



Smart Cities & Sport
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Sport Tourism (R)evolution

A SMART CITIES & SPORT PUBLICATION

JUNE 2021

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD UNION OF OLYMPIC CITIES



Grégoire Junod
Mayor of Lausanne

The rapid growth of cities in recent decades has intensified many of the world's most pressing challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the latest examples: 90% of the cases were reported in urban areas making cities the epicentres of the virus' spread in June 2020.

While the world is still fighting against the coronavirus, the measures taken seem to be starting to bear fruit. Once the health crisis is behind us, cities will need to focus on economy recovery.

Sport and tourism are among the sectors greatly affected by the pandemic. Sport tourism could not withstand the massive drop in international demand amidst global travel restrictions, nor could it resist the fact that most sports activities were put on hold.

Sport tourism has often been identified as the fastest growing tourism sector and, along with other key pillars, represents a major factor not only in the development of the city but also in its economy.

Indeed, an increasing number of tourists are interested in sports activities during their travels, even if sport is not the main objective of the visit. From the hosting of sports events (spectators or mass participation-driven) to the promotion of active sport tourism, the sector of sport tourism at large has become an essential catalyst for cities aiming to develop their image, their infrastructure or even their social and economic development.

This new Smart Cities & Sport publication invites you to deepen the links between tourism and sport, proposes ideas for building the future of sport tourism together, and reflects on how sport tourism can be not just a tool to boost our economies, but can also contribute to create social fabric and strengthen social cohesion.

Cities have a key role to play in providing innovative and inclusive solutions to the challenges of the 21st century and in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 UN SDGs. Sport has already proven to be a fantastic catalyst for change in this regard. Let's play our part in ensuring that sport tourism (r)evolution is guided by these principles.

Grégoire Junod
Mayor of the City of Lausanne
President of the World Union of Olympic Cities

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SMART CITIES & SPORT



Mélanie Duparc
Director
Smart Cities & Sport

In line with Smart Cities & Sport's role as a knowledge exchange platform and catalyst for change, this new publication aims to shed light on how best to combine sport and tourism as a catalyst for cities to achieve their goals, be they economic, social or environmental.

The publication starts with key facts and figures on the industry from the tourism sector including sport tourism. It also defines sport tourism - "leisure-based travel participate in and/or watch physical activities or to visit attractions associated with physical activities" - and the role cities can play in this sector. The current state of sport tourism is then examined, including the impact of COVID-19. The results of the online survey we conducted to take the pulse of the sport tourism sector in our network cities are presented. They show that 85% of cities have developed strategic considerations on sport tourism.

Time has led us to ask cities and sport and / or tourism authorities to tell us more about their strategic approach to sport tourism. From the assessment of the cross-sectoral nature of sport to the identification of synergies between sport and tourism, from risk and opportunity management to choices based on cities' identity, sport and tourism institutions have access to a large range of multifaceted strategies.

Finally, we move from strategy to action, analysing the different ways in which cities have put their strategies into practice. Five main objectives and axes of the different sports tourism strategies are studied: economic growth, city events, active sport tourism, Olympic dynamics and sustainability.

We would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank all of our contributors for their commitment, their availability, and their willingness to share their challenges in these difficult times, as well as their hopes for a better future.

Enjoy the reading!

Mélanie Duparc
Director of Smart Cities & Sport
Secretary General of the World Union of Olympic Cities

TAKING THE PULSE OF THE SPORT TOURISM SECTOR

What's sport tourism? Definitions can vary and embrace a more or less wide scope of the sector but what is undisputable is that sport tourism is a growing practice with great potential for expansion. A recovery in the tourism industry is expected after the pandemic hit the sector hard, and cities have a role to play in the context of redefinition of the combination of sport and tourism.

FACTS & FIGURES:
A SECTOR AMID RAPID CHANGE

SPORT TOURISM:
AN EVER-GROWING SECTOR WITH HIGH POTENTIAL FOR CITIES

SMART CITIES & SPORT:
ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

FACTS & FIGURES: A SECTOR AMID RAPID CHANGE



#DEFINITION

Sports tourism is the act of travelling from one locality to another, with the intention of being involved in some way with a sporting activity or event.

#THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF SPORT TOURISM

Sport event tourism

1. centres around a sporting event

Active sport tourism

2. taking part in sport is an important part of the tourism experience

Nostalgia sport tourism

3. involves travelling to famous sport-related tourist attractions

#SPORT AND TOURISM

- Tourism is predicted to become the world's biggest industry early in the next century
- Today, sport is regarded as the world's largest social phenomenon
- Sport is one of the few universal languages

#IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON TOURISM

1 billion fewer international tourist arrivals

100 to 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk

1,3 trillion US \$ of loss in total export revenues from international tourism

#ECONOMICS NUMBERS

14,4 trillion US \$ to be reached by the Global Sports Tourism Market to the year 2027

25% of all tourism in the world is sport related

TOP SPORT TOURISM MARKETS

- US: Over 28.7% of Global Sport Tourism Market Size in 2020. Domestic Sports Tourism (a segment of Global Sport Tourism Market) is projected to grow at a 29.1% annual growth rate to reach US \$ 5 Trillion by 2027
- China: Market size estimated to reach US \$ 3.3 Trillion in the year 2027
- Japan and Canada, each forecast to grow at 25% and 28.6% respectively over the 2020-2027 period.
- Germany is forecast to grow at approximately 26.9%, while the rest of the European market will reach US \$ 3.3 Trillion by the year 2027.

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Sports tourism explained: What, why and where
COVID-19 and Tourism, Tourism in Pre-Pandemic Times, UNWTO
Global Sport Tourism Industry, Market Report

SPORT TOURISM: AN EVER-GROWING SECTOR WITH HIGH POTENTIAL FOR CITIES

By Young Hoon Kim,
and John Nauright

Definition of sport tourism

As defined by Gibson (1998, p. 49), sport tourism is a “leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate and/or watch physical activities or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities”.

Human beings are born to travel to fulfil their motivational needs and sports can be one of the reasons and tourism will be one of the ways to satisfy those leisure activities (e.g., trail with family or attending sport events). In theory, it is a naturally generated social phenomenon to satisfy human’s physical and psychological desire through travel or vice versa.

Each domain (i.e., sports and tourism) is one of the most significant areas which impact our life from many perspectives, such as social, economy, political, and many more. In particular, Zauhar emphasised (2004, p.13), “the points of contact between sport and tourism have increased dramatically – the mutual benefits for both are quite perceptible and the relationships very compatible. In fact, the term ‘sports tourism’ has been coined to better understand the use of sport as a touristic endeavour”.

The impact of COVID-19 on the sport tourism industry

Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 has significantly impacted both sport and tourism industries. Since its original break in Wuhan, China on 21 December 2019, it led to the world pandemic declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 11 March 2020. There was no way to stop this disaster and its global spread across every continent.

Although our life has been getting better after vaccine and some medical treatment, it is still a question to get back to our “new” normal. The impact on global sports tourism and income

from events has run into billions of dollars of lost revenue. The impact has been particularly hard for smaller scale events and lower-level leagues that do not have protection from significant television, streaming and advertising revenues.

It is the key solution for major sport cities to get back to the “new” normal by recovering from the down-turn stage after being negatively impacted by COVID-19. However, it is a great opportunity for specific sport tourism sectors, such as e-sports and golf industry.

Role of cities in sport tourism

As Kim et al. (2018) pointed out in their research, “a destination brand with strong equity leads to greater commitment in the form of loyalty and willingness to revisit the destination” (p. 1196). Not only for its image developed by sports tourists but also it is critical to prepare the destinations (i.e., cities) for sustainable growth.

While sport tourists select and look for a city (i.e., destination) to experience “unique” sport tourism components (e.g., physical activities or sport events), most cities are not primarily designed for sport tourism except some cases (Settimi, 2020).

In addition, it is strongly recommended to partnership with educational institutions to maximise the outcomes as well as sustainable development for cities (i.e., destination) (Kim et al., 2018). The specific following suggestions can be emphasised for sport cities:

- Accessibility (e.g., transportation and highway access)
- Basic sports facilities
- Hotel and lodging facilities
- Local government (city) involvement

Sport tourism trends

Hosting of major events (spectators) is still a successful way for cities to develop their sport tourism strategy

Sport tourism strategy will lead sport cities to the next level by approaching destination as a travel package or products which eventually increase the brand equity of destination. Thus, systematic recovery strategies are keenly needed to prevent from unexpected health-related disasters in the future (e.g., pandemic). In addition, foreseeing framework and business structure will help cities to prepare for next stage.

The development of active sport tourism should be looked at closely

Probably, the 2020 Olympics in Japan will be the best case for cities or city cluster to examine the critical cases how to react and follow up. The given lists below will be considered and discussed:

- Organise a special committee under the IOC to monitor,
- Require pre-examination systems to evaluate the current condition,
- Establish disaster-related control centre,
- Provide the stages and steps to react the outbreaks,
- Follow-up strategies to minimise the damages,
- Assess the post-Olympics, and
- Report and share the results to the publics

Conclusion

While global sport tourism has been damaged in the short term by the COVID-19 pandemic, immediate return of spectators and plans for new events and seasons suggests the upward trends of the latter 2010s will continue by 2022 and into 2023 and beyond. Regional events could become more important, as spectators do not travel as far. Cities and municipalities should consider the appropriate mix of major events and more local and recurrent events.

