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OVERVIEW & MISSION

Founded in 1989, the Spokane Sports Commission is a non-profit, economic development organization responsible for recruiting, retaining, and facilitating sports events for the Spokane region. As advocates for sports development, our efforts help our region realize the economic, social, and community development benefits of sports.

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DESIGNING THE INLAND NORTHWEST'S PREMIER SPORTS FACILITIES



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

A NEW SEASON FOR SPORTS IN SPOKANE

> **Rustin Hall, ALSC Architects**

On behalf of the entire board, I am honored to be a part of Spokane Sports and the incredible presence they have in sports in our Inland Northwest community. Spokane Sports is a tremendous asset in regards to the region's economic development strategy, bringing an average of 60+ sporting events to Spokane each year. Driving sports tourism to our community is a win for Spokane, with over \$100 million dollars of direct economic impact to Spokane brought by traveling athletes and fans.

I would also like to take a moment to thank Eric Sawyer for his leadership and commitment to

the organization over the past 30 years. Eric has done an incredible job at the helm of Spokane Sports as CEO, and deserves to be recognized for his successful career. Eric was instrumental in bringing a multitude of events to Spokane, including the 1996 USA Wrestling Olympic Trials, the inaugural women's boxing Olympic Trials in 2012, NCAA Women's Volleyball Final Four, and NCAA Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments.

The future looks bright for sports tourism in Spokane! Recent Points of Pride Include:

- 100k+ visitors welcomed annually to Spokane due to

- Spokane Sports' supported events
- 60k+ hotel room nights generated annually due to sports tourism
 - 2019 Sports Commission of the Year, presented by Sports ETA
 - The Podium powered by STCU was named Best New Sports Venue in the Country, by SportsTravel Magazine

To close, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be Chair of such an exciting organization. The entire board is ecstatic for what is to come!

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2023 HEADLINER/PREMIER EVENTS

WITH 60+ SPORTS EVENTS ON THE CALENDAR FOR 2023, HERE ARE A FEW OF THE NOTEWORTHY EVENTS TO ATTEND



JANUARY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27TH

2023 Lilac Grand Prix
Indoor Track & Field Meet

FEBRUARY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2ND -
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH

2023 WSU Open & Combined Events
Indoor Track & Field Meet

MARCH

SATURDAY, MARCH 4TH -
SUNDAY, MARCH 5TH

2023 STCU West Coast High School Indoor Track and Field Championship

SATURDAY, MARCH 25TH -
SUNDAY, APRIL 2ND

2023 USA Volleyball Pacific Northwest Qualifier
(PNQ I & PNQ II)

APRIL

FRIDAY APRIL 14TH -
SUNDAY, APRIL 16TH

2023 USA Wrestling Women's National Championships



MAY

THURSDAY, MAY 5TH -
SUNDAY, MAY 7TH

2023 USA Team Handball Open + U20 Junior National Championships

SATURDAY, MAY 20TH -
SUNDAY, MAY 21ST

2023 USA Judo Senior National Championships



JUNE

MONDAY, JUNE 26TH -
SUNDAY, JULY 2ND

2023 USA Badminton Junior National Championships

DECEMBER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH

2023 Spokane Invitational
Indoor Track & Field Meet



THE HISTORY OF *SPORTS IN* **SPOKANE**

Modest doesn't even begin to describe the early steps of what has become Spokane Sports, both procurer and producer of upwards of 60 athletic competitions in the city each year.

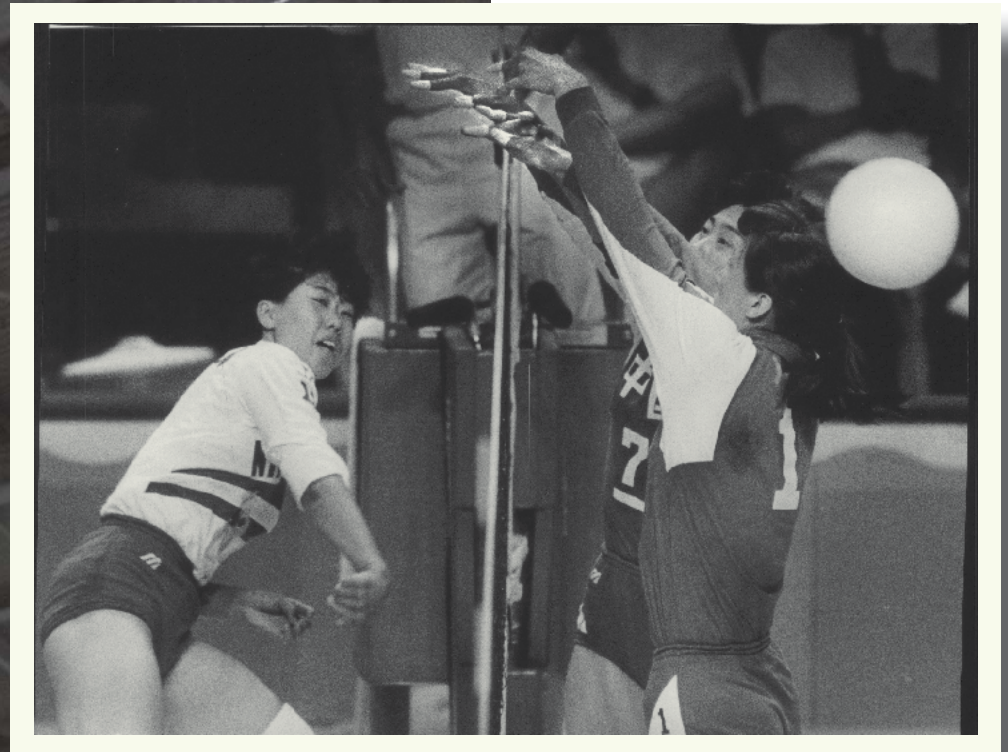
In the spring of 1962, 100 or so civic-minded men met at the Dav-
enport Hotel to create the Greater Spokane Sports Association to "supplement promotion of Spokane's major sports events," a rather open-ended mission statement. The members sold \$10 books of tickets to games, rodeos and ski areas to give themselves \$5,000 worth of seed money for their projects.

