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ON THE MOVE

WHY FLAG FOOTBALL IS BECOMING
A MAJOR SPORT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

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EDITOR'S PLAY•BY•PLAY

Words of encouragement

Every year, a few days before Father's Day, my family asks what I want to do. By now, they already know the most likely answer: bowling. I'm not a particularly good bowler, but that isn't really the point. The point is doing something active and fun together.

The first time I suggested it a few years ago, I was met with resistance. "But I'm no good," my then 11-year-old daughter said. "That sounds boring," my then eight-year-old twins declared. Thankfully, even though my wife isn't much of a bowler either, she went along with it and reserved a time at the lanes. The first year, the kids didn't exactly embrace it. The following year, they were more amenable. This past year, they were excited.

We still only bowl once or twice a year, and none of us is likely to join the pro tour anytime soon, but something my kids initially resisted has become a family tradition they look forward to. Sometimes participation starts that simply: with an opportunity, a little encouragement, and a reason to come back.

That's a lesson that applies far beyond our annual trip to the bowling alley. As freelance contributor Keith Loria found while reporting his story on youth bowling in this issue, the United States Bowling Congress is having great success attracting a new generation by meeting young people where they are, embracing technology and finding new ways to engage them and celebrate their accomplishments. In "Fresh address" on page 16, Loria explores how the organization is increasing participation among Gen Z and Gen Alpha. You may even find a few ideas worth adapting for your own organization.

Creating opportunities and giving young people reasons to stay involved is important across the sports landscape. One of the clearest examples is the remarkable growth of flag football among women and girls. As regular contributor Paige Townley reports in "Raising the flag," on page eight, participation has surged at every level. According to USA Football, the number of girls ages six to 12 playing flag football grew 283 percent between 2015 and 2024. At the high school level, the National Federation of State High School Associations reported nearly 69,000 girls playing in 2024-25.

The growth is particularly encouraging because girls leave organized sports at significantly higher rates than boys. Yet the benefits of staying involved can extend far beyond the playing field, with research linking sports participation to leadership, academic achievement, career success and overall well-being.

Not every kid who goes bowling will become a lifelong bowler. Not every girl who plays flag football will become a college athlete. But participation has to start somewhere. Sometimes all it takes is an invitation, encouragement, and an experience good enough to make someone want to keep playing. And if that happens, maybe enthusiasm will take care of the rest. ■



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On The Cover:

U17 U.S. Junior National Team captain and quarterback Makena Cook makes a run during the gold medal championship game against Team Azteca from Mexico at the Junior International Cup in June 2026

Courtesy USA Football/Kelli Tolar

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For the last 15 years, downtown Mobile, Ala. has hosted the Dauphin Street Vault Championship, a USA Track & Field-sanctioned event attracting hundreds of athletes.

THE BENEFITS OF FLEXIBILITY

TEMPORARY COURTS, PORTABLE EQUIPMENT, AND CAREFUL LOGISTICS ALLOW COMMUNITIES AND CONVENTION CENTERS TO ACCOMMODATE A GROWING RANGE OF TOURNAMENTS AND CHAMPIONSHIPS

BY TAMMY LEYTHAM

When it comes to unusual settings for athletic competitions, Dauphin Street in downtown Mobile, Ala., raises the bar. Most days, the popular corridor is filled with shoppers, diners, and people seeking live music in bars and nightclubs. But for the past 15 years, organizers have transformed several blocks into the Dauphin Street Vault Championship, a USA Track &

Field-sanctioned World Athletics Challenger competition that attracts hundreds of athletes.

As facility availability tightens and competition for events grows or they just want to try something out of the ordinary, organizers are rethinking where sports can be played. Streets, parking lots, public parks, and convention centers can become tournament sites when planners address the sport-specific needs of athletes, officials, and spectators.

Courtesy Atlantic City Sports Commission



The Atlantic City Convention Center (ACCC) is one of the East Coast's most versatile indoor event facilities and an ideal venue for sports such as pickleball

Courtesy Hoop It Up



Hoop It Up 3x3 basketball events adapt public spaces by setting up temporary half-courts in urban areas, such as Thrive City in San Francisco.

WHAT IT TAKES

Whether an event is held on a street, in a plaza, or in an exhibit hall, planners should account for the following elements to adapt a space for sports.

Competition footprint: Playing surfaces, safety zones, vertical clearance and warm-up areas.

Event infrastructure: Temporary courts or pits, equipment, scoring and timing, sound and audiovisual support.

Spectator experience: Seating, traffic flow, restrooms, hydration, parking, and accessibility.

Permits and safety: Street closures, local ordinances, security, medical support, and crowd management.

Identity and operations: Signage, branding, vendor space, athlete areas, load-in and teardown schedules.

Transforming urban spaces into sports venues

For the Dauphin Street Vault Championship, held each July, organizers need room for four competition pits, two runways and landing areas, along with warm-up space, parking, and room for more than 2,000 spectators. Once city officials approve street closures, the asphalt is converted into a sanctioned track-and-field venue for more than 250 vaulters from across the country.

The event also requires practical guest services. Portable restrooms are stationed at the northeast corner of Cathedral Square, across from a competition pit, and water jugs are placed throughout the site. Athletes warm up in Cathedral Square or at a competition pit, while several downtown hotels accommodate overnight guests.

Hoop It Up 3x3 basketball events offer another example of adapting public spaces. The events use temporary half-

courts in urban locations, including the northwest parking lot of Oak View Mall in Omaha, Neb., and Plaza Park, a downtown green space in San Jose, Calif.

Founded in 1989 by Terry Murphy, Hoop It Up hosts basketball events for participants of all ages and abilities, often in partnership with NBA teams. The Milwaukee Bucks, for example, have hosted tournaments with more than 100 teams on 12 courts at the Plaza at Deer District and along part of Juneau Avenue.

In addition to space for 10 to 12 half-courts, Hoop It Up events require portable hoops, court line markings, game balls, and scorekeeping stations. Organizers must also obtain street-closure permits, comply with music-related sound ordinances, and arrange on-site security and medical or first-aid staff.

Now owned by NBA star Kevin Garnett, Hoop It Up uses temporary courts to turn concrete spaces into sports arenas. The approach taps into streetball culture, makes the game accessible, and creates a festival-like, family-friendly atmosphere.

Convention centers can be blank canvases

Convention centers offer a different kind of flexibility: the ability to build a purpose-designed competition environment inside a single climate-controlled facility.

The Atlantic City Convention Center (ACCC) is one of the East Coast's most versatile indoor event facilities and an ideal venue for sports such as pickleball, says Daniel Gallagher, executive director of the Atlantic City Sports Commission. For the USA Pickleball Indoor National Championships, the exhibit hall was outfitted with dozens of temporary courts, spectator seating, championship courts, vendor space, athlete lounges, and broadcast areas.

"The flexibility of the facility allows us to create an experience that feels purpose-built for the sport while providing athletes and spectators with a comfortable, climate-controlled environment," Gallagher says.

National championships can bring several thousand athletes, plus coaches, officials, families, and spectators, to a

destination over multiple days. That can generate tens of thousands of hotel room nights and a significant economic impact.

Beyond pickleball, the ACCC has hosted volleyball, basketball, wrestling, cheerleading, dance, gymnastics, fencing, esports, futsal and martial arts, among other indoor championships. Its exhibit halls have 30-foot ceilings for sports that need additional vertical clearance, while carefully designed court layouts help maintain safety zones and spectator flow.

Temporary fencing, pipe-and-drape, branded graphics, and portable seating can define individual competition areas. Sound management is equally important when multiple courts operate at once, Gallagher says, so the operations team works with organizers on public-address systems, acoustics, scheduling and traffic flow.

The ACCC also features 90,000 square feet of Sport Court flooring—enough for 18 basketball courts, 27 volleyball courts or 12 futsal fields, along with related hoops and nets.

“That significantly cuts the cost for our rights holders because they do not have to rent and ship them,” Gallagher says.

One hall, many sports

The Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center offers a similar model. Its 100,000-square-foot exhibit hall, located on the waterfront in downtown Mobile, Ala. has hosted a wide variety of indoor sporting events, says Marlene Rathle, marketing and events director for the Mobile Sports Authority Inc. “Each event has unique logistical requirements that must be carefully considered during the planning process,” Rathle says.

For the 2025 Alabama High School Athletic Association Super Regional Cheer Competition, the facility needed a 54-x-42-foot competition floor, or nine strips, plus a designated warm-up area, 18- to 20-foot ceilings, spectator seating, space for judges and scoring operations, and professional sound support. The 2026 USA Gymnastics Trampoline & Tumbling Region 5 Championships, which drew 650 athletes and 130 coaches, required at least 20 feet of ceiling height, 50,000 to 60,000 square



feet of floor space, seating, audiovisual equipment, an awards area and space for judges and scoring personnel.

Court sports require another set of coordinated services. The 2026 Ballin’ on the Bay Showcase Basketball Tournament brought more than 120 boys’ and girls’ teams to Mobile and needed floor space for 10 portable courts, basketball goals, timing and scorekeeping equipment, spectator seating, security, and crowd management. Similar planning supports the Gulf Coast Showdown Basketball Tournament and the Primetime Gulf Coast National AAU Basketball Tournament.

Meanwhile, the USA Volleyball Gulf Coast Regional Championships attracted more than 200 teams and 1,800 to 2,000 athletes. To meet USA Volleyball requirements, the facility provided space for up to 14 portable courts, coordinated the installation and dismantling, and provided volleyball nets, scorekeeping equipment, and seating at each court. The Port City Volley Jolly Christmas

Volleyball Tournament has similar needs, Rathle says.

A competitive advantage

The lesson for sports planners is to look beyond traditional venues. Convention centers can function as blank canvases, Gallagher says, allowing organizers to build championship-quality competition spaces in one location rather than relying on multiple gymnasiums across a region.

That creativity can help solve facility shortages while centralizing athletes, vendors, spectators and sponsors under one roof. For organizers, Gallagher says, the result can be better logistics, stronger branding opportunities, and a more memorable event. Paired with Atlantic City’s walkable hotels, restaurants, entertainment, and beaches, a tournament can become a destination experience. Wherever you’re holding your event, if you can combine that kind of athlete and family satisfaction with economic impact, that’s a win for everyone involved. ■

RAISING THE FLAG

FEMALE PARTICIPATION IS RESHAPING ONE OF AMERICA'S FASTEST-GROWING SPORTS

BY PAIGE TOWNLEY



Girls' flag football will make its official debut as a medal sport at the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.

Courtesy Tampa Bay Sports Commission

Girls' flag football has quickly evolved from an emerging sport into one of the most promising growth opportunities in the youth sports industry. For sports commissions, facility operators, and event organizers, its rapid rise is creating new opportunities to attract tournaments, generate overnight visitation, and establish long-term partnerships around a sport whose competitive calendar continues to expand.

The momentum is being driven by more than participation alone. As more states sanction girls' flag football at the high school level and new collegiate opportunities emerge, athletes now have a clearly defined pathway that stretches from youth leagues to college competition—and, ultimately, the Olympic Games when flag football debuts at the 2028 Summer Games in Los Angeles. That growing pipeline is fueling demand for more leagues, more showcases, more championships, and more destinations equipped to host them.

"The passion for it has always been there," says Vanita Krouch, the most decorated woman in U.S. National Flag Football Team history. "There just wasn't a pipeline."

Today, that pipeline is firmly in place. According to USA Football, from 2015 to 2024, girls ages six to 12 playing flag grew 283 percent, crossing 144,500 participants. Girls ages six to 17 grew 57 percent over that same span, with more than 267,200 playing in 2024. And at the high school level, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) reported 68,847 girls playing in 2024-25 alone—and participation continues to accelerate. As more athletes enter the sport, organizations are expanding tournament offerings while destinations invest in facilities and partnerships to capitalize on the growing demand for competition.

As participation continues to climb, organizations are building a deeper event calendar while destinations position themselves to capitalize on the sport's long-term growth.

Courtesy USA Football/Kelli Tolar



USA Football has fueled growth by supporting state sanctioning efforts, launching girls' flag grants, and creating programs that connect youth players with U.S. National Team opportunities.

Building the pipeline

The rapid growth of girls' flag football hasn't happened by chance. Behind the rising participation numbers is an expanding network of organizations creating opportunities for female athletes at every stage—from introductory leagues and local tournaments to elite showcases, national championships, and international competition.

As the sport's national governing body, USA Football has helped drive much of that growth by supporting state sanctioning efforts, launching girls' flag grants and creating athlete development programs that connect youth players with U.S. National Team opportunities. The

organization has also helped strengthen the collegiate pathway by supporting the addition of women's flag football to the NCAA's Emerging Sports for Women program and expanding development initiatives such as Talent ID Camps, Select Bowl, and Stars & States, giving athletes multiple avenues to progress from local competition to international play. As participation continues to accelerate, CEO Scott Hallenbeck has described the sport's inclusion in the Olympics as "rocket fuel" for continued growth.

Tournament operators are seeing that momentum firsthand. "We've been in girls' flag for more than 15 years," says Mike Reimel, director of flag football and

growth at Flag Football Life. "Now that there's a college pathway, we're seeing a lot more girls playing. The sport was always there, but now it's on a global stage." What began six years ago with six tournaments has grown into a calendar of nearly 30 events annually. About a dozen are dedicated exclusively to girls, anchored by the organization's We Run the World Tour and its We Run the World Nationals. The event has become the country's largest all-girls flag football tournament, growing from roughly 40 teams in its inaugural year to more than 200 teams this year. Flag Football Life now serves approximately 30,000 athletes through its leagues and tournaments, including about 12,000 girls.

"The younger girls now have female athletes to look up to," Reimel says. "It's turning fast where it won't be just male-dominated."

Multigenerational appeal

That same evolution is evident at the adult level. The United Flag Football League, which hosts tournaments nearly every weekend across the country, has watched girls' and women's participation transform over the past two decades. What began with inviting a handful of Florida high school teams to offseason tournaments has evolved into one of the nation's largest women's competitive circuits, while the organization's annual National Championships over Martin Luther King Jr. weekend in Polk County, Florida, now draws more than 500 teams competing across 27 fields.

"Back in 2008 we would've never thought this would take off," says Norm McLean, owner of the United Flag Football League. "Now look at us."

The organization continues exploring new opportunities, including a future national championship for high school and collegiate teams, while also introducing formats that make the sport more accessible. One example is "Playground," a variation developed by U.S. National Team standout Vanita Krouch that allows male quarterbacks while female athletes develop the quarterback position, helping more girls gain experience at the sport's most influential position.



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Courtesy ULF Sports



The Louise Bethel Invitational in Greensboro, North Carolina, brings together women's and girls' teams for competition while promoting breast cancer awareness.

Courtesy Tampa Bay Buccaneers



The Tampa Bay Buccaneers' She Is Football Weekend combines an invitational tournament with leadership programming and career development opportunities.

Further expansion

Growth has also created space for events that celebrate far more than competition. Now in its 19th year, the Louise Bethel Invitational anchors the Pink October Games weekend in Greensboro, North Carolina, bringing together women's and girls' teams for competition while also raising awareness for breast cancer education and advocacy. "The event started out small with just seven teams, and now we're almost at 100 teams," says Mashonda Paschal Gilmore, executive director of the Lewis Bethel Project. "It's amazing to see women come together, and seeing the growth in the sport makes my heart smile."

New events continue to emerge as participation grows. Unrivaled Flag

Football has expanded its event portfolio with regional tournaments across the country, the Youth Flag Football World Championships and a recent partnership with the AAU Junior Olympic Games, creating additional competitive opportunities for girls at every level. Across its events, girls' participation has climbed from roughly 10 percent of the field five years ago to approximately one-third of all teams today.

"What we're seeing now is organizations putting together multiple travel teams—some entirely girls," says Austin Bradshaw, president of tournament operations for Unrivaled Flag Football. "Five years ago, maybe 10 percent of our teams were girls. Now it's closer to 30 to 35 percent. The growth is definitely there."

Destinations taking notice

As organizations expand competitive opportunities, destinations are working just as aggressively to secure them. What was once viewed as an emerging participation sport has become a year-round driver of tournaments, overnight visitation, and repeat business, prompting sports commissions to make girls' flag football a priority in their event portfolios.

Kissimmee Sports Commission has watched that evolution unfold firsthand through its partnership with Unrivaled Flag Football and the organization's Youth Flag Football World Championships at ESPN Wide World of Sports. Since arriving in 2023, the event has grown from just over 200 teams to nearly 1,000 in 2026, including 318 girls' teams and participants representing 37 states and six countries.

For Kissimmee, with events like these, the sport has become much more than just another event on the calendar. "We're putting flag football right in that top tier for us in terms of number of events, alongside cheer, soccer, wrestling, and lacrosse," says Tyler Weyant, deputy director of the Kissimmee Sports Commission. "It's right there in that upper echelon, which is great to see. And it's great it's not just the boys now—there's a whole other level with girls playing the sport."

The destination currently hosts more than seven flag football events each year and supports major events elsewhere in Florida through strategic partnerships. One example is the Jacksonville Jaguars Girls Preseason Classic, where Kissimmee serves as the presenting sponsor as part of its broader initiative to support women's sports.

Facility inventory has also positioned the destination to capitalize on the sport's growth. With venues including ESPN Wide World of Sports, the 10-field Austin Tindall Sports Complex and the eight-field Omni complex, Kissimmee can accommodate events that require dozens of flag fields by converting traditional soccer pitches into multiple competition surfaces.

"This sport is taking off. For those of us with rectangle fields, primarily soccer fields, this is a good way to fill



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Courtesy Unrivaled Flag

According to USA Football, from 2015 to 2024, girls ages six to 12 playing flag grew 283 percent, crossing 144,500 participants.



those complexes,” Weyant says. “It adds diversity to our portfolio.”