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SMART CITIES & SPORT ONLINE SURVEY INSIGHTS

During spring 2021, over a period of six weeks, Smart Cities & Sport conducted an online survey as a way of taking the pulse of the sport tourism sector in the cities of its network.

The results of this study are outlined in this section and serve to:

1. Provide insights on cities' general approach to sports tourism. More precisely, the study looks at how cities integrate sports events, focus on local and active tourism and consider climate change within their strategies.
2. Give an overview of how COVID-19 impacted cities and their sports tourism strategies and activities.

The survey was shared within the Smart Cities & Sport Summit network through its newsletter and social media channels (Twitter and LinkedIn). While 57 respondents began the survey, only 20 completed it fully. The report focuses on these 20 completed responses and acknowledges that the results are not necessarily representative of the broader sport tourism industry.

Survey respondent profile

The majority of survey respondents who completed the survey represent a city in Europe (53%), followed by representatives from North America (37%), Asia (5%) and Oceania (5%). The results should therefore be interpreted in a predominantly European and/or North American context.

To what regions of the world does your city belong to?

However, the different sizes of cities are rather well represented. 37% of the participating cities have a population of more than 1 million inhabitants. An equal share of cities (37%) has a population between 100,001 and 500,000 inhabitants. The remaining cities have a population of less than 100,000 inhabitants (16%) or between 500,001 and 1 million inhabitants.

Survey highlights

Attracting tourism is one of the least important strategic objectives of cities.

This result may be particularly low due to the current health crisis COVID-19 and the limited possibility for cities to attract visitors, both national and international. However, it is important to note that income generation is the most important objective quoted by the cities, and tourism can contribute in some way to achieving this objective. More than attracting tourism, cities seem to focus on the potential of sport to develop their image or brand.

“// The next generation is not as interested in live sporting events so innovative and unique digital elements need to be mixed in with traditional sport hosting.”

A majority of cities, that have replied to the survey, have developed some strategic considerations about sport tourism and equally target international and domestic tourism.

A large majority of cities have included both 1) sports into their tourism strategy and 2) tourism in their sports strategy. In addition, many cities have also mentioned having developed an event attraction strategy, focusing solely on sport events and their impacts.

When asked what type(s) of tourism their city was targeting through sport, respondents replied that their city was seeking to attract both international and domestic tourism - showing no notable trend.

“ There is likely a greater focus on national tourism related to sport because the economic impact relative to rights fees and cost of hosting is higher. International events are important to tourism but often come with a far greater price tag that is manageable at times, but not in significant volume.”

Cities leverage different type of sport tourism platforms, but with a strong focus on the hosting of sports events.

According to the answers, cities partner with other local, regional or national organisations to develop its sport tourism activities. The spectrum of partners listed is large and tells that both the sports and tourism sectors involve a vast ecosystem: IFs, all sports clubs locally, national sport associations, national sport tourism body, other municipalities, just to name a few.

The majority of cities that replied to the survey, measure the impact of sports tourism. Some national sport tourism organisations have even developed some measurement tools for their cities; such as Sports Tourism Canada and their STEAM system.

The main barriers cities face in measuring the impact of sports on its tourism activities are the lack of resources; whether financial or

qualitative (such as expertise) and the lack of data. Some cities also referred to the lack of a solid methodology to measure intangible effects as ‚pride‘ and/or networking/relation/positioning-effects

Climate change and its impact on sport tourism is not currently a challenge identified as the most important by cities, with the exception of winter sports destinations.

However, this does not prevent cities from thinking about actions to limit the climate impact of sports tourism. Cities have targeted two strategic options: 1) the spreading of sports tourism activities across the four seasons and 2) the development of local tourism activities.

In doing so, cities indicated that they planned to focus more on domestic tourism and ‘active’ tourism; two trends already observed before the crisis, but for reasons related to the mitigation of climate change. However, almost half of the survey respondents admitted that they see these strategic changes as a short-term orientation, waiting for tourism to recover.

When asked about their opinion on the impact of “bubble” sports events on the development of their brand, cities are quite optimistic and some of them believe they can provide the same promotional branding opportunity as traditional sports events or that they can contribute to the development of a city’s brand but not as much as traditional events.

“ Government restrictions on travel to/from our country and shut downs of facilities has forced us to rethink and focus on return to sport locally first before people will be able to travel again.”

STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO SPORT TOURISM

Strategy is the art of coordinating actions to achieve a goal. Cities, as well as sport and /or tourism entities see sport as a lever for economic development, and have seized opportunities to be attractive to event hosting and visitors while meeting the needs of citizens and honouring local identities.

RECOGNISING THE CROSS-SECTORAL NATURE OF SPORT
AN EU PERSPECTIVE

SIZING UP POTENTIAL SYNERGIES BETWEEN SPORT AND TOURISM
AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

MANAGING RISKS AND BEING READY FOR EVENT HOSTING
A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

CHOOSING EVENTS THAT MATCH THE CITY'S DNA
A DANISH PERSPECTIVE

RECOGNISING THE CROSS-SECTORAL NATURE OF SPORT

AN EU PERSPECTIVE



Interview with Florencia Van Houdt, Head of Sport Unit, Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission

What is the current situation in relation to sport tourism in Europe?

It should not be a surprise that the current COVID-19 pandemic is having a major impact on the sport sector and tourism. The consequences of cancelled or postponed sport events are immense for a wide range of stakeholders, including event organisers, sport federations, clubs, the athletes themselves and spectators. The events affected have included the Olympic Games, championships in a variety of sports, the regular competitions and matches and the events of local clubs. The economic impact of the pandemic on the sport sector was also evidenced by a study published in November 2020¹. Sport is going to be a major and visible element in the rebound from restrictions and this will include people travelling to re-engage in sport tourism.

How do you define the role of sport and physical activity within the tourism sector?

Indeed, there are many elements of the sport sector that have been considered a very important part of tourism strategies in the EU. Overall, sport tourism can have two main aspects: active and passive. First, active sport tourism is where a physical activity is the main or an important contributory reason for choosing a specific holiday package. Examples are visits that include walking, cycling, hiking, skiing, canoeing or extreme sports (some of whose activities are also referred to as 'adventure tourism'), most frequently taking place in rural or remote areas. Secondly, passive or inactive sport tourism - attracting visitors as spectators, with associated activities - is also a very important element in

creating an attractive destination for domestic and international visitors, in particular in cities. This dimension typically has a sport event as the main reason for the visit to a particular destination.

What role can cities play in the development of sport tourism?

Sport tourism can play an important role in recovery and resilience building as we emerge from the crisis, contributing to a greener hospitality and experience economy, while generating social and environmental benefits in local communities. As also underlined



Riudecanyes Adventure Park – a sport natural park in a rural area in the province of Tarragona, Spain. It promotes active tourism by combining different sport activities (biking, hiking, climbing, kayaking etc), also adventure trails and circuits.



Source: seikluskeskus.ee

The active tourism centre of Kivioli, Ida-Viru, Estonia: transforming a brownified area into a multi-functional sport centre and complex. For leisure, family tourism, but also adventure tourism.

by a study published in March 2021² on innovative practices in the EU to promote sport outside of traditional structures, there has been a growing appreciation of the need to facilitate exercise and sport within cities as part of making cities healthier and more attractive environments. Further initiatives in this area can benefit from the New European Bauhaus³ initiative at an EU level. At the same time, cities continue to develop sport facilities not only for their own inhabitants, but also because they know that this makes their city more attractive as a destination and as a location for other investment. Sport tourism is an important part of this dynamic.

How do you see the future of sport tourism, considering climate change?

Tourism in general, including sport tourism, can have many positive benefits both for visitors and the host societies, but, unless managed well, it could also leave a significant carbon footprint. Sport can contribute to a greener tourism by making its own activities and facilities sustainable, using outdoor sports to raise awareness of environmental issues, for instance by spreading the tourism load over a larger area and an extended season as well as promoting alternative means of transport towards active mobility.

“ Sport tourism can play an important role in recovery and resilience building as we emerge from the crisis, contributing to a greener hospitality and experience economy, while generating social and environmental benefits in local communities.”

How does the European Commission support the development of sport tourism?

In recent years, EU policy makers have gradually recognised and acknowledged the cross-sectoral nature of sport and its significant contribution to areas such as health, sustainability, innovation, social cohesion, or tourism.

As part of its work in diversifying the tourism experiences on offer in the EU, the Commission co-funds, through the COSME programme, sustainable transnational tourism products⁴ that can contribute to tourism growth. These are thematic products and services in areas such as environmentally friendly tourism

including cycling routes, sport tourism, nature tourism and cultural routes crossing Europe.