The first official bit of business: throwing a parade for the Spokane Comets hockey team, returning home after winning their playoff opener.

Mostly, the GSSA became known for its stewardship of the In-
land Empire Sports Awards Banquet, a yearly bash that brought in top-end celebrity speakers – one year's dais included Tommy Lasorda, O.J. Simpson, Jake LaMotta and Jesse Owens – and doled out hardware to the region's athletes and coaches.

But by the time the banquet wheezed to its end in 2000, the GSSA had already become the Spokane Regional Sports Commission – eventually streamlined to the current Spokane Sports in 2019 – and its mission had taken a turn.

"It really had been more of a fraternal organization," said Jim Murphy, a retired judge who spent two decades on the commission's board. "From the time we became the sports commission, it was a steady progression toward a more professional focus in making Spokane a real center for sports by attracting events to the city."



1990 Press Photo Japan versus China at the Goodwill Games at the Coliseum.
—Dan Pelle/The Spokesman-Review

Community Builder

Use the QR code to see how the best, new sports venue in the country was built for our community.



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LYDIG



Under the spotlights of the Spokane Veteran's Memorial Arena, Tanith Belbin and Benjamin Agosto perform during the Championships Exhibition Sunday Jan. 27, 2007. The pair were the gold medal winners in Senior Dance at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships.
—Colin Mulvany/The Spokesman-Review



It's fair to say that focus was born out of both an embarrassment – after bidding to host the World Championships of Modern Pentathlon, Spokane had to bow out just two months before the event – and a home run: the hiring of Eric Sawyer as executive director of the then-GSSA in 1991.

Skating fans give themselves a hand at the Championship Mens free skate.
—Dan Pelle/The Spokesman-Review

“I kind of found the job and the job found me,” said Sawyer, who grew up in southern Oregon and arrived in Spokane in the late 1980s. “If you can do something to contribute to your community, that’s a pretty good job. And sometimes you pinch yourself that you get to work in sports.”

But at that point in Spokane, such work was still rather vaguely defined.

“I found an organization with a good idea,” he said, “but it needed vision, direction and funding. The city had done the Olympic Trials in cycling, the Centennial Games and the Goodwill Games – things that sparked an interest in the community around sports events, so building on that seemed a logical next step.”

“But the strategic business plan wasn’t there.”

Even so, Spokane was at least a step or two ahead of the game. The SRSC was the first sports commission in the Northwest, and one of maybe 20 in the country – though that lodge became very crowded in a short time.

Hence, the need for strategy – and, every bit as important, funding.

In the early ‘90s, money came from Momentum, a private economic development program, but Sawyer’s initial task was to find a replacement for that source, which was time limited. Later, an affiliation with the

Convention and Visitors Bureau provided pass-through funding from lodging tax sources, and the GSSA secured a 1 percent rental car tax. By 1998, the city and county began providing lodging tax funds directly.

Those were evolutionary gains. Occasionally, there was some revolution, too.

In becoming the SRSC and drilling down on its task, the board was pared from 40 members – the hail fellows of the banquet culture – to 15 in what Sawyer jokingly characterizes as a “bloody coup.” Meanwhile, the scrap for public dollars among groups in the tourism-related field grew ever more contentious.

“We’re all swimming in the same pool,” Sawyer said. “As we gained traction, it was clear that to some degree we were a threat to other organizations – as anybody would be threatened in those circumstances. It got to be a food fight, so we had to build some partnerships and educate people about our mission.”

A major boost came in 2004 with legislative approval for cities to form Tourism Promotion

“Spokane was at least a step or two ahead of the game. The SRSC was the first sports commission in the Northwest, and one of maybe 20 in the country.”