The destination’s warm winter climate has proven equally valuable. While many northern markets sit idle during January and February, Florida becomes a prime destination for national events, allowing organizers to attract teams from across the country during months when outdoor competition is limited elsewhere.

Just as important, says Weyant, is maintaining close relationships with event operators to understand participation trends and future needs.

“I would’ve never imagined an event we started with at 200 teams would grow to over 900,” he says. “You can’t really predict that. You stay in conversations with the organizers, make sure they have a great experience, and want to come back.”

A similar strategy has positioned Tampa Bay as one of the nation’s premier destinations for flag football.

The Tampa Bay Sports Commission annually supports between 70 and 100 youth and amateur sporting events, but few have experienced the growth of flag football. The destination has hosted the USA Flag (now iFlag) World

Championships for five consecutive years, with the 2026 event drawing more than 1,300 teams and approximately 12,000 athletes over Martin Luther King Jr. weekend—a Guinness World Record for the largest flag football tournament ever held.

“Flag football has grown not just in the number of events, but also the size of those events,” says Tony Diaz, director of sales and events for the Tampa Bay Sports Commission.

That growth has been made possible in part by the Tournament Sportsplex of Tampa Bay. Opened in 2019, the 15-field, tournament-only venue can be configured into nearly 50 flag football fields during major events, giving organizers the flexibility to host competitions on a scale few destinations can accommodate.

Pro support

But infrastructure is only part of Tampa Bay’s success. The destination’s efforts have been strengthened by one of the NFL’s most active supporters of girls’ flag football: the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

“Our entire basis for our flag football outreach, especially with girls, is that we aim to develop female leaders,”

says Steve Fidura, vice president of community impact for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. “Ninety-four percent of women in executive-level positions played sports growing up, but girls drop out of sports at twice the rate boys do. It’s important to us that we create opportunities that keep girls involved in sports, help them build their confidence and realize their full potential.”

That philosophy has shaped a series of initiatives designed specifically for girls. The Buccaneers’ annual Girls Flag Football Preseason Classic has grown from approximately 30 teams when it launched to a record 126 teams, and more than 3,000 athletes this year. Free to every high school girls flag football team in Florida, the event gives athletes the opportunity to begin their season at the club’s AdventHealth Training Center.

“We aim to create experiences these girls deserve because they’re amazing athletes,” says Zak Zumbiel, senior community impact manager. “These programs let them play on NFL-caliber fields, and we create the kind of moment football players dream about.”

The organization has continued building on that momentum with programs that celebrate girls throughout the season. For example, its Battlegrounds showcase game transforms a regular-season matchup into a “Friday Night Lights” atmosphere complete with marching bands and packed stands, while the She Is Football Weekend combines an invitational tournament with leadership programming and career development opportunities centered on empowering young women through sports. In addition, the She Is Football Scholarship—created before collegiate flag football opportunities became widespread—supports graduating seniors who play football as they continue their education.

“The path doesn’t end at high school anymore,” Fidura says. “Now there’s college, the Olympics, and even professional opportunities on the horizon. Flag football has developed in a way that females can continue playing throughout their careers. That’s what makes this moment so exciting—we’re finally seeing girls grow up with a real future in the game.” ■

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While technology such as livestreaming and social media can enhance the tournament experience, the focus should always be on fair and fun competition.

FRESH ADDRESS

How youth bowling tournaments are winning over a new generation

BY KEITH LORIA

At a modern youth bowling tournament, the action extends well beyond the approach. Relatives follow matches through livestreams, athletes see their accomplishments celebrated on social media, and families build a weekend around meeting professional bowlers, exploring a new city or attending an opening ceremony.

The competition, however, remains the reason everyone gathers in the first place. That balance is shaping the evolution of youth bowling events as organizers work to attract Gen Z and

Gen Alpha participants. Technology and entertainment can make an event more accessible and memorable, but the strongest tournaments use these elements to support fair competition, athlete development, and a sense of community.

“Live streaming and social media activations have generated the strongest response,” says Chad Murphy, executive director of the United States Bowling Congress (USBC). “We also incorporate a level of athlete experience and entertainment at our largest youth event, Junior Gold, via our trade show and opening ceremony.”

The 2026 Junior Gold Championships, held in July, brought nearly 3,500 young athletes to 10 bowling centers across the Greater Minneapolis area. The event’s scale illustrates the challenge for organizers: Deliver a serious national championship while creating an experience families will remember after the scores are final.

Competition comes first

For youth tournaments, the event experience can enhance the competition, but it cannot replace a fair and credible playing field. USBC’s 2026 Junior Gold Championships moved from three age divisions to four—

U12, U14, U16, and U18—to group athletes more closely by age. USBC also continually evaluates tournament rules and equipment guidelines. The changes reflect the organization’s priority as youth events continue to evolve.

“While items such as event presentation and fan engagement will always be important and are items we keep fresh every year, maintaining competitive balance and fairness in our youth events is paramount,” Murphy says.

That focus gives organizers a foundation on which to build the rest of the tournament experience. Athletes and families may be drawn by a destination, a professional-bowler appearance, or an opening ceremony, but the tournament must remain understandable to families and credible to competitors.

At Junior Gold, USBC uses its largest gathering to offer experiences that reinforce athletes’ ambitions. The event’s trade show allows competitors and parents to interact with professional bowlers and



Plaques, medallions and awards are some of the ways that tournaments recognize athletes’ accomplishments.

Courtesy Storm Youth Bowling

representatives from colleges with bowling programs. The 2026 opening ceremony added a performance by viral dance duo Funkanometry, giving the championship

a celebratory start without taking focus away from the week’s objective. For other organizers, the same balance can take a more intimate form.



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Storm Products took that approach when it launched the Storm Youth Championships (SYC) in 2017. Leanne Hulsenberg, who handles tournaments, events, and charitable giving for Storm, notes the company's involvement with Junior Gold helped inspire the series.

Junior Gold gave Storm access to a large national field, but its size made it difficult for the company to interact with families as closely as it wanted. Hulsenberg's husband, Gary, suggested creating a smaller event at the National Bowling Stadium in Reno, Nev. The first tournament drew more than 200 bowlers and sold out immediately.

A host in Myrtle Beach, S.C., then invited Storm to bring the concept there. The second event was held later that year, and the series continued expanding. Storm scheduled 10 events around the country in 2026 and has held more than 60 since the program began.

Hulsenberg says the philosophy can be summarized through the "three C's."

"You come for the competition, you enjoy the camaraderie, and we also have a charity aspect," she says. "It's about having the right people and knowing what our goal is for the weekend."

The format is designed to give young bowlers and their families more ways to connect around the competition. Storm professionals volunteer their time to attend, allowing young bowlers to learn from athletes who compete on the men's and women's professional tours. A Friday social gives families time together before competition begins, with activities varying by destination. Past groups have attended baseball games, visited parks, and gone to Topgolf.

Those activities may help turn an initial tournament visit into a repeat experience. First-time bowlers account for approximately 30 percent of the field at an average event.

"We give full attention to everyone who comes," Hulsenberg says. "Although we have a lot of regulars, we also have a lot of first-timers, which I think is word of mouth. Kids tell their friends, and then they come bowl."

That personal connection is particularly valuable in youth sports, where a



Today's tournaments use social media to recognize and engage Gen Z and Gen Alpha participants

Photos courtesy USBC

participant's first experience can influence whether they return, bring friends or remain involved as they get older.

Extend the experience digitally

Digital coverage gives organizers another way to connect competition, recognition, and family involvement. For a national event, it can extend the audience well beyond the bowling center. For a local or state tournament, it can provide a practical way to recognize athletes and share information without the expense of a full production.

USBC reaches young bowlers through dedicated youth accounts on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, coordinating tournament reminders and event coverage with the youth section of BOWL.com. BowlTV, the organization's streaming service, carries youth competition, while Bowling TV, a free, ad-supported 24-hour channel, gives the sport another way to reach viewers.

Those platforms expand the audience without changing what happens on the lanes. They also give families and athletes a way to follow competition and share accomplishments during and after an event.

Similarly, Storm streams every SYC event, maintains dedicated youth-bowling social accounts, and spotlights its champions online. The coverage allows grandparents, teammates, and other supporters who cannot travel to watch from home, widening an event's reach beyond the bowling center.

Not every organizer has the staff or resources to produce a full broadcast. The value of digital engagement, however, does not depend on matching the scale of a national event.

Brett Rearick, Pennsylvania State USBC Youth Open Championships tournament director, notes that parents frequently stream portions of state and local tournaments for relatives through their own social accounts. His organization concentrates on sharing photos and recognizing notable performances through its Facebook pages.

"If a bowler has a 300 game or bowls way over their average, we'll get their picture, recognize them, and put them on Facebook," Rearick says.

For smaller organizers, a digital strategy can be built around timely photos, athlete recognition, clear event information, and

To create a fair and credible playing field, USBC's 2026 Junior Gold Championships moved from three age divisions to four—U12, U14, U16, and U18—to group athletes more closely by age.



shareable results. Those tools can make participants feel seen while giving families material they naturally circulate through their own networks.

Give families reasons to travel

Parents frequently determine which tournaments their children enter, making the family experience inseparable from the athlete experience. The decision is not simply about a bracket or a bowling center; it also involves the destination, the schedule and whether the trip feels worthwhile for the whole family.

Murphy says bowlers and their families increasingly seek “things to do” in a host destination along with the camaraderie that develops among participants.

USBC rotates Junior Gold to a different city each year, occasionally returning to popular destinations but not in consecutive years. The organization works with host cities to identify



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Courtesy Storm Youth Bowling



A portion of the entry money for Storm Youth Championships events goes to charitable causes, such as the Make a Wish Foundation Utah

entertainment options and carefully schedules squads to avoid overcrowding, allowing parents and spectators to watch without unnecessary obstacles.

The host bowling center is just as important. Storm seeks partners that understand the purpose of SYC, can provide a high-quality competition environment and have enough lanes to handle demand. Hulsenberg says the average bowling center may have approximately 32 lanes, while some SYC events require closer to 60.

Some centers provide discounted lineage because they recognize the long-term value of investing in youth bowling. Strong partners frequently become repeat hosts. For example, SYC's Coastal Classic in Myrtle Beach will mark its 10th annual edition in October 2026.

For destinations, the opportunity reaches beyond filling hotel rooms. A well-planned social outing can introduce visiting families to local attractions, while destination-themed awards can create an additional connection to the host. Storm has designed trophies that reflect event locations, including a Wisconsin-shaped award featuring a cow, cheesehead, and football.

The goal is to make the destination part of the tournament experience without losing sight of why families traveled in the first place: the competition.

Make the investment tangible

Scholarships give youth bowling tournaments a benefit that can continue long after an event. They can also help families view tournament participation, including travel, as an investment in an athlete's future.

USBC offers scholarship opportunities through Junior Gold, USA Bowling, and the newly renamed USBC Youth Scratch Championships presented by SMART, formerly the Pepsi USBC Youth Championships.

Pennsylvania's Youth Open annually distributes approximately \$40,000 in scholarships across team, doubles, singles, and all-events competition, according to Rearick. Champions also receive trophies and are invited to a recognition luncheon at the Pennsylvania State USBC annual meeting, while the top three finishers in each division receive medallions.

That combination of future-focused awards and immediate recognition

can help young bowlers see that their accomplishments matter.

"We try to recognize the youth quite a bit because they're the future," Rearick says. "We want to keep them involved and have them become adult bowlers for the rest of their lives."

Storm has awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships through SYC. Hulsenberg has seen young bowlers accumulate scholarship funds over years of tournament participation, providing families with another reason to view travel as an investment in an athlete's future.

SYC also connects each entry with a larger purpose. Five dollars from each entry goes to Ballard vs. the Big "C," a bowling-based organization that assists people affected by cancer, and another \$5 supports Make-A-Wish Utah. Hulsenberg describes the latter partnership as "kids helping other kids."

Start with a welcome

At the local level, recruiting the next generation often begins with simple incentives. Rearick has seen bowling centers offer free games or concession vouchers to young participants who bring a friend. On-site awards, social posts, and personal recognition then give those newcomers reasons to return.

The tactics vary with an organizer's resources, but the principles are consistent. Events need to be easy to enter, understandable to families, and credible to competitors. They also need people who recognize that a first-time participant may become a lifelong bowler.

"Creating a competition that is accessible and welcoming, along with the emphasis on competitive fairness and balance, are among the most valuable lessons that can be passed along from the national to the local level," Murphy says.

Technology, entertainment, and destination experiences will continue changing how youth tournaments are presented. Their greatest value, however, comes from strengthening the fundamentals: fair play, meaningful recognition, and relationships that bring athletes and families back to the lanes. ■

AMATEUR ATHLETIC UNION



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WWW.AAUSPORTS.ORG

2026 Guide To Sports-Friendly Convention Centers, Hotels, & Arenas

Convention centers, arenas, and venues throughout the U.S. were asked to update their information in detail with *SportsEvents* prior to publication.

LAKE BUENA VISTA

Amateur Athletic Union



1910 Hotel Plaza Blvd
Phone: (407) 934-7200
Contact: Alex Gagnon,
 AAU Public Relations Coordinator
Email: agagnon@aausports.org
Website: aausports.org
Venues Available For: Baseball, Softball
Comments: The Amateur Athletic Union is one of the largest, non-profit, volunteer sports organizations in the country. As a multi-sport organization, the AAU is dedicated to the promotion and development of amateur sports programs. Founded in 1888 to establish standards and uniformity in sports, the AAU philosophy of "Sports For All, Forever" is shared by more than 800,000 members and 150,000 volunteers
SEE AD ON PAGE 21

PANAMA CITY BEACH

Frank Brown Park



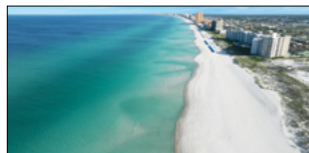
16200 Panama City Beach Parkway
Phone: (850) 233-5045
Contact: Chris O'Brien,
 VP of Sports Marketing
Email: cobrien@visitpanamacitybeach.com
Website: www.visitpanamacitybeach.com/
 things-to-do/parks/frank-brown-park/
Venues Available For: Baseball,
 Basketball, Diving, Fishing, Football,
 Pickleball, Running Walking, Soccer,
 Softball, Swimming, Synchronized
 Swimming, Tennis, Triathlon, Volleyball
Comments: Frank Brown Park has
 been a top sports and training venue
 since 1978. This 200-acre park features
 9 baseball and softball diamonds, 6
 soccer fields, basketball and tennis
 courts, an aquatic center with a
 50-meter pool, nature trails, and a
 fishing pond. Recently renovated with
 brand new LED lights, new backstops,
 laser graded fields, and a 10,000 sq foot
 PCB City Skatepark.
SEE AD ON PAGE 11

Publix Sports Park



50 Chip Seal Parkway
Phone: (850) 481-7529
Contact: Chris O'Brien,
 VP of Sports Marketing
Email: cobrien@visitpanamacitybeach.com
Website: www.playpanamacitybeach.com/
Venues Available For: Baseball,
 Fitness Competitions, Football, Frisbee,
 Hockey, Lacrosse, Quidditch, Rugby,
 Soccer, Softball
Comments: Publix Sports Park, part
 of the Panama City Beach Sports
 Complex, opened in 2019 for players
 from youth to collegiate level. This 200-
 acre facility features 13 diamond fields
 (5 collegiate-size), 12 multipurpose
 AstroTurf fields with Z-cap cooling, 7
 batting cages, 2 championship fields,
 and 3 concession stands. Fields flex
 to host baseball, softball, lacrosse,
 football, and soccer.
SEE AD ON PAGE 11

The Gulf



17001 Panama City Beach Pkwy
Phone: (850) 233-5070
Toll Free: (800) 722-3224
Contact: Chris O'Brien,
 VP of Sports Marketing
Email: cobrien@visitpanamacitybeach.com
Website: www.visitpanamacitybeach.com
Venues Available For: Boat Sports,
 Fishing, Swimming, Triathlon, Volleyball,
 Water Sports
Comments: Panama City Beach's 27
 miles of sugar-white Gulf coastline
 serve as a natural venue for beach
 and water sports. The shoreline hosts
 IRONMAN Florida's swim course,
 plus nearly a dozen public volleyball
 courts near Russell-Fields Pier. Beyond
 competition, the Gulf supports jet
 skiing, parasailing, kayaking, canoeing,
 paddleboarding, and saltwater fishing
 year-round.
SEE AD ON PAGE 11

Georgia

ATHENS

Akins Ford Arena



155 Hickory Street
Phone: (706) 208-0900
Fax: (706) 548-0870
Contact: Katherine Puckett, Director
 of Sales
Email: sales@classiccenter.com
Website: AkinsFordArena.com
Metro Area Rooms: 2,600
Lgst. Area Room Block: 1,300
Meeting Rooms: 35
Exhibit Space: 100,000
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 54,000
Meeting Cap: 8,000
Banq Cap: 2,800
Arena Cap: 8,500
Venues Available For: Adaptive
 Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton,
 Bandy, Basketball, Brain Games,
 Broomball, Cheerleading, Climbing,
 Combat Sports, Cornhole, Cricket,
 Croquet, Curling, Cycling, Dance,
 Darts, Dodgeball, Esports, Field, Figure
 Skating, Fitness Competitions, Football,
 Frisbee, Gymnastics, Handball, Hockey,
 Lacrosse, Motorsports, Pentathlon,
 Pickleball, Poker, Quidditch, Ringette,
 Rodeo, Roller Derby, Rugby, Soccer,
 Speed Skating, Strongman, Table
 Tennis, Tennis, Volleyball, Weightlifting
Comments: Located in Athens,
 Georgia, Akins Ford Arena enhances
 the economic, entertainment, and
 cultural well-being of Athens by
 providing an exceptional venue for
 both local and visiting guests. Part of
 The Classic Center Authority, Akins
 Ford Arena is driven by entertainment
 and is dedicated to providing top-
 tier entertainment and unparalleled
 experience for all.
SEE AD ON PAGE 29