Furthermore, the Commission has supported the SHARE initiative⁵ as an action to promote the contribution of sport to regional development, including through interaction with other sectors, and notably tourism. SHARE activities include developing research papers⁶, identifying best practice examples in an online database⁷, a capacity-building programme for sport stakeholders to unlock the recovery funds within Next Generation EU and the Cohesion Policy funds and organising high-level events (e.g. in the context of the European Week of Regions and Cities).



The manifold contribution of sport to regional development (KEA, 2018-2021)

SHARE infographic - manifold contribution of sport on regional development

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- 2 Mapping of innovative practices in the EU to promote sport outside of traditional structures.:
- 3 New European Bauhaus : beautiful, sustainable, together.
- 4 Sustainable transnational tourism products - Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
- 5 Share Initiative | Sport
- 6 SHARE - KEA
- 7 SHARE Database

SIZING UP POTENTIAL SYNERGIES BETWEEN SPORT AND TOURISM

AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE



Interview with Prince Deji Ajomale-McWord, President, African Sports Tourism Week and Secretary General, World Sports Tourism Council

Could you please tell us more about the sport tourism landscape in Africa?

The sport tourism landscape in Africa is a virgin territory yet to be deliberately and consciously attended to. Very few African nations make a deliberate effort at development.

One major challenge sports tourism has in Africa is the lack of understanding of how and why sports and tourism administrators need each other. They remain aloof to one another. Sports administrators believe the travel profession is such a laid-back job that they can get any friend or associate who parades him/herself as a travel agent to do it. They end up making a mess of the grand opportunity a sporting event provides for visiting sport tourists to experience their country or city. They do not leave up to expectations and are hardly bothered about the damage this does to the image of the destination.

Tourism boards sparsely identify or pay attention to the tourism that stems from sport.

Another major problem sport tourism encounters in most African nations is the act of paying attention to one sport while neglecting others; forgetting that no reputable sports destination was built on the back of a single sport. Every sport, especially those favoured by locals must be empowered to contribute to arrivals and gross domestic product.

What are the particularities of the African sport tourism market?

The holiday culture in Africa is particularly different to what transpires in other continents of the world. Soft sports tourism isn't much of a thing yet. Hard sports tourism could be said to be chiefly driving sports tourism here, though, sporting events aren't necessarily much in numbers, compared to what happens in the American and European continents.

How do African cities integrate sport into their tourism strategies?

For most, there aren't any strategies, because they are yet to identify sport as tourism. A few cities stand out for me. Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Nairobi, Kigali, as well as Morocco and Egypt as countries. Cape Town is home to three of Africa's biggest road races – Two Oceans Marathon, Cape Town Marathon and Comrades. These three marathons have proven themselves as billboards promoting the city's attractions, as their locations are included in the race routes. They are also perfect excuses for social runners to visit the city, to run and experience the city's fervour, while emptying their wallets with a smile on their faces. Cape Town also uses sport in promoting noble causes like conservation and carbon neutrality, which the city's handlers seek to be known for. This is a solid approach to building lasting legacy.

Moses Mahbida Stadium in Durban attests to the city's strategy to

ensure that sporting facilities are multidisciplinary in outlook and utility. Not only does it host soccer matches, adventure seekers can go bungee jumping, ziplining and do other extreme activities.

Kenya is a country that favours more than one sport which makes it a destination for more than one sports.

I'm sure you are aware of Rwanda's 'Visit Rwanda' campaign through Arsenal FC. Also, on the 16th of May, 2021, the NBA will be inaugurating African operations in Kigali, as the country seeks to make Rwanda the next top destination for basketball in Africa. African Sports Tourism Week Rwanda 2021 will be largely geared towards conservation and carbon neutrality in sport – topics dear to Rwanda's heart.

It is important to understand that sport is one of the few universal languages. If you speak it well, as a destination, you will court many people from far and from near.

In your view, what are the key success factors of a sport tourism strategy for cities?

It is key to first and foremost identify the sports that locals favour, develop them, build infrastructure, encourage participation. This is because international arrivals is as important as internal travel inspired by sport. The pandemic made certain we learn that. It is possible for a westerner that's yet to visit not to know that there are golf courses in Nigeria, but when they read or watch Georgia Oboh's interview on CNN or Sky; they most likely would have a different opinion. It is from the locals that destinations pick ambassadors that fly their flags on global stages.

This is why a sport tourism strategy that will succeed cannot afford to leave locals out. Promotion can never be overemphasised. Destinations shouldn't just build great facilities and expect them to be discovered out of the blue. It doesn't work that way.

Own and be known for a major sporting event. Sporting events are multipurpose tools that discerning destinations use in opening up their domain to arrivals and foreign investments. A city hosting a major sporting event clearly sends a message to everyone that it is open for business.

Create commodities out of sporting activities, that can be sold as experience. The beauty in this is that they can make encourage visitors year-round happen year-round, if properly tailored and promoted. This tourism sustains destinations during those seasons when there are no major sporting events.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Africa's sport tourism?

Just as sport tourism took a major hit in Europe and other continents of the world, this was also the case here in Africa. In fact, it is worse. Local football leagues rarely had stadium attendance pre-COVID-19. It became an all-time worst when people had more reasons to boycott the stadia.

In soft sports, with tourism drivers such as golf however, things took shape a bit. A number of obituaries of members of some of the top country clubs in Nigeria were being declared because the one thing that gets them active and basking in the pool of friendship and company was taken away, owing to closure of the clubs during the major height of the pandemic; other members who had been used to playing only in their own clubs sought opportunity to golf elsewhere – even if it meant travelling to other states in the federation in search of tee times. This isn't to say that sport tourism has returned to what we used to know as normal. No, it hasn't, thanks to the blow COVID-19 dealt both national and individual economies.

Now that the pandemic has compelled everyone to look inwards and become more active, it is my earnest hope that African nations look in the direction of sports tourism, knowing that sport is a pilgrimage that brings footfall like no other. And this charity needs to start from home. It is time to encourage our citizens to travel within our countries for sporting purposes.

“ It is important to understand that sport is one of the few universal languages. If you speak it well, as a destination, you will court many people from far and from near. ”

ABOUT THE AFRICAN SPORTS TOURISM WEEK



Created in 2018, the African Sports Tourism Week is the sports travel market event where stakeholders from both sports and tourism landscapes cross-pollinate ideas and exchange fellowship towards maximising the opportunities in sporting events holidays, with the sole goal of arriving at an Africa that consciously approaches sports as tourism.

The main objectives of the event are:

1. To encourage collection of data that can inspire accurate metrics on how best we are maximising the opportunities sport tourism provides.

2. To lay the foundation for a deliberately structured sport tourism sub-industry.

3. To create awareness on sport tourism and the potential impact it can have on African socioeconomic life.

4. To promote the sport tourism offerings of the host city/nation and other nations that partner/sponsor the event.

5. To influence policies, as best possible, that concern inter-agency relationships between tourism boards and sports commissions/ministries/associations.

6. To promote responsible choices in sports tourism

To learn more

The next edition of the African Sports Tourism Week will take place in Kigali, Rwanda and focuses on the theme of "Responsible Sports Tourism". Facebook [African Sports Tourism Week](#)

MANAGING RISKS AND BE READY FOR EVENT HOSTING

A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE



Interview with Rick Traer,
CEO Emeritus, Sport Tourism
Canada

There are many definitions for sport tourism in use throughout the world, but we use the following:

"Any activity in which people are attracted to a particular location as a sport event participant, an event spectator, or to attend sport attractions or business meetings."

Our definition revolves around competitions, primarily because of our ability to quantify/measure the spending activity associated with events. That's not to suggest, however, that other types of recreational or leisure activities (e.g., hiking, biking) are not part of the sport tourism landscape, as many definitions are broad enough to include such activities.

What is the role of major sports events in sport tourism strategy?

It is estimated that domestic and intercommunity events drive 85-90% of the CAN \$6.8 billion sport tourism industry in Canada consisting of events that typically involve families traveling to competitions with their children on weekends (Friday to Sunday). After hosting local, provincial and national events, hosting international sport events can be a logical progression on the hosting continuum once the infrastructure, expertise and volunteer base is in place. Hosting major international events can achieve a variety of local or national objectives, including economic, tourism, social, sport and infrastructure development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has swept away all the certainties we had, including in the field of sports tourism. What do you think the future of sport tourism looks like? Would you talk about an evolution or a revolution?

When Sport Tourism Canada reached out to its members to ask the question, 'My vision for the sport tourism industry in 2021 is ...' they delivered! The result is a compilation of self-recorded video submissions that tie into STC's Bouncing Back initiative.

Videos submitted feature the following destinations: Edmonton, Quebec City, London, Leduc, Penticton, Kelowna, Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo, Lethbridge, Waterloo Region, Swift Current, Quispamsis, Lake Louise, Winnipeg, Calgary, Laval

Here's what they said:



What are the key success factors for a sport tourism strategy for cities today / in a post-COVID 19 world?

The key success factors in the development of a sport tourism strategy for cities in a post-pandemic landscape were identified by our recent COVID-19 Recovery Task Force Report entitled Bouncing Back! that states that the planning playbook for sport events of all sizes is no longer applicable during the recovery of a global pandemic. Therefore rights holders, host organisations, venues and suppliers to events require support to be nimbler to enable informed decision-making. This state of readiness will prepare all stakeholders in the sport hosting system to adapt as knowledge evolves and risk mitigation measures are developed and made available.