Queen Underwood of Seattle celebrates her 25-24 decision over N'yteyah Sherman in the lightweight semifinals on Thursday.
—Kathy Plonka/The Spokesman-Review

Areas (TPA), creating funding with assessments on hotel stays. With a plan accepted by the TPA, the SRSC was able to add staff, shore up marketing and further its cause of economic development through sports – virtually doubling its budget overnight. Later increases in the assessments in 2009 and 2020 allowed for further growth, and the TPA source is now 70 percent of Spokane Sports’ funding.

A concept that started with Sawyer and a part-time aide now has seven full-time staffers, and an army of interns.

“With the exception of COVID shutting down events for a year or more, our budget has

grown every year,” Sawyer said. “To me that says there is acceptance, that people are saying there’s a good return, so let’s keep investing.”

Now comes a new chapter in Spokane Sports’ evolution: Sawyer is retiring at the end of 2022 after 30 years.

“I can’t say enough about what Eric’s leadership has meant,” said Jeff Colliton, another former board member and former city councilman. “I don’t think we would have made the progress in driving economic development with sports that we have without his vision. He’ll be missed, but this organization will continue to not just survive, but thrive.”

CONGRATULATIONS

...Spokane Sports and the Spokane Public Facilities District on The Podium Powered by STCU for being named the best new sports venue in the country!



Brett Sports



FACILITIES ON THE FOREFRONT



MAXIMIZING NEW FACILITY INVENTORY

Spokane Sports has the ability to leverage new facility inventory—allowing for the greatest return of sports tourism in the history of Spokane. The Podium powered by STCU was selected by SportsTravel magazine as Best New Sports Facility in the country— an accolade that certainly resonates with stakeholders. In its first year, The Podium generated \$45.2M in economic impact—this is new money to our region that would not have been realized without the intentional sales, marketing, and game day management efforts of Spokane Sports.

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On a December afternoon in 2021, Gonzaga University track coach Pat Tyson brought his runners downtown for a first workout at Spokane’s latest sports jewel – a \$53 million, 135,000 square-foot palace with a state-of-the-art hydraulic banked oval.

“I watched the kids’ faces and it was like they got a brand new car,” Tyson said. “It’s like that episode of ‘The Wonder Years’ where they

go shopping for a new car. Kevin wanted the convertible, but they ended up getting the station wagon.”

“Well, we got the Mercedes.”

The gull-wing model, at that. Just 10 months later, that local perspective got some national validation. Sports Travel magazine – a prominent voice for professionals in the sports event and travel industry – selected The Podium powered by STCU as the country’s top new sports venue for 2022.

“What the Spokane community has accomplished by pulling its resources together to build this world-class

venue,” said Jason Gewirtz, executive editor and publisher of SportsTravel, “is an example by which other communities can learn.”

In hosting USA Track and Field’s Indoor Championships and USA Karate’s Championships in its first year, the new multipurpose facility on the north edge of Riverfront Park has already generated buzz among national sports governing bodies seeking both new markets for their events and confidence they’ll come off smoothly. Nor did it hurt that Spokane Sports was also able to land the annual gathering of the Association of Chief Executives for Sport (ACES) in Sep-

tember, bringing upwards of 70 CEOs of Olympic sports – and those hoping to join the Olympic fold – to see what the city had to offer.

And with the opening of The Podium, what Spokane can offer as potential venues is nearing the full gamut – much of it in a scenic park setting in the city’s core near hotels and restaurants, and operated by the Spokane Public Facilities District in a hand-in-glove relationship

Construction begins inside The Podium, with the addition of bleachers in the Fall of 2021.



“ You have to maintain them and market them, and there’s more to attracting events than just a building. But you have to start there, and in Spokane we have a great start.”

started the conversation on the Spokane Veteran’s Memorial Arena. That was the major button – a 12,000-seat arena, with the first PFD in the state to oversee it. What does that open up for us? What can we put in here? It really inspired some strategic planning.”

with Spokane Sports.

“In the discovery of who we are and what we can do, so much has to be based on facilities,” said Eric Sawyer, the retiring CEO of Spokane Sports. “That goes back to the early 1990s when we

With a building capable of hosting NCAA competition – a record-setting women’s volleyball Final Four was first, followed by 10 incarnations of men’s and women’s basketball tournament weekends to date – Spokane had its centerpiece for major

events, and one that even 27 years later stands up hand-somely against newer facilities in other cities.

Across the river at the Spokane Convention Center, upgrades in 2007 and 2015 won by the PFD in public votes opened up more possibilities for Spokane Sports and local promoters – whether it was a supplementary ice sheet for the U.S. Figure Skating Championships or vast floor space for regional youth events in volleyball and wrestling.

