



2022 Annual Report

Sports Sweet Home - Alabama

We are excited to report that 2022 was a rebounding year for sports tourism, and destinations continued to see the increase of travel and tourism post-Covid within their communities. Alabama was no different, and the overall trend was a upward movement in the return of championships, sporting events and youth activities to full capacity. While still unfair to compare to previous years, the Sports Alabama team benefited from continual partnerships and sponsorships to promote the “Sweet Home Alabama” brand. Focus was also given to proposed legislation for additional ways to share the story of sports tourism in our state, but also to watch potential positive and negative impacts from proposed bills in the State Legislature.

The 2022 State of the Industry report detailed how the sports tourism industry saw a \$91.8 billion dollar impact on communities throughout the country. While Alabama experienced an increase in travel and spending for tourists, visitors and families attending events, our member destinations also evolved within the ever changing industry to reflect current trends and projections. Our 2022 Annual Report reflects the economic impact numbers from our member communities that they enjoyed during this past year. Once again, our 12 DMO partners provided support to our sports marketing efforts, while also benefiting from generated exposure at various conferences and events. The ultimate goal for Sports Alabama is to promote Alabama as a premier sports tourism destination, and the evidence proves that our members were successful in attracting, bidding on and hosting numerous events during the year.

We continued several sponsorships with our various conference partners: 2022 Symposium “Name Badge Sponsorship” with the Sports Events and Tourism Association (Sports ETA); and the “Grand Annual Luncheon sponsor” with Kenilworth Media / *SportsEvents Magazine* at the SPORTS Relationship Conference. Additionally, we returned to a multi-year partnership with the Northstar Meetings Group and the TEAMS Conference to run through 2024. Through these strategic partnerships, Sports Alabama provided members opportunities to meet with rights holders and host events to spotlight destinations, facilities and attractions throughout the state. By helping to off-set expenses and offer unique one-on-one meetings with potential rights holders, our communities were able to focus on detailed conversations to host high-quality events to Alabama.

In finishing my 15th year as President of the organization, I continued to be humbled and inspired by our dedicated members and the role they play, not only within their own organizations, but also as a special part of Sports Alabama. During 2022, I was honored to have been able to serve part of my term as Chairman of the Board of Directors for Sports ETA, being the first Alabamian to not only be elected to the Board, but also as the Chair. My service is only possible because of the members, and it has, and will be, my on-going effort to promote Alabama. The energy and passion of our team, as well as the commitment to put others first is inspiring, but also a true representation of the servant-first attitude I encourage our members to represent us every day. As President, I’m thankful for the daily work we put into the sports tourism industry, but more excited about the continual support in making Alabama a truly special place to live, work, play and visit! My promise is to always serve the best interest of Alabama and our members in every aspect of our operations. We live by our motto that we truly love “Sweet Home Alabama!”



Don Dukemineer
President – Sports Alabama





APP Tour event



NCAA Gymnastics Regionals



War Eagle Run Fest

AUBURN OPELIKA

t o u r i s m

Estimated Economic Impact	\$21,704,805
Number of Events	69
Room nights	18,538

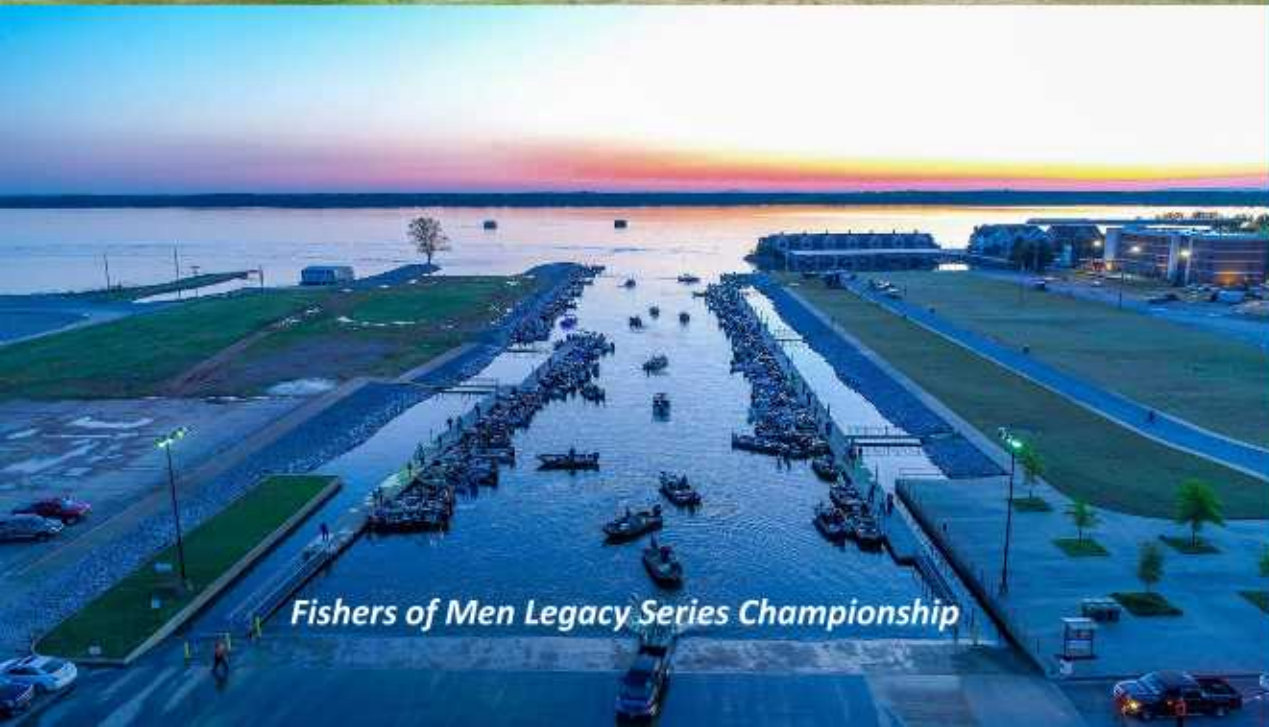
*Estimated economic impact; calculated with STR & DI calculator with event surveys and other event data.

