NC AAU consistently growing our event base in the Gate City."

— Sean Kilmartin, Governor, NC Amateur Athletic Union



Greensboro Aquatic Center



Truist Stadium at NC A&T State University

Women's basketball tournaments. Other venues within the complex include the Fieldhouse — a state-of-the-art structure that features a 30,000-square-foot, column-free area and currently houses the Greensboro Swarm NBA G League team—and the Special Events Center, a 167,000-square-foot space that include three exhibit halls.

The complex has hosted several ACC Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments. Additionally, it was the host of the AAU Junior Olympic Games and the USA Gymnastics American Cup.

## Greensboro Aquatic Center

**Swimming, synchronized swimming, diving and water polo**

The Greensboro Aquatic Center (GAC) is a 105,323-square-foot facility with a long history of hosting national swimming meets. Located in the Greensboro Coliseum Complex and only one minute from the Greensboro Visitor Center, it offers plenty of lodging and eating options in the surrounding area. The Aquatic Center has five, seven and 10-meter diving boards and a 25-yard pool that can be transformed into 10 different configurations based on event needs. A new pool was constructed and opened in August 2019 that provides 19 additional lanes making the GAC the largest indoor aquatic facility in the country. In the past, the GAC has hosted the U.S. Synchronized Swimming 2012 Olympic Team trials, the 2012 U.S. Masters Swimming Spring National Championships and the 2019 USA FINA Synchronized American Open.

## Truist Stadium at NC A&T State University

**Track and field, javelin, shot put, hammer/discus throwing areas**

An IAAF-certified track, Truist Stadium at NC A&T State University previously played host to the track and field component to the AAU Junior Olympic Games. Home of the NC A&T Aggies and capable of seating 23,000 spectators, it is a Mondo Super X Performance track with eight lanes as well as javelin and discus throwing areas. A newly constructed stadium press box offers state-of-the-art amenities.



### GREENSBORO AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Brian Ambuehl, Sports Sales Manager  
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Kayla Adams, Sports Sales Manager  
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www.VisitGreensboroNC.com

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Experience a zoo, aquarium and museum all in one day at the **Greensboro Science Center**.
- ▶ **SKYWILD** offers 60 different challenges aimed at giving you an inside look into animal movement and behavior among the trees. Waddle, leap, brachiate and crawl through a variety of zip lines, bridges and climbs.
- ▶ Check out the 84-foot wide tsunami waves at **Wet n' Wild Emerald Pointe**, one of North Carolina's largest water parks.
- ▶ Get a glimpse of the world's largest china shop at **Replacements Ltd.**
- ▶ Step back in time to the forefront of the civil rights movement with a visit to the **International Civil Rights Center and Museum**.

G
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# WE'RE READY FOR YOU.

**From world-class championships to youth tournaments, Greensboro makes sporting events safe and successful. We're taking extra precautions to keep you healthy. You will be surprised by all we have to offer.**

greensboro

●●●●● NORTH CAROLINA  
Convention & Visitors Bureau

[VisitGreensboroNC.com](http://VisitGreensboroNC.com)

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# HICKORY, NC

WITH A WORLD-FAMOUS RACING SHORT TRACK, PROFESSIONAL AND COLLEGIATE FACILITIES AND A GREAT HISTORY AND HERITAGE, HICKORY'S ROOTS RUN DEEP IN NORTH CAROLINA SPORTING LORE



Hickory is conveniently located off Interstate 40, which connects Knoxville to the west with Raleigh to the east. If you're flying in, Charlotte Douglas International Airport is around 42 miles away in Charlotte.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Immerse yourself in the interactive opportunities presented at the **SALT Block**, which encompasses an entire city block filled with Science, Arts & Literature Together.
- ▶ **Downtown Hickory** yields a fantastic communal feel as you explore a bevy of local retail shops, locally owned restaurants and breweries, entertainment options, theatrical pursuits and more.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Hickory Metro Convention Center *Multipurpose indoor*

As one of the premier trade show and meeting locations in the Southeast, the Hickory Metro Convention Center features more than 76,000 square feet of meeting space, making it ideal for tournament planners looking to host fantastic indoor events. This facility has been the home to a variety of indoor sports including: Bull riding, soccer clinics, martial arts, wrestling, gymnastics, dance and more. The center hosted the XCEL Regional Gymnastics Competition in May 2019, which drew in more than 1,500 gymnasts.

### Henry Fork Regional Recreation Park *Canoeing, running, soccer*

With eight soccer fields, an 8,000-square-foot picnic shelter, picnic tables and grills, an alpine tower ropes course, two playgrounds, a concession stand, walking trail, canoe launch and horseshoe pits, this multiuse park is ideal for soccer, lacrosse, rugby and other sports.

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Everybody loves it here, it's beautiful. It (Lake Hickory) is the perfect size for a competition such as this one. It offers a variety of fishing experiences depending on how the anglers prefer to fish."

— Secret York, Co-founder of LBAA



### Lake Hickory (Catawba River) *Boating, fishing, swimming*

Take in the magisterial beauty of the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains when you plan an outdoor tournament on Lake Hickory. Fishing tournaments are popular here during the summer months, when the lake has an abundance of largemouth bass, striped bass, crappie and channel catfish. Lake Hickory hosted a Lady Bass Anglers Association Pro Tour event in late March 2019 and an episode of "Fishing University" in 2018. the Lady Bass Anglers Association will be returning to Lake Hickory Spring 2021.



## VISIT HICKORY METRO

Sarah Davis, CMP  
Director of Sales & Marketing  
828-322-1335  
sarah@hickorymetro.com  
www.visithickorymetro.com

# Mask



While some games may be off for now, Play Greenville, NC Sports is looking forward to hosting your next sporting event when the time is right. We can't wait for you to compete once again in Greenville-Pitt County.

See you soon at  
**VISITGREENVILLENC.COM/SPORTS**



Connect with us for updates and more info





# GREENVILLE, NC

SOUTHERN CHARM, A PASSION FOR SPORTS, AND A GROWING METROPOLITAN REGION MAKE THE EAST COAST'S EMERALD CITY A SPORTS PLANNER'S DELIGHT

ECU's North Recreational Complex

Play Greenville, NC Sports



Greenville is mainly accessible from the east and west via future Interstate 587. About an hour and a half to the west of downtown Greenville is Raleigh-Durham International Airport, which offers countless domestic and international flights to meet travelers' needs. For connections to and from Charlotte, local Pitt-Greenville Airport offers flights via American Eagle.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

**ECU's North Recreational Complex**  
*Cross-country, disc golf, lacrosse, rugby, soccer, Ultimate Frisbee*

Just 10 minutes from the East Carolina University campus, you'll find a selection of versatile playing fields, all surrounding a quaint lake that makes for the perfect backdrop to any event. The North Recreational Complex features eight multipurpose fields including one championship field, along with walking and jogging trails. This is the perfect setting for cross-country, where runners can

follow any of the six trails or the 5k running route. The 18-hole disc golf course offers a unique layout, and the fields are a popular spot for Ultimate Frisbee, with invitational tournaments taking place throughout the year.

### ECU Sports

**Baseball, basketball, football, golf, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and field, volleyball**

East Carolina University's facilities are state-of-the-art and home to some exceptional collegiate talent. These same venues are also



available for tournaments, meets, competitions, and other events that sports planners are putting together throughout the year. Be sure to check out the 50,000-seat, fully lit Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, home to the Pirates' football program; the 8,000-seat ECU Williams Arena at Minges Coliseum for both basketball and volleyball games; and the 1,000-seat Stewart Johnson Soccer Stadium.

## Stallings Stadium

### Baseball

Greenville has a strong connection to baseball, and in particular, Little League. Stallings Stadium at Elm Street Park is a premier choice when planning an event in the region, and is scheduled to host the Little League Softball World Series, starting in August of 2021. The stadium is also the permanent home to the Greenville Little League's City Championship Series, and could be the site of your next big event! While players have been stepping up to the plate here since the 1950s, the stadium itself was completely renovated in 2012, making for a state-of-the-art experience. There are 234 stadium seats, 400 right field bleacher seats, and additional space for lawn seating - in all the stadium can seat around 1,000 spectators.

## Sara Law Softball Complex

### Softball

In the world of softball, Greenville is arguably among the top contenders. The all-female Pitt-Greenville Babe Ruth squads have won several World Series titles in recent years, and made it all the way to the World Series in 2018, too. So, it makes sense that Greenville would be home to some of the best softball facilities that the nation has to offer. The Sarah Law Softball Complex has hosted its share of champions and is home to the Pitt County Girls Softball League as well as many fastpitch tournaments throughout the year. It offers a 4-field lighted complex with restrooms, parking, a concession stand, and meticulously maintained landscaping - all creating the perfect recipe for a successful softball event.



### GREENVILLE-PITT COUNTY SPORTS COMMISSION

Paul Sheehan, Director of Sports Dev.  
252-329-4200, ext. 4232  
paul@visitgreenvillenc.com  
www.visitgreenvillenc.com/sports

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- **Knee Deep Adventures** is a watercraft outfitter that rents out kayaks and stand-up paddleboards so you and your group can navigate the Tar River and explore the forests at a leisurely pace.
- For another peaceful getaway, check out **River Park North**, a 324 acre park with outdoors fun for everyone.
- For a bit of educational insight into the natural surroundings and waterways of Greenville, pay a visit **Walter L. Stasavich Science & Nature Center**.
- Taste real southern barbeque on the **Pitt County Brew & Cue Trail**.
- Treat your sweet tooth at **Simply Natural Creamery & Jersey Farm** in Ayden where there are ice cream sundaes and cones galore.



Cliff Hollis



Aaron Hines/City of Greenville

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"FIRST North Carolina was thrilled to work with the Greenville-Pitt County Convention & Visitors Bureau both before and during our high school robotics competition at ECU last March. They were instrumental in helping us secure hotels for our teams, meals for our volunteers and so much more. They are one of the best CVBs we have ever had the privilege to work with in our planning."

— Marie E. Hopper, President  
FIRST North Carolina



Sara Law Softball Complex



# PIGEON FORGE, TENNESSEE

WITH ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S BEST BACKDROPS, THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS, VISITORS COME FOR THE SPORTS AND STAY FOR THE SCENIC BEAUTY AND WEALTH OF ONE-OF-A-KIND ACTIVITIES



LeConte Center

Located southeast of Knoxville, Pigeon Forge is accessed via U.S. Routes 441 and 321 to the north and south, respectively. If you're flying in, the closest airport is McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS) in Knoxville, 35 miles to the northwest.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### LeConte Center at Pigeon Forge

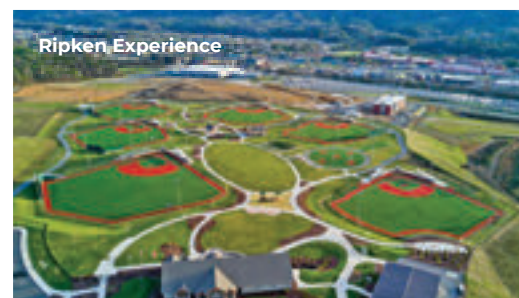
**Basketball, wrestling, volleyball, gymnastics, cheer**

Named for the scenic views of Mount LeConte in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, this facility sits right in the heart of Pigeon Forge and exudes a mountain lodge ambiance. The center spans 232,000 square feet and prides itself in its flexibility to host competitive events of all types. Plus, as a certified Tennessee Green Hospitality venue, the LeConte Center is committed

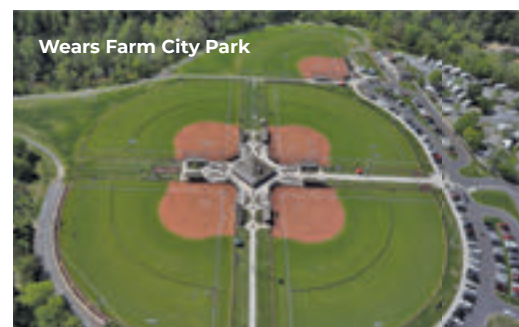
### PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Hosting our annual Make It Count gymnastics invitational at the LeConte Center is the best move we ever made! The LeConte venue is unsurpassed in its beauty and spaciousness and the staff at the LeConte Center set you up for success every time! The staff have that unique ability to balance professionalism with friendliness!"

— Tracy Counts, *Gymnastics Counts*



Wears Farm City Park



to environmentally sustainable practices that continue to protect and enhance the natural beauty and health of the Pigeon Forge community.

The LeConte Center has thrived as a popular spot for sports tournaments since its opening. Hosting indoor sporting events of all types, the facility features seating for up to 12,000 spectators, free Wi-Fi, eight bay registration areas, a private office for event management and a convenient central location, that borders the Little Pigeon River and Riverwalk.

## Wears Farm City Park Baseball, softball

Thought you were done with America's Pastime in Pigeon Forge? Guess again: Wears Farm City Park boasts an abundance of fields and the perfect amenities that make it fun for a family to enjoy a summer day at the ballpark. There are five lighted baseball fields in one complex and one additional field close by, located across the 118-acre multipurpose park.

Baseball tournaments are about more than just the games, however. Luckily, the main facilities offer batting cages, warm-up areas, restrooms, concession stands and vending machines. A lighted football field, one multipurpose field, two full playgrounds, three pavilions, a basketball court and walking trails are all on-hand for those who'd prefer to stay active as well as for siblings who are bored from watching baseball all day. With such a plentiful array of fields and features, Wears Farm City is a top pick of many tournament directors.

## The Ripken Experience Pigeon Forge Baseball

The Ripken Experience might be the best experience possible for an eager youth baseball player or an experienced coach. Hosting a baseball tourney in Pigeon Forge is worthwhile, as the Ripken Experience offers an incredible backdrop of the Smoky Mountains and features replicas of six professional ballparks.

Reserved for the 7U-12U age groups, there is no better place for kids to chase their major league ambitions while learning a little about the history of American baseball stadiums. The complex enjoyed its inaugural season in 2016, when it welcomed over 600 teams to the area. It consists of six youth turf fields with lights, batting cages and bullpens at each field as well as a 14,000-square-foot clubhouse.



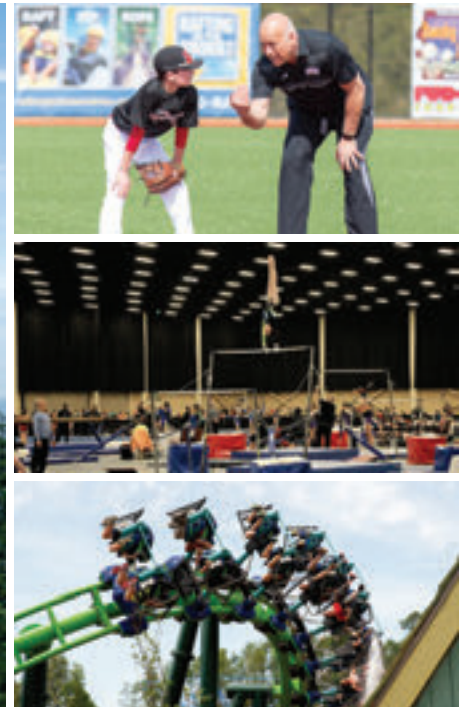
### PIGEON FORGE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

Jennifer Smith, Sales Manager  
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jsmith@mypigeonforge.  
www.mypigeonforge.com

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ **Dollywood**, hosting more than three million guests in a typical season, offers more than 40 rides, fabulous festivals, award-winning music productions and shows, handmade crafts and more. Another place to cool off during the hot months is at **Dollywood's Splash Country**, a 35-acre waterpark.
- ▶ For outdoor lovers, Pigeon Forge is just a stone's throw away from **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**. There are more than 800 miles of hiking trails, with options for quiet strolls or hearty hikes.
- ▶ Visit one of Pigeon Forge's educational experiences while visiting, from the **Titanic Museum Attraction**, the **Alcatraz East Crime Museum**, enjoy "edutainment" at **WonderWorks**.

## PART OF YOUR GAME-WINNING STRATEGY.



Three major venues for both indoor and outdoor competition make our city a prime destination for sporting events. But what really scores with visiting families is our offering of countless entertainment options, including Dollywood, museums, shows, unique dining experiences, water parks, coasters and, of course, incredible views of the Great Smoky Mountains.

**PIGEON FORGE**  
T E N N E S S E E  
Call Jennifer Smith at 865-429-7432  
LeConteCenter.com



# REAL SPORTS. REAL SAFE.

#RealColumbiaSC

**SURE WE'VE GOT GRITS, BUT WE'VE ALSO GOT GRIT.**

We have all been missing sporting events something fierce. And while our enthusiasm to get back to normalcy is unbridled, our planning has been deliberate. Our region's facility managers, restaurants, hotels and attractions have been working tirelessly to make sure we can deliver the best (and safest options) for your events moving forward. Let us help you get back in action. Visit [ColumbiaSCSports.com](https://ColumbiaSCSports.com)

SC is OPEN

**COLUMBIA SC**  
**SPORTS**

# 2021 SOUTH CAROLINA GUIDE

## South Carolina Is Your Place for Outdoor Sports

This Lovely State Offers a Varied Landscape and a Variety of Venues

## State Parks Are a Visitors' Favorite

The Palmetto State Is Home to a Myriad of Beautiful State Parks



**SPG**  
A Premier Travel Media publication  
[www.SportsPlanningGuide.com](http://www.SportsPlanningGuide.com)



# Welcome to:

# **SOUTH CAROLINA**

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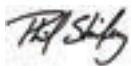
If you're searching for a place to hold a professional, amateur or collegiate sporting event, look no further. South Carolina is Just Right for Champions. We're just right for soccer games, baseball tournaments, golf championships and tennis playoffs. And let's not forget about football, basketball and the awesome mud run challenges, cycling events and fishing tournaments.

The Palmetto State has played host to national and worldwide organizations including the PGA Tour, NCAA, Women's Tennis Association, Bassmaster, American Softball Association, USA Cycling and so many more. Whether your event is small or large, professional or amateur, the members of the South Carolina Sports Alliance (SCSA) are committed to helping you create an atmosphere where your sporting event can achieve the utmost success.

From the deep forests of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the beautiful beaches of the Grand Strand, South Carolina's diverse landscapes promise a memorable escape to the great outdoors. Our charming small towns, coastal cities and inland areas offer a unique setting for indoor and outdoor sports. With award-winning restaurants, affordable accommodations and plenty of exciting attractions to keep athletes, families and spectators entertained, we can deliver an unforgettable experience. Did we mention the unrivaled southern hospitality our visitors are certain to receive? You just might want to come back for your vacation!

Start planning your event in South Carolina today. Our team is ready to assist you in planning a winning event that your participants won't forget. Become a champion in South Carolina!

Sincerely,



Phil Shirley  
President  
[discoversouthcarolina.com/sports-alliance](http://discoversouthcarolina.com/sports-alliance)



**Hickory Knob State Park Recreation Center**



Photo courtesy of SCPRT



Photo courtesy of SCPRT

**Kayaking among the Cypress at  
Cheraw State Park**



©iStock.com/bgblue

# SOUTH CAROLINA

**100** Great Outdoor Sports

**102** Favorite State Parks



**Site InSpections**

**104** Beaufort-Port Royal

**106** Spartanburg

**109** Irmo Chapin  
Recreation Center

**110** Columbia

**112** Aiken

**114** Myrtle Beach

**ON THE COVER:**

Photo courtesy of Shelly Marshall Schmidt  
and the City of Aiken



**Casting for bait**

Photo courtesy of Visit Beaufort





# SOUTH CAROLINA IS YOUR PLACE FOR GREAT OUTDOOR SPORTS

*From South Carolina's coast to the mountains, you'll discover a varied landscape and wide variety of venues that will fit any outdoor sport*

By David Bodle

**S**outh Carolina Sports Alliance members are professionals dedicated to the success of your outdoor competitions and have the venues and sites to assure that achievement. Here's a sampling to get you started.

## BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

You could spend far too much time trying to count all the diamonds in South Carolina. In Myrtle Beach, there's the Grand Park Athletic Complex, Ned Donkle Field Complex and The Ripken Experience. Add to the mix the North Myrtle Beach Park & Sports Center and Central Park Sports Center along with Georgetown and Horry County fields and the state is capable of hosting the largest tournaments. Which it often does.

There are also championship venues at TicketReturn.com Field and Coastal Carolina University.

Aiken is no stranger to big-time baseball and softball with 15 lighted fields and eight batting cages. Spartanburg's Tyger River Park welcomes events with 12 fields, a championship stadium and all the necessary amenities. With 15 parks operated by the parks & recreation department, Beaufort has no problem hosting your event.

Baseball, softball and the accompanying amenities are a part of the 64-acre Anderson Sports and Entertainment Center. The Shipyard Park in Charleston has 5-field youth facility with water on all-sides. They host tournaments 46 weekends a year. Carolina Softball Stadium at Beckham Field and Founders Park in downtown Columbia are on the University of South Carolina campus. Columbia's minor league stadium, Segra Park, will also host a championship game.

Easley's JB "Red" Owens Park and Seneca's Shaver Complex have hosted some major championship tournaments as well. Easley's JB "Red" Owens Park has

hosted some major championship tournaments as well. In Greenville, Furman University has multiple baseball options while Flour Field downtown is a top minor league stadium. Elsewhere in Greenville County, David Jackson Park, Northwest Park, Conestee Park and Corey Burns Park are all baseball/softball ready. In Greenwood County, baseball and softball are played at Wilbanks Sports Complex and Lander University's Jeff May Recreation, Wellness and Sports Complex.

Lexington features baseball and softball facilities at Lexington Sports Complex, Pine Grove Softball Complex and Oak Grove Sports Complex. A South Carolina suburb of Charlotte, Rock Hill plays baseball and softball at Cherry Parks Sports Complex, South Pointe High School Sports Complex and Winthrop University's Recreation Complex.

## SOCCER & LACROSSE

Many of the multi-purpose fields that follow are easily set up for quidditch, ultimate Frisbee, rugby and others. In Rock Hill, Manchester Meadows features regulation and championship fields. Myrtle Beach's Grand Park Athletic Complex welcomes competitors to its multi-purpose lighted FieldTurf fields. North Myrtle Beach Park and Sports Complex features multiple all-purpose fields.

Greenwood County features soccer at its Wilbanks Sports Complex and Lander University's Jeff May Recreation, Wellness and Sports Complex. Bush Creek Soccer Complex has multipurpose fields, as do Pavilion Recreation Complex, MeSA Soccer Complex, Herdklotz Park, Gary L. Pittman Memorial Park, and Piedmont Athletic Complex in Greenville County. Furman University in Greenville also has multi-purpose fields.

Lexington County Soccer Complex features lighted, natural grass fields.



Kiawah Island Golf Resort  
The Ocean Course

Photo courtesy of PGA of America/Gary Kellner

The University of South Carolina's Stone Stadium is a championship venue. Polo Road Park in northeastern Columbia has lighted, natural grass fields. Freedom Florence Recreation Center is a 126-acre venue and includes multi-purpose fields.

Beaufort's parks each have multi-purpose fields. Citizens Park and Odell Weeks Recreation Center in Aiken regularly hosts soccer tournaments. The Hammonds Ferry Soccer Complex in North Augusta features multi-purpose fields. Also in North Augusta, Lions Field is a stadium for both soccer and football.

## WATER SPORTS

Whether you need freshwater or saltwater for your event, there are plenty of options in South Carolina.

Anderson's Greenpond Landing provides three deep-water launch lanes into Lake Hartwell, a competitive boating and fishing destination. Lake Hartwell is also accessed from Seneca and Westminster. Lake Greenwood Recreation Area in Greenwood County hosts fishing, kayaking, canoeing and rowing events. Lake Jocassee in Salem and Seneca's Lake Keowee are prime fishing and water sports destinations. The City of Clemson and Clemson University are the choice for winter and spring crew training on area waterways.

Moree's Sportsman Reserve in Society Hill is a great fishing destination.

Closer to the coast, saltwater tournament fishing events are launched

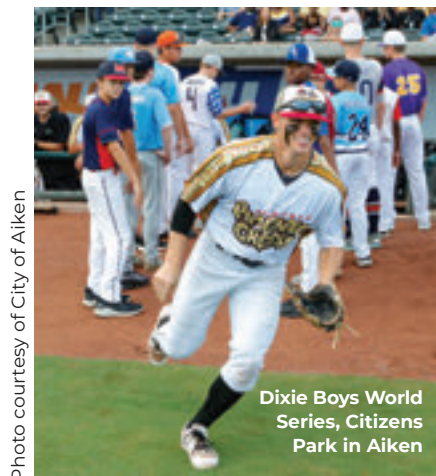


Photo courtesy of City of Aiken

Dixie Boys World  
Series, Citizens  
Park in Aiken

from Little River, Murrells Inlet Georgetown's Winyah Bay, Charleston Maritime Center and Hilton Head Island.

## GOLF

Regardless of whether you are planning a tournament or just getting away for some recreation time, most agree golf is synonymous with South Carolina. There's not a region in the state that can't handle your tournament. The upstate mountain terrain is both scenic and host to some great collegiate events on Clemson University's Walker Course, a top 10 college course, and Furman University Golf Club. In the midlands, Cobblestone Park is home to the University of South Carolina. Coastal Carolina hosts its tournaments at TPC Myrtle Beach.

Any destination that can host the World's Largest Handicap Tournament utilizing 60 Myrtle Beach courses and numerous youth tournaments is capable of handling your featured event. The Santee region off I-95 is also not a stranger to handling tournaments. With 360 golf courses, there are amateur tournaments happening every weekend.

At the professional level, each professional tour has South Carolina events on their schedule. Most noticeable are the May 2021 PGA Championship at Kiawah Island Golf Resort's Ocean Course and RBC Heritage at Hilton Head Island's Harbour Town Golf Links. The Carolinas PGA schedule includes numerous South Carolina stops, while the Carolina Mountain Professional Golf Tour is the oldest tour outside of Florida. Each reflects the world-class golf courses found in the Palmetto State.

## TENNIS

South Carolina tennis legacy is similar to golf with professional, amateur and youth events happening regularly. Daniel Island, just outside the City of Charleston, is home to the LTP-Daniel Island, a professional style venue. Hilton Head Island has long been a tennis mecca for both competition and recreation. Myrtle Beach's Kingston Plantation and other tennis facilities feature courts with various surfaces. A stadium court along with lighted courts is found at the Cayce Tennis and Fitness Center at Otter Pointe, Cayce. The Florence Tennis Center features a nice mixture of hard and clay courts.

Sumter's Palmetto Tennis Center regularly hosts professional circuit competitions. North Augusta's Riverview Park Tennis Center sports lighted courts. Lexington Sports Complex offers lighted hard courts and seating for 500 at the stadium court. All courts at Rock Hill Tennis Center are lighted with seating for 300. In Greenwood County and the Greenville-Greer area, numerous golf clubs and courses have tennis courts available for competitive events.

Be assured there are also venues for mountain bikes, road cycling and BMX outdoors. Track & Field, marathons and Iron Man competitions are regulars to South Carolina as are equestrian events in multiple locations. Did we miss anything? We probably did, but you can find the answers at [discoversouthcarolina.com/sports-alliance](https://discoversouthcarolina.com/sports-alliance). **SPG**



# SOUTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS ARE A VISITORS' FAVORITE

*When the great outdoors is calling,  
it's likely a South Carolina State Park you're hearing*



By David Bodle

From the Atlantic Ocean to the Blue Ridge Mountains, South Carolina's diverse landscapes have been attracting generations of travelers. Couples, families and small groups have enjoyed a wealth of outdoor experiences in state park settings that feature a wide variety of camping, cabin and lodging options. Here are just a few to pique your interest.