Planning in the short term will be completely different with factors for future sport hosting success including:

- Generating multiple sources of revenue including:
 - Public sources for bidding and hosting success;
 - Ticket revenue based on limited capacities due to public health requirements for host venues; and
 - Sponsor revenue with reduced business to business and business to consumer opportunities.
- Managing event expenses based on new realities to meet operational requirements due to COVID-19.
- Developing new event operational protocols that meet public health requirements.
- Proactive risk management including health and safety, financial, legal and reputational risks will require collaboration from all groups involved in bidding and hosting.

- Creating positive sport event experiences for participants and spectators that meets local, provincial and Canadian standards require ingenuity and investment in tools and resources to support all stakeholders.
- Visitors will return to sport events before other leisure travel and their experience must be rooted in good planning, better communication with shared responsibility in building customer and public confidence in travel and events.

Over the mid to long-term, sport tourism can be reimagined to withstand the recovery from impacts of COVID-19 and ultimately adapt and thrive in bidding and hosting well beyond the pandemic.

“ Sport tourism is any activity in which people are attracted to a particular location as a sport event participant, an event spectator, or to attend sport attractions or business meetings.”

@smartTandSport

ABOUT SPORT TOURISM CANADA



Sport Tourism Canada (STC) is a non-governmental, member-based, capacity building organisation that promotes sport tourism as a grassroots economic development initiative at the community level. STC services over 500 members across Canada, including 130 municipalities, 300 national and provincial sport, multi-sport and major games organisations and a variety of other sport and tourism industry partners. Sport tourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry in Canada with over \$6.8 billion in annual spending by domestic and international visitors.

If a city is interested in developing a sport tourism strategy, what would be your advice to them?

In Canada, one of the first tools we developed was the Sport Tourism Planning Template that was designed to serve host communities in two key ways: first, it can build understanding of the opportunity that sport tourism represents as an emerging market segment; second, communities seeking to establish or update a plan can benefit from using this process as a guide in the development of a comprehensive sport tourism strategy. This tool is broken down in five stages or modules:

1. Expanding Knowledge of Sport Tourism
2. Assessing Community Capacity
3. Building a Vision and Setting Objectives
4. Developing a Strategic Approach
5. Evaluation and Accountability

Like all strategies, those for sport tourism are based on research specific to the market or community in question. The Sport Tourism Planning Template provides examples of the types of information that can be assessed to inform the short and long-term plans for sport tourism. A consistent approach to developing sport tourism, rooted in sound research and focused on clear outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs), can help to enhance the economic, social/cultural and sustainability impacts realised from each sport event and the overall sport tourism program for a host community.



Ottawa Race Weekend



Durham Region 2019 Ontario Parasport Games



3X3 Basketball - Edmonton

To learn more

[Sport Tourism Canada.](#)

A copy of the Template can be accessed here:

[NEW Sport Tourism Planning Template.docx](#)

CHOOSING EVENTS THAT MATCH WITH THE CITY'S DNA

A DANISH PERSPECTIVE



Interview with Lars Lundov,
CEO, Sport Event Denmark

How does hosting major international sports events contribute to increasing the attractiveness of Denmark and its cities as a tourist destination?

Hosting major sporting events increases the awareness of a country, a region, or a city - and is thus an effective platform for sharing relevant stories, positions of strengths, and values about the place. The unique thing about hosting a major event is that you have a unique opportunity to demonstrate – not just talk about – these things directly to your audience, such as visiting fans, athletes, media representatives, VIP guests and many others. Let me give you an example.

Denmark is very well known for its bicycle culture, as a large number of Danes use their bicycle every day, whether as a means of transport or to get good exercise. Therefore, it makes perfect sense for Denmark to focus on major bicycle events and on bicycle tourism in general. Both elements will be exposed on a large scale when Denmark hosts the Tour de France Grand Depart next year. A three-day major event that starts in Copenhagen and ends close to the German border in the city of Sønderborg. In connection with this world-leading event for the elite, several mass-participation events will be organised in different cities across our country and will include targeted sporting activities for all participants from abroad and from Denmark.

Additionally, the many Tour de France cycling activities also go hand in hand with Denmark's ambitious focus on climate and sustainability. CO-2 emissions from cycling are very limited, and this is just one story that can be told within the climate and sustainability area.

When deciding to bid for a major sports event, what are the main selection criteria that guide your decision?

The main tool we are using in the Sport Event Denmark selection process is a score card with seven criteria:

Mercantile / marketing criteria:

- International tourism turnover for the benefit of the Danish tourism industry
- International promotion of Denmark, the host city, the sport

Sporting criteria:

- Prestige of the event
- Danish elite-level
- Development of sport

Anchoring criteria:

- Involvement of the Danes
- Organisational strength

In other words, tourism development is an important criterion, but it is not overweighted relative to the other criteria. Our selection is based on a holistic view and approach.

However, it is important to emphasise that the above reflects the criteria that Sport Event Denmark prioritises. An individual host city may have different priorities, but tourism development is pretty much always important.

As a partner of Danish cities in the organisation of major sports events, what are their main objectives and pillars for developing tourism?

It can of course vary from city to city but commonly the objective is to create revenue for the tourism industry as well as promote the city nationally and internationally. In addition, it is most often a desire to link the city's most important values to the event hosting. For example, in relation to our capital Copenhagen.

Copenhagen hosts events in-line with the city's DNA, using events to showcase the city as a sustainable front runner and one of the world's most livable cities. A city where the locals are cycling everywhere, where it is possible to swim safely in the clean harbor, and where you can enjoy an organic meal in some of the world's best restaurants.



To learn more

Sport Event Denmark

“ The unique thing about hosting a major event is that you have a unique opportunity to demonstrate – not just talk about - these things directly to your audience, such as visiting fans, athletes, media representatives, VIP guests and many others. ”

ABOUT SPORT EVENT DENMARK

**SPORT EVENT
DENMARK**

Sport Event Denmark is a national event organisation established in 1995 by the Danish Government and the National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark with the main objective of attracting and organising major international sports events and sports congresses.

Very importantly, Sport Event Denmark recognises the importance of adding value to an event and its owner and always strive do its utmost to exceed the expectations of all stakeholders.

During the last years more than 350 international sporting events have been secured including a wide range of World Championships, European Championships, World Cups and major sports conferences.

FROM STRATEGY TO ACTION

Cities share their ambitions and achievements on how to develop relevant sport tourism policies that address the 21st century challenges; to design creative solutions in order to remain attractive despite the pandemic restrictions and the post-Covid new norm; and to innovatively define new sport tourism models according to their objectives and choices: economic growth, city events, active sport tourism, Olympic dynamics, and sustainability.

#ECONOMIC GROWTH

FRISCO, TEXAS, USA: FROM AN UNPRETENTIOUS CITY TO THE
MECCA OF SPORTS

#CITY EVENTS

RUGBY WORLD CUP 2019 IN JAPAN: A TALE OF TWELVE CITIES
POP-UP EVENTS AND VENUES: THE SHOW IS DOWNTOWN

#ACTIVE SPORT TOURISM

ATHENS, GREECE: THE CITY WANTS VISITORS TO MAKE JOGGING PART OF
THEIR JOURNEY
THREE QUESTIONS FOR EVANGELOS VLACHOS
KIGALI, RWANDA: ITS DUAL APPROACH TO SPORT TOURISM

#OLYMPIC DYNAMICS

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, ITALY: ON THE WAY TO THE 2026 OLYMPICS

#SUSTAINABILITY

AARHUS, DENMARK: HOW SPORTS EVENTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF A CITY'S SUSTAINABILITY BRANCH

FRISCO, TEXAS, USA: FROM AN UNPRETENTIOUS CITY TO THE MECCA OF SPORTS

Combining a genuine conviction in the benefits of sports with efficient management, a hands-on approach to service, and responsiveness in facing the pandemic, Frisco, Texas, deserves its reputation as a sport destination.

Back at the turn of the 21st century, the City of Frisco, Texas, was a sleepy town on the northern outskirts of Dallas. The farming community of 35,000 had more cows than people. The major artery, the Dallas North Tollway, stopped just short of its border. But in just 20 years, Frisco has become one of the fastest growing US cities and one of the leading sports destinations. Nothing seems to stop the city's growth, not even the COVID-19 pandemic. While the sports sector has suffered greatly from the health crisis, Frisco has found ways to minimise the negative impact and has even experienced successful sport tourism.

So, what are Frisco's secrets to success? How did this city of 200,000 inhabitants become a national reference in sport tourism and is now considered the Mecca of sports? And how has the city managed and coped with the COVID-19 pandemic?

The secrets of Frisco's sports tourism success

One of the secrets to Frisco's success is the respect for sports held by the city leaders, residents, and various community groups.

Because of this support, Visit Frisco, the official Destination Marketing Organisation for the City of Frisco, has a "seat at the table" to influence and assist with true destination management.