Some of that action has now moved to The Podium, at least after the indoor track season that runs from mid-December through early

March. The \$4.7 million track is one of just two 200-meter banked indoor ovals in the west, and was booked for 12 different meets in its first year – from a high school invitational that drew athletes from multiple states to collegiate conference championships to the spectacular USATF Indoor Championships.

Just outside the doors of The Podium, the next phase of Spokane’s facility picture is coming into focus – a 5,000-seat stadium that will be the home of Greater Spokane League football and soccer and USL professional soccer. It suggests other outdoor possibilities in conjunction with the Dwight Merkle Sports Complex in northwest

Spokane and the Planes Ferry Complex in the Spokane Valley – which also recently hosted the NCAA Division III West Regional Cross Country Championships.

There remains a wish list, of course. The demand for gyms, ice rinks and soccer and softball fields grows ever higher, and impacts the ability to stage larger youth tournaments. The outdoor track at Spokane Falls Community College needs a re-do similar to the one in the 1990s which lured the national Junior Olympics and other high level USATF events to town.

“ ‘Build it and they’ll come’ is something of a myth,” said Sawyer. “You have to main-

tain them and market them, and there’s more to attracting events than just a building. But you have to start there, and in Spokane we have a great start.”

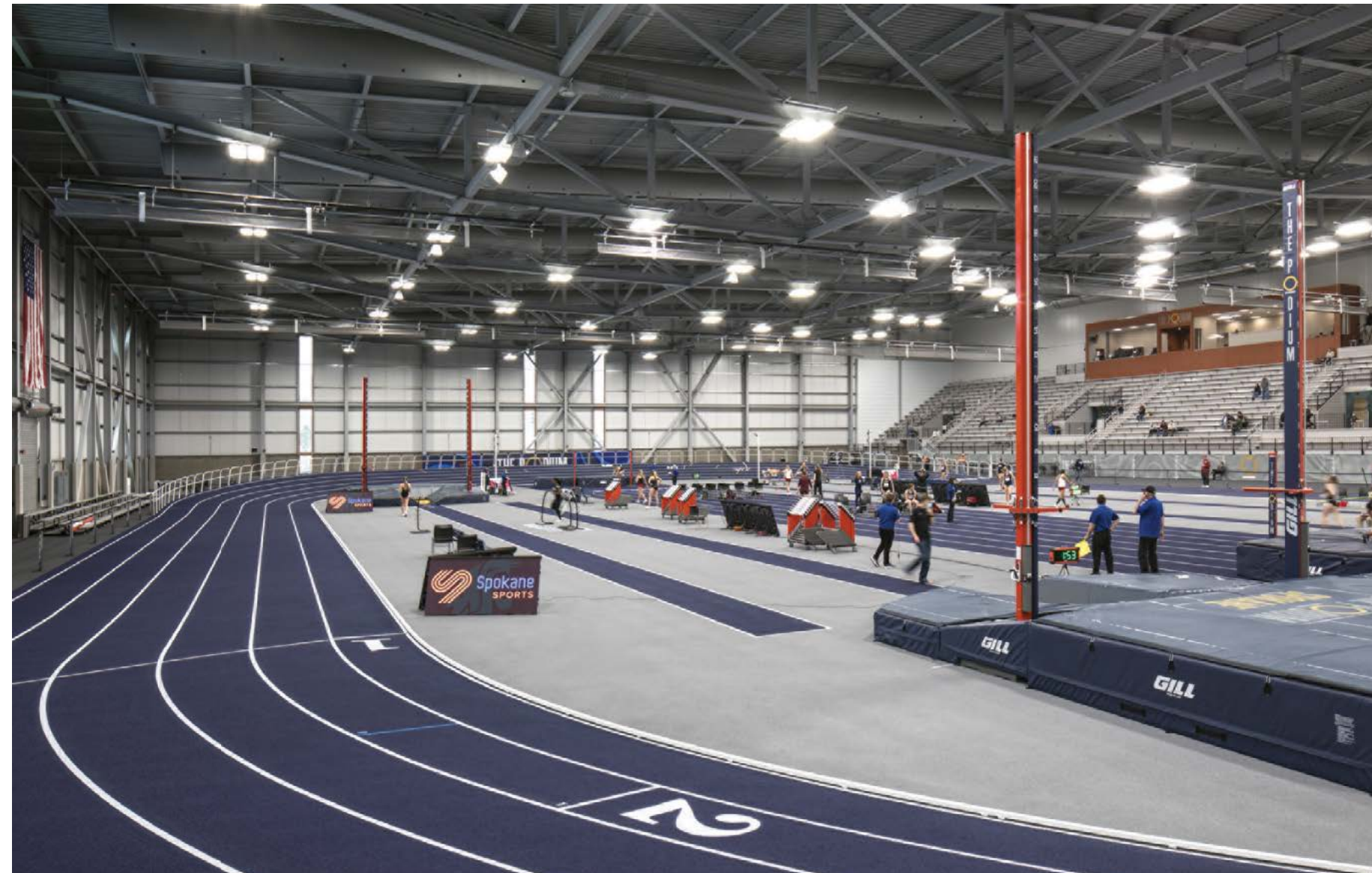
The Podium powered by STCU is set up for an indoor track and field meet in January of 2022.