ATLANTA

Al Bishop Softball Complex

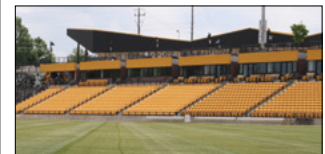


300 Galleria Parkway, Suite 1850
Phone: (678) 303-2622
Contact: Rachel Rogers,

Vice President of Sports Sales &
 Engagement

Email: rrogers@travelcobb.org
Website: www.cobbcounty.org/parks/
 parks-and-nature/
Venues Available For: Softball
Comments: The Al Bishop Softball
 Complex is the hub of league and
 tournament action. The nationally
 recognized facility annually hosts about
 2,500 tournament games and another
 2,000 league games on its five fields. Over
 175 adult teams participate each spring-
 summer league season, while another
 120 teams play during the fall season.
SEE AD ON PAGE 33

Kennesaw State University Sports and Entertainment Park



300 Galleria Parkway, Suite 1850
Phone: (678) 303-2622
Contact: Rachel Rogers,
 Vice President of Sports Sales &
 Engagement
Email: rrogers@travelcobb.org
Website: sportspark.kennesaw.edu/
Venues Available For: Field, Football,
 Lacrosse, Rugby, Soccer, Track, Volleyball
Comments: KSU Sports and
 Entertainment Park boasts Fifth Third
 Bank Stadium. This arena can host
 football, soccer, and lacrosse games
 on its regulation-size field and has all
 the typical amenities you would expect
 from a large, modern sports arena. It
 also has The Perch, which comprises
 three synthetic fields, one natural turf
 field, four sand volleyball courts, and an
 NCAA-regulation track..
SEE AD ON PAGE 33

Wild Horse Creek Park



300 Galleria Parkway, Suite 1850
Phone: (678) 303-2622
Contact: Rachel Rogers,
 Vice President of Sports Sales &
 Engagement
Email: rrogers@travelcobb.org
Website: www.cobbcounty.org/parks/
 parks-and-nature/
Venues Available For: Baseball,
 Cycling, Equestrian, Football, Soccer,
 Softball, Tennis

Comments: Wild Horse Creek Park is a community park in Powder Springs. This 53-acre park has a little of everything with its Rec Center, playground, various sports fields and courts, fishing pond, and BMX track. This park is also home to the Seven Springs Water Park, with two water slides, a lazy river, and a sprayground..
SEE AD ON PAGE 33

PEACHTREE CITY

MOBA Soccer Academy



1000 Moba Dr
Phone: (678) 216-0282
Contact: Sarah Tarnowski, Sales Manager
Email: sarah@visitpeachtreecity.com
Website: www.mobasoccer.com
Metro Area Rooms: 1,000
Lgst. Area Room Block: 1,000
Meeting Rooms: 50
Exhibit Space: 90,000
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 7,800
Meeting Cap: 800
Banq Cap: 800
Venues Available For: Lacrosse, Soccer
Comments: MOBA Soccer Academy is built from a passion for the sport and a drive to offer the best quality soccer development. Our facility is one of the finest in the US and we work with each player to grow to their highest potential.
SEE AD ON PAGE 31

Peachtree City Athletic Complex (PAC)



1125 Hwy 74 S
Phone: (678) 216-0282
Contact: Sarah Tarnowski, Sales Manager
Email: sarah@visitpeachtreecity.com
Website: visitpeachtreecity.com
Metro Area Rooms: 1,000
Lgst. Area Room Block: 1,000
Meeting Rooms: 50
Exhibit Space: 90,000
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 7,800
Meeting Cap: 800
Banq Cap: 800
Venues Available For: Baseball, Soccer
Comments: PAC welcomes teams with nine baseball fields and six fields. All lit, permanent concessions stands and restrooms in several locations as well as ample parking. Conveniently located within minutes of Peachtree City with over 100 restaurants, lodging and shopping.
SEE AD ON PAGE 31

Peachtree City Tennis Center



10 Planterra Way
Phone: (678) 216-0282
Contact: Sarah Tarnowski, Sales Manager
Email: sarah@visitpeachtreecity.com
Website: visitpeachtreecity.com
Metro Area Rooms: 1,000
Lgst. Area Room Block: 1,000
Meeting Rooms: 50
Exhibit Space: 90,000
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 7,800
Meeting Cap: 800
Banq Cap: 800
Venues Available For: Tennis
Comments: Peachtree City Tennis Center boasts 24 courts, including 2 clay and 6 covered. Separate registration facility along with clubhouse, on site repair shop and just minutes from over 100 restaurants, lodging and shopping.
SEE AD ON PAGE 31

Hawaii

HONOLULU

Hawaii Convention Center



1801 Kalakaua Ave.
Phone: (808) 943-3500
Toll Free: (800) 295-6603
Contact: Teri Orton, General Manager
Email: torton@hccasm.com
Website: sports.hawaii.convention.com
Metro Area Rooms: 30,000
Meeting Rooms: 47
Exhibit Space: 204,249
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 204,249
Meeting Cap: 13,000
Banq Cap: 9,000
Venues Available For: Badminton, Basketball, Cheerleading, Combat Sports, Esports, Gymnastics, Pickleball, Volleyball
Comments: The 1.1 million-square-foot Hawaii Convention Center provides a spacious, modern and flexible meeting and sporting event space in the heart of Honolulu – all with an award-winning team and renowned aloha spirit. Conveniently located between East and West, the Center is a global leader for events, just steps from iconic Waikiki. For more, visit HawaiiConvention.com.
SEE AD ON PAGE 19

Indiana

FISHERS

Fishers Event Center



37 East Main Street
Phone: (317) 809-9062
Contact: Gabe Amick, Sr. Sports Development Manager
Email: gamick@hamiltoncountysports.com
Website: hamiltoncountysports.com
Metro Area Rooms: 5,500+
Arena Cap: 7,500
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Basketball, Cheerleading, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Curling, Dance, Dodgeball, Esports, Figure Skating, Fitness Competitions, Gymnastics, Handball, Hockey, Pickleball, Rodeo, Roller Derby, Strongman, Table Tennis, Tennis, Volleyball, Weightlifting
Comments: Fishers Event Center is a 7,500-seat entertainment and sporting event venue. More than 2,000 parking spots are adjacent to the Center, with additional spots available within walking distance at the Fishers District. Fishers Event Center is set to host high school, college, and professional sports teams. Indy Fuel in ice hockey, Indy Ignite in volleyball, and Fishers Freight in indoor football.
SEE AD ON PAGE 43

NOBLESVILLE

Riverview Health Arena



37 East Main Street
Phone: (317) 809-9062
Contact: Gabe Amick, Assistant Director of Sport Operations
Email: gamick@hamiltoncountysports.com
Website: hamiltoncountysports.com
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Basketball, Baton, Cheerleading, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Dance, Darts, Dodgeball, Esports, Fitness Competitions, Gymnastics, Handball, Pickleball, Poker, Roller Derby, Strongman, Table Tennis, Tennis, Volleyball, Weightlifting
Comments: 122,000-square-foot, multi-purpose sports and entertainment venue that officially opened on August 8, 2025, in Noblesville, IN. With 3,400 fixed seats (most of which are retractable) and capacity for up to 4,200 with floor seating, this flexible venue elevates the local sports landscape. Home of the NBA G-League team, Noblesville Boom (Indiana Pacers).
SEE AD ON PAGE 43

WESTFIELD

Droplight Grand Park Sports Campus



37 East Main Street
Phone: (317) 809-9062
Contact: Gabe Amick, Assistant Director of Sport Operations
Email: gamick@hamiltoncountysports.com
Website: hamiltoncountysports.com
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Baseball, Basketball, Billiard Sports, Brain Games, Broomball, Cheerleading, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Cricket, Croquet, Dance, Darts, Dodgeball, Esports, Fitness Competitions, Football, Frisbee, Gymnastics, Handball, Hockey, Lacrosse, Pickleball, Rugby, Soccer, Softball, Strongman, Table Tennis, Target Sports, Volleyball, Weightlifting
Comments: Grand Park is a 400+ acre campus in Westfield, IN featuring 31 outdoor multi-purpose fields, 26 diamonds, a 377,000 sq ft Events Center with 3 indoor full-size synthetic fields, and a full-service restaurant bar.
SEE AD ON PAGE 43

Louisiana

BATON ROUGE

Elite Training Academy



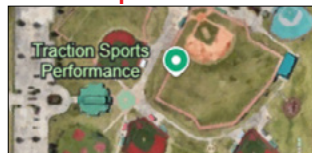
5414 Burbank Dr
Phone: (225) 308-6017
Contact: Triston Monte, Sports Development Manager
Email: triston@visitbatonrouge.com
Website: www.elitetrainingacademybr.com/
Venues Available For: Cornhole, Dodgeball, Fitness Competitions, Football, Frisbee, Lacrosse, Rugby, Soccer, Target Sports
Comments: Expansive Training Spaces: Our 42,000-square-foot indoor training area includes a 60-yard full-width field, perfect for year-round training and conditioning regardless of weather conditions. Additionally, we offer two full-sized, lighted artificial turf outdoor football/soccer fields ideal for team practices, games, and tournaments.
SEE AD ON PAGE 13

Raising Cane's River Center



275 S. River Rd.
Phone: (225) 389-3030
Contact: Triston Monte, Sports Development Manager
Email: triston@visitbatonrouge.com
Website: raisingcanesrivercenter.com/
Metro Area Rooms: 8,000
Lgst. Area Room Block: 250
Meeting Rooms: 17
Exhibit Space: 200,000
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 70,000
Meeting Cap: varies
Banq Cap: varies
Arena Cap: 10,000
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Basketball, Billiard Sports, Bowling, Brain Games, Cheerleading, Climbing, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Dance, Darts, Dodgeball, Esports, Fitness Competitions, Gymnastics, Hockey, Motorsports, Pickleball, Poker, Rodeo, Roller Derby, Strongman, Table Tennis, Volleyball, Weightlifting
Comments: Discover the possibilities at the Raising Cane's River Center Convention Center. With an expansive exhibition hall, a grand ballroom, and versatile meeting rooms, our venue is perfect for your next event. Explore our site for detailed information on amenities, floor plans, and services. Book your event with us and enjoy the dynamic spaces and Southern hospitality Baton Rouge has to offer.
SEE AD ON PAGE 13

Traction Sports



1430 Gardere Ln
Phone: (225) 753-7777
Contact: Triston Monte, Sports Development Manager
Email: triston@visitbatonrouge.com
Website: tractionsports.com/
Metro Area Rooms: 8,000
Lgst. Area Room Block: 250
Meeting Rooms: 1
Venues Available For: Baseball, Cornhole, Football, Softball
Comments: Traction Sports in Baton Rouge is a premier sports facility featuring 11 youth-sized baseball/softball fields with turf infields and lighting. This state-of-the-art complex supports year-round play, ensuring optimal conditions for training and competitions. Traction Sports is dedicated to enhancing athletic performance and providing a top-notch environment for young athletes.
SEE AD ON PAGE 13

New Jersey WILDWOOD

Wildwoods Convention Center



4501 Boardwalk
Phone: (609) 846-2664
Toll Free: (800) 992-9732
Contact: Michele Mendelson, Sales Mgr.
Email: mmendelson@WildwoodsNJ.com
Website: www.WildwoodsCC.com
Metro Area Rooms: 12,000
Lgst. Area Room Block: 3,000
Meeting Rooms: 15
Exhibit Space: 110,440
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 75,000
Meeting Cap: 7,500
Banq Cap: 850
Arena Cap: 7,500
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Baseball, Basketball, Batton, Billiard Sports, Boat Sports, Bowling, Brain Games, Broomball, Cheerleading, Climbing, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Cricket, Croquet, Cycling, Dance, Darts, Disc Golf, Dodgeball, Esports, Field, Fishing, Fitness Competitions, Football, Footgolf, Frisbee, Gymnastics, Hiking, Hockey, Lacrosse, Motorsports, Pentathlon, Pickleball, Poker, Quidditch, Rodeo, Roller Derby, Rugby, Running Walking, Soccer, Softball, Strongman, Swimming, Synchronized Swimming, Table Tennis, Target Sports, Tennis, Track, Triathlon, Volleyball, Water Sports, Weightlifting
Comments: From basketball, volleyball, soccer and gymnastics tournaments to regional dance and cheerleading championships to national wrestling and mixed martial arts competitions, organizers and attendees alike love the Wildwoods Convention Center. The Wildwoods Convention Center offers 260,000-square-feet of modern flexible space located right on the beach and Boardwalk with amazing ocean views.
SEE AD ON PAGE 17

Ohio AKRON

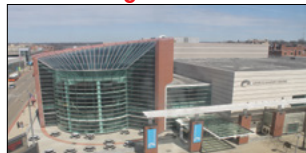
Firestone Stadium



1575 Firestone Pkwy.
Phone: (330) 375-2855
Contact: Melvin Blake, Sports Information & Athletic Coordinator
Email: mblake@akronohio.gov
Website: akron.recdesk.com/
Community/Facility/Details
Venues Available For: Softball
Comments: In 2023, the City of Akron and the Akron Recreation & Parks divisions began a multi-million-dollar renovation to the Stadium. Renovations

include state-of-the-art artificial turf fields, restrooms, new press equipment, upgraded scoreboards, new dugouts and updated locker rooms. It is home to the OHSA Softball Championships, the GMAC Softball Championships and the MAC Softball Championships.
SEE AD ON PAGE 39

John S Knight Center



77 E Mill St
Phone: (330) 374-8900
Toll Free: (800) 245-4254
Contact: Jess Schmidt, Director of Sales
Email: jschmidt@visitakron-summit.org
Website: www.johnsknightcenter.org/
Metro Area Rooms: 4,969
Lgst. Area Room Block: 516
Meeting Rooms: 15
Exhibit Space: 28,640
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 28,640
Meeting Cap: 3,802
Banq Cap: 2,070
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Batton, Cheerleading, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Croquet, Dance, Dodgeball, Esports, Fitness Competitions, Gymnastics, Pickleball, Poker, Roller Derby, Rugby, Strongman, Table Tennis, Volleyball
Comments: The John S. Knight Center offers 28,000 sq. ft. of exhibit hall space, two large ballrooms, a green room for speakers, and 25 separate breakout rooms. The Center also has a 3,000 sq. ft. glass rotunda - perfect for awards and registrations. It is home to many cheer and dance competitions, the Akron Marathon and so much more!
SEE AD ON PAGE 39

The University of Akron Athletics



373 Carroll Street
Phone: (330) 972-8102
Contact: Alan Hoon, Senior Associate Athletics Director for Facilities & Operations
Email: alan1@uakron.edu
Website: gozips.com/facilities
Metro Area Rooms: 4,969
Lgst. Area Room Block: 516
Arena Cap: 1,120
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Baseball, Basketball, Batton, Billiard Sports, Bowling, Brain Games, Cheerleading, Climbing, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Cricket, Croquet, Cycling, Dance, Darts, Disc Golf, Diving, Dodgeball, Esports, Field, Fitness Competitions, Football, Footgolf, Frisbee, Gymnastics, Handball, Hockey, Lacrosse, Pickleball, Poker, Quidditch, Rugby, Running Walking, Soccer, Softball, Strongman, Swimming, Synchronized Swimming, Table Tennis, Target Sports, Tennis, Track, Volleyball, Weightlifting

Comments: The University of Akron boasts multiple venues to host sporting events. These include: Infocision Stadium-Summa Field, James A Rhodes Arena, FirstEnergy Stadium, Stile Athletics Field House, Lee R Jackson Track & Field Complex, Lee R Jackson Practice Field, Skeels Field, Lee R Jackson Softball Field, Robert A Pinn Shooting Range, and Oliver J Ocasek Natatorium.
SEE AD ON PAGE 39

SANDUSKY

Cedar Point Sports Center



2701 Cleveland Rd W
Phone: (419) 609-5644
Contact: Justin Kijowski, General Manager
Email: JKijowski@cpsports.com
Website: www.cpsports.com
Metro Area Rooms: 8,093
Lgst. Area Room Block: 884
Meeting Rooms: 3
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 78,000
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Basketball, Brain Games, Cheerleading, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Darts, Dodgeball, Esports, Gymnastics, Handball, Pickleball, Table Tennis, Volleyball
Comments: Cedar Point Sports Center is a premier indoor sports destination in Sandusky, Ohio. It features 145,000 square feet of versatile, tournament-ready space with multiple hardwood courts. Modern amenities and a convenient Midwest location (minutes from Cedar Point Amusement Park) make it ideal for basketball, volleyball, cheer, dance, and other indoor sports tournaments for all ages.
SEE AD ON PAGE 2

Kalahari Resorts & Conventions - Sandusky, OH



7000 Kalahari Dr
Phone: (419) 433-7200
Toll Free: (877) 525-2427
Contact: Jerry Simon, Director of Sales
Email: jsimon@kalahariresorts.com
Website: www.kalahariresorts.com/ohio/
Metro Area Rooms: 8,093
Lgst. Area Room Block: 884
Meeting Rooms: 41
Exhibit Space: 215,000
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 38,232
Meeting Cap: 5,000
Banq Cap: 7,736
Venues Available For: Arm Wrestling, Billiard Sports, Cheerleading, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Darts, Esports, Fitness Competitions, Gymnastics, Poker, Table Tennis
Comments: Kalahari Resorts & Conventions - Sandusky combines a massive indoor waterpark resort with versatile convention space, creating an

unforgettable setting for sports events. Its flexible meeting space, on-site lodging, dining and entertainment give organizers the opportunity to build unique experiences that go beyond competition and keep athletes and families engaged from arrival to departure.
SEE AD ON PAGE 2