Moreover, Visit Frisco has a hands-on servicing approach when hosting events. To mention only two, Frisco's sports events that attracted the most visitors include:

- NCAA Division I Football Championship Series. Frisco has hosted the event for the past 11 years with an agreement to continue through at least 2027. The average annual economic impact of the event is around \$9 million.
- Conference USA Men's and Women's Basketball Championships. Frisco has hosted the event for the past four years and has an eye on extending. The average annual economic impact of the event is \$4 million.

While Frisco is located within in a major market with incredible airlift, the spirit of the community has maintained that 'close-knit/can-do' attitude of a small town.

Finally, Visit Frisco embraces a 'regional approach' to sports tourism and actively collaborates with neighbouring destinations to maximise the potential of the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

“ We do not have to convince anyone of the importance or benefits of sports in our community.”

Josh Dill, Visit Frisco Director of Sports & Events



Ford Center at The Star, Frisco-USA

Led by Visit Frisco, the City's pillars for sport tourism are threefold:

1
Establishing Frisco as a desirable destination to host sporting events.

2
Building and maintaining successful sports partnerships.

3
Recognition of sport tourism as an economic development strategy.

Sports City USA: an initiative launched to tell the sports story of Frisco

Along with the five professional sports teams that call the city home, Frisco also features multiple world-class athletic facilities, prestigious medical and sports rehabilitation centres, national and international athletic organisations and an emerging eSports community. All these positives contribute to Frisco being known as Sports City USA.

Since its launch, Sports City USA has evolved into more of a brand, or a tagline, lending a 'sense of community' for the city. Not only does Visit Frisco actively promote this message, but city leaders and sports partners such as Jerry Jones, owner of the Dallas Cowboys, and PGA of America executives regularly refer to Frisco as Sports City USA.

“ Partnerships with sports partners have always been strong, but seem to have strengthened in the last year, in part due to our department's drive to aid and assist with recovery efforts.”

Josh Dill, Visit Frisco Director of Sports & Events

Turning the COVID-19 pandemic into an opportunity

From the beginning, Visit Frisco saw the pandemic as an opportunity to assist its sports venues and operators by being a hub of information. Visit Frisco shared the latest news on current restrictions and regulations and provided a platform for partners to share best practices and resources for hosting events safely.

Visit Frisco later spearheaded the city's initiative for venues and hotels to attain the Global Biorisk Advisory Council's STAR Accreditation to help travellers feel safe about returning to the city.

As restrictions in Texas relaxed, Frisco's venues were prepared to safely host events, which allowed the City to capitalise on the need to quickly relocate events from other areas of the country. Visit Frisco assisted in the relocation of three youth hockey events, one international world championship hockey tournament, a college football bowl game and a national collegiate basketball tournament.

To learn more

[Visit Frisco](#)

What more you should know about Frisco's sport tourism strategy:

SNEAK PEEK OF THE NATIONAL SOCCER HALL OF FAME (NSHOF)

NSHOF is an interactive and immersive experience that can be enjoyed by die-hard and casual soccer fans alike. It blends the traditional displays of memorabilia and the story of soccer with interactive, hands-on, game-like experiences. The NSHOF equally represents and includes Men's and Women's teams and notable players and is the home of the four US Women's FIFA World Cup Trophies.

NSHOF plays a crucial role in Frisco and the Dallas-Fort Worth region's bid to host the 2026 World Cup.

Finally, while it still needs to be confirmed, NSHOF will host 2020 Tokyo Olympics Watch Parties for soccer matches.

FRISCO TO BECOME THE "MODERN HOME OF AMERICAN GOLF"

Opening summer 2022, PGA Frisco, PGA of America's new headquarters, will be the preeminent home for golf in the U.S. The 600-acre project will feature two championship courses, a short course, practice areas and clubhouse. An adjacent 529-room Omni resort with 12,000 m2. conference centre will open in 2023.

"With these world class courses as the centerpiece, PGA Frisco will become the modern home of American golf", according to PGA of America CEO Seth Waugh.

This unprecedented development will be a premier destination for golf enthusiasts, families, and business travellers alike.

www.smartcitiesandsport.org



She Believes Cup 2020 Toyota Stadium

RUGBY WORLD CUP 2019 IN JAPAN: A TALE OF TWELVE CITIES

The facilitation of major events across different cities can also benefit sport tourism. Indeed, this type of organisation allows tourists to go beyond a single host city and visit an entire country or at least several regions. This approach allows each host city to benefit from economic spin-offs, as opposed to a scenario where revenues are centralised in one location. In addition, multi-city events also enable host cities to develop and promote their brand image to tourists who might not otherwise travel to them. RWC 2019 in Japan offers a good illustration of the impact of multi-site sports events on tourism!



Rugby World Cup 2019

©Stefan Lehner on Unsplash

The Rugby World Cup is the flagship tournament for both men's and women's rugby and is typically staged in four-yearly cycles for teams who have passed specified qualification criteria. Since the inaugural tournament in 1987, Rugby World Cups have been held in Europe, North America, Africa and Oceania. The latest one – in Japan in 2019 – was the first time the event had ever been held in Asia.

The men's tournament in Japan in was the most economically successful Rugby World Cup ever, with US \$ 5.6 billion generated in economic output according to the Economic Impact of Rugby World Cup 2019 (RWC 2019) Report published by Ernst and Young.

The venues were spread across the country in a balanced manner between urban areas and regions, allowing the whole country to benefit from the event. Any hosted match becomes a major event in itself for the host city within a larger national event. More precisely, Japan 2019's matches were conveniently spread across twelve stadia and 16 fan zones in twelve cities on three of the four main islands that make up Japan: Yokohama, Tokyo, Sapporo, Oita, Osaka, Kobe, Kumamoto, Fukuoka, Aichi, Iwate, Saitama and Shizuoka.

A winning bet on international tourism

Figures speak for themselves and prove how much the combination of sport events and tourism are a win-win proposition, as highlighted in the Ernst & Young Review of Outcomes:



- 242,000 international visitors from 178 nations staying an average of 17 days vs 14 days for RWC 2015
- 60 % of fans visiting Japan for the first time
- Tourists visited five cities on average
- 90 % of fans said they would return to Japan
- US \$ 3 billion spent in Japan by international visitors
- Daily spend was 4.6 times higher than that spent by the average visitor to Japan in 2018
- US \$ 375 average spend per international visitor per night, almost double compared to England 2015

The report also took a close look at what inbound spectators did while in the country. Results show that many inbound spectators travelled long distances around Japan following the matches of their national teams, which resulted in a trend towards longer stays. Moreover, four different types of tourists; each with different expectations were identified:

1. 'Activity lover'; i.e., people who actively sought out tourism opportunities in Japan such as: 'drinking Sake', or 'bathing in hot springs' – accounted for 38% of inbound spectators.
2. 'Culture explorer'; i.e., people who visited a number of regions and tried to encounter ordinary Japan – accounted for 28% of inbound spectators.
3. 'Tournament visitor'; i.e., people who wanted to stay and relax while they enjoyed the tournament – accounted for 19% of inbound spectators.
4. 'Typical tourist'; i.e., people who visited popular destinations for ordinary tourists – accounted for 15% of inbound spectators.

Beyond the tourism and economic impact, the social impact

Such a high level of national passion for a rugby competition is rather unprecedented in Japan. Nearly all Japanese people became 'nikawas fans', non-core fans attracted by the excellent results of the national team attaining the quarter finals of the tournament and by the atmosphere generated by a very well-organised event. A strong feeling of national pride emerged from the competition.

Academics looked at an interesting element of the 2019 RWC, namely the overall social impact of the event on Japanese residents, distinguishing between the expected social impact (pre-event) and the experienced social impact (post-event). The results indicate that emotional expectations played an important



Rugby World Cup 2019

role in predicting viewer behaviour during the event. This confirms that the expected emotional benefits of sport inspire consumer behaviour.

At the city level, the RWC 2019 host cities developed interesting strategies for promoting their image through the event beyond tourism attractiveness; one example is the City of Higashi Osaka, in Osaka Prefecture. The latter developed its city, not only by renovating the football stadium, but also by developing the entire area around the stadium, including the park and the museum. It also set the stage for wheelchair sport, with the aim of attracting these events after the RWC.

The 2019 RWC is a successful example of a major sport event achieving short-term economic objectives and longer-term social benefits, a renewed image of the country and the host cities both abroad and internally, and combining soft and hard legacies.

References

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- Rugby World Cup brought 30% more tourists to Japan from participating countries, Inquirer.net
- Rugby World Cup 2019 Review of outcomes, EY Japan 2020.
- The Economic Impact of the Rugby World Cup 2019, EY Japan 2020.

“Co-hosting events across cities, regions or countries is an important trend for the future as it will allow for more sustainable impact by using existing infrastructure as well as developing those social and cultural benefits across a much greater geographical area.”

Paul Bush OBE, Director of Events at VisitScotland

POP-UP EVENTS AND VENUES: THE SHOW IS DOWNTOWN!

Individually, sport and tourism are two ways to promote or to discover a city. When combined, synergies are fruitful, and the opportunities are endless! Zurich, Lausanne or Budapest are among cities that have sized up the potential of city events.