## OCONEE STATE PARK

### Mountain Rest

The definitive, relaxing mountain getaway features fishing and canoe rentals on a lake with a swimming hole, several nature trails for hiking and the Foot Hills Trail, the southern trail head on the Blue Ridge Escarpment. The Palmetto Connector Trail is a hike to the historic Oconee Station and the Station Cove Falls. In the winter months, there is trout fishing at Cabin Lake, one of two lakes in the park, while the spring has the picturesque laurel in bloom. There will be bluegrass music and square dancing on Fridays from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

One of the 16 state parks built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), there are rustic cabins with upgrades available to rent. There are also lake-view cabins and others in a more secluded wooded area. The main campground's individual campsites have electrical and water hookups. A tent camping area with tent pads and centralized water is just off the main campground. All

campgrounds are conveniently located near restrooms and hot water showers.

## KEOWEE-TOXAWAY STATE PARK

### Sunset

Marvelous views of the Blue Ridge Mountains have earned this park a designation as one of South Carolina's pretty places. Natural Bridge Trail is a moderately strenuous, 1.3-mile loop. A pleasant place to connect with the Blue Ridge Mountain foothills, the trail features a rock natural bridge over Poe Creek. Raven Rock Trail is also moderately strenuous, but with a 4.4-mile loop. Both trails offer splendid spring wildflower photo opportunities. Canoe/kayak access to Lake Keowee is convenient in the park, while motorized boat access is about five miles away from the park entrance. Access to Lake Keowee for fishing is just a half-mile trail. Swimming is permitted in the lake.

There are 10 paved RV sites that will accommodate units up to 40 feet in total length with individual water and electric hook up. Bigger vehicles will have trouble navigating the campground road. Check with the park directly for any concerns. There's trailside camping at three designated sites on the shore of Lake Keowee. One primitive group area is available on the lake's shore with a minimum of six campers and a maximum of 25. A completely furnished lodge with all basic amenities, including two fireplaces, sleeps 10 and overlooks the lake with a private dock.

## Huntington Beach State Park



Photo courtesy of SCPRT

## CHERAW STATE PARK

### *Cheraw*

Located in the Midlands area, Cheraw offers something for just about everyone. The Cheraw State Park golf course year after year has been voted by Golf Digest as one of the "Best Places to Play." There's plenty of fishing in the park's Lake Juniper, the headwaters to a cypress swamp. Motorized boats with more than a 10 horsepower engine are not permitted. Boats are available to rent as are rods and reels which are available for loan. With more than 100 identified birds attracted to Cheraw's Sandhills/Longleaf ecosystem the park is a birdwatchers paradise.

Nine historic CCC cabins are fully furnished with all the amenities. All are one-bedroom cabins accommodating four guests. One cabin is a four-bedroom that sleeps six to eight people. There are 17 standard RV sites with electric and water convenient to showers and restrooms and five designated rustic tent campsites. There is a primitive group area and boat-in camping on the north side of Lake Juniper.

## HICKORY KNOB STATE PARK RESORT

### *McCormick*

Located on the Strom Lake Reservoir's wooded shoreline, this full-service golf resort and remote state park is ideal for family getaways, reunions, retreats or meetings. Tom Jackson designed the picturesque championship 18-hole golf course with a putting green and driving range. Club rentals

are available. Other recreational options are skeet shooting, archery, fresh water fishing, biking and hiking trails, boating and swimming.

Located about 125 yards from the lake, 16 fully furnished cabins will accommodate up to four people. The restored historic French Huguenot Guillebeau House has two bedrooms accommodating up to four people. The lodge has 70 motel-style rooms sleeping two to four people, many with a lake view. The Barrack hosts groups up to 10 people with four bedrooms. The Hickory Knob Restaurant menu features breakfast, sandwiches and burgers, appetizers, dinner entrees, children's menu and family meals.

## HUNTING ISLAND STATE PARK

### *Hunting Island*

It's easy to understand why Hunting Island is South Carolina's most popular state park with more than a million visitors annually. First, there's the landscape, with five miles of beautiful beaches and thousands of acres of maritime forest and marsh, an ocean inlet and saltwater lagoon. Take it all in from 130 feet above ground in South Carolina's only publicly accessible lighthouse. There's surf, pier and fresh water fishing. Hunting Island participates in the Tackle Loaner Program. There is a full list of options to experience, including swimming, biking, hiking, bird watching, boating and paddling. A St. Phillips Island tour and Dolphin Watch tour are also available.

There is only one cabin available at Hunting Island State Park. The two bedroom cabin sleeps six comes with linens and basic cooking utensils. There are 102 camping sites near the ocean with electric and water accommodating RVs up to 40 feet and others up to 28 feet. All are conveniently located to hot showers and restrooms. A primitive group camping area is available for organized groups up to 100.

## HUNTINGTON BEACH STATE PARK

### *Murrells Inlet*

Located between Myrtle Beach and Georgetown, this 2,500-acre state park has so much to offer. Known as a premier surf fishing spot with three miles of wide sandy beaches, the park is equally well known as a top East Coast birdwatching destination. There's also a history and arts story to tell. The remains of Atalaya, the Moorish-style winter home of philanthropist archer and sculptor Anna Hyatt Huntington, were left to the park and adjacent Brookgreen Gardens. A docent, or self-guided audio tour, is available. The juried Atalaya Arts Festival is held annually in September. The Coastal Exploration Program with a naturalist is popular among visitors.

Tent and RV camping are both available at Huntington Beach. There are 107 standard sites with electric and water and 66 sites full hook-up sites with sewer included. There are six rustic tent sites that include tent pads and water. Tent campers can also use the sites with electric and water. There are also six primitive group areas for organized groups. Each site has nearby restroom facilities and can accommodate 25 people.

South Carolina's 47 state parks each offer exceptional experiences and accommodations. Find the one that's perfect for you by visiting online at [southcarolinaparks.com](http://southcarolinaparks.com). **SPG**



# BEAUFORT, SC

HISTORIC HOMES, NATURAL FOLIAGE AND GLORIOUS GOLF COURSES GUIDE  
YOU THROUGH SCENIC BEAUFORT ON PORT ROYAL ISLAND



Burton Wells Park



Burton Wells Recreation Center

If you're driving through the Lowcountry, Beaufort is most accessible via U.S. Route 21, an offshoot running south from Interstate 95. If traveling by air, Hilton Head Airport (HHH) is 38 miles away, while Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport (SAV) is 48 miles away.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Burton Wells Park

**Baseball, basketball, boating, fishing, softball, tennis**

The Burton Wells Park encompasses a 300-acre recreational complex that features three baseball and softball complexes, a community recreation center, passive use facilities, picnic areas, walking and nature trails, lakes, an interpretive botanical garden, and tennis and basketball courts. The park routinely hosts baseball and softball tournaments as well as soccer and lacrosse.

### Fripp Island Resort

**Golf**

Fripp Island is home to a pair of glorious golf destinations in the Ocean Point and Ocean Creek courses, both at Fripp Island Resort. Set against the lively backdrop of the Atlantic Ocean on 10 of its 18 holes, Ocean Point offers sweeping vistas designed by George Cobb. Located on the south end of the island, the Ocean Creek course provides panoramic views of the Great Salt Marsh and freshwater lakes, while rolling dunes make for challenging play.

## Dataw Island Club

### Golf

Dataw Island epitomizes Lowcountry golf, where two 18-hole courses take full advantage of the beautiful natural surroundings. Traverse grounds covered in live oaks that date back hundreds of years as well as Civil War-era ruins. The Cotton Dike course was renovated in 2011 and features emerald fields and fairways with a winding creek. The Morgan River course underwent a renovation of its own the following year and challenges novices and professionals with a strategically demanding layout.

## The Legends at Parris Island

### Golf

As one of the premier courses in the entire Lowcountry and one of the top military golf courses in the world, the Legends at Parris Island has a unique history that can't be missed. Each hole is named after a legendary United States Marine who either trained or stationed on Parris Island, including National Baseball Hall of Fame member Roberto Clemente.

## Lady's Island Country Club

### Golf

Beaufort's oldest golf club is a staple for statewide tournament and LGPA play, since its Pines course is in excellent, tournament-ready condition. The course features 22 sand bunkers, elevated tee boxes and champion Bermuda greens deep-set against a heavily wooded area. Golfers of all skill levels can enjoy the course, which ranges between 5,200 to 7,000 yards long.

## Beaufort's Waterfront Park

### Fishing, dragon boat races, croquet

This beautiful park is the crown jewel of Beaufort. The park is set against the backdrop of the Beaufort River and the Woods Memorial Bridge and is flanked by restaurants and shops in historic downtown. The host site of Beaufort heritage festivals, special events, and community events, this iconic park has something special to offer everyone.



### GREATER BEAUFORT-PORT ROYAL CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Linda Jeffries  
Director of Sales  
843-525-8526  
ljeffries@beaufortsc.org  
beaufortsports.com

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Take a **guided tour** through historic downtown and the Point by foot, horse-drawn carriage or van with one of the local tour services.
- ▶ **Reconstruction Era National Historical Park** offers guided tours as park rangers educate guests on Civil War stories and period-specific medicine.
- ▶ Enjoy a beachfront stroll, spot loggerhead turtles, deer, alligators, diamondback rattlesnakes and more while visiting **Hunting Island State Park**.



## Epic sporting events. On an unbeatable stage.

With miles of pristine coastline and tidal flats, championship golf courses and professional sporting fields, Beaufort, SC is the ideal year-round destination for fishing, golf, soccer tournaments and more. Find excitement on and off the water with carriage tours, Lowcountry cuisine and historic museums in a charming downtown.

SPORTS COUNCIL  
**BEAUFORT**  
PORT ROYAL SEA ISLANDS

*inner coastal*

Let our team help you plan the perfect event at [beaufortsc.org/sports](http://beaufortsc.org/sports).

South Carolina   
Just right.



# SPARTANBURG, SC

SOFTBALL AND TRACK AND FIELD FACILITIES HIGHLIGHT A SOUTH CAROLINA CITY THAT HOSTS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Tyger River Park



Spartanburg County, at the crossroads of Interstates 85 and 26, is less than a six-hour drive from major cities like Atlanta, Birmingham, Lexington, Jacksonville and Richmond. Major airlines serve the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport (GSP), and from there it's just a 20-30 minute drive east on I-85 to downtown Spartanburg.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Jerry Richardson Indoor Arena

**Basketball, volleyball**

Opened in 2017, the Jerry Richardson Indoor Stadium is a 123,000-square-foot facility that includes a 3,400-seat basketball arena and a 500-seat volleyball competition venue. This facility replaced Benjamin Johnson Arena and serves as the home for women's basketball, men's basketball and volleyball at Wofford College. The facility has a seating capacity for non-athletics functions, such as commencement and concerts, of 4,500.

## Upward Sports Star Center

**Soccer, basketball, volleyball**

Upward Sports recently opened the Upward Star Center, a 120,000-square-foot indoor facility equipped with two regulation-size artificial soccer fields and up to four grass multi-purpose fields as well as six basketball courts, 12 full-sized volleyball courts, four lighted sand volleyball courts. This union facility features seven meeting rooms and can host an event of roughly 3,000 people indoors and 8,000 people outdoors. This massive facility is conveniently located 10 minutes from over 3,000 hotel rooms.

## Tyger River Park Softball, baseball

Tyger River Park, one of the South's premier baseball and softball tournament complexes, features 12 youth baseball/softball fields arranged in convenient four-field clusters, a championship stadium seating 600 people and with unmatched site amenities, clubhouse, concession areas, umpire changing rooms, lounge, VIP Suite, wireless internet, covered seating, two playgrounds and flat-screen TVs at each pod. Located 15 miles from downtown, Tyger River Park has hosted the 2015 USSSA Global Sports Baseball World Series, 2015 ASA/USA Girl's 18 U Class A National World Series and 2015 NSA Girls Fast-Pitch Class B World Series, among other events. All fields are dirt and irrigated. Eight fields have permanent fences at 275 feet, two fields have permanent fences at 220 feet and two fields have permanent fences at 260 feet. The stadium field has a permanent 300-foot fence. Ample parking and restroom facilities are available.

## Spartanburg Viking Track Track and field

The Viking Track features world-class MondoTrack FTX surface, the same track surface that was used in the Beijing Olympic Games and the IAAF World Indoor Championships in Valencia. This premium, custom-made track has increased the optimal traction and contact area due to the irregular size and shape of the tessellation pattern and has been designed to provide the best traction between track and spikes and for a greater contact area than other track systems. This improves the athletes' grip and performance. The track facility contains eight world-class lanes, Lynx MVP fully automatic timing system, two jump pits, pole vault and high jump areas.



### SPARTANBURG CVB

Kristyn Hawkins  
Director of Sports Tourism Development  
864-594-5000  
khawkins@onespartanburginc.com  
www.visitspartanburg.com/sports

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Explore the **Spartanburg Science Center** where you'll learn about everything from robotics to ecology and unleash your inner architect at the LEGO™ Building Zone.
- ▶ Pick your own in-season fruits, navigate through a corn maze, go on a wagon ride and enjoy other fun seasonal activities at **Strawberry Hill USA**.
- ▶ Outdoor enthusiasts will enjoy an afternoon of boating, fishing or hiking at **Croft State Park**.
- ▶ Visit the **BMW Zentrum and Performance Driving Experience**, the only BMW factory on the continent. With its interactive museum exhibits, this attraction will hold the attention of everyone.



Upward Sports Star Center

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Spartanburg has built an exceptional facility that provides fans and teams with everything that they could dream of and more. This is truly one of the premier complexes in the United States."

— Chris Sebren,  
Director of Championships,  
USASoftball



USA Softball National Team



Spartanburg Viking Track



Tyger River Park, Duncan

# SPACE OUT, HEAD TO VICTORY.

We know how to host a great tournament. The *'knock your socks off and have a good time'* sort of tournament. We regularly host a multitude of regional sports championships and offer up a calendar full of outdoor events, festivals, and public art displays nearly all-year 'round.

So while we know how to make your next tournament great, what we don't know is...when are you coming to visit?



**SPARTANBURG.**  
THERE'S ONLY ONE.

[VisitSpartanburg.com/SPG](http://VisitSpartanburg.com/SPG)



# IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION, SC

THIS SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION MAKES IT EASY FOR YOU TO PLAY HARD WITH ITS MANY FABULOUS FACILITIES



Formed in 1969, the Irmo Chapin Recreation District serves community members living in Lexington County. ICRC has earned a reputation for facility excellence and has parks in the picturesque towns of Chapin and Columbia. Three major interstates run through Columbia: I-26, I-20 and I-77. Chapin resides 23 miles northwest of Columbia via I-26.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

► A premier, environmentally sensitive riverfront spot, **Saluda Shoals Park** is a 400-acre regional park that features an 11,000-square-foot Environmental Education Center, Exhibit Hall, and paved and unpaved trails for hiking, biking and jogging.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### The Palmetto Health Fields at Saluda Shoals Park

**Soccer, lacrosse, tennis**

With six soccer, lacrosse and multi-use fields, six clay and four hard surface tennis courts, The Fields in Columbia is an exceptional spot to host tournaments and run/walk events. Among the facility's amenities include natural turf fields, state-of-the-art lighting, exceptional field visibility, Wi-Fi access and ample parking. This athletic complex is located within Saluda Shoals Park, a 400-acre riverfront park with miles of paved and unpaved trails, canoeing, kayaking, tubing, biking, Saluda Splash and more.

### Melvin Park

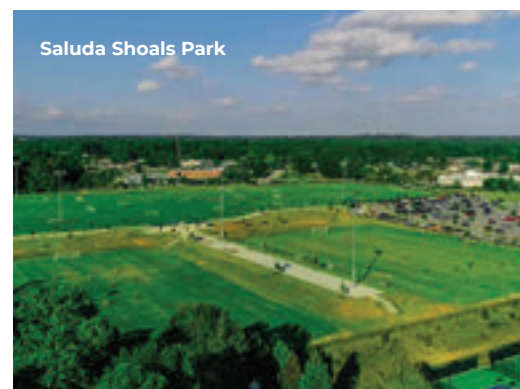
**Baseball, tennis, softball, soccer**

ICRC's newest park, Melvin Park is a marvelous venue that features a six-field baseball complex, eight hard surface lighted tennis courts, two multi-use fields, a splash pad,

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"As you know, we run over 40 different events around the country - so we work with a lot of different facilities. Ashley and his staff are THE BEST that we work with. They go above and beyond what we could ever ask for. One of the biggest things that stood out this past year was how he had his workers help set up and break down our bow nets."

— Ryan Long, Former Director, Boys Events, NXTSports, Inc.



a guest services pavilion and two picnic shelters. Other sports that can take place at Melvin Park include softball, soccer, and football.

### Seven Oaks Park

**Outdoor sports, walking, running, fitness**

Built in 1973, Seven Oaks Park is a full-service recreation complex offering fitness, athletics, instructional and cultural arts programs. Seven Oaks Park also features a 30,000-square-foot facility with three full gymnasiums, a fitness area, indoor walking track, senior center, dance studio, art studio and meeting rooms.



### IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION

Ashley Smith  
803-772-1228  
asmith@icrc.net  
www.icrc.net



# COLUMBIA, SC

A STORIED COLLEGE SPORTS TOWN, COLUMBIA IS HOME TO ENJOYABLE ATTRACTIONS AND STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES

Colonial Life Arena



Columbia Metropolitan Airport is located about seven miles south of the city and offers over 36 non-stop flights to 9 major airports in 11 cities each day. By car, Columbia is surrounded by major thoroughfares in I-77 to the north and south, I-26 to the west and I-20 to the east.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Williams-Brice Stadium

#### Football

Opened in 1934 and renovated most recently in 2020, Williams-Brice Stadium is the home of the University of South Carolina football team. The storied stadium, nicknamed “The Cock Pit,” holds more than 77,500 people and has hosted some of the most thrilling (and loudest) games in college football history. Williams-Brice may be a football fan’s dream venue, of course, but it is also popular with concert-goers. Past performers have included Metallica, Guns N’

Roses, U2, Paul McCartney, the Rolling Stones and, most recently, Beyonce and Jay-Z. Want even more variety? The stadium hosted Pope John Paul II during a 1987 Papal visit to Columbia.

## Colonial Life Arena

### Basketball

One of South Carolina’s most impressive multi-use arenas, Colonial Life is an 18,000-seat venue that plays host to both sports and music events. It is best known as the home court of the South Carolina Gamecocks’ men’s and women’s basketball teams, both of which



have been highly successful in recent NCAA tournaments. It hosted first- and second-round NCAA men's basketball tournament games in March of 2019. Beyond basketball, Colonial Life Arena has held concerts by the likes of Billy Joel, Elton John, and Bruce Springsteen. Overall, this is a top-notch, multi-surface facility that regularly hosts some of the most exciting events the state has to offer.

## Segra Park Baseball

Segra Park is the home of the Columbia Fireflies, the city's Minor League Baseball team. The stadium, with the capacity to seat more than 9,000, opened in 2016 for the Fireflies' first game in April of that year. Baseball fans can catch exciting minor league games here, though Segra Park is much more than just a ballpark. It is also a great choice for weddings and business meetings. Inside the stadium, the Club Lounge has space for 500 guests, while the Broad River Balcony looks out onto the field and can hold as many as 120 people. There are also batting cages that accommodate 20 guests per hour and a large conference room located just off the concourse.

## Cobblestone Park Golf

Cobblestone Park is a wonderful 27 hole golf course. Voted one of the best golf courses in the Midlands, Cobblestone Park features the best design in Columbia. Panoramic views, rolling hills, beautiful oaks and pines take it over the top. As longtime area golfers know, this is the best golf experience in Columbia. Cobblestone Park features a 28,000 square foot clubhouse. This well-appointed masterpiece also offers Columbia's newest restaurant, Alexander's at Cobblestone Park. Open for lunch and dinner, stop in for a post round beverage, casual lunch or family dinner overlooking the spectacular 18th hole.

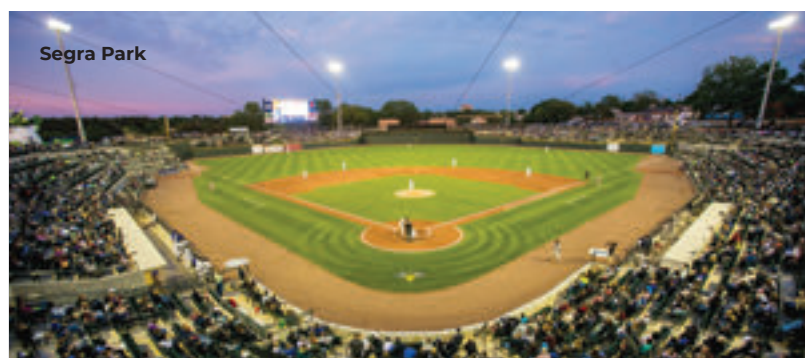


### EXPERIENCE COLUMBIA SC SPORTS

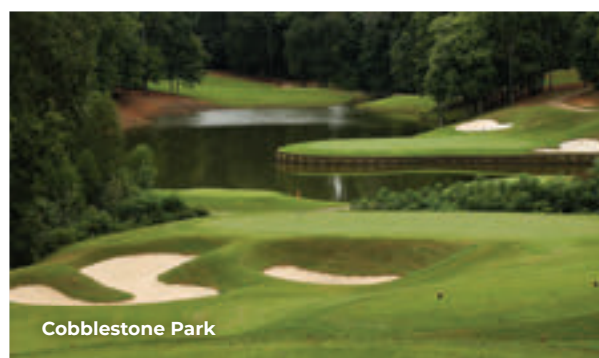
S. Scott Powers, Executive Director  
803-545-0009  
spowers@experiencecolumbiasc.com  
www.ColumbiaSCsports.com

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Learn about more than 4,200 species of native and exotic plants and check out the 2,000-plus animals at **Riverbanks Zoo and Garden**.
- ▶ The **South Carolina State Museum** features a digital dome planetarium, 4D interactive theater and four floors of fascinating exhibits.
- ▶ Explore the internationally renowned gallery at the **Columbia Museum of Art**.
- ▶ Originally built in 1855, the **South Carolina State House** is a great place to learn about the state's past.
- ▶ Hop on a boat to traverse the 650 miles of shoreline over at **Lake Murray**.



Jeff Blake



## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"It was our honor to work with Experience Columbia SC Sports in hosting the 2019 US Sports Congress. From our site visit to event execution their team worked with us every step of the way to ensure a flawless experience. Based on comments from our attendees, we can't wait to return to Columbia for our next event."

— Lou Mengsol, President, US Sports Congress



# AIKEN, SC

**A TRUE BREEDING GROUND FOR CHAMPIONSHIP —PEDIGREE HORSES, AIKEN MIXES SOUTHERN CHARM WITH AN ESTABLISHED EQUESTRIAN LEGACY**

Citizens Park



Located just northeast of Augusta, Georgia, Aiken is accessible via U.S. Route 78, which runs directly through town and has access to Interstate 20 to the north via U.S. Route 1. Augusta Regional Airport is around 24 miles to the west and offers daily flights through Delta, while Columbia Regional Airport is 50 miles east and offers nonstop flights to nine major U.S. cities.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

**Citizens Park**  
**Softball, soccer, multipurpose outdoor**

Aiken's premier athletic facility features 15 lighted baseball/softball fields and eight AstroTurf batting cages, that are able to host a wide variety of leagues and tournaments throughout the year. The park is a familiar host for USSSA baseball and softball tournaments and also housed the Dixie Boys and Junior Boys World Series in August 2019. A championship soccer field, Banks Mill soccer

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

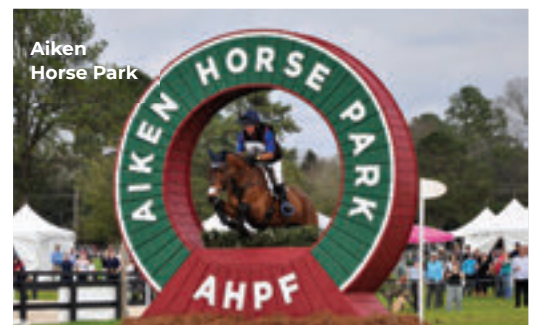
We love coming to Aiken, and the reason we do is they are always so on top of everything; they anticipate our needs. Aiken is a nice, quaint town that people love going to and experiencing. At a tournament a couple years back it rained the final day, but that didn't stop the City of Aiken staff from helping out. They actually came out and dried the courts for us and we were back playing within 30 minutes!

— Mary Goins,  
USTA Director of Leagues

Weeks Tennis Center



Aiken Horse Park



field, 14 score towers, concession stands, a playground for kids aged 2-12, sprayground, covered eating areas and more round out this spectacular 123.3-acre complex.

**H.O. Weeks Center**  
**Multipurpose indoor, racquetball, basketball, pickleball**

Located at Virginia Acres Park, the H.O. Weeks Activities Center (HOW) is a versatile, multifaceted indoor facility with two gyms available for rental, including one with a stage. The center additionally features four meeting

rooms and a multipurpose aerobics room, as well as a fitness room, indoor racquetball court, kitchen, restrooms, locker rooms and a canteen. The venue is the annual home of the Palmetto Indoor Pickleball Invitational in September.

## Weeks Tennis Center Tennis

This state-of-the-art tennis center features 13 hard courts and 10 clay courts, as well as a gorgeous clubhouse complete with a wrap-around porch with Adirondack chairs, dining tables and ceiling fans. Located at Virginia Acres Park, the center also features access to 12 indoor/outdoor pickleball courts, a tennis pro shop with racket stringing available, and is the home to many USTA tournaments.

## Aiken Horse Park Equestrian

Located in the heart of Aiken's historic district, Bruce's Field at the Aiken Horse Park provides premier facilities and a rich heritage for both horses and riders. The park has

224 permanent stalls, space for additional temporary stabling, five all-weather rings and two schooling areas, all featuring GGT footing.

## USC Aiken Convocation Center Basketball, volleyball, multipurpose indoor

Home to the University of South Carolina Aiken Pacers volleyball and basketball teams, this multipurpose indoor arena can seat between 3,500 to 4,100 spectators. The arena features a first-class VIP room with a capacity for 200 patrons and also features multiple electronic scoreboards with backlighting advertisement opportunities, rentable meeting space for any function and two practice courts.



### CITY OF AIKEN

Pam Royal  
Athletics and Tourism Manager  
803-643-4779  
proyal@cityofaikensc.gov  
www.VisitAikenSC.com

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Discover the secrets of the first designed steam-powered commercial railroad at the **Aiken Visitors Center and Train Museum**.
- ▶ Explore the **Aiken Arboretum Trail**, where visitors can dial a number on their mobile devices to label and identify each tree they're viewing.
- ▶ Celebrate the history of some of the world's best racehorses with a trip to the **Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum**.
- ▶ **Shop 'til you drop** with eclectic offerings like women's clothier Fox and Lady, jewelry store Beyond Bijoux, equestrian wear at Equine Divine.



# SPORTING AROUND AIKEN

AIKEN, SOUTH CAROLINA: A PLACE LIKE NO OTHER



PLAN YOUR VISIT TODAY  
[www.VisitAikenSC.com](http://www.VisitAikenSC.com)  
1.888.AIKENSC or 803.293.7846

@VisitAikenSC

**South Carolina**  
Just right.



# MYRTLE BEACH, SC

CROWNED AS ONE OF SOUTH CAROLINA'S TOP DESTINATIONS, MYRTLE BEACH WILL BRING YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED AND MORE WHEN IT COMES TO ORGANIZING AN INDOOR OR OUTDOOR TOURNAMENT

Myrtle Beach Sports Center



Visitors can drive to Myrtle Beach along either Highways 51, 73 or 501. The city can be easily accessed from Jacksonville, Atlanta, Savannah, Virginia Beach and Charlotte, which are all situated less than eight hours away from Myrtle Beach. Visitors from farther cities can fly into Myrtle Beach International Airport, which is seven minutes from central Myrtle Beach.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

**Myrtle Beach Sports Center**  
*Badminton, basketball, volleyball, pickleball, archery, cheer, gymnastics, wrestling*

Indoor sports thrive at the Myrtle Beach Sports Center, a 100,000-square-foot indoor sports facility that helped expand sports tourism. The \$12.4 million facility includes eight basketball courts, 16 volleyball courts, a café and retail area and a large multiscreen video wall. The center has 2,000 bleacher seats that can be reconfigured for various sports.