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FAST FACTS AND FIGURES

Demographic of Events Hosted

75% of events are youth/collegiate focused.



These events typically bring a larger travel party, extended stay, and have a

\$250/day average spend.



Spokane Sports remains very active in selling the entire region and utilizes a number of facilities from Cheney to Downtown to Liberty Lake. Listed below are the various sports supported by the organization during the 2023 Calendar year:

Nordic Skiing
Indoor Track & Field
Hockey
Basketball
Road Running
Volleyball
Rugby
Wrestling
Outdoor Track & Field
Body Building
Team Handball
Baseball

Tennis
Judo
Golf
Lacrosse
Softball
Triathlon
Badminton
Parachute
BMX
Road Cycling
Mountain Biking
Cross Country

Clients We Work With

- U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Sports Governing Bodies
- Amateur Sports Governing Bodies
- Collegiate Conferences and National Governing Bodies
- International Sports Federations
- Privately Held Sports Events
- High School Sports Federations

30+ years of consistent growth in funding and community support

Supports and operates **50-70+** major sports events in a typical year resulting in more than **\$100 million** in economic impact and nearly **60,000 hotel room nights**

Named Sports Commission of the Year in 2019 by National Association of Sports Commissions (Sports ETA)

Proven and experienced **full-service events team**

Actively partners with regional sports clubs to create **large banks of volunteers** and **event management**

Pinnacle year for Sports Tourism; **two brand new first-rate facilities** in market that require additional sales, marketing, and game day management efforts from Spokane Sports

2023 SPOKANE SPORTS OUTCOMES AT CURRENT FUNDING LEVEL



48,769 Athletes



64,413 Out of Town Officials, Coaches, VIPs & Spectators



58,209 Hotel Room Nights

Client Priorities When Selecting Spokane Over Other Locations

- 1 Incentives Provided by City
- 2 Sports Services & Capabilities
- 3 Reputation in Sports Community
- 4 Quality of Local Organizing Committee
- 5 Quality of Facilities
- 6 Housing & Travel Accessibility



93 Practice/Move in/Move Out Days



63 Indoor Track & Field High-performance Training Sessions

Economic Impact **\$102,365,657**

“Sports can be a vehicle to enact change, tackle important community issues, and advance caliber of life for a region. Our nationally recognized, full-service team is capable of executing every component of a championship event including research, bidding, event logistics, marketing, public relations, hotel block management, transportation, community impact/legacy, ticketing, VIP/hospitality, and athlete services.”

62 Events
156 Event Days

THE SPOKANE SPORTS STORY

A moment of rare synergy revealed the possibilities for Spokane's place as both a destination and an incubator for the excitement and economic benefits sports can bring to a community.

It was March 2003, and the Spokane Arena – not yet eight years old – was hosting its first NCAA Basketball Tournament games, lured to the city by the pooled efforts of the building management, Washington State University and a small but growing concern now known as Spokane Sports.

A crowd of 11,271 packed the Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena for a second-round doubleheader – UConn besting Stanford, Wisconsin squeaking past Tulsa. But when the games were over, officials had the inspiration to put the telecast of Gonzaga University's nail-biter against Arizona, being played 500 miles away, on the Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena's big screen and the concourse TVs. Instead of filing out, half the crowd scrambled back in, finding seats and cheering and groaning through two overtimes before the Bulldogs fell in a game still acknowledged as one of the tournament's all-time classics.

The Zags would grow into one of college basketball's power brands, ambassadors for Spokane with every national television appearance. And those 2003 NAAs at the Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena ushered in an



The Podium powered by STCU was transformed into a true multi-sport venue in July of 2022, featuring eight mats for karate competition.

even if they might feel like Super Bowls for the competitors involved: BMX Gold Cups at the Merkel Complex, lacrosse tournaments at Spokane Polo Fields, Nordic skiing races at Mt. Spokane, Pacific Northwest Qualifier volleyball at Spokane's newest – and nationally lauded – venue, The Podium powered by STCU. For the ever-growing number of Olympic sport national championships on the Spokane Sports resume – track and field, karate, curling, boxing, team handball – there are state high school events in which the stakes seem every bit as high.

In combination, they fulfill a multi-pronged mission: generate hotel stays and other tourism-related income, put the city in a spotlight and add dimension to a community that's come to be known for its volunteerism and active participation.

The economics are not inconsiderable. In just the past 10 years, sports events have filled more than 500,000 hotel rooms in the Spokane area. In 2023 alone, their economic impact is projected to top \$102 million.

Some benefits, however, can't always be measured on a spreadsheet, and in the 30 years since reconstituting itself as a sports commission, Spokane Sports has gained

era of major athletic events being staged in the city, virtually all of them bearing the fingerprints of Spokane Sports, the agency tasked with mining that vein for both economic and quality-of-life value.