Sports Force Parks at Cedar Point Sports Center



3115 Cleveland Rd W
Toll Free: (844) 737-2757
Contact: Mike Virgin, General Manager
Email: mvirgin@sportsforceparks.com
Website: www.sportsforceparksandusky.com
Metro Area Rooms: 8,093
Lgst. Area Room Block: 884
Venues Available For: Baseball, Football, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball
Comments: Sports Force Parks at Cedar Point Sports Center in Sandusky, Ohio is an outdoor venue designed for competitive play, featuring well-maintained, multi-purpose turf fields, great for baseball, softball, soccer, and more. With modern facilities and easy access from key Midwest regions, its events team will help to create an unforgettable event experience for athletes, staff, coaches, and families.
SEE AD ON PAGE 2

South Carolina

MYRTLE BEACH

John T. Rhodes Myrtle Beach Sports Center



2115 Sports Center Way
Phone: (843) 918-1518
Contact: Danielle Hennessy, Director of Events
Email: dhennessy@sportsfacilities.com
Website: www.myrtlebeachsportscenter.com
Metro Area Rooms: 157,000
Meeting Rooms: 3
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 77,000
Meeting Cap: 100
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Dodgeball, Esports, Fitness Competitions, Gymnastics, Handball, Pickleball, Rugby, Strongman, Table Tennis, Target Sports, Volleyball
Comments: The John T. Rhodes Myrtle Beach Sports Center opened in 2015. The venue has over 100,000 total feet of flexible indoor space with the ability to do 8 basketball/16 volleyball courts. The all-hardwood floor facility, recently went through several upgrades including all new high efficiency LED lighting and a complete floor resurfacing.
SEE AD ON PAGE 52

Myrtle Beach Regional Sports Alliance



1200 N Oak Street
Toll Free: (800) 488-8998
Fax: (843) 448-3010
Contact: Jonathan Paris, Executive Director of Sports Tourism
Email: jonathan.paris@visitmyrtlebeach.com
Website: www.myrtlebeachsports.com
Metro Area Rooms: 130,000
Lgst. Area Room Block: 450
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 100,000
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Baseball, Basketball, Baton, Billiard Sports, Boat Sports, Bowling, Brain Games, Cheerleading, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Cycling, Dance, Darts, Disc Golf, Dodgeball, Esports, Field, Fishing, Fitness Competitions, Football, Footgolf, Frisbee, Gymnastics, Handball, Hiking, Lacrosse, Orienteering, Pentathlon, Pickleball, Poker, Quidditch, Rugby, Soccer, Softball, Strongman, Table Tennis, Target Sports, Tennis, Track, Volleyball, Water Sports, Weightlifting
Comments: The Myrtle Beach Regional Sports Alliance works to promote and support sports tourism along the 60 miles of the Grand Strand. As part of Visit Myrtle Beach, the DMO for the region, MBRSA has the ability to connect event planners with both the sports venues and hospitality industry.
SEE AD ON PAGE 52

Styers Athletic Complex at Grand Park



1011 Crabtree Lane
Phone: (843) 918-2389
Contact: Jen Shaffer, Sports Tourism Manager
Email: jshaffer@cityofmyrtlebeach.com
Website: www.officialmyrtlebeachsports.com
Metro Area Rooms: 157,000
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Baseball, Football, Frisbee, Quidditch, Soccer, Softball
Comments: Styers Athletic Complex @ Grand Park is the main outdoor diamond venue in Myrtle Beach. With a total of 11 fields - 9 lighted fieldturf fields and 2 non-lighted natural surface fields. Of the Field Turf fields, 7 of the diamonds are full sized and 2 are youth. With a moveable fence, the 7 full sized fields can be reconfigured. The outfields of the venue can be set up for rectangular field sports
SEE AD ON PAGE 52

Texas

EL PASO

Destination El Paso



One Civic Center Plaza
Phone: (915) 238-6419
Fax: (915) 534-0687
Contact: Omar Ramirez, Sports Sales Manager
Email: oramirez@destinationelpaso.com
Website: visitelpaso.com
Metro Area Rooms: 10,500
Lgst. Area Room Block: 600
Meeting Rooms: 17
Exhibit Space: 133,100
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 80,000
Meeting Cap: 8,300
Banq Cap: 3,900
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Bandy, Baseball, Basketball, Baton, Billiard Sports, Bowling, Brain Games, Broomball, Cheerleading, Climbing, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Cricket, Croquet, Curling, Cycling, Dance, Darts, Disc Golf, Dodgeball, Esports, Field, Figure Skating, Fitness Competitions, Football, Frisbee, Gymnastics, Handball, Hiking, Hockey, Lacrosse, Pickleball, Racquetball, Rodeo, Rugby, Soccer, Softball, Strongman, Swimming, Table Tennis, Target Sports, Tennis, Track, Volleyball, Weightlifting
Comments: El Paso has more than 300 days of bright, sunny weather. That's more than 300 perfect days to bike, climb, swim, run, throw, kick, and anything else that can be done under the sun. From the award-winning Southwest University Triple-A baseball stadium to a 92-acre sports complex and a \$180 million state-of-the-art multipurpose arena, El Paso's making incredible strides.
SEE AD ON PAGE 15

Eastside Sports Complex



1 Civic Center Plaza
Phone: (915) 534-0600
Contact: Omar Ramirez, Sports Sales Manager
Email: oramirez@destinationelpaso.com
Website: visitelpaso.com/sports-planners/
Metro Area Rooms: 10,500
Lgst. Area Room Block: 600
Meeting Rooms: 15
Exhibit Space: 133,100
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 133,100
Meeting Cap: 4,000
Banq Cap: 2,000
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Badminton, Bandy, Baseball, Basketball, Cheerleading, Climbing, Cornhole, Cricket, Croquet, Cycling, Dance, Disc Golf, Dodgeball, Field, Fitness Competitions, Football, Frisbee, Handball, Lacrosse, Pickleball, Roller

Derby, Rugby, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, Volleyball, Weightlifting
Comments: Choose El Paso as your home base for all things sports. Discover the Sun City's vast collection of sports facilities, fields, natatoriums, diamond mounds, tracks, and more. With 300+ days of sunshine, El Paso guarantees athlete and spectator comfortability indoors and outdoors, year-round, and sports planners will discover the city's charm and adaptability in more ways than one.
SEE AD ON PAGE 15

El Paso County Sportspark



1 Civic Center Plaza
Phone: (915) 238-6419
Contact: Omar Ramirez, Sports Sales Manager
Email: oramirez@destinationelpaso.com
Website: visitelpaso.com/sports-planners/
Metro Area Rooms: 10,500
Lgst. Area Room Block: 600
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Badminton, Baseball, Basketball, Cheerleading, Climbing, Cornhole, Cricket, Croquet, Cycling, Disc Golf, Dodgeball, Equestrian, Fitness Competitions, Football, Frisbee, Handball, Lacrosse, Pickleball, Rugby, Running Walking, Softball, Target Sports, Tennis, Volleyball
Comments: Choose El Paso as your home base for all things sports. Discover the Sun City's vast collection of sports facilities, fields, natatoriums, diamond mounds, tracks, and more. With 300+ days of sunshine, El Paso guarantees athlete and spectator comfortability indoors and outdoors, year-round, and sports planners will discover the city's charm and adaptability in more ways than one.
SEE AD ON PAGE 15

ROUND ROCK

Old Settlers Park



3300 E Palm Valley Blvd, Round Rock
Phone: (512) 218-7094
Contact: Evan Sanders, Assistant Director
Email: esanders@roundrocktexas.gov
Website: goroundrock.com/old-settlers-park
Metro Area Rooms: 5,000+
Lgst. Area Room Block: 995
Meeting Rooms: 6
Exhibit Space: 100,000
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 40,000
Meeting Cap: 5,000
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Badminton, Baseball, Brain Games, Cheerleading, Cornhole, Cricket, Croquet, Cycling, Dance, Disc

Golf, Dodgeball, Fitness Competitions, Football, Frisbee, Handball, Hiking, Quidditch, Rugby, Running Walking, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, Volleyball
Comments: The crown jewel of Round Rock's outdoor facilities is Old Settlers Park. Located on 670 acres, it features an 18-hole disc golf course, 2 football fields, 12 tennis courts, 9 pickleball courts, sand volleyball courts, cross country courses, and a 3-acre area for events. Champion Fields sits within the park and includes 20 baseball fields, five softball fields, 18 batting cages, & shaded areas.
SEE AD ON PAGE 27

Round Rock Multipurpose Complex



2001 North Kenney Fort Blvd
Phone: (512) 218-7094
Contact: Evan Sanders, Assistant Director
Email: esanders@roundrocktexas.gov
Website: roundrockmpc.com
Metro Area Rooms: 5,000+
Lgst. Area Room Block: 975
Meeting Rooms: 6
Exhibit Space: 100,000
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 40,000
Meeting Cap: 5,000
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Brain Games, Cheerleading, Cornhole, Cricket, Croquet, Dance, Dodgeball, Fitness Competitions, Football, Frisbee, Gymnastics, Handball, Lacrosse, Quidditch, Rugby, Soccer, Volleyball
Comments: The Round Rock

Multipurpose Complex is a spacious facility that sits on 68 acres and consists of 10 "Multipurpose" fields with 5 Synthetic Turf fields and 5 Natural grass playing surfaces, with expansion and upgraded amenities underway to meet growing demand. The complex features ample parking, Musco sports lighting, restroom/concessions building, spectator amenities, and playgrounds.
SEE AD ON PAGE 27

Round Rock Sports Center



2400 Chisholm Trail
Phone: (512) 218-7094
Contact: Evan Sanders, Assistant Director
Email: esanders@roundrocktexas.gov
Website: rrsportscenter.com
Metro Area Rooms: 5,000+
Lgst. Area Room Block: 975
Meeting Rooms: 6
Exhibit Space: 100,000
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 40,000
Meeting Cap: 5,000
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Basketball, Baton, Brain Games, Cheerleading, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Dance, Dodgeball, Fitness Competitions, Gymnastics, Handball, Hiking, Poker, Table Tennis, Volleyball
Comments: This premiere facility has just been upgraded to 118,750 square-feet of space with enhanced championship court seating and upgraded amenities. Several court configurations are available, including 8 high school-sized basketball courts,

16 high school-sized volleyball courts, and 4 NCAA-sized basketball courts. This space is customizable and can be utilized for a variety of events.
SEE AD ON PAGE 27

Virginia WILLIAMSBURG

Greater Williamsburg Sports and Events Center



421 N. Boundary Street
Phone: (757) 253-2313
Contact: Morgan Cordle, Director of Sports Sales
Email: Morgan.Cordle@VisitWilliamsburg.com
Website: gwsportsandeventscenr.com/
Metro Area Rooms: 7,000
Lgst. Area Room Block: 1,250
Meeting Rooms: 80,000
Exhibit Space: 120,000
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 200,000
Banq Cap: 500
Arena Cap: 8,000
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Bandy, Basketball, Baton, Billiard Sports, Brain Games, Cheerleading, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Cricket, Croquet, Dance, Darts, Dodgeball, Fitness Competitions, Football, Frisbee, Gymnastics, Handball, Hockey, Lacrosse, Pentathlon, Pickleball, Poker, Quidditch, Soccer, Strongman, Table Tennis, Target Sports, Volleyball
SEE AD ON PAGE 51

Sports Williamsburg



421 N. Boundary Street
Phone: (757) 253-2313
Contact: Morgan Cordle, Director of Sports Sales
Email: Morgan.Cordle@VisitWilliamsburg.com
Website: gwsportsandeventscenr.com/
Metro Area Rooms: 7,000
Lgst. Area Room Block: 1,250
Meeting Rooms: 80,000
Exhibit Space: 120,000
Contiguous Exhibit Space: 200,000
Banq Cap: 500
Arena Cap: 8,000
Venues Available For: Adaptive Sports, Arm Wrestling, Badminton, Bandy, Basketball, Baton, Billiard Sports, Brain Games, Cheerleading, Climbing, Combat Sports, Cornhole, Cricket, Croquet, Dance, Darts, Dodgeball, Fitness Competitions, Football, Frisbee, Gymnastics, Handball, Hockey, Lacrosse, Pentathlon, Pickleball, Poker, Quidditch, Soccer, Strongman, Table Tennis, Target Sports, Volleyball
SEE AD ON PAGE 51

SERVICE PROVIDERS

All Goals inc.
 Dresser, Wisconsin
Phone: (715) 755-2720
Website: www.allgoals.net
Email: webuy@allgoals.net



Amateur Athletic Union
 Lake Buena Vista, Florida
Phone: (407) 934-7200
Website: aausports.org
Email: agagnon@ausports.org
Profile: The Amateur Athletic Union is one of the largest, non-profit, volunteer sports organizations in the country. As a multi-sport organization, the AAU is dedicated to the promotion and development of amateur sports programs. Founded in 1888 to establish standards and uniformity in sports, the AAU philosophy of "Sports For All, Forever" is shared by more than 800,000 members and 150,000 volunteers
SEE AD ON PAGE 21

Bison Inc
 Lincoln, Nebraska
Phone: (402) 474-3353
Website: www.bisoninc.com
Email: chris@bisoninc.com

Book Your Block LLC
 Morristown, New Jersey
Phone: (973) 814-4317
Website: www.bookyourblock.com
Email: mshearer@bookyourblock.com

EventConnect
 London, Ontario
Phone: (888) 723-2064
Website: eventconnectsports.com
Email: matt.trinnear@eventconnect.io

FlagHouse
 Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey
Phone: (201) 288-7600
Website: www.flaghouse.com
Email: gcarmel@flaghouse.com

GARED
 Noblesville, Indiana
Phone: (800) 325-2682
Website: www.garedsports.com
Email: marketing@garedsports.com

K & K Insurance
 Fort Wayne, Indiana
Phone: (260) 459-5000
Website: www.kandkinsurance.com
Email: nick.pentsos@kandkinsurance.com

Meetingmax
 Vancouver, British Columbia
Phone: (604) 899-1069
Website: meetingmax.cc/
Email: dclark@meetingmax.cc

pc/nametag
 Verona, Wisconsin
Phone: (800) 369-8622
Website: www.pcnametag.com
Email: ckrantz@pcnametag.com

Southern Bleacher Co. Inc
 Graham, Texas
Phone: (940) 549-0733
Website: www.southernbleacher.com
Email: info@southernbleacher.com

Sportsinsurance.com
 Lake Placid, New York
Phone: (866) 889-4763
Website: www.sportsinsurance.com
Email: ryan@sportsinsurance.com

The Sports Facilities Companies
 Clearwater, Florida
Phone: (727) 474-3845
Website: sportsfacilities.com/
Email: info@sportsfacilities.com

Traveling Teams
 Novi, Michigan
Phone: (248) 916-2778
Website: www.travelingteams.com
Email: john@travelingteams.com

US Youth Soccer
 Frisco, Texas
Phone: (972) 334-9300
Website: www.usyouthsoccer.org
Email: cwebb@usyouthsoccer.org

USA Volleyball
 Colorado Springs, Colorado
Phone: (719) 228-6800
Website: usavolleyball.org



Round Rock is the Place to Play

Known as the Sports Capital of Texas, Round Rock is the ideal destination for your next sporting event. Home to world-class, tournament-ready facilities and plenty of attractions beyond the playing field, it's a place where athletes, coaches, and families can all have a great time.

The Go Round Rock team makes planning and hosting your event simple and stress-free. From lacrosse and volleyball to rugby, table tennis, basketball, and more, Round Rock has welcomed tournaments of every size. The newly expanded Round Rock Sports Center is a premier indoor venue with nearly 118,750 square feet of total space, designed to accommodate tournaments of all sizes and configurations. The expanded facility offers seating for more than 2,200 spectators, a total capacity of 6,500 guests, and more than 700 parking spaces.

For outdoor competition, the Round Rock Multipurpose Complex delivers championship-caliber amenities with a mix of natural grass and synthetic turf fields. The complex features four natural grass multipurpose fields, four synthetic turf fields, and two championship fields across 60 acres, providing the flexibility sports planners need.

Round Rock continues to attract premier events from across the country, including the 2025 U.S. Open Netball Championships, 2025 MCLA/WCLO National Championships, 2025 NIRSA National Soccer Championships, and the 2025 USA Goaltimate National Championships.

When the competition ends, the fun continues. Cool off at Kalahari Resorts & Conventions, home to America's largest indoor waterpark, or challenge your team to even more excitement at Tom Foolery's Adventure Park, an 80,000-square-foot indoor attraction packed with rides, games, and family-friendly activities.

TOP SPORTS SPOTS:

• Round Rock Sports Center

Newly expanded to 118,750 square feet with playing space for tournaments and events of all sizes.

• Round Rock Multipurpose Complex

Four natural grass multipurpose fields, four synthetic turf fields, and two championship fields across 60 acres.

• Dell Diamond

Home of the Round Rock Express, the Triple-A affiliate of the Texas Rangers, with seating for approximately 13,000 fans.

• Old Settlers Park

A 670-acre sports destination featuring 20 baseball fields, five softball fields, two football fields, seven soccer fields, 12 tennis courts, 9 pickleball courts, two sand volleyball courts, a cricket field, an 18-hole disc golf course, four multipurpose fields, and more.