**Myrtle Beach Convention Center**  
*Badminton, basketball, volleyball, pickleball, archery, cheer, gymnastics, wrestling*

Covering 250,000-square-feet, the Myrtle Beach Convention Center provides easily convertible space for sports and trade shows. Located in the Myrtle Beach Convention and Entertainment District, the center houses a 30,000-square-foot outdoor dance and cheer complex. If you're not looking to host a tournament, then utilize the venue for trade shows and national meetings. The venue is

within walking distance of Broadway at the Beach, one of the area's premier shopping and entertainment destinations.

### Grand Park Athletic Complex

**Baseball, football, lacrosse, soccer, softball**

Located at the beautiful Market Common and one mile from the Atlantic Ocean, this facility includes nine lighted multipurpose Field Turf fields and two natural youth fields, six-lane batting tunnel and complimentary live streaming for those who can't make the trip. Enhanced safety and sanitation policies and protocols are in place for the wellbeing of both participants and spectators. Other attractions include the Crabtree Memorial Gymnasium, a roller hockey rink and the Market Common shops.

### Doug Shaw Memorial Stadium

**Football, lacrosse, soccer, track and field**

Recently having undergone a major \$5.4 million renovation, the Doug Shaw Memorial Stadium is home to the Myrtle Beach High School Seahawks, 4A State Champions. Teams from all over will want to test their endurance on the FieldTurf infield for soccer, lacrosse and football and NCAA-approved track. The eight-lane track comprises weatherproof artificial

surface with the ability to catch replays on a Daktronics video board. The stadium holds up to 4,500 guests.

### North Myrtle Beach Park and Sports Complex

**Baseball, lacrosse, soccer, softball**

The North Myrtle Beach Park and Sports Complex is a 163+ acre park that includes two first-class sports complexes. The baseball/softball complex consists of four fields along with two collegiate baseball/adult softball fields. Also included at the complex are misting fans in the dugouts, bleacher awnings, officials room and a full-service concession stand. The soccer/lacrosse complex consists of eight natural grassed regulation soccer/lacrosse fields (four with lights), officials room and a full-service concession stand.



#### MYRTLE BEACH SPORTS COMMISSION

Jonathan Paris, Executive Director

843-916-7264

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[www.myrtlebeachsports.com](http://www.myrtlebeachsports.com)

### POPULAR ACTIVITIES

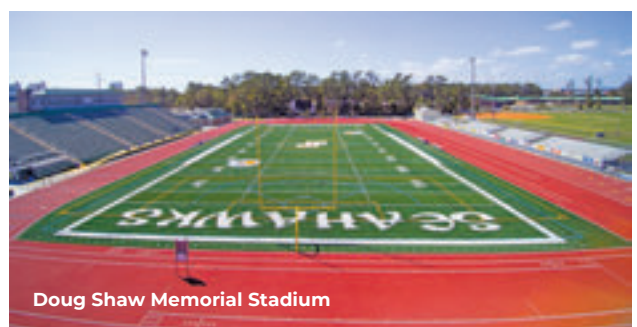
- ▶ Ride the waves at **Myrtle Waves Waterpark**, offering more than 30 water slides.
- ▶ Visit the **Family Kingdom Amusement Park** for more adventures on 37 rides for adults and children of all ages, including thrill rides, family rides, kiddie rides and go karts.
- ▶ Pet stingrays, see a mermaid show and learn about marine life at **Ripley's Aquarium**.
- ▶ Find a souvenir at **Tanger Outlet** malls and specialty shopping at **Broadway at the Beach**.



### PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Myrtle Beach is such an easy sell to my travel teams that play in our events. The city sells itself! With miles of sandy beaches, tons of attractions and plenty of hotels for every budget, teams simply love coming to play in our tournaments. Parents use our events as a vacation while getting a chance to watch their child play in a national championship."

— John Whitley  
National Travel Basketball Association





# *Play it Safe* IN MYRTLE BEACH



**MYRTLEBEACHSPORTS.COM**  
800.488.8998

It's time to get back to The Beach! Our sports venues are ready to host your next event with enhanced safety measures in place. Let our award-winning CVB staff help you plan your next sporting event with safety and social distancing in mind. Together, we'll make your event a win!

Contact Jonathan Paris at  
[jonathan.paris@visitmyrtlebeach.com](mailto:jonathan.paris@visitmyrtlebeach.com)

visit  
**MYRTLE BEACH**  
REGIONAL SPORTS ALLIANCE



# 2021 MISSISSIPPI GUIDE

**Host Your Next  
Event in the  
Magnolia State**

**Mississippi Is Home  
To Beautiful Locales,  
Fabulous Facilities**

**Six Great  
Places to Play**

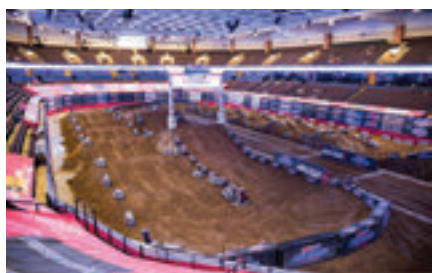
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**SPG**  
A Premier Travel Media publication  
[www.SportsPlanningGuide.com](http://www.SportsPlanningGuide.com)



# DESOTO COUNTY

Tucked in between Tunica and Memphis, you will find a treasure chest of perfect indoor and outdoor sports and recreational facilities perfect for any event. DeSoto County is a great place to host your next sporting event.



## TOP VENUES:

- 1. Landers Center** plays host to the Memphis Hustle of the NBA's G League and other sporting events such as boxing, ice shows, rodeos and more are held throughout the year.
- 2. Snowden Grove Park** features 17 fields, plus Greenbrook Park has eight softball fields while the Snowden Grove Tennis Complex has eight lighted courts.
- 3. The Indoor Volleyball Arena in Southaven** has established itself as one of the finest volleyball arenas in the region with multi-court play.



**KIM TERRELL**  
662-393-8770  
kterrell@visitdesoto.com  
visitdesotocounty.com/  
[plan-an-event/sports](#)

# RIDGELAND

Play Inside + Out in Ridgeland! Some of the state's finest athletic facilities, over 1,500 hotel rooms and 150 restaurants make tournament and event play a breeze in Ridgeland.



## TOP VENUES:

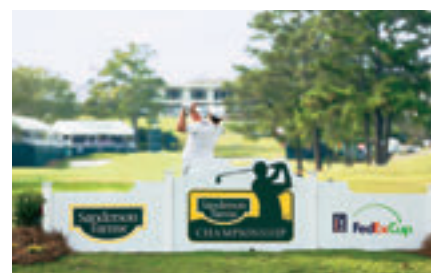
- 1. Freedom Ridge Park** is a 50-acre complex with four 300' turf baseball/softball fields, four lighted 360' x 225' soccer fields, plus two playgrounds.
- 2. Hite Wolcott Park** hosts USSSA and Grand Slam baseball tournament on seven lighted baseball/softball fields at a 40-acre complex.
- 3. Ridgeland Tennis Center** contains 17 lighted hard courts, a 2,000-square-foot covered porch for viewing, a pro shop and men's and women's locker rooms.



**MINA THORGESON**  
601-605-5253  
mina@visitridgeland.com  
[visitridgeland.com](#)

# JACKSON

Home of the PGA Tour's Sanderson Farms Championship, Jackson is a lively capital city with plenty of southern hospitality. Whether you need courts, fields or arenas, the sports facilities in Jackson can accommodate your event and with just over 5,000 hotel rooms you can "Stay Where You Play."



## TOP VENUES:

- Opened in 2009, the **Jackson Convention Complex** features 330,000 square feet of flexible exhibit, ballroom, and meeting space and is located in the heart of downtown Jackson
- The **Mississippi Coliseum** is a 25,000-square-foot facility with 70-foot ceilings and permanent seating for 6,500 spectators. The facility has hosted basketball, rodeo, ice skating and wrestling.
- Adjacent to the Coliseum is the new 110,000-square-foot **Mississippi Trade Mart** which features 63,000 square feet of column-free space that can be divided into three trade halls.



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# OXFORD

Oxford is an appealing sporting event location with a mixture of small-town charm and big-town facilities and amenities. As the home of the University of Mississippi, there is always something here to immerse yourself in the “Cultural Mecca of the South.”



## TOP VENUES:

1. Across its 75-acre campus, **mTrade Park** is one of the premier soccer, baseball and softball facilities in Mississippi. The park has 12 synthetic turf infields with natural grass outfields, plus there are five international size soccer fields.
2. The University of Mississippi features **The Pavilion at Ole Miss** with seating for 9,500 people and an additional 1,700 premium seats. Vaught-Hemingway Stadium has seating for 64,038 and Ole Miss Soccer Stadium seats 1500-plus.
3. **The FNC Tennis Center** is the largest public hard court tennis facility in the state, featuring 20 lighted hard courts.



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recreation/

# COASTAL MISSISSIPPI

Coastal Mississippi's location, climate and affordable sports event venues perfectly complement the 62 miles of scenic coastline. With a variety of lodging and family entertainment, region provides the ideal sporting experience.



## TOP VENUES:

1. The **Mississippi Coast Coliseum** is capable of hosting major events with multiple seating arrangements from 1,500 to 15,000 while the adjacent convention center features over 400,000 square feet of space.
2. **MGM Park** has been home to the Biloxi Shuckers since 2015. The park features 4,500 reserved seats, 12 suites, two open-air party decks, a grass berm and a 1,472-square-foot scoreboard.
3. The **Gulfport Sportsplex** features six full size soccer fields and 15 baseball and softball fields. The facility hosts some of the largest and finest local, state, regional & national tournaments.



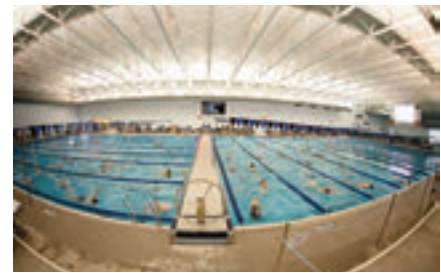
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# TUPELO

A variety of venues makes it easy for Tupelo to accommodate local, statewide, regional, and national events. Off the field, you can feel the beat of live music, see all the Elvis Presley tour sites or hang out at one of the area's hot spots – there's lots of fun things to do in Tupelo.



## TOP VENUES:

1. The 43,665-square-foot **Tupelo Aquatic Center** boasts a 12,625-square-foot Olympic size competition and 3,000-square-foot teaching pool that can accommodate a 20-lane short course, eight-lane long course and four-lane warm-up.
2. **BancorpSouth Arena** is a 32,000 square-foot facility that can accommodate wood, ice or dirt and a variety of events.
3. **Sportsplex at Ballard Park** boasts 13 baseball fields, 16 multi-purpose fields, a skate park, 1.7-mile trail and 1.2-mile cross country course.



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**Looking for the perfect sporting venue?  
Mississippi has you covered.**

Year-round mild climate. Check.

Varied terrain. Check.

Easy access. Check.

Whatever your requirements, Mississippi has you covered with ample room to play and socially distance.

Start planning today at [visitmississippi.org](https://www.visitmississippi.org).

**VISIT  
MISSISSIPPI**





# 2021 FLORIDA GUIDE

## Get Out and Get Active in Florida

Beautiful Weather,  
Backdrops Make Florida  
an Ideal Destination

## Florida is Home to the Biggest Sporting Events

America's Southernmost State is  
the Center of the Sports Universe

**SPG**

A Premier Travel Media publication  
[www.SportsPlanningGuide.com](http://www.SportsPlanningGuide.com)





**Angela A. Suggs**  
President & CEO, Florida Sports Foundation

Welcome to the Sunshine State where you can *Come Play in Florida* year-round! With beautiful weather and average annual high temps in the 80s, more than 35 local sports commissions from Pensacola to Miami host over 3,000 sporting events a year.

Florida boasts more than 11,000 miles of coastline and rolling hills of golf courses that invite visitors to play outside while fresh sheets of ice and state-of-the-art convention centers host events indoors.

Multi-sport competitions on all levels, like the annual Sunshine State Games, Florida Senior Games presented by Humana, Florida Grapefruit League Spring Training, Super Bowl LV, the 2021 NHL All-Star Game, the College Football Playoff, and NASCAR, can spread out over thousands of square feet of event space all year long.

Our local sports commissions have developed partnerships with universities to host events at the same facilities collegiate athletes compete in, giving aspiring youth athletes a goal for their athletic careers or the start to an Olympic dream. Commissions partner with parks and recreation departments to showcase the same amenities for out-of-area athletes and fans that their residents enjoy daily. These same groups reach into the community to develop new sporting opportunities, taking advantage of technological advances in e-Sports and virtual events through Zoom.

For athletes and fans visiting the state's sports-minded communities, local convention and visitors bureaus showcase other area amenities. Visitors stay in conveniently-located hotels, dine in restaurants to suit all appetites, and enjoy other attractions making the communities a part of the state's thriving sports industry. Each year, the more than 16 million who *Come Play in Florida* contribute to a \$57.4 billion annual impact that creates 580,000 jobs.

Sporting opportunities remain open and are welcome in the Sunshine State. There's no age and ability limit and blue skies await your arrival.

*Come Play in Florida*, and stay a while.

Angela A. Suggs  
President & CEO, Florida Sports Foundation





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# FLORIDA

**124** Big Sporting Events

**126** Get Outdoors in Florida



**Site InSpections**

**128** Orange County Convention Center

**130** Lake County

**132** St. Augustine

**136** Pasco County

**138** Bradenton

**ON THE COVER:**

**Amelia Island Golf Resort**

Photo courtesy of Visit Florida



Photo courtesy of Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau





# FLORIDA IS THE PLACE TO BE FOR BIG SPORTING EVENTS

*America's southernmost state is the center of the sports universe in 2020 and beyond*

By Jason Paha

**M**arch 11, 2020, will forever be remembered as a flashpoint in American sports history. On that night, Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert tested positive for COVID-19, resulting in the postponement of that evening's basketball game.

In the ensuing days, weeks and months, sports leagues were thrown into a state of flux as games and seasons were halted because of the pandemic that swept across the planet. In that timespan, officials were wracked with uncertainty as to when and where their leagues would return to action.

For many sports, the answer to the "where" question was Florida.

## MLS IS FIRST TO RETURN

Major professional and college sports did eventually return to action after a nearly four-month hiatus. The first sport to restart in the United States was Major League Soccer, which began its MLS is Back tournament July 8. Citing a need to compete in a safe environment, MLS opted to host the tournament in the quarantined confines of the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex in the Walt Disney World Resort in Bay Lake, Florida. Opened in 1997, this 220-acre, multipurpose sports complex is home to nine venues and hosts numerous amateur and professional sporting events throughout the year. The complex is also slated to host the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games.

In more traditional times, the ESPN complex is a popular destination for tournaments thanks to its 11 baseball and softball diamonds, 17 outdoor multipurpose fields, more than 700,000 square feet of playing space and more than 15,000 spectator seats. Its close proximity to Disney's four theme parks is also a major plus for tournament organizers, athletes and their families.



## NBA BUBBLE

Also taking place at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex was the National Basketball Association's return, which restarted on July 30. The conclusion to the 2020 NBA regular season along with the entirety of the playoffs unfolded at the complex, with 22 teams competing in the NBA "bubble." That number was whittled down to 16 once the postseason started with the campaign ending with the Los Angeles Lakers battling the Miami Heat for the title.

While the ESPN complex has a wide array of entertainment options, it's also an appealing destination because of its location. With Orlando, and its many attractions including SeaWorld Orlando, Universal Orlando Resort, Fun Spot America Theme Parks and LEGOLand less than 20 minutes away, athletes and their families are never lacking in entertainment options.

## WNBA RESTART

Like the MLS and NBA, the Women's National Basketball Association restarted its season in Florida, at IMG Academy in Bradenton. The league restarted July 25 and concluded October 6 at the facility that sits on 450 acres and is considered one of the top sports training destinations in the country. IMG Academy offers camp programs on a year-round basis and serves as a training and competition venue for amateur, collegiate and professional teams, adults and families. It is also a host site for a variety of events.

When athletes aren't honing their craft or competing for a championship at IMG, they can often be found enjoying picturesque Bradenton's outdoor offerings. Among the most popular destinations and activities are white-sand beaches, kayak fishing and even embarking on a dolphin cruise.

## FOOTBALL KINGS ARE CROWNED HERE

Even before the pandemic wreaked havoc on the sports landscape, numerous sports, including the National Football League and the NCAA, chose Florida as the ideal

locale to determine their champions.

The most recent example of this took place in February of 2020 at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, when the Kansas City Chiefs upended the San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl LIV. In 2021, Hard Rock Stadium is also slated to host the 2021 College Football Playoff National Championship.

Located in north-central Miami Dade County, Miami Gardens resides a half-hour drive from the glamorous hot spot that is South Beach. Renowned for its art deco architecture, outdoor cafes and magnificent beaches, South Beach is one of the most popular destinations in the world.

Not to be outdone, in February of 2021, the NFL's biggest game returns to Florida as Raymond James Stadium in Tampa will host Super Bowl LV. This will be the second massive game Raymond James has entertained in the past five years, as the stadium held the 2016 NCAA football title game between Clemson and Alabama.

Aside from its prowess at hosting major events, Tampa is a world-class destination as it features such popular attractions as Busch Gardens, Tampa Bay, the Florida Aquarium, ZooTampa and the Botanical Gardens. It is also home to the Tampa Museum of Art, the Tampa Bay History Center and the Glazer Children's Museum.

## A PERFECT CLIMATE FOR A HOCKEY GAME

Even a winter sport borne in harsh climates wanted in on Florida's hospitality. Thus, the National Hockey League's 2021 All-Star Game is scheduled for January 30 at the BB&T Center in Sunrise. In 2018, Florida also hosted the All-Star Game as Amalie Arena in Tampa presented the event.

Located in the heart of South Florida, Sunrise is a city filled with cosmopolitan shopping, dining and recreation destinations. The city is also minutes from Fort Lauderdale's exquisite beaches and less than an hour from Miami and Palm Beach. **SPG**



IMG Academy  
Basketball Courts



# GET OUT AND GET ACTIVE IN FLORIDA

Photo courtesy of Greater Miami  
Convention & Visitors Bureau



Matheson Hammock Park in Coral Gables, Florida

*The Sunshine State's immaculate weather and picturesque backdrops make it an ideal destination for lovers of the great outdoors*

By Jason Paha

**F**or many, 2020 was a year in which too much time was spent cooped up indoors.

And while the COVID-19 pandemic still looms large, many would-be travelers are feeling a growing need to get out and stretch their legs in a picturesque and socially distanced setting.

In other words, a trip to Florida is in order.

With three national parks, 175 state parks, 663 miles of beaches and vast stretches of coastline, Florida's outdoor activity options are unparalleled. And with an average of 237 sunny days per year, any sojourn to Florida will most likely involve ideal weather conditions.

Here are a few outdoor locales across the Sunshine State where you can burn calories and soak in the sun's rays while savoring miles of scenic tranquility.

## BICYCLING

Florida's legions of trails pass through a multitude of diverse landscapes, making it a cyclist's paradise. The Lake Trail in Palm Beach is a five-mile paved path that provides excellent views of the waterfront along with looks at historic buildings and massive mansions. For more advanced riders, the Withlacoochee State Trail in Dunnellon is a huge 46-mile trail that features miles of natural lands on a wide asphalt-paved path. The Everglades are an unexpectedly great place to bike as it is home to a network of trails that bring you close to flamingoes, herons and pelicans. One of the Everglades' most popular trails is Shark Valley Trail, a paved loop spanning 15 miles enabling riders to bike near birds, turtles and even alligators.

## FISHING

Often called the Fishing Capital of the World, Florida is home to more than 900 world records and 7,700 lakes, making it a desirable place for anglers to gather. Lake Okeechobee, known as Florida's inland sea, features 730 square miles of trophy-winning Bass fishing. Nicknamed the "World's Luckiest Fishing Village" because of its ample fishing options, Destin, in northwest Florida, has earned a reputation as one of the best fishing spots in the state. Destin has been labeled the Billfish Capital of the Northern Gulf and is a favorite among anglers because of its white sands and emerald green waters. The Florida Keys, a 100-mile stretch of islands at the state's southern end, is home to several famous fishing towns, including Key West, Marathon, Islamorada and Big Pine Key. Deep sea fishing is a favorite activity in the Keys as fishermen engage in a battle of wills with some of the world's most robust fish: marlin, tuna and sailfish.

## GOLF

When Golf.com ranked the best states to golf, not surprisingly, Florida finished No. 1. With more courses than any other state (1,250) and a slew of immaculate courses (including the legendary Seminole Golf Club in Juno Beach), golfers come from far and wide to hone their skills and have a good time. Some of the best courses in the state include Red Course at Streamsong Resort in Fort Meade (featuring dramatic and unique land forms that are pleasing to the eye), Commander Course at Lakewood National in Lakewood Ranch (stretches 7,184 yards and was designed by Arnold Palmer Design), Pine Barrens at World Woods Golf Club in Brooksville (pristine forestry and ample vegetation are a natural setting for this course) and PLAYERS Stadium at TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach (Home of The Players Championship, golfers can play 36 challenging and memorable holes created by noted architect Pete Dye).

## HIKING

Florida is home to a variety of habitats, making it one of the best places to hike in the country. In Blackwater River State Forest, located in the state's western panhandle, huge red clay bluffs reside along Juniper Creek, giving hikers some of the best views on the Florida National Scenic Trail. Etoniah Creek State Forest, northeast of Gainesville, sports the Longleaf Pine Trail Loop, which is roughly five miles in length and is a favorite place to spot black bears. Ocala National Forest covers 360,000 acres including a 75-mile section of the 1,300-mile Florida Trail, which weaves from the Gulf Island National Seashore to Big Cypress National Preserve. Outdoor enthusiasts will appreciate its more than 600 lakes, rivers and springs, including three first-magnitude springs where visitors can swim, snorkel and dive in sparkling rivers year-round.

## KAYAKING

Florida's diverse ecosystems and clean waters make it a must-visit

destination for paddlers across the world. Walton County in Northwest Florida is home to unique natural features that are rare on this planet: Coastal dune lakes, which are bodies of freshwater that exist alongside the ocean. This county has 15 named dune lakes, where paddlers can immerse themselves in the tranquil waters and gorgeous scenery that accompanies these lakes. Juniper Run, in Ocala National Forest, offers narrow and winding waterways that wend through a landscape of palms and cypress along with the diverse wildlife that lives in the forest. Those seeking a memorable outing can head out after dark in Florida's Space Coast, where they will see an incredible phenomenon: bioluminescent algae transform dark waters into a vibrant blue color. Bioluminescence has been described as nature's glow sticks and most commonly takes place during the summer months.

## SCUBA DIVING AND SNORKELING

With so much water in and around the state, Florida is a favorite destination for snorkelers and scuba divers. One top spot to visit is Biscayne National Park near Miami, where offshore outings bring snorkelers close to coral reefs, shipwrecks and beautiful underwater habitats. Dry Tortugas National Park resides 70 miles west of Key West and is made up of a remote group of islands that are only accessible by boat or seaplane. Snorkelers and scuba divers flock to this location because of its amazingly clear underwater views of marine life and colorful corals that call the Tortugas home. Looe Key National Marine Sanctuary, near Big Pine Key, is home to a majestic array of coral and more than 150 marine animals including eels, barracuda and angelfish.

Those seeking an immersive swimming experience can travel to Crystal River in Citrus County, where between November and April, they can snorkel with the gentle giants of the sea, manatee. During these months, hundreds of manatee head to this region to escape colder temperatures. Along those lines, guests can visit West Palm Beach where they can dive in the area's clear warm waters and swim with wild sea turtles. More than 60,000 turtles come ashore during the summer months and divers can swim alongside these affable creatures. **SPG**



Joel de Vriend via Unsplash



# ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER

AS ONE OF THE LARGEST CONVENTION CENTERS IN THE U.S., THE ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER IS WORLD-FAMOUS FOR ITS EXTENSIVE SPACE, STATE-OF-THE-ART AMENITIES, AND DEDICATION TO EXCELLENCE.



Home to the world's largest volleyball competition, the OCCC's North-South Building offers exceptional flexibility and amenities for sporting events.

Located in the heart of Orlando's tourist corridor, The Center of Hospitality is accessible for both domestic and transatlantic travelers. Offering convenience and connectivity, the Center is just 15 minutes from the Orlando International Airport (MCO) and 45 minutes from Sanford Orlando International Airport (SFB). in the Southeastern portion of the U.S., teams can reach the Center easily and affordably.

## **FACILITY SPOTLIGHT** **North-South Building** **Volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, gymnastics, taekwondo, indoor sports**

With more than 950,000 square feet of exhibition space, the North-South Building offers exceptional flexibility for diverse sporting events. Home to the world's largest volleyball competition, the AAU Junior National Volleyball Championship, the 2019 event broke records, welcoming more than 110,000 guests and more than 2,805 teams from around the world.

## **West Building** **Volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, gymnastics, taekwondo, indoor sports**

Boasting more than 1 million square feet in exhibition space, the OCCC's West Building has welcomed a wide variety of high-profile sporting events, including WrestleMania Axxess, USA Volleyball Florida Region and American Open Cheer. Designed with flexibility and functionality in mind, the modern West Building offers state-of-the-art amenities for attendees, including newly renovated food courts and refreshment areas.

## Competing Safely at the OCCC

As a Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC) Star accredited venue, the OCCC is taking every precaution to ensure a safe and seamless experience for sporting events at The Center of Hospitality. This includes, but is not limited to, enhancing cleaning in line with GBAC STAR standards, collaborating with Orlando Health to offer the first-of-its-kind medical concierge service for attendees, and working closely with groups to identify safe solutions that tailor to their event and adhere to current guidelines.

With ample space for physical distancing, that OCCC can help you devise solutions to create a controlled and organized space, so you can host your next sporting event with confidence.

## Notable Recent and Upcoming Events

In 2019, The Center of Hospitality hosted 19 sporting events, welcoming more than 239,000 participants, coaches, chaperones and attendees.

### 2020 Highlights

- Florida Fest Boys' Bid Tournament (January 2020)
- USA Volleyball Sunshine Volleyball Classic (March 2020)

- American Open Cheer (March 2020)
- Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Junior National Volleyball Championships (July 2020)

Offering the best-in-class service, location and venue, many sporting events return to The Center of Hospitality year-after-year, solidifying the Center's ability to satisfy and exceed expectations.

### Returning Sporting Events

- Spirit Cheer will return for its 4th year in December 2020
- Sunshine Classic Volleyball will return for its 7th year in March 2021
- Florida Region of USA Volleyball will return for its 17th year in April 2021
- AAU Junior National Volleyball Championships will celebrate its 20th year in June 2021



### ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER

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## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ See your favorite characters, fantasy landscapes and thrilling rides at **Universal Orlando Resort**, which is home to Universal Studios, Islands of Adventure and Volcano Bay.
- ▶ Immerse yourself into the wonders of marine life and hop on a variety of rides and enjoy a wealth of attractions at **SeaWorld Orlando**.
- ▶ **ICON Park** is an entertainment complex for the whole family featuring more than 40 restaurants, funky bars, boutique shops and amusement park rides.
- ▶ **Pointe Orlando**, a beautiful outdoor shopping center, offers more than 40 unique stores, delicious restaurants and exciting nightlife near Orlando's entertainment center, International Drive.