Not every event it helps bring to Spokane is March Madness, of course.

For every televised spectacle – NCAA basketball, figure skating championships, Olympic trials – there are a dozen other events of a youth or grassroots nature,

“ In 2023 alone, their economic impact is projected to top \$102 million. ”

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Location.

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Check All the Boxes

acceptance as a critical, if sometimes under the radar, component in the way the community thinks of itself.

“What’s been gratifying is being able to tell a story of the benefits of sports and having it understood,” said Eric Sawyer, who retires this year after leading the organization for more than 30 years. “From the city councilperson to the businessperson, they can say, ‘It’s good for the community, good for my business.’ We can measure its benefits – the tourism impact – and, yes, that’s where our foundation and funding come from.”

“But we can also ask, OK, how much media exposure is this worth that pushes more tourism and growth? One of those NCAA basketball weekends is 15 hours of TV time with our name attached. How much



Athletes celebrate after a successful competition at Mt. Spokane during the Nordic Junior National Qualifier in the winter of 2020.

being, the opening of the Spokane Arena in 1995 allowed that showing off to begin in earnest, beginning with the USA Olympic Wrestling Trials. Near-sellout attendance for the 1997 NCAA Women’s Volleyball Championships, however, truly set the table. Donna Noonan, the NCAA representative who oversaw the event, looked at the full house and told Sawyer, “You guys have set the bar pretty high. It won’t be long before you’ll be seeing more.”

Ten NCAA basketball tournament weekends, for men and women, have followed. In the 2000s, U.S. Figure Skating brought its national championships twice in the space of four years, and experienced record-setting attendance.

“We have found a successful niche and it resonates to this day,” said Sawyer. “We can do these events and the people involved show up and feel like they own the city, because of the attendance and media interest. That’s important. They can go to major-league cities and feel like nobody knows their event is in town. That’s not the case here.”

Yet for all the attention generated by the big-splash events, Spokane Sports’ bread and butter – 75 percent of its business – remains attracting and promoting regional events featuring youth, high school

entertainment does it provide our populace? All of that figures into the quality of life equation.”

Nadine Burgess, the owner of Spokane Gymnastics whose club has partnered with Spokane Sports on several events, boils it down a different way.

“It’s fun to be able to show off this city,” she said, “and have it be great.”

Though Spokane had success hosting national-level events before it came into

Two USA Judo Athletes compete at the Convention Center in 2017.



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Collegiate sprinters take off at the start of the 100-meter dash at the 2022 Cougar Classic Invitational.

“But our job isn’t to make more sports fans. It’s to use sports as an economic development tool, and if I put that into the puzzle, yes, we’re a sports town.”

bid or boots-on-the-ground management or providing volunteers or media outreach. It's all a package we're selling.”

track championships featuring 50 Olympians.

“I always get asked that question and I struggle with it, because what is a 'sports town?'” Sawyer said. “Is it defined by attendance or quality of venues or level of participation? I do think we're a sports town, but defined on different levels.”

Nearly 40 years ago, a professional athlete who grew up here characterized Spokane as a “terrible” sports town that “can't get out of its own way.” That was, of course, before the big participatory events hit their peaks, before Gonzaga basketball was a thing, before the Arena was built – and before any incarnation of Spokane Sports had found its footing in attracting, promoting and staging events, whether it be a U.S. Tennis Association junior sectional or a national

“But our job isn't to make more sports fans. It's to use sports as an economic development tool, and if I put that into the puzzle, yes, we're a sports town. Because you can define it by our interest and investment as a community in sports, and we're proud of the contribution we've made.”

and collegiate athletes. They bring larger travel parties, with parents following along, with more hotels filled and restaurants patronized, even if they're not as heavily publicized. Indeed, people would be shocked to learn that volleyball's Pacific Northwest Qualifier in the spring fills more hotel rooms than Bloomsday or Hoopfest.

Still, the participants come away feeling like they're not just cogs in an economic wheel.

“They seem to have a great balance,” said Burgess of Spokane Gymnastics. “It's not just based on finances. It's very experience-centric for the athletes and driven

by the big picture of what's good for Spokane.” So just what role does Spokane Sports play in all of this?

That varies from event to event. The staff must work hand in hand with major event promoters, like Toby Steward and Barb Beddor, whose StarUSA team drove the skating events. Or with the schools like WSU and the University of Idaho that serve as the collegiate hosts for NCAA events. They partner with local club officials who are the liaisons to national governing bodies in the bid process and provide organizational manpower – and often hands-on labor.

“Basically, it's in filling gaps

to make an event successful,” Sawyer explained. “For instance, Toby and Barb don't need us to sell tickets, but we are needed to sell the idea to public officials of putting bid fees in.”