"We're proud to be the Sports Capital of Texas for youth, amateur, and recreational sports because we have tournament-class facilities, athlete-friendly lodging and dining, and we're located in the heart of Texas."



GET TO KNOW:

Evan Sanders

**Assistant Director, Sports
Management & Tourism**

512-906-6817

esanders@roundrocktexas.gov
goroundrock.com

SPOTLIGHT ON: GEORGIA

Georgia pairs world-class sports infrastructure with genuine Southern hospitality. Home to iconic competitions, championship-caliber venues, and vibrant communities, the Peach State has a long track record of delivering memorable experiences for athletes, organizers, and spectators alike. "What really sets Georgia apart is the unmatched hospitality and partnership that exists in every corner of our state," says Jay Markwalter, deputy commissioner of tourism for the Georgia Department of Economic Development. "Our destinations work hand in hand with event organizers to deliver successful events, while our welcoming communities, vibrant downtowns, and unique attractions offer visitors plenty to enjoy beyond the competition. We want every athlete, coach, and spectator to leave with a positive and memorable experience – and a reason to come back." ■

Albany hosts the annual Combos Marathon and Half Marathon. ►



Courtesy Visit Albany

GEORGIA

ALBANY

Situated in southwest Georgia, Albany is the region's second-largest city, with a population of approximately 65,000. It is conveniently located within a few hours' drive from major cities such as Atlanta, Tallahassee, and Montgomery.

Hotel rooms: 1,400

Hotel tax rate: 16 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Albany James H. Gray Civic Center is a 10,240-seat multipurpose arena and the largest indoor venue in southwest Georgia with 46,000 square feet of exhibit space
- Paul Eames Sports Complex is a 3,000-seat minor league baseball venue
- Hugh Mills Stadium is an 11,000-seat facility used for football and track and field
- YMCA Sports Park has multiple soccer fields and a pool

Contact: Albany CVB, visitalbanyga.com.

ALPHARETTA

With its award-winning parks and recreational facilities, Alpharetta is the unbeatable choice for successful sporting events and an awesome getaway. Boasting over 200 fields and facilities, more than 250 high-quality shops, 270 restaurants, 750 acres of parkland, and 31 clean, convenient, modern hotels, Alpharetta offers everything athletes, organizers, and spectators need for a seamless tournament experience, both on and off the field.

Hotel rooms: 4,105

Hotel tax rate: 15.75 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- North Park is a 97-acre park with courts and fields for football, softball, tennis, pickleball, soccer, and baseball
- The 110-acre Wills Park offers eight baseball fields, two tee ball fields, six fenced-in tennis/pickleball courts with lighting, disc golf, equestrian arenas, and a swimming pool



MUST SEE:

The Tree That Owns Itself

Few attractions capture Athens' quirky charm quite like the Tree That Owns Itself. According to local legend, a University of Georgia professor deeded the beloved white oak ownership of itself and the land surrounding it—a tradition the community continues to honor today. Though the original tree fell in 1942, the current oak was grown from one of its acorns, preserving one of the city's most distinctive stories. ■

Courtesy Visit Athens GA



FROM PUCK DROP TO TIP-OFF.

ATHENS' HOME FOR BIG-TIME SPORTS.

One Venue. Multiple Ways to Play.



TURF
FIELD



THREE
BASKETBALL
COURTS



FOUR
VOLLEYBALL
COURTS



GYMNASTICS
& CHEER

Akins Ford Arena gives sporting-event planners the flexibility to bring tournaments and large-scale events to life, with space that can transform to fit the game. And with Downtown Athens just a short walk away, teams, families and fans have hotels, restaurants and the city right outside the door.

Ready to bring your next tournament to Athens?

Let's start planning!





The Sanford Stadium in Athens is home to the Georgia Bulldogs football team.

- Racket Social Club has 18 courts for tennis, six for pickleball and four for padel, as well as an aquatics facility
- 1 North Park has 12 outdoor pickleball courts
- Webb Bridge Park has three soccer fields, four baseball fields, four tennis courts, six outdoor pickleball courts, and a multipurpose synthetic turf field

Contact: Alpharetta CVB, awesomealpharetta.com.

ATHENS

Athens combines the excitement of SEC athletics with the charm of a vibrant college town. Home to the University of Georgia Bulldogs, the destination offers access to premier collegiate sports venues, a walkable downtown, acclaimed restaurants, and a thriving arts and music scene.

Hotel rooms: 2,660

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Atkins Ford Arena is an 8,000-seat multipurpose arena
- Stegeman Coliseum is a 10,523-seat multipurpose venue
- Sanford Stadium is a 92,746-seat football stadium
- Foley Field is a 3,633-seat ballpark
- Athens-Clarke County Tennis Center features 12 lighted, outdoor courts
- Holland Youth Sports Complex has four youth baseball fields, two junior/senior baseball fields, and four soccer fields
- Bishop Park includes one baseball field, two softball fields, 11 tennis courts, one basketball court, one pool, and a gymnastics academy

Convention center: The Classic Center features more than 118,604 square feet of flexible meeting and event space, with additional pre-function space available throughout the facility. The campus also includes The Foundry Pavilion and the adjacent Atkins Ford Arena.

Contact: Visit Athens, visitathensga.com.

ATLANTA

Downtown Atlanta's walkable convention and entertainment district is unmatched, offering visitors a variety of hotels, nearly 300 dining options, and downtown's largest green space, Centennial Olympic Park. The park is surrounded by must-see attractions, including the Chick-fil-A College Football Hall of Fame, the Georgia Aquarium, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, and the World of Coca-Cola museum.

Hotel rooms: 13,500 downtown; 115,000 in the metro area

Hotel tax rate: 16.9 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Mercedes-Benz Stadium can seat up to 71,000 and boasts almost two million square feet of space
- Home of the Atlanta Hawks NBA team, State Farm Arena is a 680,000-square-foot multipurpose arena with a capacity of up to 21,000
- Home of the Atlanta Braves, nearby Truist Park is a 41,084-seat venue

Convention center: Georgia World Congress Center is the world's largest LEED-certified convention center, with 3.9 million square feet. There are more than 13,000 hotel rooms within one mile of the venue.

Contact: Discover Atlanta, discoveratlanta.com.

AUGUSTA

From the famous PGA golf tournament that is hosted in Augusta (i.e. The Masters) to the Ironman 70.3 Augusta to the Nike Peach Jam, the Greater Augusta area is a hot spot for sporting events.

Hotel rooms: 7,000

Major facilities:

- The 40,000-square-foot Augusta Aquatics Center has two pools: an Olympic-sized competition pool and an instructional pool with three-foot and 10-foot diving boards
- Diamond Lakes Regional Park includes eight tennis courts, a sand volleyball court, stocked fishing ponds, and nine ball fields

- A new state-of-the-art, 10,500-seat arena is being constructed on the same site as the legendary James Brown Arena, which was demolished in 2024. It's slated to open in the summer of 2027

- Newman Tennis Center features 18 tennis courts

Convention center: The Augusta Convention Center sits in the heart of downtown Augusta and features a 40,000-square-foot exhibit hall.

Contact: Augusta Sports Council, augustasportscouncil.org.

CARTERSVILLE

Cartersville offers the perfect combination of world-class facilities, easy interstate access (just north of Atlanta), and stellar hospitality.

Hotel rooms: 1,800 countywide

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facility:

- LakePoint Sports Complex includes the eight-field Baseball Village, 170,000-square-foot Champions Center, three-field Publix Fields, and Beach Volleyball Pavilion

Convention center: The Clarence Brown Conference Center offers more than 20,000 square feet of flexible space that can accommodate sports like dance or cheer.

Contact: Cartersville Museum City, visitcartersvillega.org.

CLAYTON COUNTY

Clayton County is home to the world's busiest airport and is just 15 miles south of downtown Atlanta.

Hotels: Approximately 34 properties

Major facilities:

- Gerald Matthews Complex in Hampton has nine softball fields, eight soccer fields, eight tennis courts, and two basketball courts
- The Arena at Southlake is a multipurpose venue with a capacity of 9,000

Contact: See Clayton County, seeclaytoncountyga.com.

COBB COUNTY

Conveniently located just ten miles north of Atlanta, this dynamic destination offers more than 100 million square feet of world-class venue space, top-tier amenities, and a winning lineup of entertainment, dining, and accommodations. That's one of the many reasons Major League Baseball's Atlanta Braves and Major League Soccer's Atlanta United call Cobb County home.

Hotel rooms: 14,000

Hotel tax rate: 14 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:



VISIT
Peachtree
CITY

Play Big in Georgia



Where Small Town Meets Big League

Step up to a tournament-ready destination where every detail is designed for athletes and fans alike. The Peachtree City Athletic Complex features nine LED-lit baseball fields, including the uplifting Field of Hope, plus convenient concessions, restrooms, and plenty of parking. Just minutes from hotels, dining, and shopping, this family-friendly complex makes game day seamless, exciting, and unforgettable.



Let's
Play!



VisitPeachtreeCity.com | 678-216-0282



Courtesy Discover DeKalb

The Sugar Bert Boxing Club is located in DeKalb County.

- Truist Park offers 1.1 million square feet of space and seating for 41,000
- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Training Ground includes 50,000 square feet inside, six full-length soccer fields, and two warm-up areas totaling more than 500,000 square feet
- Kennesaw State University's Fifth Third Stadium and Sports and Entertainment Park is an 88-acre multiuse complex
- The Al Bishop Softball Complex hosts youth baseball, adult softball and youth softball
- The 42-acre Acworth Sports Complex contains seven baseball fields, and two football fields

Convention center: Cobb Convention Center Atlanta boasts 144,000 square feet of space and hosts sports such as volleyball, martial arts, cheerleading, gymnastics, basketball, and fencing.

Contact: Cobb Travel & Tourism, travelcobb.org.

COLUMBUS

Columbus is a city rich in history and amenities. It is just 90 minutes south of Atlanta and easily accessible via I-185.

Hotel rooms: 4,942

Hotel tax rate: 17 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Columbus offers a 10,000-seat Civic Center, ice rink, football and baseball stadiums, an 11-field soccer complex, a 57-court tennis center, eight-field softball complex with a 2,500-seat stadium, an aquatic center, and the world's longest urban whitewater course

Convention center: The Columbus Georgia Convention & Trade Center totals over 180,000 square feet of space.

Contact: Visit Columbus GA, visitcolumbusga.com.

DALTON

Dalton is home to several turf facilities, ranging from baseball and softball to soccer and football.

Hotel rooms: 1,900

Hotel tax rate: 14 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Riverbend Park includes four turf diamonds, a two-court gym, and one full-size FIFA turf soccer field
- Heritage Point Regional Park offers 10 softball fields and an 18-hole disc golf course
- Edwards Park has eight turf diamonds, two football fields, and a two-court gym
- Heritage Point Soccer Complex has two full-size FIFA fields

Convention center: Dalton Convention Center houses 40,500 square feet of space with 40-foot ceilings and has hosted sports like cheer, dance, gymnastics, martial arts, volleyball, and basketball.

Contact: Dalton CVB, visitdaltonga.com.

DEKALB COUNTY

DeKalb County offers a unique blend of premier sports venues, diverse communities, and convenient accessibility just 15 minutes from downtown Atlanta and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

Hotel rooms: 6,800

Hotel tax rate: ranges from 15.63 percent to 18.2 percent, plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Silverbacks Park features a 5,000-seat stadium and multiple training fields
- Georgia State University Perimeter College-Clarkston Campus offers multiple athletic facilities
- Wade Walker Park offers fields for baseball, softball, and soccer, along with tennis courts and a gym
- James R. Hallford Stadium seats 15,000 for football, soccer, and track

Contact: Discover DeKalb, discoverdekalb.com.

DOUGLASVILLE

Douglasville is located in the Atlanta metro, right off of I-20. The city is conveniently located near Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

Hotel rooms: 1,811

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Hunter Memorial Park features seven tennis courts, 10 multipurpose ball fields, and an 18-hole disc golf course
- West Pines Golf Club is an 18-hole course
- Jessie Davis Park features a state-of-the-art, full-turf field built for football, soccer, and other outdoor sports, along with a full-size gym that includes two courts ideal for basketball, volleyball, pickleball, and more

Contact: Discover Douglasville, visitdouglasville.com.

GAINESVILLE

The Greater Gainesville area offers a diverse array of sporting event venues and facilities, including the iconic Lake Lanier Olympic Park, which hosted rowing, canoe, and kayak events from the 1996 Olympic Games.

Hotel rooms: 1,200

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Lake Lanier Olympic Park is a premier facility for rowing, canoeing, and kayaking
- Chattahoochee Golf Club is an 18-hole course
- Lanier Point Park includes the Lanier Point Athletic Complex, which has four 300-foot baseball diamonds
- The Boathouse at Lake Lanier is known for hosting regattas

Contact: Greater Gainesville Sports Alliance, exploregainesville.org/ggsa.

GWINNETT COUNTY

Gwinnett County is located just 30 minutes north of downtown Atlanta and is easily accessible from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport as well as I-85. Gwinnett is home to some of the state's premier sports facilities, including the Gas South Arena and the Suwanee Sports Academy.

Hotel rooms: 12,000

Hotel tax rate: 14 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Gas South Arena is a 13,000-seat multipurpose arena
- Suwanee Sports Academy is a 100,000-square-foot multipurpose facility with seven regulation NBA courts and 12 volleyball courts
- Life Time Peachtree Corners has 18 tennis courts and 30 pickleball courts

Convention center: Gas South Convention Center offers a 90,000-square-foot exhibit hall.

Contact: Gwinnett Sports Commission, gwinnettsportscommission.com.

HENRY COUNTY

Henry County offers a number of athletic fields and is located near Atlanta.

Hotel rooms: 2,550

Hotel tax rate: up to 16 percent depending on area plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- North Mount Carmel Park offers 14 grass soccer fields
- J.P. Moseley Park & Recreation Center has four lighted softball fields, a 36-hole disc golf course, four lighted football fields, and six pickleball courts
- Red Hawk Baseball Complex has four baseball fields
- Heritage Park consists of four lighted adult softball fields
- Warren Holder Park features nine lighted baseball/softball fields, two lighted tennis courts, and four football fields

Contact: Visit Henry County, visithenrycountygeorgia.com.

walkable roster of sports venues, all set inside a state park where nearly 70 percent of the land is undeveloped. The island is home to Georgia's largest public golf resort and the only oceanfront convention center on the East Coast south of New Jersey.

Hotel rooms: 1,407

Hotel tax rate: 12 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facility:

- Jekyll Island Tennis Center features 13 clay courts
- Jekyll Island Soccer Complex features three oceanfront fields
- Jekyll Island Golf Club offers 63 holes across four courses

Convention center: The Jekyll Island Convention Center is a 128,000-square-foot venue has 11 meeting rooms and a 45,000-square-foot ballroom.

Contact: Jekyll Island Authority, jekyllisland.com.

LA GRANGE

Less than an hour from Atlanta and within easy reach of Birmingham, Montgomery, Macon, Columbus, and Auburn, La Grange serves as the regional hub for business, healthcare, retail, recreation, and the arts in West Georgia and East Alabama.

Hotel rooms: 1,568

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- George F. Harris Baseball Complex offers multiple, various-sized baseball fields
- Shuford Fields offers six baseball/softball fields
- Callaway Stadium is a 5,000-seat football stadium that can also host soccer and lacrosse
- McCluskey Tennis Center features 16 courts
- Mike Daniel Recreation Center houses a gym, basketball court, ball hockey rink, and an eight-lane pool

Convention center: The Great Wolf Lodge and Convention Center offers a 16,000-square-foot conference center with space for hosting cheerleading and gymnastics.

Contact: Troup County Parks and Recreation, troupprec.org.

MACON

Macon is home to the world's largest indoor pickleball facility and offers a variety of state-of-the-art venues for hosting a wide range of sports events.

Hotel rooms: 5,500

JEKYLL ISLAND

A barrier island retreat between Savannah and Jacksonville, Jekyll Island pairs ten miles of uncrowded Atlantic beach and 24 miles of biking paths with a

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Courtesy Visit Savannah



Savannah State University's Ted Wright Stadium hosts track and field.

Hotel tax rate: 16 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Rhythm and Rally Sports and Events Center boasts 150,000 square feet of space and offers a two-story indoor pickleball center with 32 courts
- John Drew Tennis Center includes 24 courts
- Tattnell Pickleball Center features 26 courts
- Macon Coliseum is a 9,000-seat multipurpose venue
- Carolyn Crayton Park accommodates rugby, skateboarding, softball, baseball, and more
- Georgia Premier Cross Country Course offers running loops of two, three, and five kilometers

Contact: Visit Macon, visitmacon.org.

PEACHTREE CITY

Peachtree City combines top-tier sports venues with exceptional safety and family appeal, just 20 minutes south of one of the world's most connected airports.

Hotel rooms: 887

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- MOBA Soccer Academy has two FIFA-sized artificial turf fields, suitable for a variety of sporting events, including soccer, lacrosse, and cross-training
- Peachtree City Athletic Complex features six soccer fields, nine baseball fields, including a Field of Hope
- Peachtree City Tennis Center boasts 24 courts
- Peachtree City BMX Track regularly hosts local, state, and regional races

Contact: Visit Peachtree City, visitpeachtreecity.com.

ROME

Nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Rome has miles of hiking and biking trails and waterways to explore.