The OCCC's West Building has hosted a variety of high-profile sporting events through the years, including WestleMania Axxess, USA Volleyball Florida Region and American Open Cheer.

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Providing participation opportunities to athletes in a safe environment has always been the AAU's highest priority. We worked diligently with our partners at OCCC to ensure the highest standards of social distancing and containment mitigation measures were in place for our event. During these unprecedented times, to be able to offer athletes a chance to compete and play safely is immeasurable. Thank you to OCCC for your tireless efforts on the behalf of the Amateur Athletic Union."

— Roger J. Goudy,  
AAU President and CEO



The OCCC boasts more than 1 million square feet in exhibition space.



West Building newly renovated food courts and refreshment areas.



# LAKE COUNTY, FL

IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO ORLANDO, LAKE COUNTY HAS PLENTY TO OFFER ON ITS OWN MERITS AS IT STAKES ITS CLAIM AS A PREMIER ATHLETIC DESTINATION

Lake Louisa State Park



Just northwest of Orlando, Lake County is accessible by road via Florida's Turnpike, US Highway 27 and US Highway 441, as well as state route 44 from the northeast after exiting Interstate 4. If flying into the area, Orlando International Airport and Orlando Sanford International Airport are both less than an hour away.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Hickory Point Park/Hickory Point Beach Sand volleyball, soccer, fishing

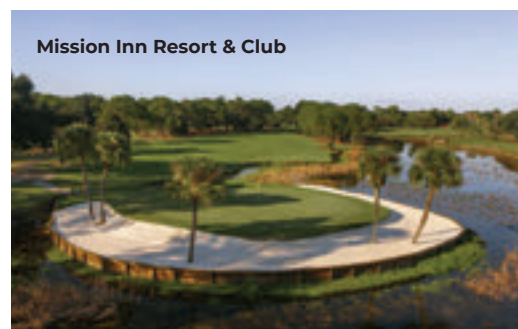
Located in Tavares, the Hickory Point Beach sand volleyball complex is Florida's largest beach volleyball complex with 21 sand volleyball courts ready for action.

Hickory Point Beach has hosted the AVCA Small College Beach Championships, professional events, and many more. Hickory Point Park is home to the Mike Stone Soccer complex (six fields) and a boating complex used for fishing tournaments.

Hickory Point Beach



Mission Inn Resort & Club



## Victory Pointe

### Triathlon, rowing, watersports, endurance

Victory Pointe, located on Lake Minneola in Clermont, is a world-class venue designed for multi-sport athletes, event organizers and visitors. For over 34 years, Clermont has been a global destination for multi-sport training and competitive events including numerous regional and national championships. Nearby, the Clermont Boathouse and Clermont Waterfront Park, include a 1,000-meter and 2,000-meter course for rowing and

other watersports and an oak-tree covered shoreline which provides spectators a great viewing area.

### **Mission Inn Resort & Club** **Golf**

Spectacular vistas, sparkling water hazards and a stunning—yet challenging—course layout separate tournament play at the Mission Inn Resort & Club, which has a particular expertise when it comes to hosting golf tournaments. The club boasts two championship-caliber golf courses in the El Campeón and Las Colinas courses, which blend right in with the surrounding Florida landscape.

### **The National Training Center** **Swimming, soccer, softball, track and field**

This state-of-the-art training center located in Clermont is nationally recognized as a USA Triathlon Certified Performance Center thanks to the available services in

running, swimming, cycling, wellness and nutrition that maximizes sports performance through great coaching. Professional and amateur athletes from all around the world compete and train at the NTC including many preparing for the 2020 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo. The NTC campus includes a Track & Field Complex, Aquatic Center, five multipurpose athletic fields and the Legends Way Ballfields softball complex. The Track & Field Complex features a 400-meter Eurotan Premier Sandwich (an impermeable synthetic surface) track and grass infield that supports multiple events.



#### **VISIT LAKE, FL**

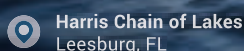
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### **POPULAR ACTIVITIES**

- ▶ **Revolution Adventures** lets guests cruise around a 230-acre property on ATVs, go land-to-sea with the Mucky Duck amphibious vehicle or try their hand at target archery or clay-shooting.
- ▶ **The Jones Brothers Seaplane Adventures** give guests a birds-eye view of Orlando's attractions, the Harris Chain of Lakes, Mount Dora and much more.
- ▶ Tour a working citrus and cattle ranch in the World's Largest 4x4 Monster Truck Adventure at the Showcase of Citrus.
- ▶ Experience award-winning festivals, fine dining, shopping and more in historic downtown Mount Dora.

## **PLAY IN REAL FLORIDA**

Located 30-minutes west of Orlando, Lake County is the host destination for championship events and Olympic athletes in Central Florida. Contact us today to learn why so many have chosen **"REAL FLORIDA. REAL CLOSE."**



**VISIT LAKE, FL**

[www.VisitLakeFL.com/Sports](http://www.VisitLakeFL.com/Sports)



# ST. AUGUSTINE, PONTE VEDRA & THE BEACHES, FL

THE NATION'S OLDEST CITY IS HOME TO COASTAL VIEWS, AMAZING ATTRACTIONS, GOLF COURSES, BEACHES, STATE PARKS AND MORE

St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches golf courses



St. Augustine is the nation's oldest city and one of Florida's finest destinations. This historic city and its neighbors are home to a wealth of attractions and can be reached via Interstate 95, U.S. Highway 1 and scenic Florida Highway A1A. Visitors from the West are served by Interstate 10. Jacksonville International Airport is 50 minutes north of St. Augustine and 30 minutes from Ponte Vedra.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### More than a dozen golf courses

#### Golf

One of the best golfing destinations in the whole country, St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches are home to more than a dozen outstanding courses, including the world famous TPC Sawgrass, which annually hosts The Players Championship every March. If you love the feel of the ocean breeze as you play, visit the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club. The par-72, 6,811-yard ocean course offers stunning seaside views and has served as the site for

the U.S. Open qualifying round five times. The Ocean Course at Hammock Beach Resort was carved out of the Atlantic Coast coastline and was designed by legendary golfer Jack Nicklaus. This 7,201-yard par 72 is a Florida oceanfront course with six holes that overlook the Atlantic Ocean.

### More than a dozen boating ramps

#### Fishing

This coastal region features a variety of accessible boating ramps and perfectly placed fishing piers. One such spot is Lighthouse Park

Boat Ramp, a historic ramp that features two boat ramps, a dock, water fountains and ample parking. The lovely view can be enjoyed from the vantage point of picnic tables and grills and is perfect for an afternoon cookout. Alpine Groves Park is a beautiful area that is home to a citrus grove, butterfly garden, nature trails, and of course, a dock for fishing. Anastasia State Park is another popular outdoor destination as it features picnic tables, a playground, seasonally staffed lifeguards and a host of fishing spots.

### First Coast BMX BMX biking

This spectacular BMX track in St. Augustine is ideal for BMX riders of all ages. It features a track of tight turns and wavy jumps and is perfect for riders who crave the thrilling speed and stunning tricks of the sport. This 8-lane, 24-foot track is ideal for any level of rider, from the youths still learning to balance to the seasoned rider flying through the air.

### 42 miles of scenic coastline Hiking, biking, swimming, padding/ kayaking

When Ponce de Leon was first drawn to Florida's historic coast 500 years ago, he may

have been so attracted to the gorgeous coastline that he couldn't resist sticking around. This area is home to 42 miles of spectacular beaches, from the pristine coast of Ponte Vedra Beach to St. Augustine Beach's lively surf and south to the wide sands of Crescent Beach. Other top spots include Anastasia State Park, featuring pristine beaches, native Florida hammocks and tons of wildlife, Crescent Beach, which sports a majestic stretch of coastline, and Vilano Beach, which features a charming community and one of St. Augustine's best-kept secret beaches. The 42 miles of scenic views also makes for an unforgettable road trip, so make sure to bring your camera.



#### ST. AUGUSTINE, PONTE VEDRA & THE BEACHES VISITORS AND CONVENTION BUREAU

Jaya Dillard, Sales & Services Manager  
904-209-4429  
sports@FloridasHistoricCoast.com  
www.FHCSports.com

Don't waste valuable time checking on room rates and availability. Instead, simply call or email the St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra VCB Sales Team. Your specific needs will be forwarded to the appropriate facilities, and you will receive timely and targeted responses.

### POPULAR ACTIVITIES

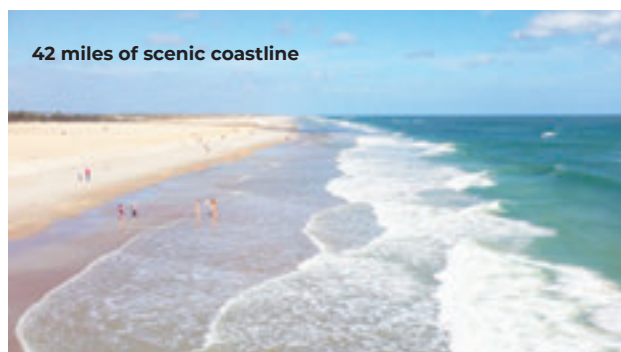
- ▶ **With Schooner Freedom Charters**, groups can sail on a replica 19th-century blockade-runner. St. Augustine's premier tall ship, it stands 76 feet and is a testament to naval history.
- ▶ From its distinctive 35-foot watchtower and colonial buildings to shops and diners, **Colonial Quarter** has something for everyone.
- ▶ **Sea Serpent Tours** takes guests through the Matanzas River, Tolomato River and St. Johns River, giving an unforgettable perspective of this side of Florida.
- ▶ From international fare and waterside seafood shacks to fine dining in the top resorts of Ponte Vedra Beach, there are no better dining experiences than the cuisine along **Florida's Historic Coast**.



### PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"The team with the St Augustine CVB has been great to work with to launch our conference championship. Their support and insight is going to make our event even better. We look forward to working with them for years to come!"

— Rob Chismark, ACL (American Cornhole League) SE Conference Pro





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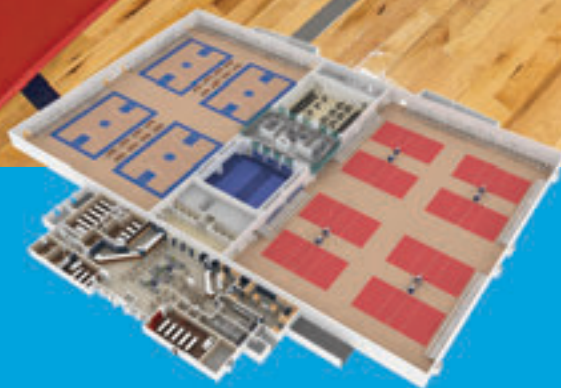
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Wiregrass Ranch Sports  
Campus of Pasco County



Florida's Sports Coast is located about 30 miles north of Tampa and roughly 50 miles west of Orlando. Both the Tampa Bay International Airport and the Orlando International Airport are served by most major airlines and offer hundreds of daily flights from all corners of the country. Learn more about how to enjoy a safe experience at [flsportscoast.com](https://flsportscoast.com)

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Wiregrass Ranch Sports Campus of Pasco County

**Basketball, volleyball, wrestling, cheerleading, gymnastics, pickleball, martial arts, futsal, soccer, lacrosse**

Opened summer of 2020, Wiregrass Ranch Sports Campus of Pasco County will be the premier destination for local, regional and national competitions. Catering to players, coaches, referees, families and fans looking for quality venues, this all-encompassing athletic center will be the perfect place for your next sporting event.

### AdventHealth Center Ice

**Ice hockey, roller hockey, ice skating, figure skating, basketball, volleyball, wrestling**

At 150,000 square feet, AdventHealth Center Ice is the largest ice complex in the Southeast. This state-of-the-art arena features three North American Standard NHL ice rinks (200' x 85'), one Olympic/International standard ice rink (200' x 100') and one junior rink (80' x 40'). The NHL rinks can also convert to a dry floor to accommodate basketball and volleyball.

## Saddlebrook Resort

### Tennis, golf, sports performance and training programs

Saddlebrook Resort's 480 acres are home to two Arnold Palmer signature golf courses and 45 tennis courts in all four Grand Slam surfaces. This award-winning and all-inclusive resort is an amazing sports and vacation destination where your athletes can train like professionals, play like kids and relax like champs. Saddlebrook's elite tennis and golf facilities offer year-round opportunities to grow with the guidance of ATP, WTA and PGA professionals.

## SunWest Park

### Wakeboarding, volleyball

SunWest Park is a recreational waterfront facility that has been developed around a former limestone mine. There is a wakeboarding cable over the lake, where experienced riders can practice their tricks on the spine kicker and modular box. On the shores of the 70-acre lake, you will find space for 20 beautiful white sandy beach volleyball courts perfect for college competitions.

## The Beach at Bishop

### Volleyball

The Beach at Bishop is a state-of-the-art beach volleyball facility featuring ten, three-foot deep courts filled with pure white sand brought in from the Bahamas. In late 2020, this venue will have a total of 20 courts, including two stadium courts.

## Sarah Vande Berg Tennis Center

### Tennis, pickleball

Opened summer of 2020, the Sarah Vande Berg Tennis Center will be a USTA sanctioned tennis facility featuring 11 tennis courts, one of which will be an exhibition court, eight pickleball courts and four padel courts. It will also feature a restaurant, pro shop and fitness center.



### FLORIDA'S SPORTS COAST

Consuelo Sanchez

727-847-8129

cbsanchez@flsportscoast.com

flsportscoast.com/sports-tourism

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

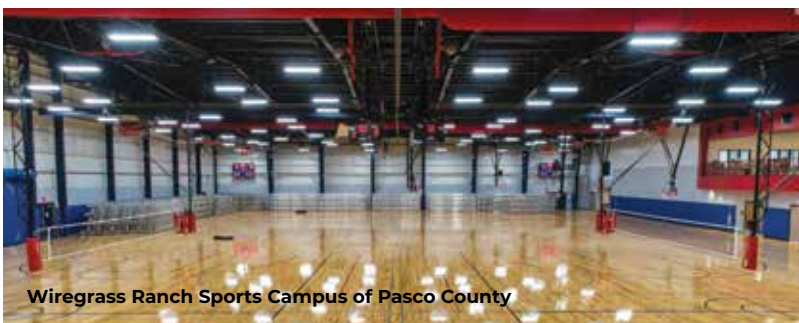
- ▶ Gear up for your next wakeboarding adventure at the **Lift Adventure Park**. The park features exciting Aqua Park.
- ▶ **Giraffe Ranch** offers intimate safari expeditions led by experienced guides in customized 4-WD safari tour vehicles.
- ▶ With eight different courses and over 100 unique elements, your team will enjoy adrenaline-charged zip lines at **Treeshoppers Aerial Adventure Park**.
- ▶ Score your next highflying adventure at **Skydive City**, known as one of the world's premier drop zones.
- ▶ Winter has come to Florida! Get ready to hit the slopes at Florida's first and only outdoor snow park at **Snowcat Ridge** in Dade City. Families can tube down real snow covered slopes.



## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"We work with many CVBs across the country, but what sets Florida's Sports Coast apart is Consuelo and her tireless work ethic and passion for making the events successful. We look forward to continuing to work with Florida's Sports Coast and Consuelo in the future."

— Jonathan Oppenheimer,  
President/Managing Member,  
MYHockey Tournaments, LLC





# BRADENTON, FL

WELCOME TO THE EMERGING ALL-STAR OF SPORTS IN FLORIDA. DOZENS OF FIRST-RATE SPORTS FACILITIES ARE SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE BRADENTON AREA—ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS CHOOSE WHERE TO COMPETE.

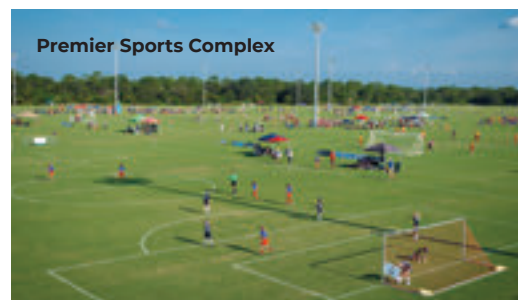


## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"We want to thank Bradenton Area Sports for their continued support and assisting at our tournaments. We have built a great working relationship and look forward to future opportunities."

— Cristian Cubillas, CONCACAF

## Premier Sports Complex



## Ellenton Ice & Sports Complex



The Bradenton Area has been a perennial favorite for athletes, teams and their coaches for years. The superb weather, welcoming attitude and tremendous value all combine to make it a top sports destination. And for many sports, the area offers the finest facilities for training and sporting events in the nation. Let us help you get your game on!

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### IMG Academy

**Baseball, basketball, football, golf, soccer, tennis, track and field**

IMG Academy is the most prestigious sports performance complex in the world. This mega-complex features over 50 tennis courts, over 20 multi-sport fields and an 18-hole golf course. The Academy also has four convertible basketball courts, weight rooms totaling more than 10,000 square feet of space and a 5,000-seat stadium. IMG Academy annually attracts nearly 200,000 athletes, coaches and spectators from 100 countries.

### Premier Sports Campus

**Ultimate frisbee, football, lacrosse, rugby, soccer**

The Premier Sports Campus in Lakewood Ranch hosts regional and national tournaments throughout the year. The campus holds 23 contiguous FIFA-approved Bermuda grass fields, eight of which are lit. A 4,000-seat stadium completes the facility's offerings. All the fields are equipped with 65,000 square-feet of underground irrigation systems.

### **LECOM Park** **Baseball**

For more than 90 years, LECOM Park has been a source of fun and excitement in Bradenton. This 8,500+ person, state-of-the-art stadium is perfect for baseball training and tournaments. A 19,000-squarefoot boardwalk spanning the outfield provides an exceptional experience for both athletes and fans.

### **Pirate City** **Baseball**

Pirate City provides tournament space and amenities for sports planners everywhere. This massive venue includes four full-sized baseball fields; each named after Hall of Fame or Pirates luminaries and equipped with bleacher and grandstand seats.

### **State College of Florida (SCF)** **Baseball, softball, basketball, tennis and volleyball**

Home of the Manatees, the State College

of Florida campus in Bradenton offers a number of facilities and accommodations.

### **Manatee County Sports Complexes** **Baseball, rowing, t-ball, softball, soccer, football, basketball**

The Bradenton Area offers a number of pristine, landscaped parks to host your next sporting event. With six top notch facilities designed to accommodate large crowds and multiple events, they include seven big league fields, 19 little league fields, five t-ball fields, 13 softball fields, 23 soccer fields, five football fields, eight outdoor courts and the Manatee County owned Fort Hamer Rowing Facility.



#### **BRADENTON AREA SPORTS**

Elliott Falcione  
941-729-9177  
sports@bacvb.com  
bradentonareasports.com

### **POPULAR ACTIVITIES**

- ▶ Just minutes from the world-class, white-sand **beaches** Bradenton is known for, visitors will find unbeatable opportunities to enjoy the region's rich history.
- ▶ At the **Bishop Museum of Science and Nature**, visitors can study fossils and prehistoric archeological artifacts, explore space at the **Bishop Planetarium**, and learn about wild manatees and witness their rehabilitation at the **Parker Manatee Aquarium**.
- ▶ Thrill-seekers can climb, zip and swing their way through **TreeUmp! Adventure Course**.

**Go from world-class facilities to world-class escape in no time.**

Premier Sports Campus

It's time to discover the leader in Florida tournament venues. The Bradenton Area is where champions train, play, and relax all while taking the game to the next level with exceptional facilities such as Premier Sports Campus at Lakewood Ranch, IMG Academy, and Pirate City, the winter home of the Pittsburgh Pirates.

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A full-page background image of a beach volleyball game. A male player in a grey tank top and blue shorts is jumping high, reaching for a yellow and white volleyball. He is wearing a blue cap and sunglasses. In the background, a net with "LIBERTY UNIVERSITY" branding is visible. Another player is crouching on the sand in the foreground, ready to receive the ball. The scene is set outdoors on a sandy beach with trees in the background.

## Virginia Sports Partnerships Extend to Colleges, Universities

Great Relationships Enable Sports to Flourish

## 5 National Parks to Put on Your Radar

Lesser-known Locations Shine a Light on American History, Culture

# SPG

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### Danish Saadat

National Sales & Marketing Manager  
Virginia Tourism/Sports Virginia

# VIRGINIA IS FOR SPORTS LOVERS

Virginia Tourism Corporation and our statewide Sports Virginia partners look forward to welcoming you, your athletes, and families to come experience all that Virginia has to offer. Whether you are a first-time visitor or revisiting the state for a tournament, there is always something new to discover when you visit.

Sports Virginia is a statewide collaboration of professionals from local convention and visitor bureaus, sports commissions, parks and recreation offices and facilities. The Commonwealth has been hosting successful sporting events for decades and we are committed to providing excellent service.

Virginia is conveniently accessible by major highway systems, Amtrak rail service and nine airports providing multiple affordable options for athletes and their families. Along with ease of access and world-class venues to compete in, visitors can enjoy well known historical attractions in the birthplace of our nation; outdoor adventures at one of many state and national parks; explore breweries and the local cuisine in urban cities and enjoy the charm of small towns. No matter what you decide to do on your visit one thing is guaranteed, you will be met with southern hospitality wherever you go.

Please contact me at [dsaadat@virginia.org](mailto:dsaadat@virginia.org) for personal assistance or visit [SportsVirginia.org](http://SportsVirginia.org) for more information and remember...

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Danish Saadat  
National Sales & Marketing Manager  
804-545-5543  
[dsaadat@virginia.org](mailto:dsaadat@virginia.org)



### Board paddling in beautiful Virginia



Photo courtesy of Virginia Tourism Corporation



©iStock.com/bgblue

# VIRGINIA

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### ON THE COVER:

Photo courtesy of Liberty University



Volleyball finals

Photo courtesy of Liberty University





# Virginia Sports Partnerships Extend to its Colleges and Universities

***Great relationships between cities and schools enable sporting events to flourish in the Commonwealth***

**By Jason Paha**

**W**hen it comes to hosting sporting events, Virginia has established itself as a national pacesetter. Thanks in large part to Sports Virginia members, a statewide collaboration of professionals from local convention and visitor bureaus, the Old Dominion State has hosted numerous top-flight tournaments over the years. Among those competitions include the Atlantic 10 Women's Basketball Championship, the Washington Football Team's training camp, the Babe Ruth World Series, the Amateur Athletic Union Junior Olympic Games, the UCI Road World Championships and the State Games of Virginia.

A large reason behind Virginia's success is the harmonious partnerships DMOs share with their local university.

An example of this can be found in the relationship between the City of Harrisonburg and James Madison University, a public research university that was founded in 1908.

"Harrisonburg has a good working relationship with JMU," said Jennifer E. Bell, tourism manager for the City of Harrisonburg. "JMU's facilities are valuable in drawing sports tourism to the area. When JMU is able to host sports competitions that draw visitors to the area,

it supports Harrisonburg's tourism industry through lodging rental, meals expenditures and patronage to Harrisonburg businesses."

The alliance between city and university only figures to strengthen when James Madison opens its new state-of-the-art arena that will seat 8,500 for basketball games, the JMU Atlantic Union Bank Center.

"We are anticipating with the completion of the new JMU Atlantic Union Bank Center that there will be more opportunities for basketball tournaments to be hosted on the campus and that in the offseason the center will be available to host other events," Bell added.

The City of Fairfax has been rated one of the top places to live well in the country according to Forbes magazine. One reason for this is the presence of George Mason University, the largest four-year public university in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

"Visit Fairfax has a great relationship with George Mason University," said Eric Kulczycky, national sales manager-sports marketing for Visit Fairfax. "Whenever our clients need facilities for their competitions, university staff respond promptly with information about availability and

pricing, and always make time for site inspections when an in-person tour is required.

"Without a great partnership with Mason, I doubt Fairfax County could have pulled off a large, multi-sport event like the World Police & Fire Games," Kulczycky said. "We are lucky to have a university in our community with excellent sports venues that can be rented when not in use by students."

For 20 years, the City of Salem and Roanoke College, a private liberal arts college with approximately 2,000 students, have enjoyed a harmonious association in which the city utilizes Roanoke's indoor and outdoor facilities.

"Without Roanoke College, we would not be hosting many of our NCAA Championships," said Carey Harveycutter, director of tourism with the City of Salem. "We were awarded in the most recent bid cycle 15 championships. And of those 15 national championships in Division III, 12 of them will be held at Roanoke College. The college just goes out of its way to work with us on hosting events."

"We began using Roanoke's outdoor field, Kerr Stadium, where in the past we've hosted Division III men's and women's soccer and Division II and III women's lacrosse," Harveycutter added. "Their newly constructed Cregger Center (a 155,000-square-foot facility that houses a gymnasium, indoor track, fitness center and classrooms) is where we host the Division III women's basketball championship and will, in upcoming years, host Division III women's and men's volleyball. The Cregger Center's eight-lane indoor track also hosts indoor high school, college and professional meets."

The city and college are so intertwined, officials from both sides occasionally break bread with one another while discussing how to best keep their unity strong.

"Our relationship with Roanoke is outstanding,"

Harveycutter added. "The college president annually invites our city departmental directors for breakfast and they annually give an award (known as the Charles Brown Award) for the person in Salem that best recognizes the relationship between the college and city."

In 2019, amateur athletes from across the country descended on the campus of Liberty University and the city of Lynchburg for the 2019 State Games of America and the VA Commonwealth Games. The games set records for participation and for economic impact as 14,027 athletes competed in 50 sports, generating \$7 million in economic impact to Virginia, and more than \$6.5 million to the Lynchburg area.

A large reason Lynchburg was able to attract these games was the outstanding facilities at Liberty that

include the college's new natatorium, featuring nine lanes, a 50-meter pool with bulkhead, a separate 17-foot deep diving well, 10-meter platforms and 2-foot decks. The college is also home to the newly opened Liberty Indoor Track Complex, featuring a 200-meter hydraulically banked oval track in a 169,000 square foot complex. It also boasts an eight lane, 100-meter warm-up track and facilities for field events.

"While the campus continues to grow, Liberty has been and continues to be, a good neighbor in its efforts to bring events like the State Games of America to Lynchburg," said Lisa Meriwether, tourism manager for Lynchburg's Economic Development & Tourism department. "The city of Lynchburg's Office of Economic Development & Tourism has worked side by side with Liberty University in planning and hosting events on their campus. As companions in the mission to serve their community and welcome visitors to the city, both entities have come to value the relationship that has developed between them."

"It is unique for a university to partner with their community's tourism office since Liberty's mission is not solely focused on driving collegiate sporting events to their campus," Meriwether added. "Our tourism office connects event owners with the venue that best fits their needs — and many times those venues are on the Liberty campus. With the growing number of world-class athletic facilities at Liberty University, and their willingness to share these facilities outside their normal student activities, it has been a valuable partnership that has resulted in attracting events rights holders that might not have otherwise looked at Lynchburg as a possible location for their event. Because of this unique partnership, the city of Lynchburg gets to host sporting events we could have never hosted before." **SPG**



Photo courtesy of George Mason University



# 5 Virginia National Parks to Put on Your Radar

*Lesser-known National Park Service locations shine a light on American history and culture, tempting travelers to stray off the beaten path*

By Randy Mink

**V**irginia abounds with landmarks that tell America's story from its very beginnings and celebrate who we are as a nation. Many are properties of the National Park Service, with popular examples including Historic Jamestowne and Yorktown Battlefield.

Scattered throughout the state, however, are some overlooked sites with compelling lures of their own. Here is a look at five Virginia National Parks worth a detour:

## **Fort Monroe National Monument**

Upon its closure in 2011, America's third-oldest Army post, acclaimed for its strategic role in defending the Chesapeake Bay, was designated a National Monument. Completed in 1834, Fort Monroe was dubbed the "Gibraltar of the Chesapeake" because of its massive stone fortifications.