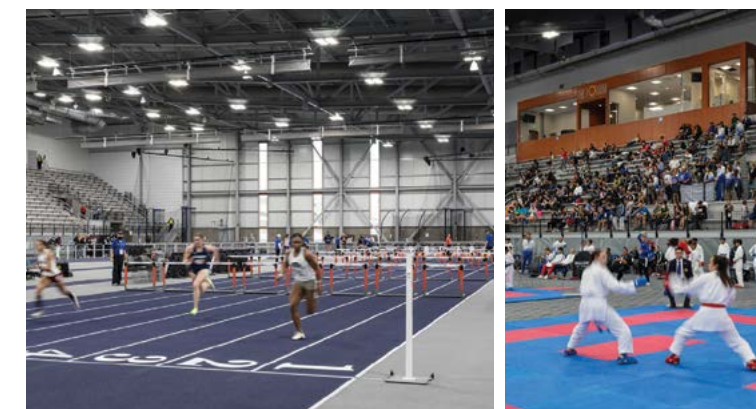
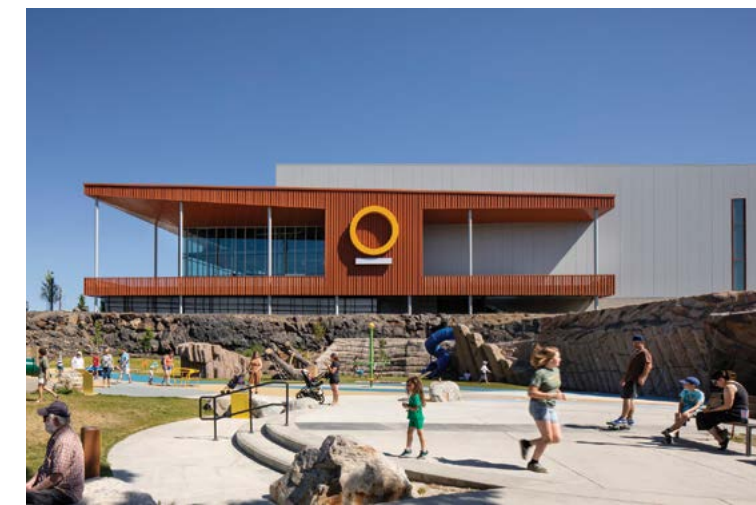
“Sometimes it's as simple as writing a letter, but not often. There's a lot more effort and management that goes into it, and sometimes there's balancing politics and egos.”

Events can't be pulled off without proper venues, and so Spokane Sports has plunged into the effort to build and improve facilities here – most recently, in the past decade, being a prime force behind the construction of The Podium powered by STCU along with the Spokane Public Facilities District. Plugging events into that new jewel has become so consuming that Stephanie Curran, CEO of the PFD, acknowledged that, “It's pretty much their building now.”

But Sawyer noted that the business of attracting events has changed dramatically.

“In the beginning, it was all about your destination,” he

said, “and selling the destination – selling Spokane, selling the Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena. Today, it's more about, 'Tell me what you're going to do for me. Yes, you have nice hotels and restaurants and a falls and the Clocktower – all cool. Tell me what you're going to do to make my event more successful.' So sometimes we're selling the sports commission more than Spokane. We have to be a full-service agency and provide incentives. Sometimes that's writing a check and underwriting venues or doing the



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COMMUNITY THOUGHTS

“I'M A RAVING FAN. I think they're one of the most underrated organizations in Spokane — just because a lot of people are unaware of all they do. I joke that if this gymnastics gig doesn't work out and I'm looking for a job, I'd want to work for Spokane Sports just because they're such great people. They jump in and do everything they can to make an event a success, and they don't seem preoccupied with getting credit for it.”

Nadine Burgess,
Owner, Spokane Gymnastics

“THEY ARE THE EASIEST GROUP OF PEOPLE TO WORK WITH. They approached us to see if we would be willing to help host tournaments with USA Judo and really they did all the work — we just showed up. They get in there and get their hands dirty. They don't just get the event here, they really immerse themselves into the event.”

Leigh Yamada,
Club Administrator, Pacific Judo Academy

“YOU DON'T COME BY A REPUTATION AS A GREAT SPORTS CITY BY ACCIDENT. You do it by creating a track record of successful events. And the positive reputation Spokane Sports has plays a role in people wanting to give the city at turn at bat. They know there is a competent, seasoned sports commission there to take care of your staff, your athletes and coaches and provide a great partnership.”

Rick Mack,
CEO, Association of Chief Executives for Sport

“I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED IT AND I'D LOVE TO COME BACK. From the hospitality to the organization to the meet itself and the facility, they did an amazing job. I can't wait to see what the future holds there.”

Grant Holloway,
Olympic medalist and hurdles winner at the 2022
USATF Indoor Championships in Spokane

“IT'S LIKE THE SMALL BUT THE MIGHTY, RIGHT? They're a group of about six and they do everything. All these governing bodies know that if you're bringing an event to Spokane, they're going to take care all the details — the volunteers, the organizing — to make the event happen. Spokane Sports is known for that. And in working with them, I feel like we're almost one organization at this point — they're just so collaborative.”