It is undeniable that sport is increasingly becoming an integral part of city life, so much so that the connection is symbiotic. Not only are more and more people playing sport in urban areas, but sporting events have moved to the heart of cities. Although attending sports events – or ‘going to the show’ – is usually associated with booking a place in dedicated venues and facilities, often in large infrastructures relegated to the suburbs due to space and transport problems, the current trend is quite different: bringing sport closer to citizens.

Multiplying pop-up events in temporary venues within the city centre can change the perception of sports and of cities themselves. With the development of temporary venues during major sport events, cities have an opportunity to highlight iconic places and to attract a diverse audience, from inhabitants to tourists and from passers-by to sport lovers. Three of the most valuable impacts from city events include:

- Increasing interaction and social bonds within the population, both between inhabitants and visitors;
- Promoting sport in an unconventional manner;
- Showcasing cities’ emblematic places or monuments as the events are broadcast, offering high visibility for potential tourists.

The Olympic Games host cities quickly recognised the potential of showcasing their city through sport to an audience of billions on TV. Many of us recall the beach volleyball competition which took place in front of Buckingham Palace during London 2012. This provided an occasion to showcase one of the most iconic places in the city through an uncommon angle and demonstrated the relevance of temporary venues. Some major sport federations have also set up recurrent urban events that people eagerly look forward to every year.

City Event, Athletissima-Lausanne 2020



The case of athletics

World Athletics (previously the IAAF) was one of the first federations to encourage cities to organise side-events during athletics meetings. Such events are not part of the requirements to host a meeting but are highly recommended by World Athletics. It is not easy to find the right balance between elite sport at temporary venues and within stadia. 'Exhibition events' are often organised, but some event organisers work closely with cities to set up city events such as high-quality official contests.

The City of Zurich in Switzerland was a pioneer in organising shot put and pole vault contests for the annual diamond league meeting – 'Weltklasse' – in the City's main train station as early as 2012. In 2021, for the first time in the history of the Wanda Diamond League, all 32 final events will take place within the same city: Zurich. And the city has even decided to split disciplines between the traditional Letzigrund Stadium, the train station and the Sechseläutenplatz, right in the city centre!

In Lausanne, the Olympic Capital, the famous "Athletissima" Diamond league meeting began to offer a free city event in 2018. And the discipline chosen for the event is one of the most spectacular but also the most difficult to set up outside of a stadium. Pole vault competition offers a dizzying show! Every



City Event, Athletissima-Lausanne 2020

year, a new location within the city is selected, which generates new insights and emotions. As Armand Duplantis, winner of the meeting said in 2020: "This evening, the most important objective was not the world record, but the spectacle offered to the public".

According to Olivier Delapierre, the new COO of Athletissima, city events are "a way forward, this approach is also supported and encouraged by the Diamond League, because it makes it possible to promote an event and to get closer to the general public in a different way. For this year, we are once again considering a City Event as part of the meeting, which we hope to be able to set up as a great moment of sport and free entertainment for families in the centre of the City of Lausanne. We will see how we can energise the entertainment dimension even more without denaturing sport, which is at the heart of what we do".

In 2021, the post-Tokyo meeting scheduled for 26 August will attract sport stars and fans and on 25 August will again offer an event in the city centre. This year will feature the Men's High Jump competition for the first time ever.

“ This evening, the most important objective was not the world record, but the spectacle offered to the public.”

Armand Duplantis, pole vaulter and the current world indoor record holder



©GAISF - WUG

Sport, Tourism and place branding

Sport, tourism and place branding appear to offer win-win combinations. City events are an efficient way to promote both the city and sport and to showcase multifaceted cities.

In the 2010s, city events were part of the International Ski Federation's strategy to promote skiing through a head-to-head racing format. Munich and Moscow led the way, followed by Oslo and Stockholm as they all organised thrilling contests within their city centres where the crowd could attend a very unexpected event! The parallel competition is now back on the mountain slopes but both athletes and fans treasure the memories of these special features. The city event was used to popularise this new type of competition before it became more "institutionalised".

Urban sports are another way of promoting cities and specific city areas or urban architecture by showcasing these locales in a unique manner. An approach that Budapest has developed to a large extent. In 2019, the Hungarian capital city hosted the first edition of the World Urban Games, which celebrate new generation sports. In a more local version, the city has developed Budapest Urban Games (BUG) gathering sport fans who utilise and shape the city as a venue for doing sports, by supporting sports communities. The invitation to join says it all: "Use the city, and build it for doing sports! Join us or build a community to make sporting your life! Utilise the town, as the gym is not the only

place where you can do sports"! Sporting communities, citizens, the time has come again to use the town as a sports venue!!!

We have not yet finished exploring the potential of cities to connect sport with tourism, as cities can be seen both as open-ended sport grounds and cultural places at the same time!

“ City events are an efficient way to promote both the city and sport and to showcase multifaceted cities.”

To learn more

- Lausanne Cité
- Zurich Diamond League
- Budapest Urban Games

ATHENS, GREECE: THE CITY WANTS VISITORS TO MAKE JOGGING PART OF THEIR JOURNEY

From a historically grounded marathon to running paths for all, the Olympic City of Athens has made the bet on easing sport practice within the city, for the pleasure of both locals and tourists.

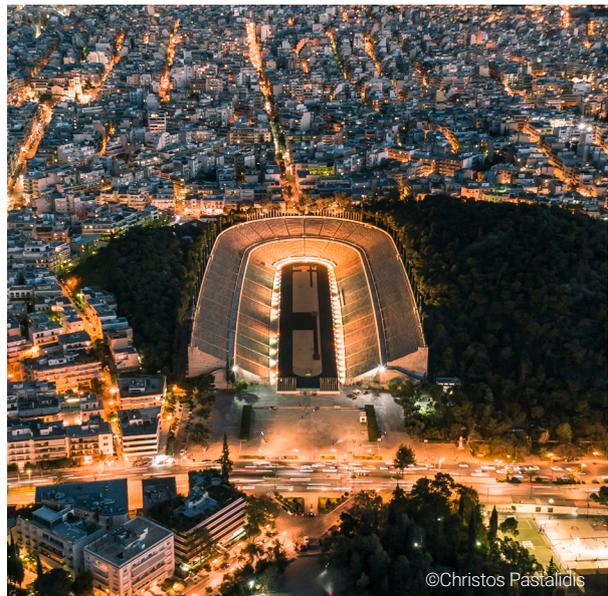
Athens claims some of history's first running champions as well as the world's oldest city streets that are today vibrant as ever. It's no surprise that both amateur and professional runners want to hit the terrain around the Greek capital and connect with its storied past.

Now the City of Athens is hoping to motivate a new generation of local runners and visitors to start jogging in the city. It's part of a strategy to spark development and inspire tourism by focusing on quality of life across the city's 129 neighborhoods.

Building upon history

Athens runs deep in the history of sport. For the 1896 Athens Olympics, the first Games sponsored by the International Olympic Committee, the organisers created a rugged cross-country race

“ The City of Athens is hoping to motivate a new generation of local runners and visitors to start jogging in the city.”



@smartTandSport

Kalimarmaro Panathenaic Stadium, City of Athens

that began in the small village of Marathon and ended in the centre of Athens. The route was inspired by ancient stories of a soldier named Pheidippides who ran the 42km route at a breakneck pace to deliver news of victory against invading Persian forces in 490 BCE.

Nearly 2,500 years later, the winner of the first Olympic Marathon was Spyros Louis, a young watercarrier who gave Greece its first gold medal victory, cementing the connection between ancient ideals and modern competitive sport.

The annual Athens Classic Marathon has followed the original

route since 1972, rightly calling itself “The Authentic.” A half-Marathon is contested in the city centre annually in March and is sponsored in part by the City of Athens.

Running routes for all

This is Athens, the Official Visitors Guide to the City of Athens online at thisisathens.org, is putting more classic routes on the map to inspire travelers to pack their training gear when they come to Athens. The editorial team asked local runners to plot courses that take in the Acropolis and the city’s varied landscapes. One of the most glorious morning runs begins on the pine covered paths below the Acropolis, weaving between ancient theaters and archaeological sites and along the historic streets of Thiseio and Plaka. The home stretch passes the Panathenaic Stadium with its all-marble seating reconstructed for the first Olympics, and the site of the finish line for the Classic Marathon.

Running in Athens sure can be interesting, but it is not always the easiest place to run. September through April offer ideal weather for training, while July and August regularly have temperatures breaking 30C (86F) in the middle of the day. The landscape features hills of all sizes for intensive training, while the flat surfaces are often busy with pedestrians and car traffic during working hours.

The City of Athens has begun investments that will make walking and running easier in the coming years. This year the city began repaving 50% of the roads across the city to take care of potholes and debris that have accumulated over the last decade. The city is adding new park spaces, repairing water fountains, and working to lower summer temperatures by creating green corridors that help move air through the city.

To learn more

[Running routes in Athens](#)

[City and Sea: A Runner’s Guide to Athens](#)

City of Athens With History At Our Backs Areios Pagos Hill



THREE QUESTIONS FOR EVANGELOS VLACHOS



Evangelos Vlachos, CEO of
the Athens Development and
Destination Management
Agency

1.