Located on a peninsula overlooking Hampton Roads, one of the largest natural harbors in the world, this Virginia

National Park figures prominently in African American history. It was at this site in 1619 that the first Africans arrived in English-occupied North America, beginning a period of slavery that lasted for 246 years. And during the Civil War, Fort Monroe became a sanctuary for thousands of escaped slaves, earning it the nickname "Freedom's Fortress." (Even though Virginia had seceded from the Union in 1861, the fort stayed in Union hands for the entirety of the war.) Two black regiments formed at Fort Monroe served gallantly in the Siege of Petersburg.

Points of interest on the sprawling grounds include the 1802 Old Point Comfort Light, an active lighthouse maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard; the Casemates Museum, a cavern of rooms with Civil War exhibits; the grassy Parade Ground; and Flagstaff Bastion, a hilltop offering views of Hampton Roads. Fort Monroe also offers beaches, picnic areas, nature trails, restaurants and an RV park. ([fortmonroe.org](http://fortmonroe.org), [nps.gov/fomr](http://nps.gov/fomr))



## Cumberland Gap National Historical Park

This national park, stretching along 20 mountaintop miles where southwestern Virginia meets Kentucky and Tennessee, protects a heavily forested area that looks much as it did when pioneers made their way westward through the Appalachians. From 1775 to 1800, some 300,000 settlers traveled through Cumberland Gap after Daniel Boone and his ax-men cut a trail that became known as the Wilderness Road. The park visitor center has films and exhibits on this important migratory track, a natural doorway through the mountains first used by Native Americans following deer and buffalo trails.

For sweeping views of the gap's rugged beauty, drive the twisty four-mile road to Pinnacle Overlook, elevation 2,440 feet. On a clear day you can see the three converging states and perhaps even North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

The park offers 85 miles of hiking trails and a campground with summer campfire programs. Ranger-led tours are conducted to Gap Cave, full of stalagmites and stalactites, and remote Hensley Settlement, a collection of reconstructed log buildings atop Brush Mountain.

Changing leaves reach their peak in late fall, a popular time to visit the park. In spring and early summer, rhododendron, mountain laurel and other wildflowers, plus blooming dogwood and redbud trees, accent the greenery of majestic oak, magnolia, pine and virgin hemlock that blankets the slopes.

## Booker T. Washington National Monument

East of Roanoke, a National Park Service property near Hardy preserves the farm site where a famous African American was born into slavery in 1856. The story of author and educator Booker T. Washington, founder of Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, is told through a 12-minute video in the visitor center and in living history demonstrations at buildings that replicate those found on a typical 19th century tobacco plantation. On a quarter-mile loop through this Virginia National Park, guests will see pigs in the pen, a demonstration tobacco field and tobacco drying in the barn.

Washington grew up in the kitchen cabin, as his mother was the plantation cook. The family slept on rags on the dirt floor and had little to eat. Washington recalled that they got their meals "like dumb animals get theirs. It was a piece of bread here and a scrap of meat there....a cup of milk at one time and some potatoes at another...." Little Booker cleaned the yards, carried water to men in the fields and took corn to the mill.

From such humble beginnings, Washington went on to become America's most influential black leader at the turn of the 20th century. He worked to promote black businesses, help black farmers and secure financing for black schools. A well-known speaker, Washington advised governors, congressmen and U.S. presidents. (nps.gov/bowa)

## Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts

One of the National Park Service's most unusual sites, this green space for music, dance, theater and opera is a summertime hub of culture in the Washington, D.C. area. The 117-acre park occupies former Fairfax County farmland donated to the federal government in 1966 by philanthropist Catherine Filene Shouse, who also provided funds to build a performing arts center. The venue, located in Vienna, is operated in partnership with the non-profit Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts.

From May to September, the architecturally stunning Filene Center, an outdoor amphitheater built of Douglas fir and Southern yellow pine, presents all music genres, from country and pop to classical and opera. Wolf Trap is the summer home of the National Symphony Orchestra.

More than half the Filene Center's 7,000 seats are under cover, and the lawn area fills with concert-goers who bring blankets and picnic baskets. Wolf Trap also has a restaurant and concessions, and there are picnic tables throughout the park. Two hiking trails traverse the rolling woodlands.

The outdoor Children's Theatre-in-the-Woods, across the meadow from the Filene Center, offers summer fare that ranges from music and dance to puppetry and storytelling. The Barns at Wolf Trap, not part of the national park, features a 382-seat indoor theater that presents opera in summer and a variety of musical performances from October to May. (wolftrap.org, nps.gov/wotr)

## Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site

Restored to its 1930s appearance, the red-brick townhome of Maggie L. Walker in Richmond commemorates a leading black entrepreneur during the Jim Crow era. Long before women could vote and African Americans were afforded legal protections, Walker achieved success in business and finance as the first woman in the United States to charter and serve as president of a bank.

Ranger-led tours of this Virginia National Park in Richmond's Jackson Ward neighborhood begin at the visitor center, located around the corner from Walker's house; exhibits and a movie spotlight her achievements. Visitors also learn about Jackson Ward, a thriving black business community at the turn of the 20th century and today a historic district; many of the townhouses have cast-iron porches, the state's richest display of ornamental ironwork.

From 1899 to the end of her life, Maggie Walker (1864-1934) was head of the Independent Order of St. Luke, a national fraternal organization dedicated to the financial and social advancement of African Americans. She opened St. Luke Penny Savings Bank in 1903 and two years later St. Luke Emporium, a department store that gave Richmond's black community access to cheaper goods and provided employment for women. A revered civil rights figure, Walker pushed for educational opportunities for African American women and promoted the benefits of community engagement to youth in order to nurture the next generation of activists. (nps.gov/mawa) **SPG**



# STAFFORD, VA

TAKE THE NEXT STEP AND BRING YOUR FUTURE SPORTING EVENT TO STAFFORD, VA FOR SPECTACULAR ATTRACTIONS AND STATE-OF-THE-ART ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Embrey Mill Park



Located directly off U.S. Route 1 and near Interstate 95, Stafford is located 25 miles south of Washington, D.C. and 55 miles north of Richmond. By air, Stafford is serviced by three nearby airports in Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, Dulles International Airport and Richmond International Airport.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Embrey Mill Park Soccer, football, field hockey, lacrosse

Situated in the heart of Stafford, the stately Embrey Mill Park is conveniently located near the county's major thoroughfares, shopping centers, restaurants and hotels, making it the ideal stop for teams and their families. The impressive multi-sport complex houses eight fields — six synthetic, lighted rectangular fields and two lighted grass

### PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

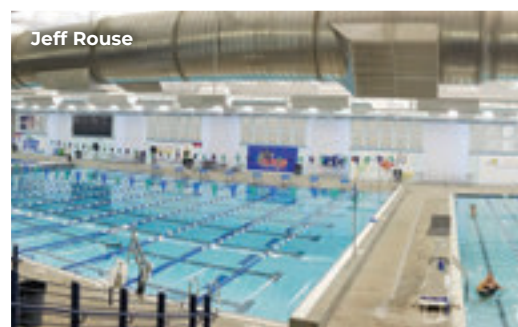
"KBF is excited to return to Stafford County, Virginia for the KBF Trail Series in 2021. The amenities, water access, host venues and world class fishing make Stafford County the perfect host for our event series."

— Chad Hoover,  
KBF Founder/President

Potomac River



Jeff Rouse



fields, and a recently added practice field with ample parking. Adjacent to the sports complex is the Jeff Rouse Swim and Sports Center, which houses an Olympic sized competition pool and athletic center.

### Jeff Rouse Swim and Sports Center

#### Swimming, diving, water polo, water sports

This 76,000 square-foot world-class Olympic sized sports complex is equipped with a 50-meter by 25-yard competition

pool with seating for more than 800 spectators and movable bulkhead, a 25-yard recreation pool, and a warm-water wellness pool. Additionally, the Rouse Center features a full-size basketball court, a group exercise studio, a fitness floor, restrooms, a full-service cafe and parking. The athletic facility presents 5,000 square feet of exercise space and workout equipment, strength and conditioning machines and free weights.

### Potomac River

#### **Kayak bass fishing, bass fishing, water sports**

The water is open for any sports adventure. With creeks and tidal tributaries of the Potomac River, many sports have caught wave to our hidden gems. Kayak fishing, specifically for bass have put Stafford on the map for a hidden "fish town" and we have become the epicenter for snakehead fishing on the east coast.

### Chichester Park

#### **Baseball and softball**

Bring your upcoming outdoor sporting event to the spacious Chichester Park, a county park that offers five lighted baseball/softball diamonds and a concession stand. The vast park also features walking tracks, hiking and jogging trails with a natural mulch surface, a pavilion, restrooms, picnic areas with BBQ grills and tables and a new playground. Chichester Park promises protected spectator seating to enhance the fans' experiences while watching nail-biting tournaments. The venue is conveniently near major transportation thoroughfares, making traversing to and from the park and other locations throughout Stafford stress-free.



#### STAFFORD COUNTY TOURISM

Lisa Logan, Tourism Manager  
540-658-4580  
tourism@staffordcountyva.gov  
www.tourstaffordva.com

### POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ **George Washington's boyhood home at Ferry Farm** is a must-stop, where guests can view artifacts from colonial and Civil War times as well as walk through luxurious gardens.
- ▶ Explore the winter fortifications of the Union Army's 11th Corps following the Battle of Fredericksburg in 1862 when you visit **Stafford Civil Park**.
- ▶ Outdoor lovers will appreciate the numerous activities available, including **kayaking the Rappahannock River, hiking Government Island, Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve**, or our newest State Park, **Widewater State Park**.
- ▶ Taste your way through **Stafford on the Kegs and Corks Trail** using a discounted pass at each of our wineries and breweries.



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COMPETE IN  
WASHINGTON'S  
BACKYARD



# HAMPTON, VA

THIS SPORTS-MINDED CITY PRESENTS AN ENTERTAINING  
DESTINATION WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART SPORTS FACILITIES

Hampton Roads Convention Center



Located just north of Norfolk and across the water, Hampton is connected via Interstate 64 on the route from Richmond to the northwest and Virginia Beach to the southeast. If you happen to be flying in, Norfolk International Airport is only 17 miles away and offers flights through Allegiant Air, American Airlines, American Eagle, Delta, Delta Connection, Frontier, Southwest, United and United Express.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT Hampton Roads Convention Center

**Aerobics, basketball, body building, boxing, fencing, futsal, gymnastics, team handball, martial arts, table tennis, weightlifting, wrestling, cheerleading, archery, field hockey, volleyball**

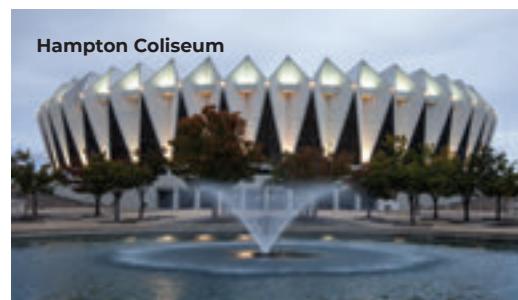
The Hampton Roads Convention Center—boasting 35 meeting spaces with the capacity for up to 14,000 delegates, including a 102,600-square-foot exhibit

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

“The City of Hampton, and Fort Monroe in particular, allows an almost perfect location to hold an inboard hydroplane race. Mill Creek is a protected body of water that lends itself to record-setting possibilities. Thanks to the tremendous support we have received over the years from Sports Hampton and the City, the Hampton Cup Regatta is one of the oldest and most successful races in the United States.”

— Lisa Hearn Adkins,  
President, Chairman/Race Director,  
Hampton Cup Regatta

Hampton Coliseum



Boo Williams Sportsplex



hall (divisible by three)—is the perfect venue for any indoor event. With portable flooring, the center accommodates 12 basketball courts or eight volleyball courts, ideal for tournament play. The center is supported by more than 2,000 hotel rooms in close proximity, including the Embassy Suites host hotel. It has 4,000 parking spaces, 11 loading dock bays and three concession stands. Other features include data ports in all meeting rooms as well as inside the exhibit hall, connectivity throughout the pre-function areas and LCD computer monitors.

### Boo Williams Sportsplex

**Basketball, aerobics, volleyball, field hockey, body building, boxing, fencing, gymnastics, team handball, martial arts, table tennis, weightlifting, wrestling, cheerleading**

The 135,000-square-foot, \$13.5-million Boo Williams Sportsplex is specifically designed for amateur sporting competitions. Accommodating athletic events like basketball, indoor field hockey and volleyball, the center boasts eight hardwood basketball courts and retractable bleacher seating for 4,000 attendees. This seating is flexible and can expand upwards to 6,000 with perimeter seating. It includes eight tournament play basketball courts, 12 volleyball courts, a 200-meter, six-lane indoor track and two training rooms. A 4,238-square-foot concession area is available as well as 64,000- and 31,000-square-foot playing pavilions.

### Hampton Coliseum

**Wrestling, boxing, fencing, aerobics, basketball, body building, gymnastics, team handball, judo, karate, taekwondo, table tennis, weightlifting, cheerleading, archery**

One of the most recognizable architectural jewels in all of Hampton Roads, the Hampton Coliseum is set on 75 acres of landscaped parkland. Formerly the home to the Virginia Squires basketball team, the arena has hosted a plethora of world-class sporting events and concerts in its 46-year existence. The Coliseum holds a 26,263-square-foot arena floor, 3,200 parking spaces, 10 Xenon Super Trooper Lights and a fully equipped sound system.



#### SPORTS HAMPTON

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### POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Parents and kids alike will enjoy a visit to the **Virginia Air & Space Center** where the legacy of the Apollo missions lives on. Investigate robotics, physics, chemistry and more with STEM Saturdays.
- ▶ Cast off for an adventure onboard the **Miss Hampton II**. Guests will take a 2.5 to 3-hour harbor tour aboard the vessel along the Hampton River, passing landmarks like Hampton University, Blackbeard's Point and the world's largest naval installation, Norfolk Naval Base.
- ▶ Plan your day in the sun with a trip to **Buckroe Beach and Park**. Bordering the picturesque Chesapeake Bay, this beach offers sheltered picnic areas and a nautical-themed playground.

## YOUR NEXT EVENT INSPIRED.



With convenient access to nearby hotels, restaurants, retail shopping, and entertainment, Hampton, Virginia is the inspired choice for your next game, convention, event, or conference. Coordinate multiple basketball tournaments simultaneously at Boo Williams Sportsplex. Schedule your next wrestling, boxing, and gymnastics event in the state-of-the-art Hampton Coliseum. Our Chesapeake Bay waterfront is ideal for sailing, triathlon, sand soccer and beach volleyball competitions. And your national governing body will find the epic Hampton Roads Convention Center a perfect fit for both conferences and athletic events.

**Discover the perfect venue and plan your next big event at [SportsHampton.com](http://SportsHampton.com)**

**SPORTS HAMPTON VIRGINIA**



# WILLIAMSBURG, VA

VOTED BY SOUTHERN LIVING MAGAZINE'S READERS AS "THE SOUTH'S BEST SMALL TOWN IN 2020," WILLIAMSBURG HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. ESPECIALLY TOURNAMENT ORGANIZERS.

Warhill Sports Complex



Williamsburg is located adjacent to Interstate 64 and U.S. Route 60, which connects the city with Richmond to the northwest and Norfolk to the southeast. The primary airport for the Virginia peninsula is the Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport, a 20-minute drive from Williamsburg.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Kiwanis Park

#### Baseball, softball, basketball, tennis

Whether your team dons a glove, bat or tennis shoes, Kiwanis Park is the place for you to host your next sports tournament, championship or competition. This 27-acre park in Williamsburg has three softball fields with electronic scoreboards, dugouts and bleachers. It also features a basketball court, six lighted tennis courts, a playground area with a pavilion, a concession building and restroom facilities.

### PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

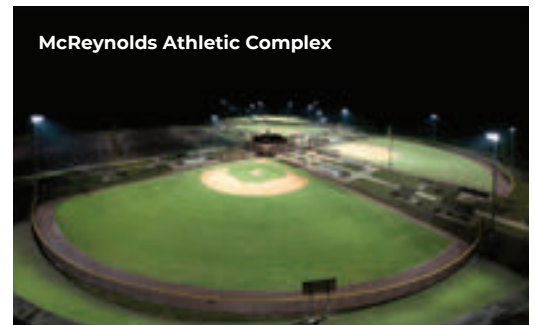
"Great organization to work with. Very involved in the whole planning process and execution. Made our National Softball Association World Series a success."

— Frank Rachubka,  
National Softball Association Hall  
of Fame

Kiwanis Park



McReynolds Athletic Complex



### Warhill Sports Complex

#### Baseball, softball, soccer

The Warhill Sports Complex is an excellent facility for outdoor sports. The venue features three lighted youth baseball fields, one lighted majors baseball field, four T-ball fields, outdoor batting cages and a concession building with restrooms and a playground. Warhill also houses a soccer/multiuse complex that contains four intermediate grass soccer fields, four premier full-size soccer fields, six synthetic turf multiuse fields and a concession building.

### McReynolds Athletic Complex Baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse

The McReynolds Athletic Complex in Yorktown is a 70-acre park with 13 lighted athletic fields that are available to rent for games, tournaments and camps. The complex features four regulation soccer fields, two instructional soccer fields, two youth baseball fields with grass infields, three youth baseball/softball fields with skinned infields, one adult softball field and one adult baseball field.

### Quarterpath Park and Rec. Center Softball, basketball, volleyball, pickleball, dance, aerobics

Quarterpath can simultaneously hold outdoor or indoor league play, championship tournaments or showcase events. This 23-acre facility in Williamsburg features three lighted softball fields, three tennis courts, two sand volleyball courts, a picnic shelter with tables and grills and a children's play area. The park also houses the Quarterpath Recreation

Center, a 35,000-square-foot indoor facility that offers a wide array of amenities.

### College of William and Mary Multipurpose

William and Mary fields NCAA Division I teams for men's and women's basketball, cross country, golf, soccer, diving, and tennis. Each of these teams, along with the school's non-Division I programs, compete in top-notch facilities. Among them are Walter J. Zable Stadium at Cary Field, which houses the football and track and field programs.

### POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Experience life in early America in **Colonial Williamsburg**, where visitors can travel back in time and immerse themselves in an 18th-century city, explore historic buildings and wander through gardens.
- ▶ The **Jamestown Settlement** features extensive gallery exhibits and films that explore Jamestown's beginnings as a business venture, the impact of European colonization on the Powhatan Indian culture and the origins of the first known African people in Virginia.
- ▶ **Busch Gardens** offers fun for all ages whether it's feeling a rush aboard thrill coasters, fulfilling an appetite for world-class dining and shopping or making memories that will last a lifetime.



#### VISIT WILLIAMSBURG

Julia Smyth-Young

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www.visitwilliamsburg.com



**COME FOR THE COMPETITION,  
STAY FOR THE REVOLUTION.**



Greater Williamsburg offers fantastic sports facilities for your next event, with the added benefit of having so much to do after the games are through. So win or lose, competitors and their families are in for a great time. We call that a "win-win."

Visit  
**WILLIAMSBURG**  
JAMESTOWN ▼ YORKTOWN

[VisitWilliamsburg.com](http://VisitWilliamsburg.com)



# VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE SPORTS

WITH OUR COMBINATION OF AWARD-WINNING SPORTS FACILITIES, CONVENIENT LOCATION IN THE MID-ATLANTIC, AND EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE, YOUR PLAYERS, COACHES, AND FANS WILL HAVE AN OUTSTANDING TIME IN THE HEART OF VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

Salem Memorial Ballpark



We have several well-maintained, centrally-located fields and facilities that can accommodate all types of sports. With over 1,000 miles of trails, Virginia's Blue Ridge has established itself as a premier destination for outdoor recreation and adventure. The challenging elevations of our mountain landscape allow for many non-traditional sports such as mountain biking, marathons, and disc golf.

## **FACILITY SPOTLIGHT** **Taliaferro Sports and Entertainment Complex**

***Basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, wrestling, boxing, pickleball, equine, cheerleading, football, baseball***

The Taliaferro Sports and Entertainment Complex offers a diverse group of facilities, including the Salem Civic Center, the Salem Football Stadium and the Salem Memorial Ballpark, all located approximately one mile southeast of downtown Salem.

The Salem Civic Center consists of an indoor

arena with a 22,000-square-foot floor, seating for 7,000, an annex of 10,000 square feet and various meeting spaces.

The Salem Football Stadium is a 7,157-seat municipal stadium. The stadium proudly hosted the NCAA Division III Football Championship for 25 years and the championship plans to return to Salem Stadium in 2023 for its 50th Anniversary Championship. The stadium features dual team coaches' boxes, suites and broadcast quality lighting.

Salem Memorial Ballpark is home to the Single-A Salem Red Sox and can seat 6,300.

### Berglund Center

**Basketball, hockey, volleyball, gymnastics, wrestling, boxing, cornhole, cheerleading**

The Berglund Center is one of Western Virginia's premier full-service facilities. The multi-purpose facility can accommodate sports events of all sizes, and hosts more than 350 events every year. It features a 10,500 seat Coliseum, 2,148 seat Performing Arts Theatre, 10,000 sq./ft. Exhibit Hall, and a 46,000 square foot Special Events Center.

### Roanoke College Cregger Center/ Donald J. Kerr Stadium

**Basketball, track & field, soccer, lacrosse, volleyball, indoor track & field**

Constructed in 2016, The Cregger Center is a 155,000 sq./ft. athletic center that includes a 2,000-seat arena, a field house that has an eight-lane, 200-meter track, event seating space for 1,000, a training room, and enhanced locker rooms. Donald J. Kerr Stadium at Roanoke College adjoins the beautiful Cregger Center. Kerr Stadium has seating for 1,400 fans.

### James I. Moyer Sports Complex Softball, baseball

James I. Moyer Sports Complex hosts events ranging from youth, adult, and high school events to collegiate and national level events. The Moyer Complex boasts four fields. Moyer also has a 50/30 lighting system and electronic scoreboards.

### Botetourt Sports Complex Softball, baseball, soccer, cross country

The Botetourt Sports Complex is located within the 125-acre Greenfield Recreation Park which features a cross-country course, soccer fields and a hiking trail. The complex features four championship level softball and youth baseball fields, all with beautiful views of the Blue Ridge Mountains.



#### VBR SPORTS

Caitlin Schmelz  
Sales & Sports Development Manager  
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cschmelz@visitvbr.com  
www.VBRSports.com

### POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Welcome yourself to Virginia's Blue Ridge by visiting the must-see **Roanoke Star** that sits atop Mill Mountain and offers scenic views of Roanoke Valley.
- ▶ Put on your hiking boots and experience the many incredible footpaths in the **Appalachian Trail**.
- ▶ Explore your wild side at **Treetop Quest at Explore Park**. Zip-lines and aerial obstacles will give you the thrill you crave.
- ▶ Check out the nation's second largest municipal park, **Carvins Cove Nature Reserve**, and go hiking, biking or fishing.
- ▶ You don't even have to leave your car to enjoy the majestic natural beauty of the **Blue Ridge Parkway**.

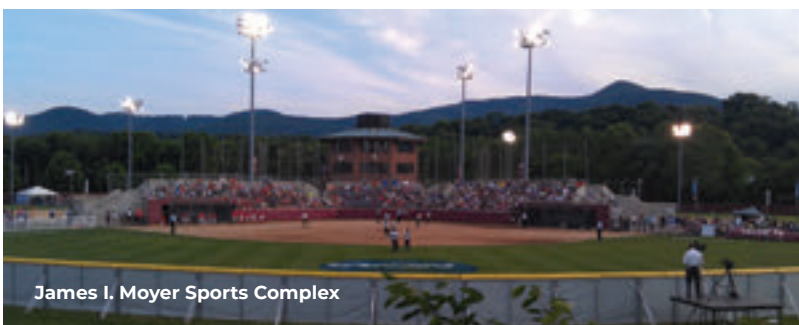


Go Cross 2018

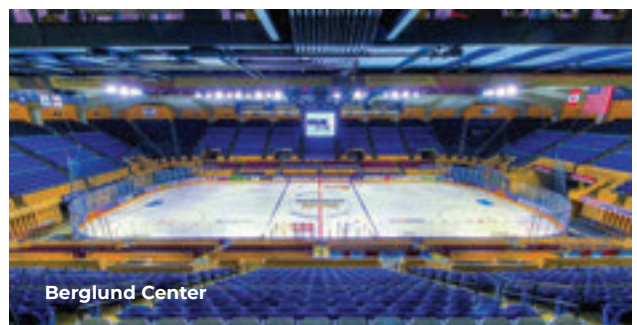
### PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Having hosted almost 100 NCAA Championships, the City of Salem and the Old Dominion Athletic Conference have become synonymous with successful NCAA Championships. Salem knows how to provide our student-athletes, coaches and fans with an experience that makes them feel that they are truly special. They welcome everyone with open arms and provide them with a once in a lifetime experience."

— Joni Comstock,  
NCAA Senior Vice President of Championships



James I. Moyer Sports Complex



Berglund Center



# LYNCHBURG, VA

THIS PICTURESQUE VIRGINIA CITY IS A BEAUTIFUL COMBINATION OF CLASSIC AND MODERN, AND IS A HAVEN FOR SPORTS FANS OF ALL AGES



Liberty University

Lynchburg, Virginia is popularly regarded as a city filled with history and incredible views. It is also home to a wide variety of activities that will appeal to groups of any age. From engaging interpretive sites, like Point of Honor Historic Home, to a thriving downtown filled with shops, restaurants and art, Lynchburg has something for everyone.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Liberty Natatorium *Swimming and diving*

The state-of-the-art 75,000-square-foot Liberty Natatorium, which is connected to the Liberty Indoor Track Complex, features a nine-lane, 50-meter pool with a movable bulkhead. The 25-yard wide pool can be divided into 20 lanes for short-course training with an additional eight lanes in the diving well. The natatorium shares a 6,554-square-foot weight room and 2,400-square-foot training room that includes a 1,000-square-

foot hydro room with an underwater treadmill and two plunge pools. The new building also features a barreled roof and plenty of glass to allow for natural lighting.

### Liberty Indoor Track & Field Complex *Track, field, judo, jujutsu, Ninja Challenge, tae kwon do, wrestling, aquathon*

Liberty added a state-of-the-art indoor track facility to its list of athletic complexes when the Liberty Indoor Track Complex opened in



January 2017. The 169,000-square-foot complex features a dynamic track, which is one of only a handful of tracks in the country to offer a six-lane, 20-meter, hydraulically blanked oval. The complex is 425 feet long by 300 feet wide and includes room for all six field events, with the weight throw, shot put and high jump pits located outside the track oval.

### Peaks View Park, City of Lynchburg **Baseball, softball, disc golf, soccer, tennis, fishing, football, lacrosse, field hockey, mountain biking, rugby**

The second largest park in Lynchburg, Peaks View Park offers both passive and active recreation for the entire family. The park has three lighted tennis courts, seven multi-purpose fields (soccer, football, softball and baseball), volleyball courts, a basketball court, mountain bike trails and a disc golf course. The park also has a popular playground and is ADA compliant. Peaks View Park was opened in 1983 with improvement activities concluding in 1986.

### Lynchburg City Stadium and Bank of the James Stadium

#### **Football, baseball, softball, lacrosse, rugby, soccer**

Originally constructed in 1939 to be used as a complex for professional baseball teams, Bank of the James Stadium is home to the minor league baseball Lynchburg Hillcats. This classic stadium has undergone a slew of renovations, including one prior to the 2005 season where six new luxury boxes were added in addition to a video board in right field. Lynchburg City Stadium opened in 1939 and the complex is home to both a baseball and football field. Bleacher seats for the football side of City Stadium can seat audiences of up to 10,000. The facility includes two press boxes, a scoreboard, natural turf grass field and gravel track. The baseball side is home to the Lynchburg Hillcats, a minor league baseball team affiliated with the Atlanta Braves.