Hotel rooms: 700

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Rome Tennis Center has 51 outdoor courts and six

indoor courts spread across 30 acres, making it the nation's largest contiguous hard-court facility

- Historic Barron Stadium is a 5,500-seat facility that hosts football, soccer, lacrosse, and track and field events
- Downtown Racquet Center is home to 22 pickleball courts and six tennis courts
- Home of the Rome Emperors Minor League Baseball team, AdventHealth Stadium is a 5,000-seat ballpark

Convention center: Forum River Center is a 4,000-seat multipurpose arena and convention center in downtown Rome.

Contact: Rome Sports, romegeorgia.org/sports.

ROSWELL

Roswell is located just 20 miles north of Atlanta. It is known for its award-winning parks and nine-mile stretch of the Chattahoochee River, which offers an abundance of trails, water access, a riverwalk, and playgrounds.

Hotel rooms: 1,367

Major facilities:

- Riverside Park serves as the start and finish site for runs
- A5 Volleyball is a volleyball club and training center that hosts 10+ tournaments a year.

Contact: Visit Roswell, visitroswellga.com.

SAVANNAH

Savannah offers a distinctive sports experience that blends competitive athletics with the charm, history, and hospitality of one of the South's most iconic cities.

Hotel rooms: 20,500

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent plus \$5 per room per night plus \$1 per room per night in the historic district

Major facilities:

- Enmarket Arena is a 9,500-seat multipurpose venue with 20,000 square feet of event space
- Jennifer Ross Soccer Complex consists of 11 fields
- Memorial Stadium is a 5,000-seat football stadium

- Chatham County Aquatic Center has a 50-meter pool
- Convention center:** Savannah Convention Center includes a 200,000-square-foot exhibition hall and hosts sports such as gymnastics, wrestling, cheerleading, and volleyball.

Contact: Visit Savannah, visitsavannah.com.

STATESBORO

Located in South Georgia, Statesboro offers first-class outdoor recreation facilities, vibrant live music venues, top-tier educational institutions, and a variety of shopping plazas.

Hotel rooms: 1,358

Major facilities:

- Georgia Southern University's Recreation Activity Center has eight indoor basketball courts, outdoor lighted playing fields, six softball fields, and a 10-lane competition pool with a diving well
- Mill Creek Regional Park features 15 baseball/softball fields (12 lighted), seven soccer/football fields (four lighted), and 10 lighted tennis courts

Contact: Statesboro CVB, visitstatesboro.org.

VALDOSTA

Valdosta is a premier destination for sports tourism, offering a wide range of state-of-the-art venues designed to host tournaments of every size. From baseball, softball and soccer to tennis, disc golf and other recreational sports, the city features high-quality indoor and outdoor facilities to meet the needs of athletes and event organizers.

Hotel rooms: 4,000

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent plus \$5 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Freedom Park is a multipurpose facility with 12 baseball and softball fields, collegiate-level cross-country course, and 27-hole disc golf course
- Miracle Field Complex spans 14.4 acres and features a Miracle Field, and four 250-foot baseball/softball fields
- South Lowndes Recreation Complex serves as home to fields for soccer, baseball, and softball
- Vallotton Youth Complex features seven baseball fields, one full-size soccer field, and two additional soccer fields with lights
- North Lowndes Sports Complex has eight fields for soccer, lacrosse, football, and ultimate Frisbee, and a skate park
- Harry B. Anderson Tennis Center offers 18 tennis courts and 12 pickleball courts

Convention center: Rainwater Conference Centers offers flexible space for sports such as karate, volleyball, dance, cheer, and wrestling.

Contact: Visit Valdosta, visitvaldosta.org. ■

SPOTLIGHT ON: OHIO

Ohio has earned its place as a go-to destination for sporting events. Its convenient location, extensive collection of championship-ready venues, and experienced host communities create the ideal environment for events of every size. From major metropolitan markets to thriving regional hubs, the Buckeye State delivers everything needed—from the hospitality and attractions to the operational expertise—that help tournaments and championships succeed on and off the field. "Sports are part of Ohio's identity," says Lydia Mihlaik, director of Ohio Department of Development. "From youth leagues that build teamwork and confidence to professional franchises and nationally recognized championships that generate significant economic impact, sports strengthen our communities and bring people together. Ohio's rich sporting heritage, outstanding venues, and welcoming communities make our state an exceptional destination for athletes, fans, and events from around the world." ■

Akron's Firestone Stadium has two fields and seats 4,756 fans. ►



Courtesy Visit Akron/Summit



MUST SEE:

Marysville Hot Air Balloon Festival

If your visit to Ohio coincides with the Marysville Hot Air Balloon Festival, it's an experience worth building into your itinerary. One of the region's signature annual events, the festival fills the skies with colorful balloon launches while offering live entertainment, local food vendors, and activities for all ages. ■

OHIO

AKRON

Akron and Summit County offer the best of both worlds: first-class sports facilities paired with memorable experiences for athletes, families and fans. Located in Northeast Ohio, it's within a day's drive of major Midwest markets including Cleveland, Columbus, Pittsburgh and Detroit, making travel easy and affordable.

Hotel rooms: 4,800 countywide

Hotel tax rate: 15.25 percent

Major facilities:

- Firestone Stadium has two fields and seats 4,756 after a recent multi-million-dollar renovation
- InfoCision Stadium at the University of Akron is a 30,000-seat facility
- Copley Road Soccer Complex offers nine fields

- 7 17 Credit Union Park (Formerly Canal Stadium) is a 7,500-seat baseball stadium
- Rubber City Sports at Goodyear Gym is a part of Goodyear Hall, a 292,000-square-foot project that includes a gym and is ideal for sports like volleyball, gymnastics, cheer and dance, futsal, and martial arts

Convention center: John S. Knight Center hosts a variety of sports, including cheerleading, roller derby, martial arts, karate, and more.

Contact: Akron/Summit CVB, visitakron-summit.org.

BOWLING GREEN

Bowling Green is in northern Ohio. The city is home to multiple easy-to-access sports venues.



The 2026 Monster Energy AMA Supercross Championship took place at Huntington Bank Field in Cleveland.

Hotel rooms: 425

Major facilities:

- Carter Park features nine baseball diamonds
- Perry Field House has four basketball/volleyball/tennis courts and a 200-meter eight-lane track
- Student Recreation Center houses two indoor pools and four basketball/sports courts
- Slater Family Ice Arena includes two rinks
- Stroh Center is a 4,000-seat multipurpose venue
- Doyt Perry Stadium is a 24,000-seat venue for football or soccer

Contact: Bowling Green CVB, visitbgohio.org.

BUTLER COUNTY

Butler County is home to Spooky Nook Champion Mill, the largest indoor sports complex in North America. The area is conveniently located between Cincinnati and Dayton.

Hotel rooms: 4,000

Hotel tax rate: ranges from 12.5 percent to 15.5 percent

Major facilities:

- Voice of America Athletic Complex boasts 25 grass multipurpose fields
- Spooky Nook Champion Mill includes 28 basketball courts, 46 volleyball courts, one outdoor turf multipurpose field, a 65,000-square-foot fitness center, and a 200-meter track

Contact: Travel Butler County, travelbutlercounty.com.

CANTON

Located 60 miles south of Cleveland, Canton boasts a variety of top-notch sports facilities, including Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium and C.T. Branin Natatorium.

Hotel rooms: 2,166

Major facilities:

- Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium includes a turf field for football and soccer
- Hall of Fame Village Center for Performance opened in 2022 and provides 100,000 square feet of multiuse space
- C.T. Branin Natatorium is a premier swimming facility

Contact: Visit Canton, visitcanton.com.

CINCINNATI

Cincinnati is a passionate sports town that supports sporting events of all shapes and sizes.

Hotel rooms: 27,000 regionwide

Hotel tax rate: 13.5 percent

Major facilities:

- Blue Ash Sports Center is a 37-acre facility with 11 baseball fields and two soccer fields
- Courts4Sports is a 53,000-square-foot facility with six basketball/volleyball courts
- Joyce Park boasts 36 soccer fields
- Miami Whitewater Forest Soccer Complex includes 16 fields for soccer, football, lacrosse, ultimate frisbee, and more

- Warren County Sports Park features 12 full-size natural grass multipurpose fields, two lighted synthetic championship fields, and six baseball/softball fields

- Voice of America Park has 23 natural grass multipurpose fields and two synthetic championship fields

Contact: Visit Cincinnati, cincyusa.com.

CLERMONT COUNTY

Clermont County offers a wide variety of sports facilities for youth and amateur sports in a unique destination.

Hotel rooms: 1,250

Major facilities:

- Elite Athletics Sports Complex houses six basketball/volleyball courts
- Nothin' But Net Sports Complex includes five basketball/volleyball courts
- Tealtown Ballpark has 17 baseball/softball fields
- Olympic Fields boasts 13 multipurpose grass fields
- East Fork State Park houses a 2,000-meter rowing course
- Flash Baseball Complex offers 10 baseball fields

Contact: Clermont County CVB, discoverclermont.com.

CLEVELAND

Greater Cleveland stands out as a premier sports destination due to its rare blend of dense, world-class athletic infrastructure packed tightly into a highly walkable downtown footprint.

Hotel rooms: 24,000

Hotel tax rate: 17.5 percent

Major facilities:

- Progressive Field is a 34,800-seat ballpark
- Rocket Arena is a 19,000-seat multipurpose arena
- Huntington Bank Field is a 67,000-seat stadium

Convention center: The Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland boasts 410,000 square feet of event space.

Contact: Cleveland Sports, clevelandsports.org.

COLUMBUS

Located within a one-hour flight or a day's drive of half the U.S. population, Columbus is easy to reach. The city's walkable footprint, world-class venues and seamless collaboration across public and private sectors make it an ideal destination for major events.

Hotel rooms: 32,652

Hotel tax rate: 18 percent

Major facilities:

- Nationwide Arena is a 684,000-square-foot multipurpose arena
- ScottsMiracle-Gro Field is a soccer-specific stadium with a capacity of 20,000

- Schottenstein Center is a 770,000-square-foot multipurpose venue
- Lou Berliner Sports Park boasts 31 baseball and softball diamonds

Convention center: The Greater Columbus Convention Center, which spans 1.8 million square feet, is located in the heart of downtown Columbus.

Contact: Experience Columbus, ExperienceColumbus.com.

DAYTON

Located at the “Crossroads of America,” the intersection of I-75 and I-70, 60 percent of the U.S. population is within a one-day drive of Dayton, making it highly accessible for tournament and event participants and attendees. Dayton has an excellent track record of hosting successful sporting events, from the NCAA First Four Tournament to the U.S. Air Force Marathon.

Hotel rooms: 7,000

Hotel tax rate: ranges from 13.5 percent to 16.5 percent depending on location

Major facilities:

- University of Dayton Arena is a 13,407-seat multipurpose arena
- James S. Trent Arena is a 4,400-seat multipurpose venue
- Action Sports Center features eight baseball diamonds, five soccer fields, one football field, and one indoor soccer field
- Day Air Ballpark is a 7,230-seat ballpark
- Kettering Fields has seven softball diamonds, four baseball diamonds, and four fast-pitch diamonds

Convention center: Dayton Convention Center sits in downtown Dayton and offers 150,000 square feet of space.

Contact: Destination Dayton, destinationdayton.org.

DUBLIN

Dublin is located 15 minutes from Downtown Columbus with easy access to John Glenn International Airport and major highways. The City provides a safe suburban setting with free parking, over 125 miles of bike paths and 64 parks.

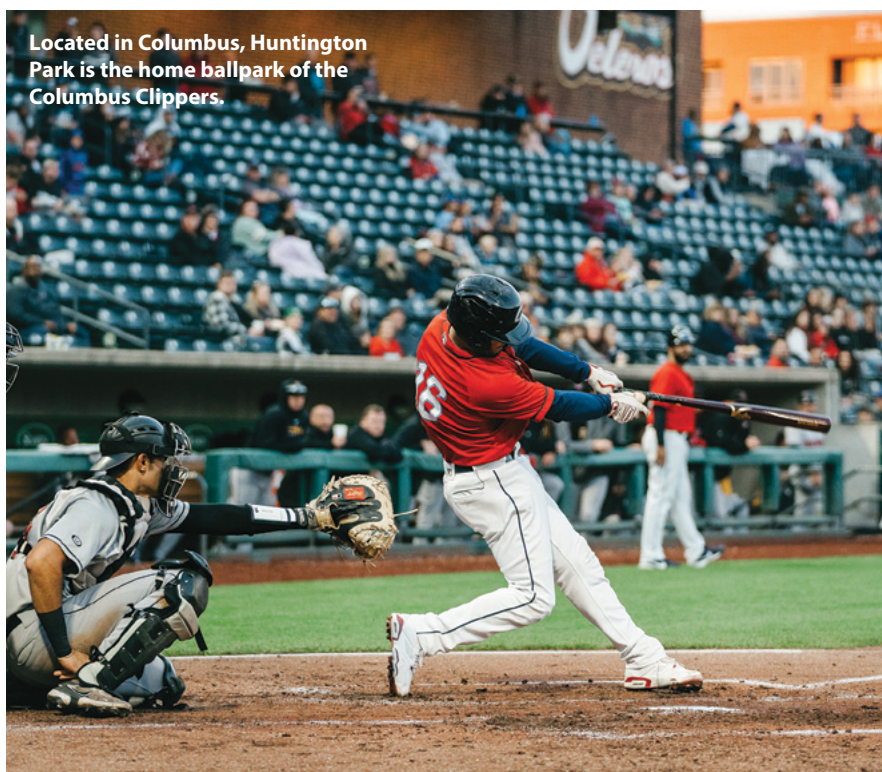
Hotel rooms: 2,400

Hotel tax rate: 17.5 percent

Major facilities:

- Darree Park features 16 soccer fields and seven baseball fields
- Avery Park has 15 soccer fields, five baseball fields, and four softball fields
- Dublin Chiller houses two sheets of ice
- SportsOhio consists of three indoor soccer fields, four indoor lacrosse/field hockey fields, and 15 outdoor soccer fields

Contact: Visit Dublin, visitdublinohio.com.



Located in Columbus, Huntington Park is the home ballpark of the Columbus Clippers.

GAHANNA

Gahanna is 10 minutes from downtown Columbus and within close proximity of the John Glenn Columbus International Airport. The area offers more than 750 acres of parkland, outdoor fields, and multiuse paths.

Hotel rooms: 387

Hotel tax rate: 17.5 percent

Major facilities:

- Headley Park features multiple soccer fields
- Academy Park includes ball diamonds, basketball courts, and multiuse fields
- McCorkle Park has multiuse fields
- Hannah Park houses tennis courts, basketball courts, ball diamond, and multiuse fields
- Gahanna Municipal Golf Course features a nine-hole golf course

Contact: Gahanna CVB, visitgahanna.com.

LIMA

Centrally located along I-75 and many major state routes and highways is Lima. The city has a variety of state-of-the-art facilities and lodging options.

Hotel rooms: 1,451

Hotel tax rate: 14.6 percent

Major facilities:

- Lima Community Aquatic Park features eight 25-meter lanes
- The 135-acre Allen County Fairgrounds houses a BMX course and various buildings
- Lima Spartan Stadium is a 5,000-seat stadium

that can host football, soccer, and track and field

- University of Northwestern Ohio Racers Athletic Facilities accommodate baseball, softball, and tennis

Convention center: With 14,000 square feet of exhibition space, the Veterans Memorial Civic & Convention Center hosts mat sports, cheer and dance, wrestling, boxing, badminton, and more. It's attached to the Wingate by Wyndham.

Contact: Visit Greater Lima, visitgreaterlima.com.

GREENE COUNTY

Greene County is located in southwest Ohio, just east of Dayton. The area's facilities are second to none, from a 100-acre soccer complex to a 12,000-seat arena.

Hotel rooms: 2,000

Major facilities:

- Wright State University's Ervin J. Nutter Center is a 12,000-seat multipurpose arena
- John Ankeney Soccer Complex is a 100-acre soccer facility
- Hobson Freedom Park is a 45-acre soccer complex
- Athletes in Action Sport Complex has all synthetic turf fields

Contact: Greene County CVB, greencountyohio.org.

MARION

Marion is conveniently situated right off State Route 23 and provides easy access to ball fields, accommodations, and attractions.

Hotel rooms: 419

Courtesy Kevin Kopanski



Union County, Ohio, offers a 58-mile covered bridge tour.

Hotel tax rate: 14.25 percent

Major facilities:

- River Valley consists of 14 fields for baseball and softball
- Veterans Memorial Coliseum is a multipurpose venue
- Lincoln Park includes 10 fields

Contact: Marion Area CVB, visitmarionohio.com.

MIAMI COUNTY

Located 20 minutes north of Dayton, Miami County is very accessible via I-75, I-70, and the Dayton International Airport. The county offers friendly, small-town hospitality with larger community amenities and fun, local attractions for youth and adults.

Hotel rooms: 800

Major facilities:

- Hobart Arena is an indoor multi-sport venue that offers 77,000 square feet of space
- Duke Park features seven soccer fields, two baseball fields, three softball fields, and eight miles of mountain bike trails

- Kyle Park houses 10 soccer fields, 10 baseball diamonds, and two softball diamonds

Contact: Miami County CVB, homegrowinggreat.com.

SHORES & ISLANDS

Shores & Islands is a unique sports destination because it combines premier competition venues with unforgettable visitor experiences. Athletes compete at top facilities while families enjoy Cedar Point, Lake Erie, beaches, island adventures, and waterfront recreation between games.

Hotel rooms: 8,000

Hotel tax rate: ranges from 13.57 percent to 14 percent, depending on location

Major facilities:

- Sports Force Parks has 11 baseball fields and eight soccer fields
- The 145,000-square-foot Cedar Point Sports Center includes 10 basketball courts that convert to 20 volleyball courts
- Lake Erie provides natural venues for water-based sports

Convention center: Kalahari Resorts & Conventions offers 210,000 square feet of function space and typically hosts cheer and dance, gymnastics, wrestling, karate, and esports.