Do outdoor sports play an important role for the tourism sector in Athens? What are the main objectives of the sport tourism strategy?

Sports have always been an important part of our local way of life and part of our international reputation. Athenians spend a large part of their daily lives outdoors, especially during the spring and fall when the weather is perfect for sports and family meals outside. The outdoors is a crucial part of our quality of life. The City of Athens has recently begun several ambitious projects to maintain and protect parks and the outdoors as part of our urban life, because this doesn't need to be a contradiction, and we would like visitors to know more about this part of our cultural heritage so that they can enjoy it too. For instance, we want people to know that jogging in Athens under the Acropolis is a totally unique experience and something that should be on their bucket lists.

2.

Why have you decided to focus on active sport tourism initiatives? Are more visitors asking for information about where to go for exercise?

People are not only coming to Athens to see major attractions like the Acropolis, they are also bringing their at-home routines. They are staying longer and traveling more slowly and thoughtfully. Many travelers look for ways to adapt their daily lives to Athens so that they can learn something from the city and explore life from a different angle. Our official guide, This is Athens, is designed to help visitors accomplish all of these goals. We want visitors to have a trip that is meaningful and feels good, so we keep adding more content about active sports. It's a great place to learn about all the trails, waves, and slopes around the city.

3.

The link between the City of Athens and Olympism is very strong. How does your city exploit this unique asset in its sport tourism strategy?

The legacy of the Olympics is very important to us. It is part of our local history, and it has left its imprint on the fabric of the city because we have hosted the Games at least twice in modern history. Athens also has a history of excellence in sports at the highest levels of competition, as well as a desire to be globally competitive whether it is a match at the Olympics or recruiting new talent and investment to the city. The Olympics is a source of pride and a key part of our story.

To learn more

Athens Development and destination
Management Agency

KIGALI, RWANDA: ITS DUAL STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SPORT TOURISM

The tourism data for the pre-COVID-19 period are striking. In 2019, tourism revenues increased by 17% from US \$ 425 million in 2018 to US \$ 498 million in 2019 . And the capital City of Kigali is working hard to become a top tourist destination. To achieve this, it has decided to turn to sport tourism, one of the fastest growing sectors of tourism.

Not only has the city focused on attracting major sporting events, but it has also looked at how to develop its attractiveness through active sport tourism, while putting the interests of local people at the heart of this strategy.

In recent years, the City of Kigali has hosted a wide range of major sporting events, including CAN (Africa Cup of Nations - football), CECAFA (Council of East and Central African Football Associations), Tour du Rwanda in cycling, Afro-basketball, regional rallies, the Kigali International Peace Marathon, the East African Military Games, and regional tennis tournaments.

This dual strategic approach of hosting events and developing active sport tourism has raised Rwanda's profile as a sport tourism destination. It has also generated revenue from sport and provided short-term employment opportunities. These types of activities will be scaled up to make Rwanda a sports hub in the region and in Africa.

The City of Kigali's tourism attributes

Kigali International Airport offers easy access to the city with direct flights from Europe, serves major European, US, Asian, African, and Middle Eastern airlines, and will soon have direct flights from the US. The new Bugesera International Airport, currently under construction, is located about 15 km east of the city.

Noted as one of the safest and friendliest of African capitals, Kigali enjoys a moderate high-altitude climate that belies its tropical location. It is a three-hour drive from the main tourist sites of Musanze (in the north) and Akagera National Park (in the east of the country).



Kigali Car Free Day



©City of Kigali

Kigali Car Free Day

Leveraging the Kigali International Peace Marathon to develop sport tourism

Together with the 'Tour du Rwanda' (cycling competition), the Kigali International Peace Marathon is the sport event that attracts the most visitors to Kigali.

The Kigali International Peace Marathon has become a 'can't miss event' and continues to grow. As the only marathon in the world organised under the theme of peace, the event is used by the City of Kigali as a platform to promote peace and to raise its sports profile. Plans are in place to elevate this annual running event to a major 'destination' marathon with great potential for international runners.

The 13th edition of Kigali International Peace Marathon 2021, took place on June 20, 2021, with a limited number of participants and strict COVID-19 protocols.

Its increasing number of international-level sports venues and focus on hosting athletic events make Rwanda optimistic that the Kigali International Peace Marathon will become a major destination marathon, foundational to Rwanda's burgeoning sports tourism industry.



Did you know?

Kigali is known for being the cleanest and safest city in Africa. In 2008, the City of Kigali was honoured with the prestigious Habitat Scroll of Honour award from the United Nations Human Settlements Programme. The award acknowledged the City of Kigali's contribution of many innovations in building a model, modern city symbolised by zero tolerance for plastics, improved garbage collection and a substantial reduction in crime. The City of Kigali is the first city authority to win this prestigious award in Africa.

The COVID-19 pandemic impact on the City of Kigali's sports activities

To stop the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Kigali underwent a total lockdown in March-April 2020 and in February-March 2021 and restrictions were imposed: restriction of movements, closure of sports facilities, sports events, closure of borders and airports. These COVID-19 preventive measures put a stop to almost all sports events, except for individual sports such as jogging, running, walking, and cycling.

Developing active sport tourism with a strong focus on 'local residents first'

The City of Kigali's approach to active sports tourism deserves special attention. Indeed, through the development of active sports tourism, the city sees the opportunity to make its inhabitants more active. This approach not only benefits the locals but also promotes the city through being active rather than just saying so. Two concrete examples are presented here.

The development of a new sports hub

The southern suburb of Gahanga (now under development), is set to become a primary sports hub for Kigali residents, which will also drive economic growth in the region. It will offer spaces for leisure activity and therefore facilitate an active lifestyle for residents.

In addition, this new hub will see the development of Eco Parks and other outdoor recreational facilities to boost eco-tourism and promote cultural activities. It will also see the establishment of cultural centres based on the city's unique heritage of promoting tourism (and also foster a sense of belonging among Kigali residents).

The Kigali Car Free Day

Kigali Car Free Day – a sport event initiated and managed by

the City of Kigali - is organised twice a month, with some Kigali's roads closed for motorised vehicles to be used only for walking, jogging, and cycling.

The event not only contributes to the promotion of Kigali internationally, as a healthy and green city, but mainly aims to promote the culture of sport among Kigali City residents and to make Kigali a green city, contributing, to a certain extent, to the reduction of gas emissions by alleviating road traffic.

Organised every other Sunday, the event is also an opportunity for great cheer and socialisation for City residents. It is a moment dedicated to the well-being of the city inhabitants by placing the promotion of a better lifestyle as a priority, offering a variety of sports activities in groups as well as free medical screening stands and medical advice for non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

This initiative, which is very popular in Kigali is attracting more and more participants, and is currently being scaled up in other Districts and remote areas of the country. The Car-Free Day also provides opportunities for mobilisation on environmental protection awareness campaigns during environment week, such as plastic reduction, natural resource management, air pollution, and an improved healthy lifestyle including exercise, better nutrition habits.

The cheerful atmosphere prevailing during this event makes it attractive not only for residents, but also for visitors who have made it a "not-to-miss" event while they are in the country. Most of them gave this event high praise in their blogs and comments in social media when they returned home, which the City of Kigali hopes, will attract other visitors or at least be on the agenda of those who will be coming for other purposes.

To learn more

[Kigali Marathon](#)

Rwanda Development Board, [2019 Annual Report](#)



CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, ITALY: ON THE WAY TO THE 2026 OLYMPICS



Interview with Gianpietro Ghedina, Mayor of Cortina d'Ampezzo

Host of the 1956 Olympic Games, Cortina d'Ampezzo is once again preparing to host the Winter Games, 70 years later. And in 2021, Cortina hosted the Alpine Skiing World Championships. Hosting international events is a distinct choice with implications at different levels. How is the organisation of major sporting events a source of immediate attractiveness for the municipality and the region? And what place is given to tourist attraction in this overall strategy?

Cortina, and especially the Public Administration I represent, strongly believes in major events. In particular, major sporting events are opportunities for visibility at an international level, and as a good time for investments in restructuring and modernising the services that we guarantee. Of course, this always omits the centre of the territory, the nature, the beauty of our unspoiled landscape.

Since 1979 Cortina has blocked the land-use plan, and therefore it is not possible to build new buildings except for public and general interest. So major sporting events are a great occasion to attract capital resources and to make a city like Cortina d'Ampezzo more modern and welcoming, giving residents an additional opportunity to continue living in their own city.

In its history, Cortina has had the fortune, and I would say it is unique, to have hosted the Winter Olympics. Seventy years after the Olympics in 1956, we will host the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter

Olympic Games: a project that looks at sustainability as one of the fundamental themes, focusing on our territory and people. A widespread project, which includes not only Cortina, but also Milan, the territories of the Veneto region, the Lombardy region, and the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano. Of course, these international sporting events are an occasion of great visibility, especially in terms of tourism.

How does the municipality of Cortina brand its image? Does it combine sport and tourism in its communication strategy to attract visitors? If so, how is this win-win combination of "sport" with "tourism" elaborated?