#### VISIT LYNCHBURG

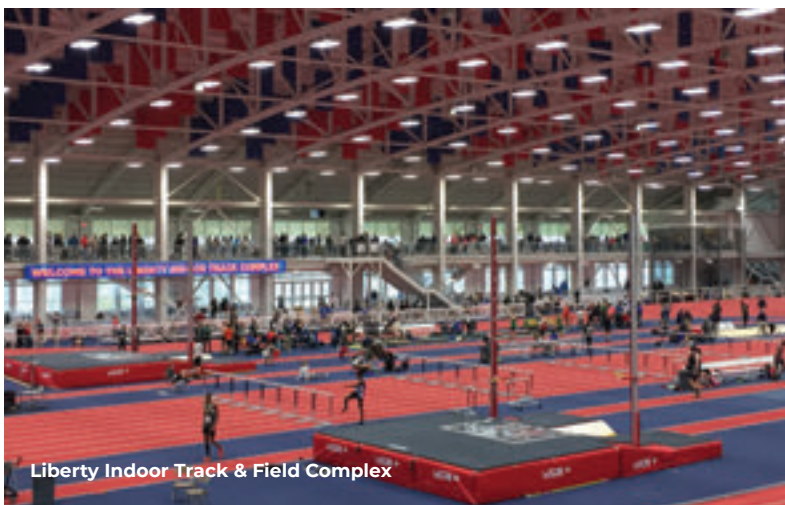
Lisa Meriwether

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lynchburgvirginia.org

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ With **James River Adventures**, guests can cruise the city's riverfront and within minutes be in a beautiful, natural river setting teeming with fish, birds and other wildlife.
- ▶ The award-winning, hands-on **Amazement Square Children's Museum** offers four floors of interactive exhibits designed to make learning fun. Guests can paint on walls, explore life on a farm and create a rainstorm over downtown Lynchburg.
- ▶ **Liberty Mountain Snowflex Centre** specializes in year-round mountain activities. Blast down tubing runs or ski/snowboard in all four seasons on Snowflex slopes. It also offers one of the prettiest sunset views around.
- ▶ A National Historic Landmark, **Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest** was designed by Thomas Jefferson as his personal retreat. Experience the natural beauty and architectural wonders of Poplar Forest and connect with history.



Liberty University

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"The experienced staff at the Virginia Amateur Sports organization held a hugely successful 2019 State Games of America. The City of Lynchburg welcomed us with open arms and we still receive compliments from our athletes on Lynchburg's first-class facilities. I would highly recommend event planners take a serious look at hosting their event in the Lynchburg, VA area."

— Eric Engelbarts,  
National Congress of State Games President





# This is Lynchburg.



VISIT  
**LYH**  
LYNCHBURG, VA

With the James River at our feet and the Blue Ridge Mountains as backdrop, we spend our days riding the paths of our urban trails, navigating the river's white waters, and fueling up with chef-inspired fare and golden brewed goodness. Follow your dreams of medals and trophies to our nationally ranked facilities then stay a while to explore our city's natural beauty and countless adventures.

[lynchburgvirginia.org](http://lynchburgvirginia.org)



## LYNCHBURG IS HOME TO THESE LEGACY EVENTS!

**VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH GAMES**  
the largest Olympic style games in Virginia



**VIRGINIA 10 MILER**

When Southern Hospitality hits the road

**STORMING THUNDER RIDGE**

Cycling "America's Favorite Drive" on the Blue Ridge Parkway





# RICHMOND, VA

TOP-FLIGHT SPORTS VENUES, SCENIC VIRGINIAN LANDSCAPE  
AND GREAT FUN AWAIT TEAMS IN RICHMOND



Greater Richmond Convention Center

The Richmond International Airport, located only 8 miles from downtown Richmond, is home to all major air carriers, including low-cost carriers such as Allegiant Air, JetBlue, Spirit Airlines and Southwest. Due to Richmond's advantageous location, it's only within a day's drive to half of the U.S. population by Interstates 64, 295 and 95.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- Stay on the history trail with a walk or bike ride on the **Virginia Capital Trail**. You'll encounter various courthouses, forests and rivers.
- **James River** awaits those who enjoy white water rafting and boating. This 348-mile wonder starts in the Appalachians and continues into the Chesapeake Bay.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

**River City Sportsplex**  
**Soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, flag football**

River City Sportsplex encompasses 115 acres of top-notch athletic fields, including 12 all-weather turf fields, all of which are fully lighted. In addition to warmup areas, River City Sportsplex includes a plaza and common area with access to electricity, bleachers on both ends, indoor restrooms and a concession stand.

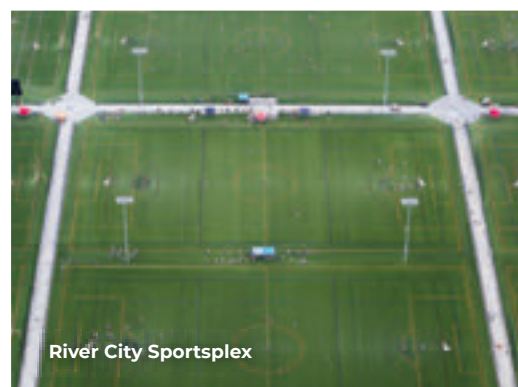
**Greater Richmond Convention Center**  
**Multisport**

Teams will feel like champions no matter what the score at the Greater Richmond Convention Center, located only minutes from Richmond International Airport. The 700,000-square-foot facility boasts the title as largest convention center in Virginia with 180,000 square feet of exhibit hall space.

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"USA Field Hockey loves working with Sports Richmond, VA. The CVB and Convention Center staff are amazing to work with. We can always count on their professionalism and expertise. They always put their clients first, and are constantly looking forward on how to enhance the Richmond experience."

— USA Field Hockey



River City Sportsplex

## Dorey Park

**Baseball, softball, football, soccer, disc golf**

This 400-acre park is conveniently located 10 minutes from Richmond International Airport and features abundant competition fields and amazing amenities for the traveling fan. The park features six (four slow pitch and six fast pitch compatible) softball fields, seven 12-and-under baseball fields, one 13-and-up baseball field and seven football/soccer fields with one field featuring a 500 seat grandstand. There is also an 18-hole disc golf course, five miles of horseback riding trails and hiking trails.



## SPORTS RICHMOND, VA

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# MARTINSVILLE-HENRY COUNTY, VA

SET AGAINST A BACKDROP DRIPPING IN NATURAL BEAUTY,  
MARTINSVILLE-HENRY COUNTY PRESERVES ITS OLD-SCHOOL COOL



Smith River Sports Complex

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"I will say in terms of the amenities, the staff and the field quality that the Smith River Sports Complex is the best field site I've used for an event."

— Michelle Ng,  
Ultimate Tournament Director and  
co-founder of Without Limits



Smith River Sports Complex



Smith River Sports Complex

United, Delta and American all offer flights to Piedmont Triad International Airport, a 40 minute drive to Martinsville heading north from Greensboro, North Carolina. Roanoke Regional Airport is located 50 minutes to the north of the city as well. If you're coming by car, US highways 220 and 58 intersect in Martinsville.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

**Smith River Sports Complex**  
**Cross-country, field hockey, football, golf, lacrosse, soccer, ultimate**

The Smith River Sports Complex features 90 acres of multiuse sports utility. Two synthetic turf fields come equipped with championship bleacher seating for 500 spectators, while the complex also features three fully irrigated Bermuda grass fields. All five fields feature sports lighting. Hiking trails surround the facility, enabling it to host cross-country and 5K events. The complex has been the host site

for the NJCAA Division I Men's Soccer National Championships and the Piedmont Community Lacrosse Association Laxfest in the past and hosts the USA Ultimate Men's and Women's Atlantic Coast Regionals annually in May.

### Hooker Field Baseball

With 3,000 seats available, Hooker Field is the go-to for the top collegiate baseball in the area. The field espouses both the NJCAA Region X Patrick Henry Community College Patriots and the Martinsville Mustangs of the Coastal



Plain League, a wood-bat collegiate summer league. Opened in 1988, the field features fence dimensions of 330 feet down the lines and 402 feet to center field. Former big-leaguers Mike Liberthal, Scott Rolen and Jimmy Rollins all graced this field before they made it to the show. Hooker Field was the proud host of the NCBA DI Regional Championship from 2012 through 2019.

### Philpott Lake Boating, fishing

More than 25 miles of water are available to paddlers and motorized watercraft across the 3,000 acre Philpott Lake, making it an ideal location for water sports. The lake is surrounded by 100 miles of pristine shoreline and 7,000 acres of wilderness yield additional opportunities for cycling, hiking and camping. There are also a few golf courses nearby for those hoping to hit the links. In past years the lake has hosted the National Guard FLW College Fishing Northern Conference Championships.

### Southside Park Baseball, softball

Spanning 37 acres and with 1,000 seats available, Southside Park is an ideal spot to catch a summer ballgame. Four professionally groomed baseball diamonds (three lit), a concession stand, broadcast facility, restrooms and upgraded playground make this a great option for tournament planners. The park has been a preferred favorite for Nations Baseball and Got Game Fastpitch.



**MARTINSVILLE-HENRY COUNTY, VA  
TOURISM OFFICE**  
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of Tourism  
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www.VisitMartinsville.com

### POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ The Smithsonian-affiliated **Virginia Museum of Natural History** combines fascinating displays from the past with the spectacle of modern science.
- ▶ **Martinsville Speedway** is the oldest, shortest and most steeped in history track on the NASCAR Monster Energy Cup and Truck Series circuit.
- ▶ **Uptown Pinball** is the spot for your VR, laser tag and classic pinball needs.
- ▶ Lovers of the great outdoors will enjoy traversing the **Smith River Trail System** by boat, foot or bike.
- ▶ Locally crafted jewelry, artwork and renowned regional artists make **Piedmont Arts** a must-stop.



Pass	Swing	Cast	#VisitMartinsville
			<p>Planning your next great sporting event? Our area is filled with a wide variety of venues for your needs. Add to that convenient services and a responsive team to make it all happen, and you've just found the perfect location for your next great event.</p> <p>888.722.6348 VisitMartinsville.com</p> <p> </p> <p></p>



# VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

VISIT ONE OF MOST BEAUTIFUL AREAS IN THE COUNTRY AND COMPETE  
IN SOME OF THE FINEST FACILITIES

Virginia Beach Sports Center



Virginia Beach, located in the Coastal Virginia Region, has a reputation as one of the most attractive destinations in the country. A vibrant coastal city with unique districts that is open year-round, it features a variety of attractions and a beautiful oceanfront and boardwalk. Visitors can reach Virginia Beach from I-80, I-85, I-95 and I-64.

## **FACILITY SPOTLIGHT** **Virginia Beach Sports Center** *Basketball, volleyball, indoor track and field, indoor field hockey*

This state-of-the-art facility which opened in October of 2020 can host a diverse roster of sporting events and tournaments. With 285,000 square feet of space, including 117,000 square feet of multi-purpose space and 195,000 square feet of programmable space, the center is built to accommodate 12 basketball courts, 24 volleyball courts, a 200-meter, hydraulically banked track,

seating for 5,000 spectators and more. It also offers two skybox meeting rooms overlooking the track and one skybox meeting room overlooking the courts.

## **Princess Anne Athletic Complex** *Baseball, lacrosse, football, soccer, softball*

This complex features 16 Musco-lit, multi-purpose fields, eight of which are fully fenced and equipped with irrigation systems, electronic scoreboards and shaded player benches. Planners can choose between four

full-sized synthetic fields and scoreboard or four hybrid Bermuda fields. Between games, spectators can picnic at two nearby Gazebos with four seated areas.

### Virginia Beach Convention Center *Wrestling, badminton, fencing, gymnastics, cheer/dance*

Host your next sporting event in the beautiful, eco-friendly Virginia Beach Convention Center. The center features more than 959,551 square feet of meeting space, 26 meeting rooms and can handle sports of any capacity. The center features portable walls, a staging area, a golf course on the grounds and its largest room is 150,012 square feet. Its second-largest room stands at 112,509 square feet and its column-free exhibit space totals 150,012 square feet.

### Virginia Beach Oceanfront *Fat tire biking, roller skating, running, soccer, surfing, ultimate frisbee, beach volleyball*

This pristine waterfront is home to a 28-foot-wide boardwalk that stretches three miles and features a separate bike path ideal for strolling, rollerblading and biking. Along the

boardwalk there's a wide variety of shopping, outdoor restaurants and vendors offering bike and surrey rentals. Live music and street performers can be found at the Oceanfront, but it is also a go-to place for sporting events and has hosted the North American Sand Soccer Championships, the Rock n Roll Half Marathon, and the East Coast Surfing Championship.

### Hampton Roads Soccer Complex *Soccer, lacrosse, camps, clinics*

This complex is located in the beautiful city of Virginia Beach with easy access to restaurants, attractions, hotels and the oceanfront. The facility has two turf fields with lights and 22 Bermuda grass fields and hosts more than 7,00 games, practices and clinics every year. It also includes two state-of-the-art turf fields, both with Musco lighting (one field has stadium seating for 260 spectators).



#### VIRGINIA BEACH CVB

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Sports Marketing Sales Manager  
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## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Enjoy the majestic views of the **Oceanfront, Sandbridge and Chesapeake Bay** beaches or take a peaceful walk or bike ride along the three-mile long **Virginia Beach Boardwalk**.
- ▶ The **Cape Henry Lighthouse** is the fourth-oldest lighthouse in the country and offers an unimpeded coastal view and can be enjoyed from the 360-degree lantern room.
- ▶ Groups can savor Cape Henry's beautiful 2,888-acre **First Landing State Park**, where more than a million visitors hike, bike, swim and camp every year.
- ▶ The **Military Aviation Museum** is home to one of the largest private collections of World War I and World War II era military aircraft in the world.



## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"The accessibility of Virginia Beach really does allow us to attract the national audience."

— Bob Ferraro,  
Executive Director,  
NHSC





# DECATUR, AL

LOCATED ON THE TENNESSEE RIVER AND SPORTING A RICH HERITAGE, DECATUR IS A GREAT PLACE TO HOST YOUR TOURNAMENT

Wilson Morgan Softball Complex



Decatur is one of the south's finest destinations for indoor and outdoor activities. Residing on the Tennessee River, it is home to a gorgeous harbor and pavilion as well as a massive recreational complex. Along with clean and welcoming facilities, Decatur also features a wildlife refuge, visual arts center, water park and a natural science museum. Decatur can be reached by I-65, I-565 and US-72.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Jack Allen Recreation Complex Soccer, disc golf

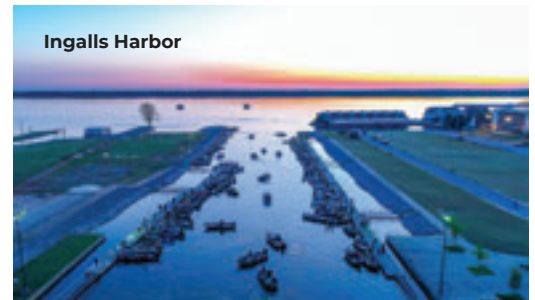
One of the best multi-use facilities in the South, the Jack Allen Recreation Complex features 10 beautifully maintained international size soccer fields, lighting, locker and shower rooms, a playground area, disc golf course, full-service concession stand, and an easily accessible walking trail. Situated on 77 acres of manicured turf, the complex has hosted numerous soccer events including adult and youth international games, Alabama

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"I have worked with the staff at Decatur Morgan County Tourism on many events over several years. Without exception, they have always been great partners. President, Danielle Gibson and Director of Sports Development, Don Dukemineer are always extremely helpful in making our events as enjoyable and productive for our organization as they are for the community. In addition, the Decatur community always welcomes our competitors and treats them as honored guests."

— Bobby Eads, Sr. Vice President,  
Fishers of Men National Tournament Trail

Ingalls Harbor



Jimmy Johns Tennis Complex



State Cup Championships, Presidents Cup and the NAIA Women's Soccer championships.

## Wilson Morgan Softball Complex Softball, baseball

This facility features six 300-foot lighted softball fields with each field equipped with bleacher seating, electronic scoreboards, press boxes, covered dugouts, a telephone system from the press box to the dugouts and more. Wilson Morgan Softball Complex has hosted slow-pitch softball tournaments, fast-pitch softball tournaments, baseball tournaments

and other fun/competitive events. With paved parking for more than 600 vehicles, this massive complex can accommodate nearly any event as it also features a concession stand and handicap accessible restrooms.

### **Ingalls Harbor & Pavilion** **Fishing, indoor sports**

Construction began in 2011 for the new entertainment pavilion at Ingalls Harbor. The 27,000-square-foot multi-purpose pavilion more than doubled the city's capacity for hosting large gatherings. Able to accommodate up to 1,200, the pavilion features 23,000 square feet of multi-purpose space and 4,000 square feet of support and service areas. It also features 202 parking spaces and 7 ADA spaces. Ingalls Harbor has also hosted plenty of nationally acclaimed sport fishing tournaments and is considered one of the best boat launch sites in the nation. It has attracted many nationally acclaimed tournaments including the Bassmaster Elite Series, American Bass Anglers, Bassmaster Weekend Series, Major League Fishing – FLW Series events and more.

### **Jimmy Johns Tennis Complex** **Tennis**

This re-modeled complex features 16 championship hard courts, four championship clay courts, and even two indoor hard courts. This complex also has a lounge area with restrooms attached, which are handicap accessible. All courts are lighted with a large viewing area. Besides the high-quality courts, Jimmy Johns Tennis Complex also features a backboard area for players to practice their strokes and volleys. In case you forget something, it also has its own Pro Shop.



#### **DECATUR MORGAN COUNTY TOURISM**

Don Dukemineer, CSEE, CHSP  
(256) 350-2028  
ddukemineer@decaturcvb.org  
www.decaturcvb.org

### **POPULAR ACTIVITIES**

- ▶ **Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge** is a beautiful 35,000-acre wildlife refuge that attracts thousands of wintering waterfowl every year. Twelve federally listed endangered or threatened species call this wildlife refuge home.
- ▶ **Cook Museum of Natural Science** is one of the most popular attractions in the community as it hosts educational events for k-12th grade students, contains interactive exhibits, programs for all ages, hands-on stations and live animals.
- ▶ In 2021, **Point Mallard Water Park** will celebrate its 50th anniversary. Home to America's first wave pool, the park features a pro bowl slide, speed slide, flume tube rides, an Olympic pool, sandy beach and more.

# **BRING YOUR A-GAME.**

HERE IN DECATUR, WE'RE ALWAYS READY TO PLAY. WE'VE GOT QUALITY FACILITIES ALL ACROSS THE COUNTY, FROM A MULTI-FIELD CHAMPIONSHIP COMPLEX, TO BEAUTIFUL GOLF TRAILS AND A STATE-OF-THE-ART MARINA. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS BRING YOUR A-GAME, BECAUSE WE'VE ALREADY BROUGHT OURS.



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# GULF SHORES & ORANGE BEACH, AL

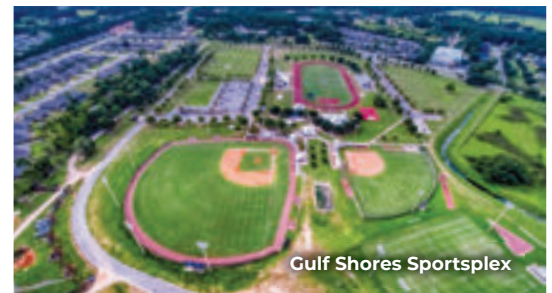
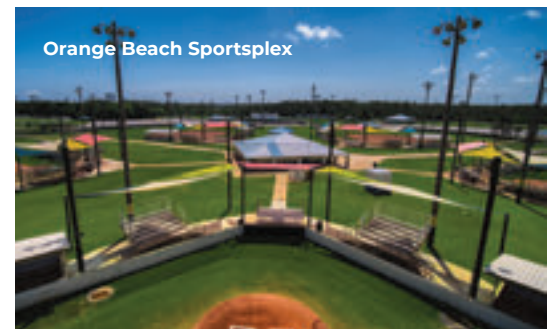
GULF SHORES AND ORANGE BEACH ARE A PAIR OF GORGEOUS COASTAL CITIES THAT HAVE PLENTY TO OFFER TO TOURNAMENT PLANNERS



## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Team Magic has enjoyed partnering with the Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Sports Commission for many years, beginning with the Brett/Robinson Alabama Coastal Triathlon in 2007, followed by the Kaiser Coastal Half Marathon, 5K and 1-Mile Fun Run in 2008. Every staff member is extremely professional and an absolute pleasure to work with."

— Faye Yates, owner, Team Magic



Gulf Shores and Orange Beach have become premier destinations for those seeking indoor, outdoor and sports attractions and activities. To get to these two cities, you can take I-65 or I-10 while another option is to come down to the beach on Highway 59. The two major airports near Gulf Shores/Orange Beach are Pensacola International Airport and the Mobile Regional Airport.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Gulf Shores Sportsplex

**Baseball, softball, football, track**

This 100-acre facility hosts baseball, softball, football and track events and contains multi-purpose fields. The facility boasts a state-of-the-art collegiate/high school track, a high school football stadium with college-level lighting, baseball fields, soccer fields and softball fields.

The stadium has seating for more than 1,500 and the sportsplex also features a field house, parking, Wi-Fi and more.

## Orange Beach Sportsplex

**Baseball, softball, soccer, football**

Opened in 2001, the Orange Beach Sportsplex is home to a variety of facilities, including playing fields, a new field house, a 1,500-seat stadium with a press box, locker rooms and a second concession stand. The Orange Beach Championship Stadium has played host to SEC teams, NCAA teams, the University of South Alabama, Troy State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, Austin Peay State University, Florida State University, UAB, the University of Louisiana Lafayette and many others.

## Orange Beach Event Center at The Wharf

**Concerts, trade shows, expos, sporting events**

Conveniently located in Orange Beach at the base of the Beach Express and Canal Road and easily accessible from Gulf Shores and Foley, the Event Center is home to almost 100 events annually, from corporate conferences to small trade shows and banquets, sporting events, seminars and more. The facility features 18,000 square feet of convenient, rentable, and accessible event space that can host almost any event.

## Gulf Place

**Beach volleyball, triathlons**

One of Alabama's most popular beaches, Gulf Shores Main Public Beach is a perfect spot to play volleyball, swim, surf or just hang out and catch some rays. Gulf Place is located where Highway 59 literally comes to an end, and this gorgeous slice of Alabama is home to a pristine, bright sand beach, new shaded areas and 350-seat beachfront restaurant The Hangout.

## Hugh S. Branyon Backcountry Trail

**Hiking, biking, running**

Established in 2003, this scenic 28-mile trail system in Gulf State Park features nine distinct ecosystems and winds through Gulf Shores and Orange Beach. Visitors can explore the timeless beauty of a Butterfly Garden, mystical freshwater marshes and coastal hardwood swamps. Another great attraction on the trails is Boulder Park, which is a boulder project that helps kids stay in shape and develop both physical and mental skills.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ **Beach** attractions are numerous in Gulf Shores, as visitors have the opportunity to swim, soak in the sun, play beach sports, enjoy beach bars and more. Gulf Place is one of Gulf Shores' most popular beaches.
- ▶ **Gulf State Park** has two miles of beaches, a spacious campground and a new Lodge and Conference Center. It is a popular attraction that features a resort, trails, camping and more.
- ▶ **The Wharf** is one of the most popular spots in Orange Beach, as it features dozens of shops, restaurants, entertainment venues, bars, a 10,000-seat amphitheater, a state-of-the-art marina, events every month and nightly laser light shows.



### GULF SHORES & ORANGE BEACH SPORTS COMMISSION

Michelle Russ, CSEE

251-223-7198

[mruss@gulfshores.com](mailto:mruss@gulfshores.com)

[www.gsobsports.com](http://www.gsobsports.com)

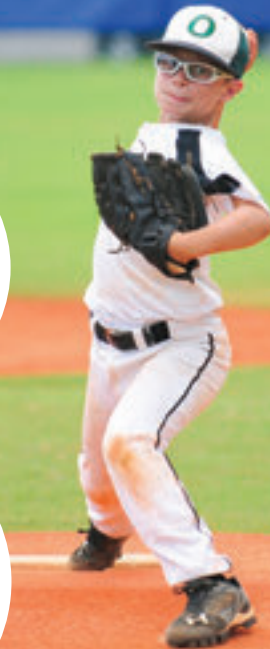
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**GULF SHORES &  
ORANGE BEACH  
SPORTS COMMISSION**





# HUNTSVILLE, AL

THIS ALABAMA CITY IS INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED AS A CENTER FOR AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY, AND IS MAKING A NAME FOR ITSELF IN THE WORLD OF SPORTS



U.S. Space & Rocket Center

Huntsville International Airport is a 15-minute drive southwest of the city's downtown and offers direct flights to places like Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Charlotte, Atlanta and Orlando. For those traveling by car, I-65 runs due south from Nashville, where a quick offshoot will land you in Huntsville.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Huntsville Aquatics Center

*Swimming, diving*

The Huntsville Aquatics Center opened in 2017 and has made a splash on the national stage, most recently as a host site for the 2020 Toyota U.S. Open meet. Two 50-meter indoor competition pools are housed under one roof, the larger with spectator seating for more than 1,400, as well as deck space seating for more than 400 competitors.



John Hunt Park



Robert Trent Jones at Hampton Cove

## Toyota Field

### Baseball

It's home to the Rocket City Trash Pandas, one of the most popular nicknames in professional baseball. The newly opened stadium has a capacity of 7,000-plus, with skyboxes, concourse-level suites and meeting space for groups up to 300.

## John Hunt Park

### Soccer, lacrosse, cross-country, sand volleyball, tennis

John Hunt Park is the centerpiece of nearly

1,000 acres of recreational facilities in the geographical center of Huntsville. The park has hosted the Alabama High School Soccer Championships since 2001 at its two lush championship fields, with seating for than 2,000 fans, and other multipurpose fields, for soccer or lacrosse, are adjacent. The park also boasts a cross country course chosen as an NCAA Regionals site as well as 15 sand volleyball courts that hosted the USA National Beach Tour Junior Championships in 2020. Additionally, John Hunt Park is in close proximity to both Brahan Spring Park and Merrimack Park, each of which offer a number of additional fields.

## Huntsville Tennis Center and Athletic Club Alabama

### Tennis

The sites for the annual USTA Girls 16s Clay Court National Championship, the facilities are less than a half-mile apart and near the John Hunt Park complex. Huntsville Tennis Center is a city-owned facility with 24 lighted clay courts and six lighted hard courts. Athletic Club

Alabama, a private facility, has six indoor courts and 15 outdoor courts, as well as a restaurant and meeting space.

## Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at Hampton Cove

### Golf

Hampton Cove is the first step onto the famed Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail for visitors from the North, Northeast and Midwest. The impressive layout offers a variety of challenges for golfers, as well as all the amenities needed to host successful tournaments. The Highlands Course meanders across hilly terrain and offers spectacular views, while the River Course offers no sand but plenty of water hazards.