Stephanie Curran,
CEO, Spokane Public Facilities District

“SPOKANE SPORTS IS THE BEST SPORTS COMMISSION IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY, HANDS DOWN. They just take care of you, and that's everyone on their staff. In other places, it's 'Here's the keys to your van, here are the keys to the venue and thanks for coming.' I've been to cities where we saw our sports commission person when we showed up and then at the end when he said, 'Everything go OK?' Spokane Sports is off the charts when it comes to seeing to your needs, reaching out to volunteers and even being part of your event.”

Price Jacobs,
Event Manager, USA Judo



THANK YOU, SPOKANE

To my Friends and Colleagues,

My last day with Spokane Sports will be December 2nd. It was not an easy decision to retire, but I know it is the right time.

I want to thank all of you for the years of support, encouragement, and friendship. It has been an incredible journey watching Spokane Sports become an established part of our region's economic development strategies. It was an honor to be a part of its success and I know the organization will continue to grow.

I look forward to seeing Spokane Sports 2.0 develop under its new leader, Ashley Blake. I encourage you to reach out to Ashley and learn about her vision for the organization. She is blessed with a tremendous team and a committed board of directors, all ensuring a bright future.

For now, I'm looking forward to spending more time with family, friends, and my many pursuits. Many rivers await my fly!!

Again, thanks!

Eric Sawyer

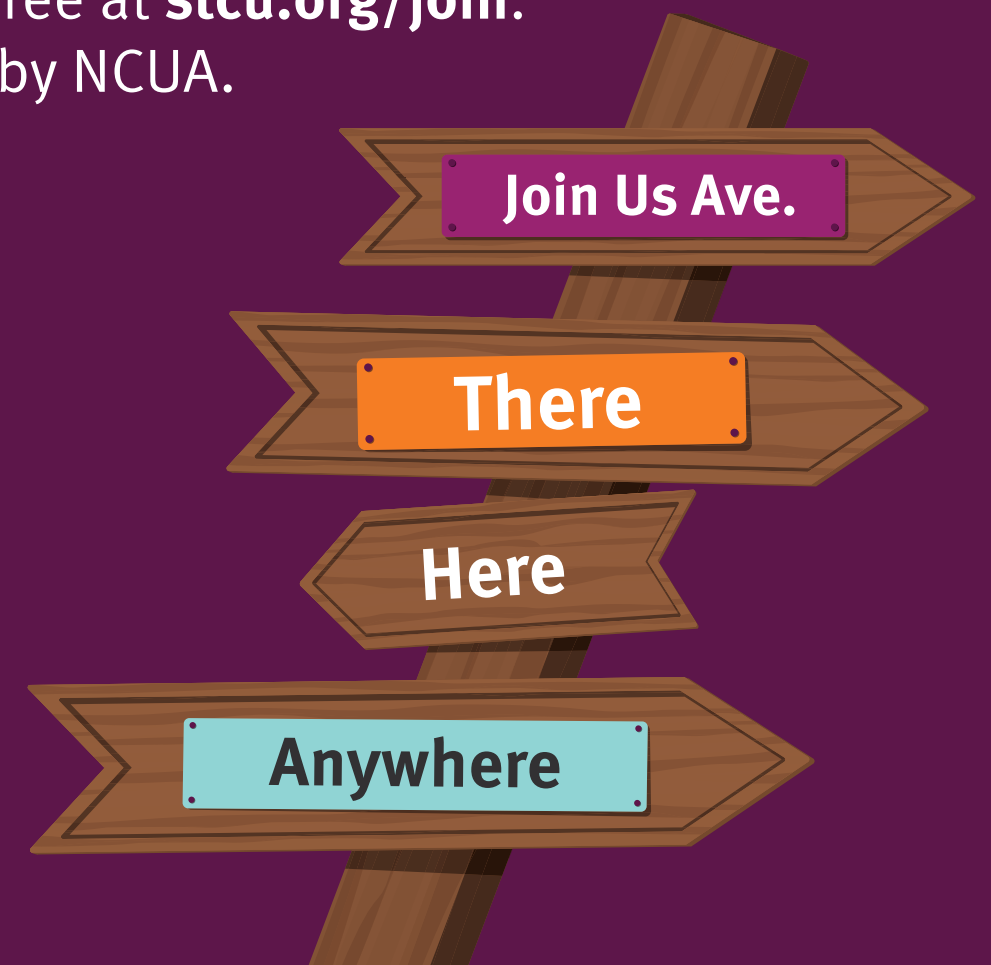
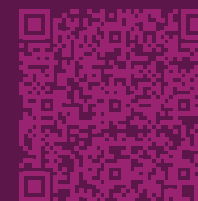


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