Contact: Shores & Islands, shoresandislands.com/sports.

TOLEDO

Toledo combines championship-caliber venues with an affordable, easy-to-navigate city and a community that genuinely rallies around events.

Hotel rooms: 8,300

Hotel tax rate: 17.75 percent

Major facilities:

- TOCA Toledo houses 70,000 square feet for soccer, flag football, softball, and baseball
- Pacesetter Park features 25 soccer fields and eight baseball/softball diamonds
- Huntington Center is an 8,000-seat arena

Convention center: Glass City Center features 75,000 square feet of versatile space for nearly every sport.

Contact: Destination Toledo, visittoledo.org.

UNION COUNTY

Located just northwest of Columbus, Union County offers easy access to a major metropolitan area while providing the convenience, affordability, and hospitality of a smaller community. Teams and families enjoy easy access from major highways, ample free parking, shorter drive times, and less congestion than larger urban markets, allowing more time to focus on the event and less time navigating traffic.

Hotel rooms: 550

Hotel tax rate: 13 percent

Major facilities:

- Union County Joint Recreation District Sports Complex is a 50-acre sports complex with eight baseball/softball diamonds, three regulation-size soccer fields, cricket pitch, and rugby field
- Marysville BMX houses a USA BMX-sanctioned track
- Marysville High School Athletic Campus includes a football stadium, baseball and softball facilities, multiple gyms, and outdoor athletic fields
- Integrity Athletics boasts more than 65,000 square feet of indoor space
- Elysium Tennis Club has indoor and outdoor tennis and pickleball courts
- Pastime Park is a 40-acre facility with baseball/softball diamonds, sand volleyball courts, disc golf course, basketball courts, aquatic center, and event grounds

Contact: Union County CVB, unioncounty.org.

WARREN COUNTY

Warren County is easily drivable, located within a one-day drive for 65 percent of the US population. The area also sits between two International Airports, each of which falls within 30 miles of the county's borders.

Hotel rooms: 4,400

Hotel tax rate: 14 percent

Major facilities:

- Warren County Sports Park at Union Village houses turf and natural grass multipurpose fields
- Lindner Family Tennis Center has 31 outdoor courts and six indoor courts, plus pickleball and padel
- Lebanon Sports Complex boasts 32 multipurpose fields
- ARMCO Park has four synthetic turf diamonds
- Mason Sports Park offers five diamonds
- Courts4Sports includes six indoor basketball and volleyball courts

Convention center: Great Wolf Lodge has 40,000 square feet of space that can host cheer and dance events.

Contact: Warren County CVB,
ohioslargestplayground.com. ■



Warren County Sports Park has turf and natural grass multipurpose fields.

Courtesy Warren County Sports via Kings Hammer



Silver Creek Metro Park
Cross-Country Course,
Summit Metro Parks

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SPOTLIGHT ON: INDIANA

Indiana has built a reputation as a premier sports destinations by combining a rich athletic legacy with a commitment to hosting successful events. From youth tournaments to national championships, the Hoosier State offers first-class venues, experienced event partners, and communities that embrace competition at every level. Its central location, ease of travel and proven ability to execute successful events year after year make Indiana a trusted choice and an unforgettable destination.

"Indiana really is a one-stop shop for planners," says Rachel Frank, director of statewide initiatives and external affairs for Indiana Sports Corp. "We're centrally located, so most of the country can get here within a day's drive, and we've got the airports to match for folks flying in. But what sets us apart is the variety. You can host a national championship in Indianapolis one weekend and a hometown tournament in a small college town the next, and both will feel like the biggest event in town." ■

**The 18-hole Pfau Course
in Bloomington. ▶**



MUST SEE:

Fort Wayne Zoo

A visit to Fort Wayne isn't complete without spending a day at the Fort Wayne Zoo, a spot consistently recognized among the nation's top zoos. Home to hundreds of animals from around the world, the zoo pairs immersive exhibits with engaging rides and hands-on experiences that appeal to visitors of all ages. It's the perfect place for athletes, families, and fans to unwind between competitions or celebrate afterward, all while discovering one of Indiana's premier attractions. ■

Courtesy Brooke Nicole Todd

INDIANA

BLOOMINGTON

Conveniently located just one hour south of Indianapolis, two hours from Louisville and Cincinnati, and four hours from Chicago, Bloomington is easily accessible for teams and spectators. With approximately 70 percent of the U.S. population within a day's drive, it is an ideal location for regional and national sporting events.

Hotel rooms: 2,700

Hotel tax rate: 12 percent

Major facilities:

- Bart Kaufman Field is a baseball and softball complex with a stadium that seats 2,500 spectators
- Bill Armstrong Stadium seats 6,500 people and has a natural grass soccer field surrounded by a quarter-mile track
- Frank Southern Ice Arena is an indoor skating rink
- Harry Gladstein Fieldhouse is an indoor track and field complex on the campus of Indiana University

Convention center: Bloomington Convention Center is undergoing an expansion set to open in late 2026 or early 2027 and will feature a new 27,000-square-foot expo hall with 30-foot ceilings

Contact: Hoosier Sports Corporation, visitbloomington.com/sports/about-sports/

COLUMBUS

Conveniently located within an hour of Indianapolis and within easy driving distance of Cincinnati and Louisville, Columbus is easily accessible via Interstate 65. It also offers excellent facilities and is easy to get around with little to no traffic congestion.

Hotel rooms: 1,351

Major facilities:

- NexusPark is a 120-acre property with an indoor sports facility that features more than 100,000 square feet of turf and courts

- Lincoln Park is a 33-acre facility with six lighted turf baseball/softball fields, four tennis courts, a basketball court, and an ice rink
- Blackwell Park, home to Richard Wigh Soccer Complex, offers more than 30 natural grass soccer fields of varying sizes
- Dunn Stadium includes four lighted softball fields and 12 pickleball courts

Contact: Visit Columbus, visitcolumbusindiana.com.

DUBOIS COUNTY

Dubois County offers top-notch sports facilities and hosts several well-known youth and amateur tournaments throughout the Midwest all year round. The county also hosts several Indiana High School Athletic Association regional tournaments.

Hotel rooms: 747

Hotel tax rate: 12 percent

Major facilities:

- Jasper Youth Complex includes four Little League fields, two Babe Ruth fields, and five other softball fields
- League Stadium is a 3,300-seat baseball facility, and was the home field to the Rockford Peaches in the movie, *A League of Their Own*
- Patoka Lake is an 8,800-acre lake that hosts fishing tournaments
- Huntingburg Event Center is a 24,000 square-foot, non-profit community event center that can host up to 1,200 guests

Contact: Dubois County Visitors Center, visitduboiscounty.com.

EVANSVILLE

Evansville is home to world-class sporting venues that serve a variety of athletes and tournaments. Located on the Ohio River in southwestern Indiana, the culture is a perfect blend of Midwestern hospitality and southern charm.

Hotel rooms: 3,900

Hotel tax rate: eight percent

Major facilities:

- Deaconess Sports Park is an eight-turf field complex with amenities for softball and baseball
- Goebel Sports Park is a 10-field facility for soccer, lacrosse, and more
- Ford Center is an 11,000-seat arena with 290,000 square feet of space
- Deaconess Aquatic Center offers a 50-meter competition pool and diving area
- Bosse Field is a 5,181-seat ballpark

Convention center: Old National Events Plaza features 95,000 square feet of flexible space, including a 36,000-square-foot, column-free exhibit hall.

Contact: Explore Evansville, exploreevansville.com.

Wheelchair basketball at the Turnstone Center in Fort Wayne.



The Grand Wayne Convention Center regularly hosts cheer competitions.



FORT WAYNE

Fort Wayne is the second-largest city in the state, offering a small-town feel along with big-city amenities. Located within 500 miles of half the U.S. population, Fort Wayne is a convenient tournament destination with award-winning facilities.

Hotel rooms: 5,500

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent

Major facilities:

- Allen County War Memorial Coliseum is a flexible space with one million square feet under one roof
- PSM Fieldhouse has eight full-size basketball courts and 10 volleyball courts under one roof
- PSM Icehouse features three NHL-sized ice rinks

- Plassman Athletic Center at Turnstone is one of nine Olympic and Paralympic Training Sites in the U.S and features a 75,000-square-foot fieldhouse with four basketball courts and 230-meter track
- ASH Centre/World Baseball Academy has four baseball fields
- The Plex has two locations: North with 19 outdoor fields and South with over 60,000 square feet of indoor turf

Convention center: The 225,000-square-foot Grand Wayne Convention Center is the second largest convention center in Indiana and is adjoined by three full-service hotels.

Contact: Visit Fort Wayne, visitfortwayne.com.

Hamilton County Sports Authority



World Fitness Project competitors at Hamilton County's Fishers Event Center.

Courtesy Kokomo High School



The Kokomo High School Softball Stadium has seating for 1,000

HAMILTON COUNTY

Hamilton County offers world-class facilities and a community, all conveniently located just north of Indianapolis. It is easily accessible by I-69, US 31, and the Indianapolis International Airport.

Hotel rooms: 5,500

Major facilities:

- Grand Park Sports Campus boasts 34 multipurpose fields, 26 diamonds and a 377,000 square-foot events center with three indoor full-size synthetic fields
- Pacers Athletic Center contains eight indoor basketball/volleyball courts
- The Fieldhouse at Finch Creek has two indoor multipurpose synthetic fields and five indoor hardwood courts
- Fishers Event Center is a 7,500-seat arena with one hockey rink, one hardwood court, one volleyball court, and one indoor 50-yard turf field

Contact: Hamilton County Sports Authority, visithamiltoncounty.com/sports-authority.

HENDRICKS COUNTY

Hendricks County's appeal begins with its optimal location: just 15 minutes west of Indianapolis. The area also boasts two major interstates running through its borders, and it's within minutes of the Indianapolis International Airport.

Hotel rooms: 2,431

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent

Major facilities:

- Al & Jan Barker Sports Complex is a 58-acre site with two football fields, one practice field, 13 soccer fields, four Little League fields, and one synthetic handicap-accessible Miracle Field
- Lucas Oil Indianapolis Raceway Park boasts three racetracks
- Capitol Sports Center is an indoor volleyball venue that can have as many as seven courts going at one time
- Canes Midwest Sports Complex has four fields for baseball and softball and eight turf batting cages

Contact: Visit Hendricks County, visithendrickscounty.com.

INDIANAPOLIS

As the "Crossroads of America," more than half the nation's population is within driving distance of Indianapolis, making the city ideal for hosting events.

Hotel rooms: 9,409 downtown

Hotel tax rate: 17 percent

Major facilities:

- Home of the Indiana Pacers and Indiana Fever, Gainbridge Fieldhouse is a 750,000-square-foot multipurpose venue
- IU Natatorium has a seating capacity of 4,700 and houses three pools
- Lucas Oil Stadium boasts 1.8 million square feet of space and seats 67,000 for a football game and 70,000 for basketball
- Michael A. Carroll Track & Soccer Stadium hosts track and field, soccer, and lacrosse

Convention center: The Indiana Convention Center offers 566,600 square feet of contiguous space and sits in the heart of downtown and is directly connected to Lucas Oil Stadium.

Contact: Visit Indy, visitindy.com.

KOKOMO

Kokomo, is centrally located within Indiana and the Midwest, 50 miles north of Indianapolis with convenient access off U.S. 31. Kokomo has multiple state-of-the-art, championship level sports venues, all located near a large variety of hotels, shops, and restaurants.

Hotel rooms: 1,367

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent

Major facilities:

- Kokomo Municipal Stadium includes a full turf field and a capacity for more than 4,000 spectators
- Kokomo High School Softball Stadium has seating for 1,000
- Championship Park includes eight outdoor baseball/softball diamonds
- Northwest Park sits on 32 acres and includes five lighted softball diamonds and three lighted tennis courts
- Kokomo Memorial Gymnasium sits in downtown Kokomo and has a seating capacity of 5,200

Contact: Greater Kokomo Visitors Bureau, visitkokomo.org.

MICHIGAN CITY LAPORTE

A vibrant lakefront destination filled with youth and water sports opportunities, Michigan City LaPorte is nestled along the southern shores of Lake Michigan. Just a short drive from Chicago, the area is easily accessible via Interstates 80/90 and 94.

Hotel rooms: 2,000



THE CENTER OF SPORTS.



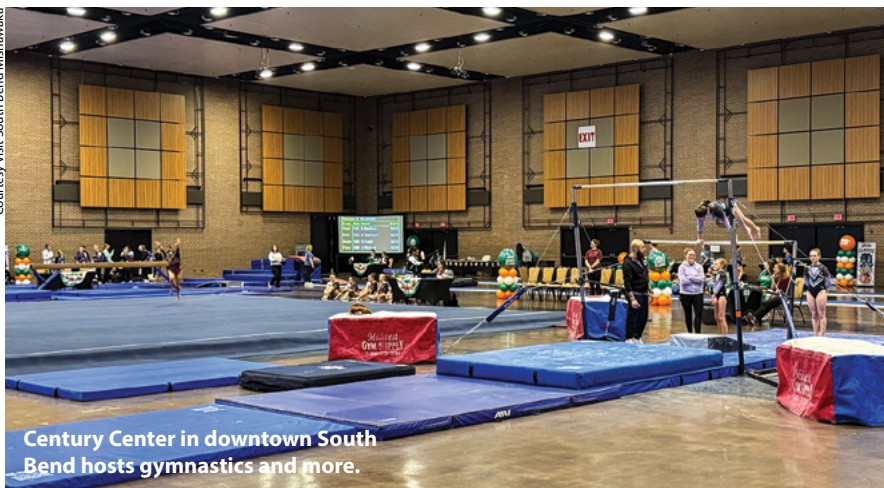
**HAMILTON COUNTY, INDIANA.
A DESTINATION THAT DELIVERS
CHAMPIONSHIP-LEVEL EXPERIENCES.**

Located at the crossroads of America and a day's drive from 50% of the population, Hamilton County offers unmatched accessibility for teams and spectators traveling from across the country. Whether your event is amateur or professional, single-site or multi-venue, our facilities are built to perform at the highest level.



HAMILTONCOUNTYSPORTS.COM

Courtesy Visit South Bend Mishawaka



Century Center in downtown South Bend hosts gymnastics and more.

Courtesy Michael Catarina



South Bend's Junior Irish Soccer Complex has 12 soccer fields.

Major facilities:

- Dunes Volleyball Club Event Center is a 50,000-square-foot facility that features eight volleyball courts and two basketball courts
- Ames Field is a multipurpose venue with a full-size football field
- Washington Park & Beach is a 99-acre park that's home to fishing tournaments, beach volleyball and soccer tournaments
- Patriot Park offers five lighted multiuse baseball/softball diamonds and soccer fields
- Kesling Park is a 90-acre park with baseball/softball diamonds, tennis courts, soccer fields, and more

Contact: Visit Michigan City LaPorte, michigancitylaporte.com. ■

SOUTH BEND

Centrally located in the Midwest, South Bend Mishawaka is easily accessible via major interstates, the South Shore Line commuter rail, and South Bend

International Airport, making travel convenient for teams and spectators from across the country.

Hotel rooms: 5,200

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent

Major facilities:

- Mishawaka Fieldhouse is a 220,000-square-foot facility with 10 basketball courts that can be converted into 19 volleyball courts
- Compton Family Ice Arena has two sheets of ice
- Indiana Invaders Sports Complex has 13 full-size soccer fields
- Byers Softball Complex feature five total fields
- Junior Irish Soccer Complex has 12 soccer fields
- Ice Box Skating Rink houses three rinks
- Newton Park has four baseball/softball diamonds

Convention center: With 100,000 square feet of flexible convention and exhibit space, Century Center sits in downtown South Bend and hosts wrestling, karate, cornhole, and more.

Contact: Visit South Bend Mishawaka, visitsouthbend.com.

SOUTH SHORE

The South Shore of Lake Michigan is situated just 30 minutes from downtown Chicago. Its state-of-the-art sports facilities and unique attractions draw youth, amateur, and collegiate sporting events from around the nation.

Hotel rooms: 6,000

Hotel tax rate: 12 percent

Major facilities:

- Crown Point Sportsplex is a 95-acre outdoor venue with 12 multipurpose fields, seven synthetic turf/natural grass fields, three natural grass fields, two fields for soccer/football/lacrosse, and a championship field
- Hammond Sportsplex is a 155,000-square-foot complex featuring 10 basketball courts or 20 volleyball courts, along with two indoor artificial turf soccer fields and four new outdoor sand volleyball courts
- Doone Kennedy Hobart Aquatic Center has a competition pool
- The Steel Yard is an open-air baseball stadium that seats 6,139
- The YMCA Sportscenter at Crown Point has eight basketball/volleyball courts and 12 pickleball courts

Contact: South Shore CVA, southshoresports.org.

TERRE HAUTE

Home to the world-renowned LaVern Gibson Championship Cross Country Course and considered to be Cross Country Town USA, the community has hosted 15 NCAA National Championships along with numerous NCAA, USATF, and high school championship events. Complementing the area's sports offerings are the Griffin Bike Park, one of Indiana's top mountain biking destinations, and the Larry Bird Museum, which celebrates the basketball legend's remarkable career.