### HUNTSVILLE/MADISON COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Mark McCarter, Convention Sales

Manager

256-551-2334

[mccarter@huntsville.org](mailto:mccarter@huntsville.org)

[www.huntsville.org](http://www.huntsville.org)

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Blast off on The Space Shot liftoff simulator at the **U.S. Space & Rocket Center**—the largest aerospace museum in the world.
- ▶ Over 200 working artist studios, six fine-art galleries, a theater, shopping, dining and more are available at **Lowe Mill ARTS & Entertainment**.
- ▶ The **EarlyWorks Children's Museum** lets kids climb, run, play and explore all its interactive exhibits.
- ▶ **MidCity Huntsville** offers unique entertainment and cultural experiences, featuring TopGolf, High Point Climbing and Fitness and The Camp, a casual venue for food and drink.
- ▶ Explore more than 80 shops and restaurants at **Bridge Street Town Centre** and catch a movie while you're there.

# meet Huntsville

Whether it involves fifty people or thousands, the Rocket City has **space** for your next sporting event.

Call Mark today! We'd love to help.  
256.551.2334 | [mccarter@huntsville.org](mailto:mccarter@huntsville.org)



HuntsvilleCVB



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# FOLEY, AL

FOLEY IS HOME TO SOME OF THE BEST SPORT FACILITIES IN THE SOUTH, BUT IT'S ALSO A GREAT DESTINATION FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AND FAMILY ATTRACTIONS



Whether you are road-tripping through the south or flying, be sure not to miss out on Foley's great facilities and attractions. Foley can be reached by I-65 and the nearest commercial airport is Pensacola International Airport, located 36 miles away.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- **OWA - Amusement Park & Entertainment Destination** is a great family-friendly attraction as it features seasonal events, an amusement park, plenty of shopping and comfortable lodging.
- **Gulf Bowl** is an ideal spot for family fun as it features arcade games, bowling, laser tag and plenty more.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Foley Event Center *Basketball, volleyball, cheerleading, pickleball, gymnastics*

One of Foley's busiest facilities is the Foley Event Center, a 90,000-square-foot multi-use indoor facility located adjacent to the sports fields. This indoor facility offers ample space for basketball, volleyball, cheerleading, gymnastics competitions and more. It is also a great place for meetings, banquets and expos. The center's main floor measures more than 55,000 sq. feet and it also has three meeting rooms, three concession/vending areas and two mezzanines overlooking the main floor.

### FST Fields & Championship Stadium *Soccer, lacrosse, football*

Part of the Foley Sports Tourism Complex features the FST Fields & Championship Stadium. The championship stadium offers TV-ready lighting and seating for up to 1,000. In addition to this is 15 beautifully maintained

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"We are so honored to be a part of the Foley family and look forward to a long term relationship with this wonderful group. Bama Bounders and Alabama USA Gymnastics have big future plans for not only state level championships but we will be hosting a southeastern regional event in 2022 and we are looking to land a bid for a national event. Our entire crew looks forward to working with the Foley Sports Tourism family every chance we get."

— Mike Holdefer, Alabama USA Gymnastics, State Administrative Committee Chair



full-size challenge fields. Visitors and competitors also have plenty of food and beverage options from on-site vendors.

### Foley Sports Complex *Soccer, baseball, softball*

The Foley Sports Complex is a huge state-of-the-art venue that sits on 100 acres. The complex features 10 youth fields, which has flawlessly maintained fields that host both softball and baseball events or tournaments, such as the USSSA Baseball World Series; and the Ralph Schumacher Soccer Complex.



## FOLEY SPORTS TOURISM

Shellie Kichler  
251-923-2119  
skichler@cityoffoley.org  
www.FoleySportsTourism.com

# LOUISIANA NORTHSHORE/ ST. TAMMANY PARISH, LA

LOCATED 40 MILES NORTH OF NEW ORLEANS, ST. TAMMANY PARISH IS HOME TO A SLEW OF SPORT VENUES AND A VARIETY OF FAMILY ATTRACTIONS & ACTIVITIES



This gorgeous area is home to plenty of events, attractions and tours, along with shopping and dining options that everyone can enjoy. The Louisiana Northshore/St. Tammany Parish can be reached by Interstate 10, I-12, I-59, U.S. Highway 11, U.S. Highway 90 and U.S. Highway 190. The Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport can be found roughly 40 miles away.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

► **Honey Island Swamp Tours** is one of the best places for visitors to immerse themselves in nature and wildlife. With an incredible list of animals to see and the unforgettable experience of this tour, this attraction is a must-do for adventure lovers.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### **Pelican Park, Castine Center** **Disc golf, baseball, soccer, pickleball**

The Castine Center is nestled inside Pelican Park in Mandeville. The arena features 28,000 square feet of clear span area that can be subdivided. The 3,400-square-foot concourse is perfect for tournaments, and the center also features sport court flooring and removable bleachers. Pelican Park has 32 athletic fields, two gyms, skate park, batting cages, 18-hole disc golf course and eight outdoor pickleball courts.

### **Coquille Sports Complex** **Baseball, lacrosse, soccer, softball, basketball, volleyball, hiking**

This impressive complex has something for everyone as it is home to five baseball fields, five lacrosse fields, five soccer fields and three softball fields, all of which are lighted. The complex also houses four basketball courts, four indoor volleyball courts, batting cages, a walking trail and practice fields.

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Without your assistance, hosting an event for athletes who for 30 straight days: swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles and run a marathon (26.2 miles) would not have been a success! My staff and I look forward to working with you again."

— Wayne P. Kurtz, Director,  
DecaMan USA



### **Harbor Center** **Indoor sports**

Designed to meet the 21st Century needs of events organizers, this versatile 45,000-square-foot venue is an ideal location for dance, cheer and martial arts competitions.

### **Slidell Bantam Baseball Complex, Fritchie Park** **Baseball, softball**

This massive complex that is home to 12 different fields. Fritchie Park is another popular location in Slidell as it features two softball fields, a baseball field, and a covered pavilion.



### **LOUISIANA NORTHSHORE/ ST. TAMMANY PARISH**

Tanya Leader  
800-634-9443  
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Site InSpections

Brian Matangelo via Unsplash

## MIDWEST REGION

**T**he Midwest is a beautiful region in the country that sports both flat terrain and rolling hills from state to state. It is also home to a fabulous array of alluring cities and towns that will keep your family entertained when your athletes aren't competing in the region's top-notch facilities. Whether you're planning a basketball tournament or a cross-country meet, these destinations are ready to host you.

- 174** Miami County, Ohio
- 179** Effingham, Illinois
- 180** Burlington, Iowa
- 182** Cape Girardeau, Missouri
- 184** Champaign County, Illinois
- 186** Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin
- 188** Rockford, Illinois
- 190** Lincoln, Nebraska
- 192** Manitowoc, Wisconsin



# MIAMI COUNTY, OH

A HUB FOR YOUTH SPORTING EVENTS, MIAMI COUNTY FEATURES SEVERAL PARKS AND ARENAS IDEAL FOR STATE-OF-THE-ART GROUP SPORTS OUTINGS IN THE BUCKEYE STATE



By car, Miami County is easily accessible from the north and south via I-75. James M. Cox Dayton International Airport is nearby for those traveling from further away.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Find sweet treats and savory delights at **Winans Chocolates + Coffees**.
- ▶ The **WACO Air Museum and Aviation Learning Center** provides educational opportunities and interactive experiences for all ages.
- ▶ **Johnston Farm** in Piqua allows guests to set sail down a restored portion of the Miami-Erie Canal.
- ▶ Nature lovers will be at home birdwatching and hiking the trails at **Brukner Nature Center**.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Hobart Arena

**Basketball, ice skating, floor events, youth hockey**

In 1950, the vision of the Hobart brothers to create an expanded recreational program for the City of Troy became a reality. Hobart Arena has grown to become one of the leading arenas in Miami County, hosting innumerable sporting events, trade shows, conferences and concerts. The arena's facilities include 3,782 seats, 50 of which are handicapped, a Robbins All-Star Plus Portable basketball court, four locker rooms, two referee rooms, 800 parking spaces and five permanent concession stands. With several nearby hotels and restaurants, Hobart Arena and its surrounding area provide all the amenities necessary for an ideal group sporting event.

### Duke Park

**Baseball, basketball, football, soccer, tennis, volleyball**

Home to the local Trojans Soccer Club, Duke

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"It is a pleasure working with the City of Troy and the Miami County Visitors Bureau on the Tour de Donut bicycle challenge. They are great to work with and are always open to new ideas. They built a music festival around the Tour de Donut to enhance the event and create a fun, energetic experience for our riders. We had our best year ever in 2019, and we're looking forward to many more years of success in Miami County."

— Roger Bowersock, Head Donut, Tour de Donut Bicycle Challenge



Park in Troy features seven soccer fields, all equipped with top-notch amenities. Facilities at Duke Park include five baseball and softball fields, a basketball court, football field, four tennis courts, a picnic shelter, playground, parking lot and restrooms. For family members and team fans looking for something to do during long practices, Duke Park features two and a half miles of recreational walking trails perfect for a leisurely stroll or bike ride during the warmer months of the year. A series of mountain/fat bike trails are also located on the west side of the park.



### MIAMI COUNTY VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU

Meghan Rodriguez, Group Sales Manager  
937-339-1044 or 800-348-8993  
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INDIANA DUNES TOURISM

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INDIANA SPORTS CORP

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INDIANA STATE FAIR COMMISSION

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Convention and Visitors Bureau

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY CVB

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MARSHALL COUNTY CVB

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SHELBY COUNTY TOURISM

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SOIN TOURISM

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SOUTH SHORE CONVENTION &  
VISITORS AUTHORITY

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& VISITORS BUREAU

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VISIT LAFAYETTE-WEST LAFAYETTE

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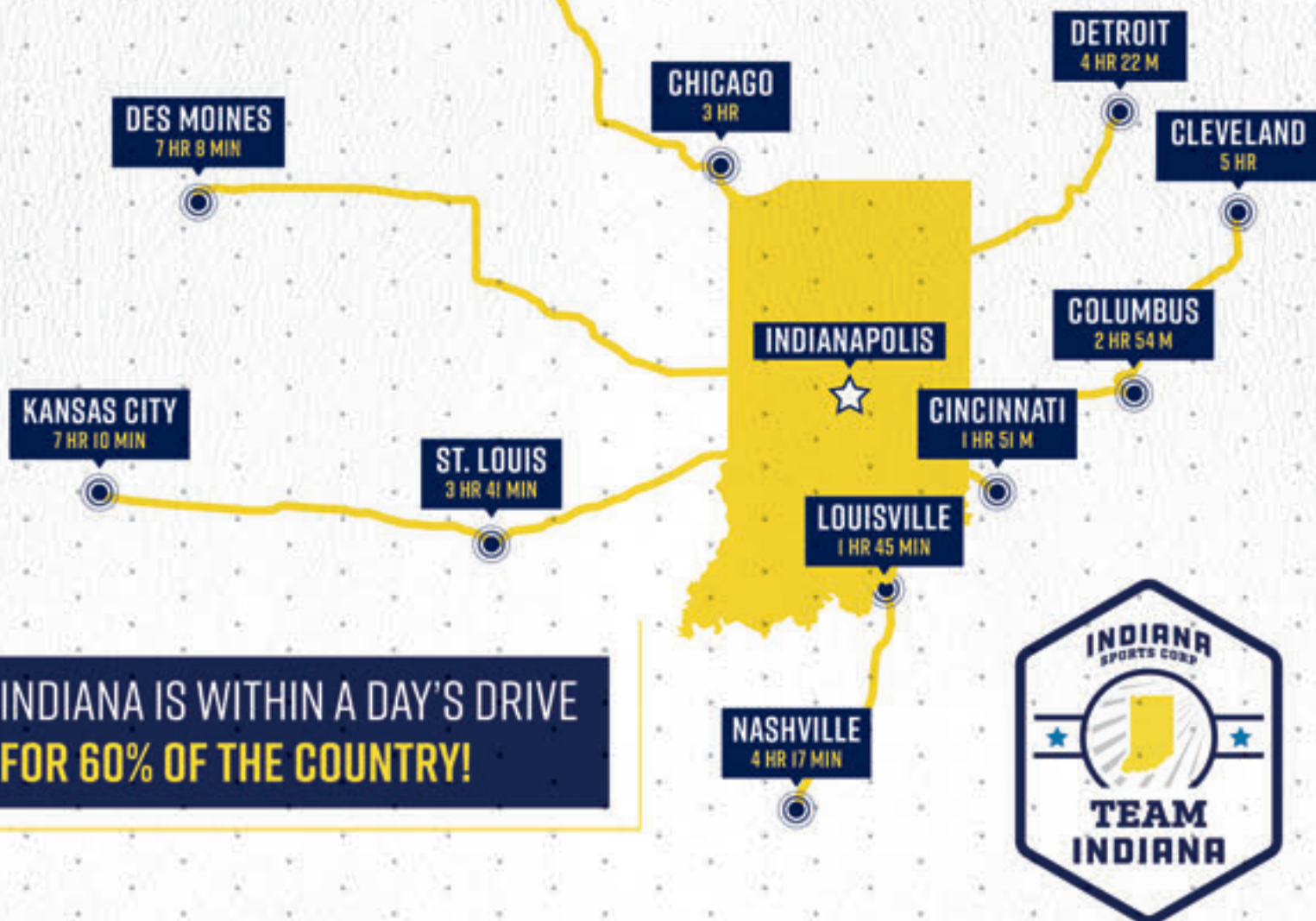


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# INDIANA. WHERE CHAMPIONS ARE CROWNED.

# EFFINGHAM, IL

EVERY DAY, EFFINGHAM BECOMES AN EVEN BETTER DESTINATION FOR SPORT EVENTS, FROM SWIMMING TO SOFTBALL AND BEYOND



Effingham County Memorial Airport and Shelby County Airport are reasonable options for those flying in, while Effingham's central location within Illinois affords easy access for drivers via the crossroads of I-57 and I-70.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Let your cares drift away as you float down the lazy river at the **Richard E. Workman Sports & Wellness Center**.
- ▶ You'll always find fresh produce and large rooms for group outings at **Firefly Grill**.
- ▶ Home-made creations and authentic Italian vibes abound at **Tuscan Hills Winery**.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Richard E. Workman Sports and Wellness Complex

#### All indoor sports

The Richard E. Workman Sports and Wellness Complex was completed in early 2016. The complex offers a 25-meter, eight-lane swimming pool and indoor 15,500-square-foot, multi-sport courts. This recreational center offers other amenities too, ranging from rentable party rooms to physical therapy services. The complex will not only offer visiting teams great places to play, but a stellar spot for helping their bodies relax and recuperate from intense activity.

### Hendelmeyer Park

#### Baseball, softball, tennis

If you're looking for outdoor sports, look no further than Hendelmeyer Park. This spot is a charming local park with expansive outdoor fields. At a respectable 20 acres, the park holds two lighted, slow-pitch diamonds and one

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"I would say that the advantage for choosing Effingham, besides being so centrally located, is the community really gets behind and supports the events. We have such a variety of restaurants and hotels for people to choose from, and our shopping choices continue to expand. I feel fortunate to be able to host the event for its businesses and community."

— Jeff Schafer, Effingham High School Girls Basketball, (Southern Illinois Basketball Circuit Director (SIBC))



lighted, fast-pitch diamond—all with natural grass—plus four lighted tennis courts. The park is rounded out with playground areas, a gazebo, concession stand and skate park.

### Evergreen Hollow Park

#### Softball, baseball, tennis, soccer, swimming

Evergreen Hollow Park spans 42 acres and comprises of two lighted softball diamonds, one lighted baseball diamond, four lighted tennis courts and soccer fields. On the west side of the park sits Kluthe Memorial Pool, an outdoor swimming pool with a lap pool, water slide and children's pool area.



### CITY OF EFFINGHAM CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Jodi Thoele, Director of Tourism  
217-342-5310  
jthoele@effinghamil.com  
www.visiteffinghamil.com



# BURLINGTON, IA

GREATER BURLINGTON, SITTING ON THE EASTERN EDGE OF IOWA, IS ALREADY ONE OF THE MIDWEST'S FINEST SPORTS HUBS. INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES ADD TO THE OFFERINGS TO MAKE THIS A YEAR ROUND DESTINATION



Burlington Regional RecPlex

Major airlines like United, American and Delta all fly into the Quad Cities Airport in Moline, about 90 minutes from Burlington. By car, US Route 34 runs from Colorado through the heart of Burlington, while Route 61 runs north-south and stretches to the Quad Cities.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Burlington Regional RecPlex Soccer, softball, baseball, volleyball

The Burlington RecPlex features tournament-class facilities for soccer, softball, baseball and sand volleyball, in addition to concessions and spectator plazas in the guest services building. Top amenities include five softball and baseball diamonds, eight regulation-sized soccer fields, four lighted sand volleyball courts, an all-purpose field, six automatic batting cages, a 1.2-mile paved trail, and shaded outdoor pavilion seating. Since

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"I have been coming to Burlington for over 12 years to run four different soccer events. The community of Burlington and the people at the RecPlex are second to none. The fields we use and the facility are first class and always ready for us. Staff at the RecPlex are dedicated to providing the best and they leave no doubt. I am excited to start hosting events in the new FunCity Turf facility. My past experiences tell me that it will be first class and well run and supported by the community."

— Eric Stratman,  
Adidas Tournament of Champions



Burlington Regional RecPlex



The Turf

its opening in 1999, this versatile complex has served as one of the Midwest's top facilities for hosting tournaments, including the annual Monster Match soccer tournament hosted by Southeast Soccer Academy.

## The FunCity Turf Softball, soccer

After months of buildup and with great expectations, a building set to revolutionize tournament play in Greater Burlington is finally here. The FunCity Turf, which opened in February of 2019, provides almost 80,000

square feet of playing surface. The facility plays host to a variety of sports, including softball and soccer. Standing tall at an impressive 79 feet high and surfaced wall-to-wall, the facility enables tournament planners and participants to enjoy everything from a full-sized regulation high school soccer field to two 185-foot youth softball fields. Up to eight playing surfaces for soccer can be used at once, as well as two youth softball fields. The building's unique design allows for easy field conversion to other sports. Additionally, the FunCity Turf has batting and pitching cages as well as high-quality turf for longterm use. The FunCity Turf hosted the Burst the Bubble softball tournament in February of 2019 after JK Sports brought it in.

## The Courts

### Basketball, volleyball

The FunCity Turf is just the first part of the Greater Burlington Area Indoor Sports Project. The Courts is an upcoming basketball and volleyball facility which will be located at the PZAZZ! Entertainment Complex in Burlington,

IA. The project anticipates breaking ground early 2021 and opening fall 2021. The Courts will feature four collegiate basketball and volleyball regulation courts which can be used for a variety of activity outside of just basketball and volleyball. The facility hopes to host a variety of local teams during the week for practices and bring in teams from outside the area for tournaments on the weekends. Being located at the PZAZZ! Entertainment Complex will allow visitors access to the already established amenities of the campus; including 3 hotels, indoor/outdoor water park, hot gaming action, arcade, bowling, laser tag, restaurants, and conference space.



### GREATER BURLINGTON CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

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## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ **Huck's Harbor Water Park**, part of the PZAZZ! Entertainment Complex, provides fun for the whole family year round with its indoor and outdoor water parks.
- ▶ **Catfish Bend Casino and PointsBet SportsBook** offer a remarkable gaming experience.
- ▶ **FunCity**, another PZAZZ! venue, offers more than 100 interactive arcade games, go-carts and laser tag.
- ▶ **Snake Alley** connects the residential and commercial districts via a snaking, winding 275 foot road that drops more than 58 feet, landing it a spot on *Ripley's Believe It or Not's* Odd Spots Across America campaign.
- ▶ **Big Hollow Recreation Area** houses a 178-acre lake and provides year-round outdoor activities and wildlife viewing.

*Two Facilities. One Location*  
**BURLINGTON, IOWA**  
**YEAR ROUND SPORTS**  
BASEBALL ■ FOOTBALL  
SOFTBALL ■ SOCCER

The **Burlington Regional RecPlex** and, **The FunCity Turf** are your teams destination for tournament play in any season.  
*Features include:*

**BURLINGTON REGIONAL REC PLEX**

- 5 Softball/Baseball Diamonds
- 8 Regulation-Sized Soccer Fields
- 4 Lighted Sand Volleyball Courts
- 1 All-Purpose Field
- 6 Station Automatic Batting Cages
- Guest Services/Concession Building

**THE FUNCITY TURF**

- 78,500 SF of Playing Surface
- 8 Playing Surfaces for Soccer
- 2 Youth Softball Fields
- Easy Field Conversion to Other Sports

## Greater Burlington Indoor & Outdoor Sports Facilities



VisitBurlingtonIowa.com



# CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO

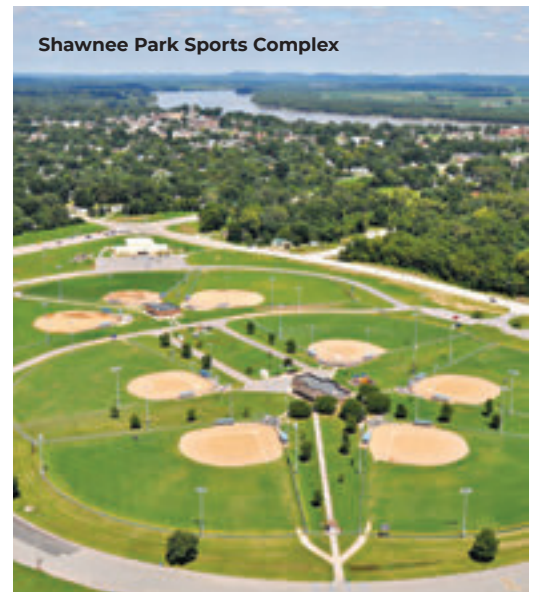
**RICH HISTORY AND MODERN DESIGNS MAKE CAPE GIRARDEAU AN IDEAL TOURNAMENT DESTINATION**



Cape Girardeau is easily accessible by car and is located directly off I-55 at its western edge. From the east, visitors cross the Mississippi River on the Bill Emerson Memorial Bridge as they traverse the connection from Southern Illinois to Southeast Missouri. SkyWest Airlines provides flights into Cape Girardeau Regional Airport as well.

## **FACILITY SPOTLIGHT** **Shawnee Park Sports Complex** **Baseball, Football, Softball, Soccer**

The Shawnee Park Sports Complex serves as one of the largest youth and adult outdoor sports venues in the region. Fourteen regulation sized soccer fields, eight fields for baseball and softball and two regulation football fields make this a key destination for tournaments. Two regulation sized baseball fields with 375-foot center field fences and six regulation-sized softball fields with 300 foot fences made this an easy choice to host tournaments. The USSSA



Shawnee Park Sports Complex



Cape SportsPlex

Boy's Baseball, USSSA Girls FP Softball and USA Coed State Slow Pitch Softball are just some of the tournaments that utilized the Shawnee Park Sports Complex this summer. This fall we look forward to safely hosting the USSSA All State Games, USFA Missouri Season Opener Girls FP Tournament and our November College Exposure tournament.

## **Cape SportsPlex** **Baseball, Basketball, Football, Soccer, Softball, Volleyball**

With 121,000 square feet to play with, the

state of the art Cape Girardeau SportsPlex is a tournament planner's dream with its uniquely utilitarian concept. Two FIFA-approved indoor turf courses with 32,000 square feet of availability can be used for soccer, football, baseball, volleyball and softball tournaments, complete with spectator seating, drop down curtains and several scoreboards. Six high school regulation sized Hard Tru wooden basketball courts over 57,600 square feet can transform into 12 volleyball courts as needed. The increased utility available at the SportsPlex has led to a number of high profile basketball tournaments choosing it as a host, like the Reebok Cape Girardeau Summer Sizzler, Hoopz Showcase and the Select Super 16 Basketball Showcase, which all called the Sports Plex home this past summer.

### Show Me Center Basketball, Wrestling

The home of Southeast Missouri State University, the Show Me Center is located in the heart of campus. After undergoing a major renovation in 2015, the 7,300 seat arena

introduced a new center-hung video display on the scoreboard, a high-tech audio system and LED panel lit scoreboards and shot clocks and expanded seating in the lower bowl.

### Dalhousie Golf Club Golf

The history of the award-winning Dalhousie Golf Club dates back to 18th century Scotland and tells a tale of the early frontier America. The 1,000-acre complex constructed by renowned designer Gary Nicklaus honors its Scottish legacy with a clubhouse manor fashioned after Dalhousie Castle, as well as four cottages available for overnight stays. This year, Dalhousie is hosting the AJGA Rolex Girls Junior Championship.

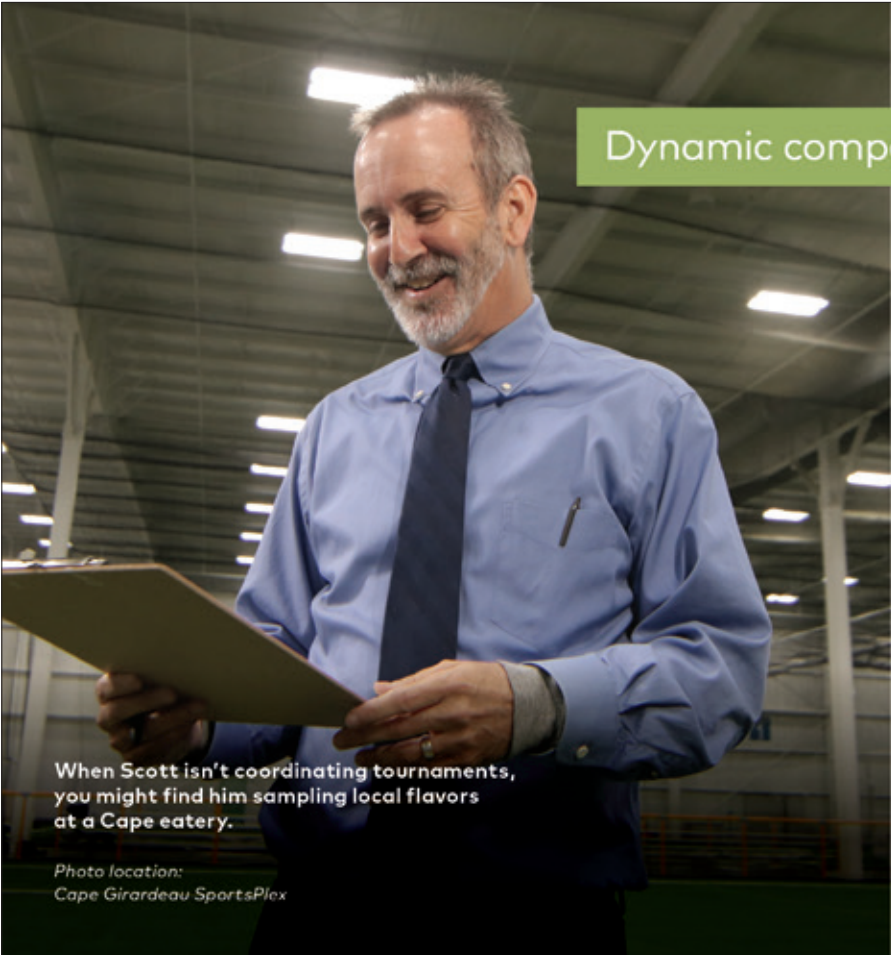


#### VISIT CAPE

Alyssa Phares, Senior Director of  
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### POPULAR ACTIVITIES


- ▶ **Cape Splash Family Aquatic Center** is the go-to spot to beat the summer heat and sate your appetite for thrills on a 265 foot slide.
- ▶ If you're looking to knock back a few pins and pints, **Dogwood Social House** has something for everyone on the menu.
- ▶ The **Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center** offers the rich cultural history and wildlife of southeast Missouri on display for free.
- ▶ Family friendly fun can always be found at **Melaina's Magical Playground**, designed to be disability friendly with foam tile and fun equipment for everyone. After that, kids can discover a grocery store, become a dentist or splash around in a secret garden at **Discovery Playhouse**.