Cortina is lucky to count on two tourist seasons, summer and winter, and sport is definitely the centre of our program, for both winter and summer sports. More and more the summer has an important part in planning and in our proposal.

There is great desire and interest in doing physical activities and sports in the mountains. This is not only from the Italian tourists but also and especially from the foreign tourists. Our territory, more than the mountain territory in general, with its large spaces, offers infinite opportunities, given the fact that the so-called healthy activities and sports can find the ideal terrain in Cortina: the unique, wide and sunny Ampezzo Valley.

So, winter sports, as well as summer sports like mountain bike, running, trekking, hiking and climbing, are sports in which Cortina



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is strongly focused on. Many themed events, starting with the Giro d'Italia on 24 May, are planned for the coming summer, this autumn and beyond.

Hosting major sporting events also creates a legacy beyond the event itself. How does Cortina integrate a long-term vision on tourism development into its event hosting strategy?

Regarding our heritage, we certainly need to make targeted efforts and attract resources in order to provide better services for both tourists and occasional users, and especially for our population. This is in terms of roads, parking, services and hotels, and anything related to hosting and welcoming people to Cortina.

Challenges linked to climate change currently urge mountain resorts to rethink their tourism offer in the long term. What are Cortina's responses to these challenges to be taken up to preserve this ecosystem and this resource that the mountains represent?

On the challenges related to the environment and climate change: these issues are absolutely taken into account, and that is why Cortina pays great attention to a year-round proposal, in all four seasons. Cortina offers a wide offer for the winter, that is certainly snow and ice, and not only this, but further sport activities for the summer. The well-being of mountain areas such as Cortina is certainly a great potential that we are working on.

International tourism is about 50% those visiting Cortina, tourists that come from all over the world. I think this combination of foreign tourists and local, Italian tourists is the right mix, especially

in terms of opportunities for our focus on working 365 days a year

The Covid pandemic has deeply disrupted the past year and will have an impact on the way we all approach sport, tourism and events. What kind of answers have been developed in Cortina?

The Covid 19 pandemic has been a very difficult and significant variable to manage during this period. As for the 2021 Alpine World Ski Championships, we are proud to be able to complete an event of such prestige and importance, and in a way that is extraordinarily valid. There was great resonance for the event, and despite the lack of an audience, we saw many representatives on television and on social media, the most technological tools. In Cortina we are working hard, planning in detail all tourist activity to be conducted in a safe way for those who come to Cortina.

In general, in this period, which I hope will be only a parenthesis, we are working to attract an audience which is mainly Italian, but also in the near future, to attract and to accommodate tourists from the so-called neighbouring countries. As Europe's borders are opened to countries like Austria or Germany, we will be ready. The moment they open all borders and there is once again the opportunity to travel, Cortina will be ready to welcome tourists from every country in the world.

To learn more

[CortinaMarketing](#)

[2026 Milan Cortina Winter Olympic Games](#)

AARHUS, DENMARK: HOW SPORTS EVENTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CITY'S SUSTAINABILITY BRAND

In recent years - and especially since it was recognised Capital of Culture in 2017 - Aarhus has become an internationally renowned, 'event city'. In the sports field, the city hosted the SportAccord Convention, major world championships in sailing, cross-country running, international golf and the World Badminton Championships.

While developing tourism through the hosting of sports events is usually a common pillar for host cities, the City of Aarhus also decided to use sports events as an opportunity to draw the world's attention to issues of sustainability and climate change mitigation.

So, what are the headlines of Aarhus's events and sport tourism strategy? How is sustainability integrated strategically and implemented in a real case study? And how does this strategic decision shape the city's brand and thus the development of sports tourism?

A new event strategy leading the way

In the spring of 2020, Aarhus Events, the City of Aarhus' one-stop shop for event organisers, released a new event strategy 2020-2025. This event strategy aims to set the framework for the city's event ambitions and contribute to the realisation of the city's visions. To achieve this, it strategically focuses on three main objectives:

1. Experiences and community: events must be inclusive and attractive to Aarhus residents, business owners and visitors. Above all, the event strategy should contribute to providing quality and memorable experiences.
2. Growth: events contribute to the international awareness and recognition of the city, the region and Denmark. In addition, events should contribute to the overall growth and economic development of the city, as they can create an international brand image for Aarhus and attract, in both the short term and the long term, national and international visitors with economic benefits provided through tourism, overnight stays, consumption.
3. Development: events can be a means of supporting local and national strategic efforts and policies. In a short period of time, when international, national and local visitor and media attention is high, events can help to highlight and contribute to the realisation of important strategic initiatives and the policies of the municipality in areas such as sustainability.

A selection of Aarhus's assessment criteria linked to sport tourism for deciding to host an event

The City of Aarhus has developed a set of parameters to help them make the right decision when it comes to deciding which event to host. There are four specific parameters that are of importance for the development of sports tourism:

VISIBILITY, BRANDING AND MEDIA EXPOSURE	ECONOMY	TIMING	SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN TRANSFORMATION
to assess whether an event provides an opportunity to highlight the values for which the city wants to be known or whether the event includes initiatives that are relevant to the City's objectives.	to assess whether the possible municipal financial impact will have a spin-off effect in tourism and branding, e.g., in the form of overnight stays and in the city's retail trade and restaurants.	to assess whether events have a link to business tourism initiatives and other similar actions in the urban community can ensure a year-round focus.	to assess whether an event can be used as a showcase for multiple new smart initiatives, and a sustained focus on green transition which can help make global goals a part of everyday life for event guests.

Insights from Pia Lange Christensen, CEO, VisitAarhus



“At VisitAarhus, we have a broad focus in the work of attracting tourists to the region. Major events, including major sports events, are an important asset in branding Aarhus as an active and vibrant city and a fantastic means to create international awareness. Attraction of events are also very important for the entire development of the city.

Tourism is not a goal for us, but a means to create results on several parameters: as a basis for employment, settlements, physical development, infrastructure, attraction of talents, quality of life and investments.

Aarhus is a sustainable destination. The mission of VisitAarhus is to develop tourism and promote the Aarhus region as a sustainable destination for holiday and business tourism. We have just published a new strategy for tourism in the Aarhus region, which is based on a sustainable fundament. Among other things, we are working on the green choices to be easy and accessible for guests. We wish to increase visibility and motivation among guests to use the sustainable offers and work hard to create incentives among tourist businesses to perform a green transition of their products and services”.

Leading the green transition: how events can help transform the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into 'everyday goals'

The current desire for green transition is unmistakable, and the event sector, with its short-term, orientation towards what are often large crowds, can contribute to the raising of awareness of sustainable actions and green transition where the event visitor is positively influenced to change his or her daily behaviour. Behavioural change can occur, for example, when the guest has a relevant personal experience, after which the SDGs become easier to adopt as a citizen.

In close collaboration with VisitAarhus, Aarhus University's Conference Department and WorldPerfect, Aarhus Events has

developed a Green Conference and Event Handbook – a guide to working strategically and practically with sustainability.

"One of Aarhus's strengths is that we can and want to work together across sectors. As a city, we are particularly strong when we join forces in sustainability and green experience economy. For this reason, Aarhus can help set new goals and standards for how to integrate sustainability in events and use the power of events to create actors of change." Charlotte Kirk Elkjær, Chief Advisor, Aarhus Events, City of Aarhus

The handbook provides a concrete guide for actors in Aarhus on how sustainability and the green transition can be approached in the areas of transport, waste, food and drink, electricity consumption, volunteering, and innovation.



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Aarhus 2020

From strategy to action: the case of the Ocean Race 2023

Building on its experience as host of the Hempel Aarhus Sailing World Championships in 2018 and the Tall Ships Races in 2019, the city has developed a multitude of initiatives to not only position itself as a sustainable city, but also to raise awareness and change the behaviour of visitors, participants and the business community. Let's have a look at Aarhus' plan to draw public attention to sustainability through the hosting of a stopover of the around-the-world Ocean Race 2023.

The Sustainability Island

The Sustainability Island will be a physical urban space of involvement and experiences where innovative exhibitors and entrepreneurs will showcase and activate their solutions towards a more sustainable world. These solutions will also be demonstrated to the visitors in the form of case presentations.

The Aarhus Sustainability Summit

The Aarhus Sustainability Summit will consist of the following components:

- A 'General Public Summit' to turn Sustainable Development Goals into 'Everyday Goals';

- A 'Youth Summit' giving young people a voice of their own and making them actors of change.

Changing the behaviours of visitors

All visitors will bring home sustainability stories, which may inspire a more sustainable lifestyle, just as Aarhus will be showcasing things often taken for granted in Denmark, such as:

- Efficient sewer systems and how consumers can help make them even better;
- Access to clean water right out of Danish taps, and how consumers can help ensure that this will continue to be the case in Denmark in the future;
- Excellent bicycle culture, and how to push for further development in this field.

To learn more

- [Visit Aarhus](#)
- [Green Conference and Event Handbook](#)
- [The Ocean Race 2023](#)
- [The Ocean Race- Racing with purpose](#)

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