Hotel rooms: 2,000

Hotel tax rate: 16 percent

Major facilities:

- LaVern Gibson Championship Cross Country Course is a 250-acre complex specifically designed for cross-country running
- Indiana State University Athletics offers the 10,200-seat Hulman Center, 12,700-seat Memorial Stadium, Bob Warn Field for baseball, and Price Field for softball
- Griffin Bike Park features over 30 miles of mountain biking trails on over 300 acres
- Hulman Mini Speedway is one of the nation's premier youth dirt racing facilities
- Fowler Park Championship Disc Golf Course opens next year and will be Indiana's only championship-caliber disc golf course

Contact: Terre Haute CVB, terrehaute.com. ■

SPOTLIGHT ON: MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts continues to raise the bar for sports, offering the ideal mix of historic significance, premier venues, and experienced event partners. Whether hosting youth tournaments, collegiate championships, or elite competitions, the Bay State provides the infrastructure, accessibility and local support needed for successful events. Combined with passionate fans, renowned athletic institutions and a legacy of innovation in sports, Massachusetts delivers the kind of memorable experience that keeps athletes and event organizers coming back year after year. "Sports give people another reason to discover Massachusetts, and they often inspire visitors to stay longer and explore more," says Kate Fox, executive director at the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism. "Fans may come for a game or tournament, then spend time in our restaurants, shops, museums, and neighborhoods. That visitor spending supports local businesses while giving people a deeper connection to the places they visit." ■

The Boston Marathon is the world's oldest annual marathon. ▶



Courtesy Kyle Klein

MASSACHUSETTS



MUST SEE:

Highland Lighthouse

Highland Lighthouse is the Cape's oldest lighthouse and one of its most iconic landmarks. Perched above the Cape Cod National Seashore in North Truro, the historic beacon rewards those willing to climb its winding spiral staircase with extensive views of the Atlantic Ocean, rolling dunes, and the neighboring Highland Links golf course. Rich in maritime history and New England charm, Highland Lighthouse offers the perfect opportunity to step away and experience one of Massachusetts' most unforgettable coastal vistas. ■

Courtesy Bill DeSousa-Mauk

BOSTON

Boston is a premier sports city, with top venues, excellent transportation, and a compact, walkable downtown. One of Boston's biggest advantages is its density. Major venues, hotels, restaurants, universities, and attractions are located in a relatively small area, creating an event atmosphere that extends beyond the competition itself.

Hotel rooms: 28,000

Hotel tax rate: 16.45 percent

Major facilities:

- TD Garden is a multipurpose arena with a capacity of 19,600 for basketball
- Fenway Park is a 37,700-seat ballpark
- Gillette Stadium is a football stadium with a capacity of 65,000
- The TRACK at New Balance is a 450,000-square-foot track and field stadium
- The Skating Club of Boston has three rinks

Convention centers: Thomas M. Menino Convention & Exhibition Center boasts 516,000 square feet of column-free, contiguous space.

Contact: Meet Boston, meetboston.com.

CAPE COD

Cape Cod is strategically located between Boston and New York, with seasonal air access from both to Hyannis Gateway Airport. A modern network of highways (Route 95, Route 195, Route 3 and Route 93, Route I-90, Route 495, Routes 28 and 6, and Route 250) also provides ready automobile access to Cape Cod.

Hotel rooms: 17,100

Hotel tax rate: 5.7 percent

Major facilities:

- Cape Cod offers a number of fields for baseball, softball, field hockey, soccer, and football, as well as gyms, ice hockey rinks

Contact: Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, capecodchamber.org.

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

Central Massachusetts offers a blend of rich sports history, diverse facilities, and a vibrant community that embraces a variety of sports. Its central location in New England makes it accessible for regional tournaments and events.

Courtesy Lynne Graves



Climbing at the Central Rock Gym in Hadley.

Hotel rooms: 6,000 countywide

Hotel tax rate: 14.45 percent

Major facilities:

- DCU Center in Worcester houses 300,000 square feet of space and can seat up to 13,000 for sports events
- Polar Park is a 9,508-seat baseball stadium
- Fidelity Bank Ice Center offers two NHL-sized rinks
- Donahue Rowing Center hosts high school and college crew teams

Contact: Discover Central Massachusetts, discovercentralma.org.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY

While its strong college community makes Hampshire County an organized sports destination, its natural attractions make outdoor recreation available to all. Hiking, biking, kayaking, and more are just steps from your front door. And when the sun goes down, its arts and culture and restaurant scenes pick up.

Hotel rooms: 1,000

Hotel tax rate: 11.75 percent

Major facilities:

- Three County Fairgrounds is a 47-acre property with multiple buildings
- Mullins Center is a 9,500-seat indoor multipurpose venue
- McGuirk Alumni Stadium is a 17,000-seat football facility

- Hatfield Rally House offers 12 indoor tennis/pickleball courts

Contact: Greater Northampton Chamber, northamptonchamber.com.

MARLBOROUGH

Located at the crossroads of New England, Marlborough offers great proximity to Boston/Worcester and access to major interstate highways such as I-495, I-290, and I-90. Marlborough is a major sporting destination, home to North America's largest indoor ice-skating facility, New England Sports Center.

Hotel rooms: 1,462

Hotel tax rate: 11.7 percent

Major facilities:

- New England Sports Center is an indoor skating facility with eight full-size rinks and two studio rinks
- Fore Kicks Outdoor & Indoor Sports Complex is a multisport facility with 135,000 square feet and seven indoor sports fields
- Special Olympics Massachusetts houses one gym and soccer field
- Williams Street Baseball Fields features three baseball fields
- Ghiloni Park hosts soccer, baseball, softball, sand volleyball, basketball, skateboarding, and running

Convention center: The Royal Plaza Trade Center offers 47,500 square feet of space and 21-foot ceilings.

Contact: Visit Marlborough, visit-marlborough.com.

MERRIMACK VALLEY

The Greater Merrimack Valley has a rich cultural and historical heritage and boasts a scenic natural setting along the Merrimack River and its canals. The area hosts a variety of sporting events throughout the year.

Hotel rooms: 7,000

Major facilities:

- Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell is a multipurpose indoor venue
- Merrimack River hosts rowing races

Contact: Greater Merrimack Valley CVB, merrimackvalley.org.

NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

Located just 30 miles from Boston, North Central Massachusetts is a scenic and dynamic New England region that offers an abundance of four-season activities for families and groups.

Hotel tax rate: 1,400

Hotel tax rate: ranges from 9.7 percent to 11.7 percent

Major facilities:

- Sbli Fields at Progin Park offers 16 soccer fields
- Devens Recreation features 11 soccer fields on 44 acres, as well as other flexible spaces
- Game-On Sports and Performance Center has six outdoor turf fields along with an indoor facility that includes 10 basketball courts, 14 volleyball courts, and eight pickleball courts

Contact: Visit North Central Massachusetts, northcentralmass.com.

SPRINGFIELD

Springfield is located in western Massachusetts and is an affordable destination with great access via Interstates 90 and 91, along with Bradley International Airport close by. There are also numerous one-of-a-kind attractions and a variety of outdoor pursuits to enjoy before, during, and after the event.

Hotel rooms: 1,366 downtown;

6,000 regionwide

Hotel tax rate: ranges from 10.7 percent to 13.45 percent

Major facility:

- Eastern States Exposition is a 175-acre facility with 355,000 square feet of space on one level, including a 5,000-seat arena, and outdoor space
- Convention center:** MassMutual Convention Center houses an 8,000-seat arena that hosts a variety of indoor sports, including volleyball, gymnastics, and cheer and dance.

Contact: Greater Springfield CVB, explorewesternmass.com. ■

SPOTLIGHT ON: CONNECTICUT

Connecticut may be one of the nation's smallest states, but it delivers an outsized advantage for sporting events. Ideally positioned between New York City and Boston, the state offers easy access to more than 23.5 million people within a two-and-a-half-hour drive, making it an ideal draw for regional and national competitions. That prime location is complemented by quality venues, welcoming communities, and a diverse mix of hotels, restaurants, and attractions. "As a small state with different regions, Connecticut can offer more customized, affordable, personal service to organizers and athletes than larger metropolitan cities can," says Robert Murdock, president of the Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau. "We really roll out the red carpet to welcome and service them." ■

Riding the track in Trumbull. ►



Courtesy USA BMX

CONNECTICUT



MUST SEE:

Mystic Seaport Museum

The Mystic Seaport Museum is the nation's leading maritime museum and one of New England's most immersive attractions. Set along the Mystic River, the 19-acre waterfront campus allows visitors to step inside a recreated coastal village, tour historic vessels—including the legendary Charles W. Morgan, the country's oldest surviving commercial ship—watch skilled craftspeople at work in a preservation shipyard, and even get out on the water aboard traditional boats. ■

Courtesy Mystic Seaport Museum

Hotel rooms: 40,000

Hotel tax rate: 15 percent

HARTFORD

Hartford, the capital of Connecticut, is located in the heart of the state. The city frequently hosts sports events, including the Eversource Hartford Marathon, the PGA Tour's Travelers Championship, and the Oakwood Soccer Premier Invitational.

Greater Hartford region Major facilities:

- Dunkin' Donuts Park is a 6,146-seat minor league ballpark
- PeoplesBank Arena is a 16,000-seat multipurpose venue located downtown
- Pratt & Whitney Stadium at Rentschler Field is a 40,642-seat stadium that hosts football, lacrosse, and soccer
- Trinity Health Stadium is a 5,500-seat soccer facility
- Fastpitch Nation Park is the largest dedicated fastpitch softball complex in the Northeast, with 12 fields
- Husky Volleyball Den has premiere training facilities in Windsor and Newington
- Day Hill Dome in Windsor is a 95,000-square-foot



The murals at the Floyd Little Athletic Center.

Courtesy Fastpitch Nation Park

Tagging out at Fastpitch Nation Park in Windsor.



Floyd Little Athletic Center in New Haven.

indoor sports dome for soccer, basketball, lacrosse and flag football

- Located in Simsbury, the International Skating Center of Connecticut is a 78,000-square-foot, twin-rink venue

Convention center: The Connecticut Convention Center features 540,000 square feet of space, including a 140,000-square-foot exhibition hall.

EASTERN CONNECTICUT

Charming coastal towns and a unique history welcome visitors to Eastern Connecticut, which is known as home to the 10,000-seat Mohegan Sun Arena.

Major facilities:

- Mohegan Sun Arena is a 10,000-seat multipurpose arena in the Uncasville area of Montville
- Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket hosts a variety of sports, including MMA, dance and cheer competitions

- New London-Waterford Speed Bowl hosts drag, car, and truck racing
- One of the premier motorsports facilities in the Northeast, Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park has the first purpose-built road course and asphalt high-banked oval in the country
- The University of Connecticut Storrs campus offers multiple athletic venues, including the Harry A. Gampel Pavilion and the George J. Sherman Family Sports Complex

FAIRFIELD COUNTY/WESTERN CONNECTICUT

Nestled in the southwestern corner of the state is Fairfield County. The area is known for its diverse landscape, scenic views, and numerous entertainment options to enjoy before or after the game.

Major facilities:

- Danbury Ice Arena has two NHL-sized rinks
- Lime Rock Park in Lakeville hosts NASCAR,



PeoplesBank Arena in Hartford.

- professional sports car, and SCCA pro racing events
- Chelsea Piers Connecticut offers a 400,000-square-foot sports complex in Stamford
- Pickleball America in Stamford has 27 pickleball courts
- Trumbull BMX T.R.A.C.K. is a BMX competition and training site

GREATER NEW HAVEN REGION

The Greater New Haven Region is known as the home of Yale University and many other colleges and universities.

Major facilities:

- Yale Bowl hosts football
- M&T Bank Arena at Quinnipiac University is a 185,000-square-foot multipurpose sports facility
- Canal Dock Boathouse on New Haven's Long Wharf is a 30,000-square-foot facility with a dock for boat launches
- Connecticut Sportsplex has five lighted baseball fields, four synthetic outdoor turf athletic fields, a 12,000-square-foot indoor baseball facility, and a 75,000-square-foot dome for soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, football, and more
- Northford Ice Pavilion is a 2,000-seat multipurpose arena with three ice rinks
- Reese Stadium seats 3,000 and hosts lacrosse and soccer
- Floyd Little Athletic Center completed renovations and now includes a new NBA-quality basketball court and Olympic-grade rubberized track

Contact: The Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau, ctmeetings.org. ■

SPOTLIGHT ON: SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota offers something increasingly hard to find: championship-caliber facilities paired with an authentic atmosphere and unforgettable scenery. Whether hosting indoor competitions, field sports, or outdoor endurance events, the state blends modern venues with wide-open landscapes to create an experience that extends well beyond the competition. Backed by welcoming communities, dedicated event partners and a commitment to delivering memorable experiences, South Dakota is a destination that always plays to win. ■

The Monument in Rapid City hosts wrestling and more. ▶



Courtesy Visit Rapid City

SOUTH DAKOTA

ABERDEEN

Aberdeen is the holder of unique sports history, including the Aberdeen Pheasants minor league baseball team, NCAA's one-time winningest basketball coach Don



MUST SEE:

Mount Rushmore National Memorial

Few landmarks are as instantly recognizable as Mount Rushmore National Memorial. Carved into the granite face of the Black Hills, the monument showcases the towering likenesses of four U.S. presidents while telling the story of the nation's history, ingenuity, and perseverance. Scenic walking trails, an engaging visitor center, and breathtaking views make Mount Rushmore an iconic destination that leaves visitors with a deeper appreciation for both the region and the country it helped shape. ■

Courtesy Visit Rapid City

Meyer and the 2019 NAHL Robertson Cup Champion Aberdeen Wings Hockey team.

Hotel rooms: 889

Hotel tax rate: 12 percent

Major facilities:

- Aberdeen Aquatic Center hosts swimming meets
- Aberdeen Civic Arena offers space for basketball and volleyball
- Clark Swisher Field accommodates football, soccer, and track and field
- Dacotah Bank Stadium is a 4,000-seat football stadium
- Fossum Field is a 2,500-seat baseball field

Contact: Aberdeen Area CVB, visitaberdeensd.com.

HURON

Between the hospitality, community involvement, and support, Huron is a great place for various sporting events. With the various facilities, it has the ability to host a variety of events.

Hotel rooms: 350

Hotel tax rate: 8.7 percent plus \$2 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- Huron Arena is a 7,000-seat facility with 15,000 square feet of athletic space
- Tiger Stadium hosts football, soccer, and track and field
- Huron Tennis Courts include 12 courts
- Bergman Arena features an NHL-sized sheet of ice

• Mtn. Dew Softball Complex has four fields

• Kunhart Softball Complex has six fields

Convention center: Huron Event Center provides more than 34,000 square feet of space and hosts sports such as basketball and volleyball.

Contact: Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau, huronssd.com.

RAPID CITY

A four-season destination, Rapid City is a robust community with a mix of hotels, attractions, national icons, restaurants and things to do, as well as a bevy of locations to host sporting events.

Hotel rooms: 5,000

Hotel tax rate: 7.7 percent plus \$4 per room, per night

Major facilities:

- The Monument boasts 500,000 square feet of flexible space with three separate arenas: the 10,000-seat Summit Arena, 1,000-seat Barnett Field House, and 5,000-seat Ice Arena
- Star of the West Complex offers eight softball fields and seven lacrosse fields
- Black Hills Surgical Sports Complex houses fields that can be configured as large as 12 full-size soccer fields
- Parkview Sports Complex has six fastpitch softball fields

Contact: Visit Rapid City, visitrapidcity.com. ■

THIS IS NOT LIVE.
THEY DID NOT
SCORE AGAIN!



Getty Images

Instant replay

BY BOB SEXTON

On December 7, 1963, a 29-year-old CBS television director named Tony Verna headed to the Army-Navy football game with a bold plan to introduce American TV viewers to something they had never seen before: the instant replay.

Football can be difficult to cover. The field is large, the action happens quickly, and multiple things can be happening at once. Verna believed replaying key moments would help viewers better understand what they had just seen. The idea was simple, but making it happen was not.

Videotape was still relatively new, although Verna had gained experience working with it while covering the Rome Olympics three years earlier. To create his replay system, he needed a dedicated camera and two refrigerator-sized videotape machines weighing about 1,200 pounds, housed in a separate truck.

Verna also needed a way to anticipate the action he wanted to capture. His solution was a series of beeps: one when the teams broke the huddle and another two when the ball was snapped.

Even then, it wasn't easy. It reportedly took about 30 attempts before Verna's crew got a replay that worked. One problem was the

videotape, which had previously recorded episodes of *I Love Lucy*. At times, Lucille Ball's face was superimposed over the football field.

Eventually, they captured Army quarterback Rollie Stichweh punching in a touchdown in the fourth quarter. When the play was shown again a few seconds later, however, CBS worried viewers would think Army had scored twice.

"This is not live," the announcer explained. "Ladies and gentlemen, Army did not score again!"

More than 60 years later, the idea that viewers might not understand a replay seems absurd. Instant replay is now such a familiar part of sports that fans can watch a play repeatedly, from multiple angles and in slow motion, often before the next snap or serve.

And replay has changed more than the viewing experience. Video technology now helps officials review critical calls in sports ranging from football and baseball to tennis and soccer.

From two massive videotape machines and one replayed touchdown came a technology that changed not only how we watch sports, but increasingly, how the games themselves are decided. ■



The Greater Williamsburg Sports & Events Center is now open. Our world-class fields and facilities include 200,000 sq. ft. of configurable athletic space and the largest indoor roll-out turf system in the U.S. Chef-driven cuisine and versatile meeting spaces take every tournament, conference, or gala to the next level.

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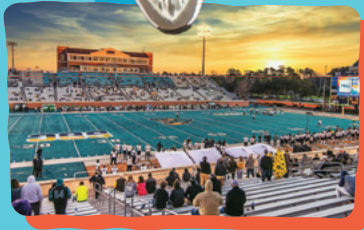
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SCAN TO SAVE THIS CONTACT

VISIT
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