Dynamic competition is waiting *here*

"Cape sets itself apart with the ease of coming to a tournament or a special event. Visitors don't have to drive around to 15 different locations. Our facilities are mostly self-contained. And we attract a large variety of teams, so you get a good balance of competition."

*- Scott Williams,*  
recreation division manager



**visitcape**  
CAPE GIRARDEAU

VisitCape.com |   

**#GetHere**

When Scott isn't coordinating tournaments, you might find him sampling local flavors at a Cape eatery.

*Photo location:*  
Cape Girardeau SportsPlex



# CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, IL

A FACILITY FOR EVERY SPORT AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR ALL AGES SETS CHAMPAIGN COUNTY APART



State Farm Center

Willard Airport, six miles south of Champaign, features American Airlines flights daily to and from Chicago, Charlotte and Dallas/Fort Worth. If traveling by car, I-74 connects Peoria and Bloomington from the west to Indianapolis in the east, while I-57 connects Champaign County to Chicago.

## **FACILITY SPOTLIGHT** **Rantoul Family Sports Complex** *Baseball, softball, soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby*

Opening in April 2021, the new Rantoul Family Sports Complex, just north of the University of Illinois, will be a state-of-the-art facility in the Midwest. The complex offers all turf fields with eight baseball/softball, two T-ball/Challenger baseball, eight soccer/football/rugby/lacrosse multi-purpose fields, over 800 parking spaces, a splashpad, and concessions.

## **Activities & Recreation Center (ARC)** **at the University of Illinois** *Basketball, volleyball, swimming, diving, squash, wrestling, martial arts*

The ARC is a 340,000-square-foot on-campus rec center with the capacity to host nearly any indoor sport with its versatile spaces. The space has four gymnasiums that can be converted into 12 basketball courts, 16 volleyball courts, three squash courts or 12 racquetball courts. Teams can take advantage of the extensive workout equipment and spaces along with its 35-foot climbing wall and



one-fifth mile indoor track. It houses both an indoor and outdoor pool, with diving wells perfect for competitions and a sauna and café great to enjoy afterward.

## Dodds Park

### Softball, soccer, disc-golf

Located at Parkland College, Dodds Park has seven premier tournament quality softball fields, in a 3-plex and 4-plex structure. The site also has 11 top quality soccer fields that have hosted the Illinois Futbol Club Spring and Fall Invites, as well as an 18-hole disc golf course.

## Atkins Tennis Center & Khan Outdoor Complex

### Tennis

Recognized in 1992 by the USTA as the country's "Most Outstanding Tennis Facility," Atkins Tennis Center & Khan Outdoor Complex has only gotten better since then. After an expansion in 2009, the complex boasts 20 outdoor and six indoor courts, with six courts containing individual scoreboards and spectator seating. The complex can hold up to 3,800 spectators and has indoor restrooms, a pro shop and a sound system.

## State Farm Center

### Basketball, wrestling, WWE, gymnastics

No stranger to large events, the State Farm Center has 15,500 permanent seats, with a max capacity of 16,500 spectators. Its flexible floor space means it's just as ready to have a Broadway show or rock concert as it is a Fighting Illini basketball game. The arena has hosted the 2019 National Intercollegiate Wheelchair Basketball tournaments, the Illinois High School Individual Wrestling State Championships, and much more. The center recently renovated its backstage area so that any event can take full advantage of its expansive full-service kitchen, catering/dining services and locker rooms.



### VISIT CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

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www.visitchampaigncounty.org/  
planners/sports-and-events

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Pick your own apples at **Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch** and stick around for the corn maze and putt-putt golf.
- ▶ Hang out with 16 friendly animals at **Hardy's Reindeer Ranch**, where you can feast on Texas-style brisket and beans.
- ▶ Catch a film or have a bite in one of the locally owned restaurants throughout **Downtown Champaign's Entertainment District**.
- ▶ The **University of Illinois campus** has something for everyone, depending on the season, but the cherry blossoms in bloom are a special treat.
- ▶ **Champaign-Urbana Adventures in Time and Space** escape rooms build teamwork through challenging, film-inspired experiences.



Dodds Park

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"I have always had great support from the staff at State Farm Center. Their attention to detail in preparation for and management of my events continues to be outstanding. The updates have enhanced the great atmosphere our event has enjoyed for years. We look forward to our annual return to State Farm Center as we know we will be supported at all levels including Visit Champaign County and the great staff at State Farm Center."

—Craig Anderson, Executive Director,  
Illinois High School Association, referring to IHSA  
Individual State Wrestling Championships



Atkins Tennis Center



Activities &  
Recreation Center



# PLEASANT PRAIRIE, WI

MAKE LASTING MEMORIES WHILE BREAKING RECORDS IN THIS PICTURESQUE VILLAGE JUST ACROSS THE ILLINOIS BORDER; MIDWAY BETWEEN MILWAUKEE AND CHICAGO



RecPlex – Fieldhouse

Pleasant Prairie is conveniently located between Chicago and Milwaukee on the shores of beautiful Lake Michigan. The Pleasant Prairie RecPlex is a straight shot from I-94 (Exit 347) on HWY 165 located in Prairie Springs Park. Three airports within an hour's drive make Pleasant Prairie easily accessible to national and international teams.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT Pleasant Prairie RecPlex Fieldhouse

The Pleasant Prairie RecPlex is the largest municipal recreational facility in America. Located on the shores of Lake Andrea in Prairie Springs Park, the complex contains a 60,000-square-foot fieldhouse that houses top competition for basketball and volleyball tournaments like Take the Title National Basketball Showcase, NY2LA, and the President's Day Volleyball Tournament.

With divisible spaces, the fieldhouse's four quadrants can be broken up to accommodate eight full-size basketball courts, while each

court can be further divided to accommodate more action with two side hoops per court. The fieldhouse can be configured to accommodate 12 volleyball courts. This kind of flexibility has made the RecPlex a go-to for tournament planners like One Day Shootouts, which held a large Border Wars basketball tournament at the facility.

## RecPlex – Baseball/Softball Fields Baseball, Softball

With six lighted ballfields, your baseball and softball play won't be hindered by the setting

sun. The facility also serves as a crucial training site for the Phenom Baseball Academy, an elite organization affiliated with Nike and USA Baseball. Recent field renovations and the addition of northside concessions made the RecPlex an ideal location for organizations like Game Day USA and Seminole Sports.

### RecPlex – Aqua Arena Swimming

The geo-thermal heated, Olympic sized pool, is a draw for acclaimed sporting competitions including Speedo Elite and the 14U CentralZone Championships. With fast lanes that easily convert from 25-meters to 50-meters and a great view of Lake Andrea, the 600 spectator capacity Aqua Arena is a great place for your next indoor meet.

### RecPlex – Ice Arena Figure skating, Hockey

The RecPlex is a prime environment to take your players to the next level. Celebrate your next win on one of our two NHL-sized ice rinks (79,000 total sq. ft. of ice) - one rink seating 300 and the other with 750 seats. We have hosted events such as the CCM World Invite Hockey Tournament and US Figure Skating Upper Great Lakes Regionals Skating Competition and are home to Patriots hockey

and Vipers hockey. We also are home to two US Figure Skating Clubs, Cutting Edge FSC, and Southport FSC. The Ice Arena has a separate entrance to the RecPlex where you'll find concessions and ample space to rent out for team gatherings.

### Lake Andrea Swimming, boating, fishing, dragon boat racing

This 110-acre, natural spring-fed lake is a great place for open water swims and triathlons. In 2019, the first-ever UANA Pan American Junior Open Water Swimming Championships for ages 20 and under in the western hemisphere was held in Pleasant Prairie. Lake Andrea has also been a favored venue for the Central Zone Open Water Swimming Championships and is also a crucial site for the swimming portion of the top triathlons held at the RecPlex, including the Iron Girl Pleasant Prairie Triathlon.

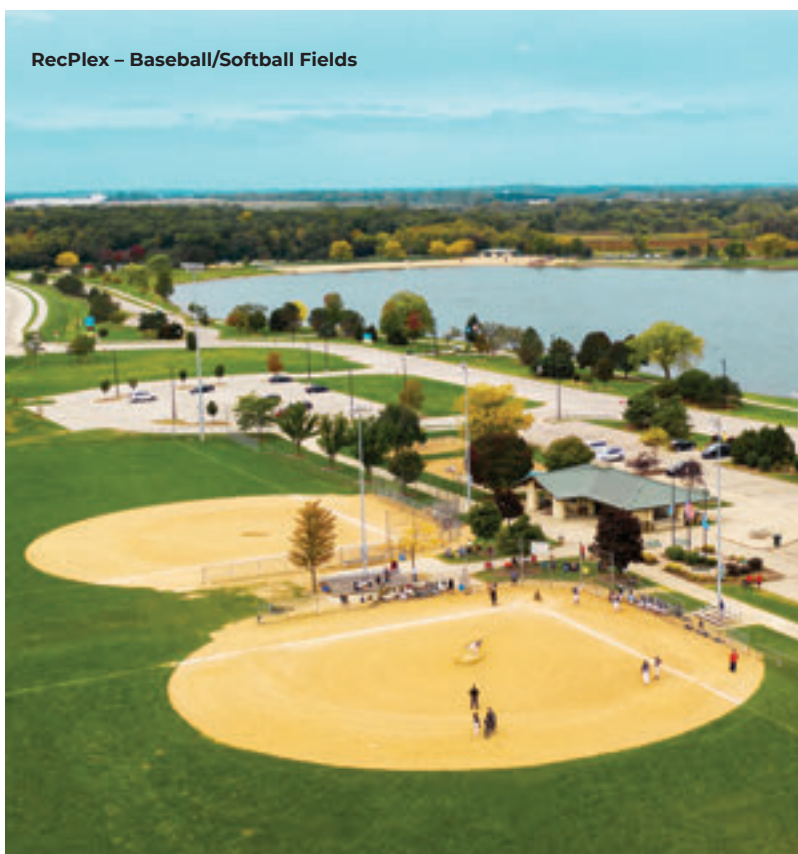


#### PLEASANT PRAIRIE CVB

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VisitPleasantPrairie.com

### POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Spend a day fishing, kayaking, swimming or relaxing on the beach at **Lake Andrea**.
- ▶ **Pleasant Prairie Premium Outlets** is an outdoor shopping center that consists of exceptional brands and extraordinary savings at more than 90 stores.
- ▶ Centrally located, Pleasant Prairie is a great place to make your event weekend into a vacation. Sail Lake Michigan on a **tall ship**, adventure into the past at the **Bristol Renaissance Faire**, thrill-seek at **Six Flags Great America**, or simply relax and explore southeastern Wisconsin's great outdoors!
- ▶ Challenge your boundaries as you swing, climb and zip-line through nine treetop adventure courses at **Boundless Adventures**.





# ROCKFORD, IL

LOCATED ON THE BANKS OF THE MESMERIZING ROCK RIVER IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS, THE CITY OF ROCKFORD GUARANTEES A MULTITUDE OF ATHLETIC VENUES AND THINGS TO DO FOR YOUR NEXT SPORTS TRIP



UW Health Sports Factory

Rockford is connected to many areas of Illinois, Wisconsin (Madison, Milwaukee) and Iowa (Dubuque) by highway. U.S. Route 20 passes through Rockford twice, and provides connections to Freeport, Galena and Dubuque. Interstate 90 connects Rockford to Madison, Milwaukee and the northwest Chicago suburbs. Interstate 39 directly links Rockford to Bloomington-Normal.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### UW Health Sports Factory

**Basketball, cheerleading, dance, dodgeball, pickleball, volleyball, wrestling**

This multi-purpose indoor sports facility spotlights 108,000 square-feet (96,000 square feet of hard court surface) of space for your upcoming tournament. One of the largest facilities in the Midwest, the venue is comprised of eight basketball courts that convert to 16 volleyball courts, 16 wrestling mats and accommodations for other indoor

sports. With a maximum capacity of 3,700 spectators, UW Health Sports Factory spotlights north and south courts, and a champions court with seating for up to 400 people. Spacious outdoor areas overlook the Rock River with a south patio area. A full-service sports restaurant with a dazzling 180-degree view of the river and north and south courts seats 160 guests, ideal for downtime in between games. Comfortable meeting spaces provide ample room for visitors, with the lower meeting room seating up to 50 people, while the upper meeting room seats up to 14 people.

## Mercyhealth Sportscore Two

**Baseball, football, pickleball, rugby, soccer, softball, volleyball, golf, lacrosse, ultimate frisbee, adapted wheelchair sports**

This state-of-the-art sports facility will be sure to impress with 180 acres of courts, fields, concessions and other favorable amenities. The expansive complex features 26 outdoor soccer fields including seven turf/lighted fields, three sand volleyball courts, a playground, a 4,500-square-foot outdoor concession/restroom building, a tournament staging area for pictures and onsite parking with more than 2,000 spaces. The Indoor Sports Center is a multi-sport complex consisting of 200,000 square-feet of multi-purpose courts and fields, anchored a full-size (120-by-80-yards, equal to four indoor soccer fields) turf field with 70-foot ceilings, locker rooms, a sports equipment store and Skybox dining overlooking the fields. The existing indoor sports center has plans to convert to turf on both sides. The vast Wedgbury Stadium seats up to 2,500 spectators, and has been refurbished to include a new synthetic turf field, NCAA professional lighting, restroom buildings, improved pathways and upgrades to bleachers and a press box.

## Mercyhealth Sportscore One

**Soccer, softball, baseball, volleyball (sand), kickball, wiffleball, golf (indoor), ultimate frisbee**

Nationally recognized as a premier host of soccer, softball, baseball, Ultimate frisbee and other sports tournaments, this first-rate sports establishment is an excellent option for athletes to duel it out in a nail-biting competition. Spanning 147 acres, the venue includes 18 soccer fields, eight lighted baseball/softball diamonds, an indoor soccer building, two playgrounds, a fishing pond, a boat ramp, a recreation path and concessions.



### ROCKFORD AREA CVB

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## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

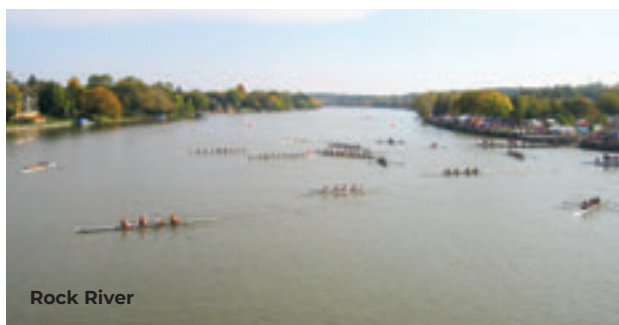
- ▶ Visit **Laurent House Museum**, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and famously known as the only home in Illinois designed by the architect for a person with a disability.
- ▶ Enjoy the natural beauty of the city by touring the calming **Anderson Japanese Gardens**, composed of flowing waterfalls, tranquil streams and beautiful gardens.
- ▶ Continue your nature walk in the captivating **Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens**, simulating the gorgeous tropics with special water features and sculptures right along the breathtaking Rock River.
- ▶ Children will appreciate the chance to explore the **Discovery Center Museum**, featuring more than 250 interactive art and science exhibits.



## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau in conjunction with the Rockford Park District provided a first-class venue and excellent support for our Division III College Championships. The service provided along with the hospitality shown has made Rockford one of our go-to places for future events.

— USA Ultimate:  
Byron Hicks (Events Manager)





# LINCOLN, NE

BRIMMING WITH ENERGY AND OPTIMISM, LINCOLN IS HOME TO FIRST-CLASS FACILITIES THROUGH ITS UNIVERSITY CONNECTION—AND A WHOLE LOT MORE



Lincoln is easily accessible via Interstates 80 from east to west and 180 from the north. If you're flying in, the Lincoln Airport (LNK) is located just northwest of downtown and offers passenger flights to and from major destinations Atlanta, Chicago, Denver and Minneapolis/St. Paul through Delta Connection and United Express.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

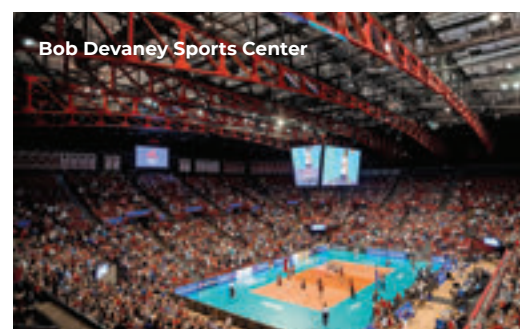
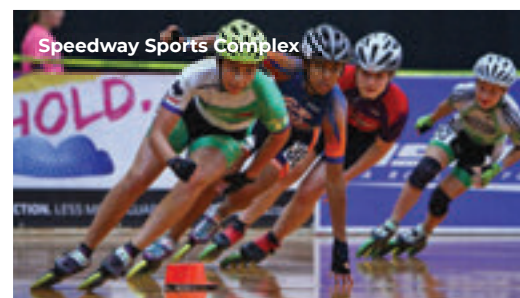
**Pinnacle Bank Arena**  
**Basketball, hockey, ice skating, multipurpose indoor, volleyball**

Nicknamed "The Vault", this multipurpose indoor arena unlocks great potential for tournament planners, offering 15,500 seats for spectator viewing. Located in Lincoln's West Haymarket District, the stadium is home to the University of Nebraska's men's and women's basketball teams and is a premier destination for concerts when shows come to town. The arena has additionally hosted large

## PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

"Obviously Lincoln is a great community and I think it is a hotbed for what we do. The Bob Devaney Center is one of the top venues and that's why we continue to come back. They have done a great job of integrating the big screen technology, the seating, and keeping it a tight environment."

— Pete Isais, Director of National Events, USA Wrestling (USA Wrestling Final X)



tournaments and events like the FIVB Volleyball Nations League, which hosted a round robin tournament between the USA, Germany, Korea and Brazil in June of 2019.

**Speedway Sports Complex**  
**Basketball, football, futsal, soccer, volleyball**

With nine outdoor sports fields, a 100,000-square-foot indoor turf facility and a 80,000-square-foot indoor basketball and volleyball-centric facility, the Speedway Sports Complex stakes its case for the most utilitarian



of its kind within the entire region. The complex additionally features a performance training gym and an interactive trampoline park, giving family members something to do during long tournament hours. The facility currently offers 1,000 parking spots on its grounds.

### **Bob Devaney Sports Center** *Gymnastics, swimming & diving, track & field, volleyball, wrestling*

Set on campus at the University of Nebraska, this multipurpose complex includes three main buildings which house the Cornhusker gymnastics, swimming and diving, track and field, volleyball and wrestling programs. A 7,907-seat main arena is home to the volleyball teams, while the Devaney Center Natatorium features 10 swimming lanes and offers seating for 1,000 spectators. The Devaney Sports Center Indoor Track features a 200-meter hydraulic-banked track and offers 5,000 seats. USA Wrestling brought its Final X freestyle championship series to the complex in June of 2019.

### **Lancaster Event Center** *Equestrian, multipurpose, rodeo*

Creating meaningful memories with top-notch events is the goal at the Lancaster Event Center, home to the Lancaster County Super Fair and many other events throughout the year. The center features a pair of arenas, three pavilions and office space. Both the Cornhusker Quarter Horse Classic and the National High School Finals Rodeo will be held at the center in 2021.

### **Star City BMX** *BMX*

With asphalt-banked turns, 1,000-plus feet of dirt racing track and plenty of opportunities to catch some big air and pull out all the tricks on a jump, Star City BMX is a staple on the extreme biking circuit.

## **POPULAR ACTIVITIES**

- ▶ Up-close encounters and interactive exhibits are the norm at the **Lincoln Children's Zoo**, home to more than 400 animals. Now open year-round!
- ▶ The largest collection of quilts in the world can be found at the **International Quilt Museum**.
- ▶ As an academic art venue for students, faculty, staff and visitors to engage with, a trip to the **Sheldon Museum of Art** is a must.

**REIMAGINE  
LINCOLN**

**SPEEDWAY VILLAGE**

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IN LINCOLN, NEBRASKA**

**LINCOLN**  
CONVENTION  
AND VISITORS  
BUREAU

**LINCOLN.CVB**  
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Sales Development Manager  
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www.lincoln.org

**LINCOLN.ORG/SPG**

Whether you are practicing for the bottom of the ninth bases loaded or digging one for set point. We have the perfect venues for sports of all kinds. Our new premier multi-sports facility, Speedway Village, is a game changer for your league or special event.



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# MANITOWOC, WI

SET ON THE SHORES OF LAKE MICHIGAN, WISCONSIN'S MARITIME CAPITAL OFFERS QUALITY SPORTING FACILITIES WITH LAKEFRONT VIEWS



Mike Roemer



Manitowoc boasts gorgeous lakeshore views with unique attractions that are sure to make your visit a worthwhile experience. Manitowoc is accessible via Interstate 43 coming from the north or south. The nearest major airport is the Austin Straubel International Airport located in Brown County.

## POPULAR ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Regarded as the Midwest's largest maritime museum, the **Wisconsin Maritime Museum** features more than 60,000 square feet of interactive and standing exhibits.
- ▶ Learn about Wisconsin farming as well as the origins of your food at the **Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center**.

## FACILITY SPOTLIGHT

### Neshotah Park and Beach *Beach volleyball, Fat tire bike races*

This park and beach features 50 acres of groomed sand beach on Lake Michigan with areas for swimming, volleyball and launching jet skis and kayaks. Neshotah also has a softball field, volleyball and basketball courts, playgrounds, the Rawley Point bike trail, horseshoe pits, four shelters, and picnic areas with tables and grills.

### Manitowoc County Ice Center *Ice hockey, figure skating*

Opened in 1995, the Manitowoc County Ice Center can host speed skating, hockey events/tournaments, dog shows and figure skating events. This facility features an 85' x 200' sheet of ice used for hockey leagues and tournaments such as the Badger State Hockey Games, ice skating events and shows. Once the dry surface is laid down, the ice center is also used for a number of shows and events as it offers 23,000 square feet of exhibit space.

### Mariner's Trail *Running, Biking*

This lovely, hard-surfaced recreational seven-mile trail that runs along the coast of Lake Michigan connects the cities of Manitowoc and Two Rivers. The trail is designed for bicyclists, joggers, walkers, and roller bladers and includes gardens, telescopes, picnic areas and restroom facilities.

### Manitowoc Two Rivers YMCA *Multipurpose*

The Manitowoc Two Rivers YMCA offers two indoor 6-lane swimming pools, indoor tennis, racket ball, gymnastics and more.

## MANITOWOC AREA VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU

RaeAnn Thomas

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# SPORTS TOURISM TRENDS FOR 2021

## "COVID Happened, Now What?"

**T**his writing marks the sixth consecutive year our team at the Huddle Up Group has outlined the key trends in sports tourism. It's no surprise that with what 2020 delivered to us all, this year's trends article was more difficult to write than anything we have offered in the past. When you consider the impacts of the pandemic, social injustice issues, and toss in a wild race to the White House, it's hard to fathom that our industry will ever see another year like this one.

There is hope. The sports tourism industry has shown signs of recovery, well ahead of the other tourism verticals. The market also has once again proven its resiliency related to the business environment as a whole. As several sectors of commerce are trying to find a pathway to rebound, numerous sports organizations are forging ahead. We all know that sports are part of the fabric of our country.

Finding ways to enable our young people to get back onto the field safely is paramount to their continued development and to our nation.

Given what we have all been through this year and where we need to get to in the future, we offer you the nine trends we are closely following leading into 2021 (We can't do a top 10 in a year like this, right?)

**1 Create Anew** – Created events will continue to become a vital business development tactic for destinations. Building locally owned and operated events, alone or with a sports club as a partner, allow for a sports commission or CVB to infill key dates on their calendar without risk of losing them through a bid process in the future. This process also limits the dependency on the national event owners, many of whom are fighting for survival and sustainability just as tourism organizations are.

**2 Drive Time** – Continuing a trend that started pre-COVID, many athletes and teams are playing closer to home today than in years past. Tournament organizers need to focus even more of their recruiting and marketing efforts on the regional drive markets within a day's drive of the host destination. This will hold true for all events, from the traditional bid-in tournaments to those locally created/operated.

**3 The I's Have It** – Individual sports have already proven to be the fastest road to recovery in the sports market. Many individual sports have safety measures built in where team sports do not. Golf, tennis, racing sports, pickleball and BMX have made big strides towards recovery. We believe the individual sports will continue to thrive as the pandemic plays out in 2021.



Sylvia Bartyzel via Unsplash



**4 The Great Outdoors** – Outdoor sports have added opportunities in the near term. Archery, golf, tennis, auto racing, cornhole and sports that are traditionally contested outdoors offer natural safety measures that indoor events don't. Add in some of the individual "silent sports" such as canoe/kayak, fishing and running, and destinations have a great opportunity to focus on potential business that is already on the rebound due to the venues (outside) where they transpire.

**5 Creative Finance** – The way our industry has operated from a funding perspective has to be revisited entirely from both sides of the event partnership table. Many of the traditional financial tools that destinations had access to in the past have been compromised (such as bid fee funds). Similarly, the budgets of rights holders that depend on event fees and memberships for a large chunk of their revenues are in peril. Destinations and event owners will have to work within an entirely new paradigm and seek financial win-win partnerships in the future.

**6 Better Safe Than Sorry** – Hosting organizations and their event partners will need to become experts at athlete and fan safety in the years to come. Even as COVID-19 starts to dissipate, the checks and balances that have been put in place to combat the pandemic will likely become industry standards in the future.

**7 Facility Futures** – Today's marketplace has prompted an entirely new discussion around facility development. There is a large national trend in repurposing publicly funded and managed venues, specifically in converting golf courses, pools and tennis courts into higher-volume (and lower operating-cost) uses. There are dozens of examples of golf facilities becoming flat-field complexes, pools revamped into skate parks (or filled in entirely)

and tennis courts being remade into pickleball venues. We also have to be open to using sports parks for non-sports purposes given issues related to the pandemic (see drive-up concerts in sports complex parking lots). Development and future use of our sports venues have to be focused on a new definition of what drives ROI, now more than ever before.

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**8 Remote Control** – Working remotely is not just a trend that industry was forced to adopt due to the pandemic. It is here to stay. If anything is the “new normal,” this is it. Given that the generations entering the workforce today largely prefer flexibility, remote work teams were likely going to take over the business world anyway. COVID-19 just sped up the process.

**9 Business as UNusual** – The marketplace we all lived and worked in as recently as March of 2020 is no longer. The way we do business has been altered forever. We will have to conduct our business in entirely new ways and with fewer resources. However, the high expectations our organizations had prior to the pandemic will likely remain in place going forward, resources or no resources.

**What does all this mean for us as we move into 2021?**

As industry leaders we will have to find ways to give our work teams the tools and the ability to reach our collective goals. For many, the altered landscape that is sports tourism and events will prove to be challenging. Those who can adapt to whatever the “new normal” becomes will provide those whom we serve a foundation to build upon going forward. Those who cannot nimbly move through the minefields that today's marketplace present to us will be bypassed by those who can pivot themselves and their organizations towards the light at the end of the tunnel. This includes a steadfast commitment to making decisions with ROI in mind, using whatever tools and data the industry offers us, and to delivering a very intentional value proposition to our stakeholders.

Here is to putting 2020 in the rear-view mirror and to setting out on a new pathway for our industry – wherever that pathway takes us. **SPG**

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#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Jon Schmieder is the founder of the Huddle Up Group LLC, a sports industry consulting company. The Huddle Up Group has worked with more than 75 sports organizations and destinations on over 150 strategic projects. In 2017 the Huddle Up Group was given the Superior Service Award, the highest honor a consulting firm can earn from the National Association of Sports Commissions. Contact: jon@huddleupgroup.com or 602-369-6955. To receive the weekly “Monday Huddle Up,” visit [www.huddleupgroup.com](http://www.huddleupgroup.com).*



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