- *War Eagle Run Fest* makes major impact. The half-marathon & 5K event started in downtown Auburn and finished at midfield of Jordan-Hare Stadium drawing participants from 37 states.
- *Host of three NCAA Regional Championships:* Women's Gymnastics, Women's Tennis and Baseball.
- Pickleball continues to bloom in Opelika - \$800,000 in direct impact alone from only four events, including a USA Pickleball regional and a professional event with the APP Tour.





USA Archery Junior Olympic Outdoor Nationals



Fishers of Men Legacy Series Championship



Estimated Economic Impact	\$8,000,000
Number of Events	45
Room nights	5,000

- Decatur hosted the 2021 National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Men's Soccer Championship
- Decatur hosted the 2021 USA Archery Junior Olympic Outdoor Nationals
- Decatur hosted the Fishers of Men 2022 Legacy Series Championship





Estimated Economic Impact	\$22,258,000
Number of Events	60+
Room nights	48,473

- Dothan hosted the USTA National Level 1 Clay Court Championships in July, an event previously exclusively held in Miami.
- 2022 also marked the second year in a row Dothan hosted the LPGA Q Series. Elite golfers traveled (some internationally) to Dothan's Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at Highland Oaks in hopes to gain their LPGA tour status.
- A bid was also secured to bring Rivals Camp Series to the newly upgraded Rip Hewes Stadium for March 2023.



Fishing has become a major tourism draw for The Shoals



Collegiate National Championship



The SHOALS

Estimated Economic Impact	\$14,958,170
Number of Events	22
Room nights	20,892

- Hosted several fishing tournaments on Pickwick and Wilson Lake highlighted by the Bass Nation Championship, Collegiate National Championship and High School World Finals. This tournament with 400 boats brought anglers from across the world for a span of 10 days from as far Zimbabwe and South Africa to participate in the tournament.
- The Florence Sport Plex has continued to be a great area to host great tournaments. Hosted the AHSAA North Regional Softball tournament for the third time and will be hosting it again in 2023.





- Secured multi-year contract with the Sun Belt Conference to host championships in Women's Soccer, Cross Country, and Volleyball.
- First in the state to host the USA Gymnastics Region 8 Xcel Championships in May of 2022. This event drew more than 1,700 participants and 6,600 spectators to the area.
- The Coastal Academy Cup soccer tournament continues to make an impact, boasting 200+ teams from across the Southeast. This event is only one of the 25 soccer events held at the Foley Sports Tourism complex in 2022.



NCAA Division I Beach Volleyball Championship



Brett Robinson Alabama Coastal Triathlon



Estimated Economic Impact	\$95,033,612.25
Number of Events	145
Room nights	133,088

**Note: Estimated economic impact calculated by Smari, Key and STR*

- Purchased 111.26 acres of land in northeast Gulf Shores to maintain and grow sports and event tourism in the future. A feasibility study is underway to determine future development.
- Built a 12-court outdoor lighted pickleball facility at the Gulf Shores Sportsplex for sports tourism and local use, which opened in December 2022.
- More than 300 athletes from across the globe participated in the International Powerlifting (IPL) World Championship. The event was originally slated to take place in Russia prior to the country's invasion of Ukraine.





Estimated Economic Impact	\$5,063,420
Number of Events	13
Room nights	9,262

- Sand Mountain Park in Albertville's first full operational year resulted in more than \$20 million in economic impact. Guntersville Rec Center started phase two of upgrading ball fields and a new basketball gym.
- Hosted the Big Bass Pro Tour in early October that had a record year with over 1,100 anglers from 25 states.
- Guntersville hosted the APBA Gold Cup for the first time in history and generated over \$2 million in economic impact.

2022 Cathedral Caverns Trail Run





Estimated Economic Impact	\$32,264,801
Number of Events	59
Room nights	52,758



Jacksonville State vs. UNA at Toyota Field



CWPA Women's National Championship

- Huntsville hosted three national championships – College Water Polo women’s national championship, AVCA Beach Volleyball Pairs Championship, and USTA Under-16 Clay Court Nationals.
- College football arrived in Madison for the first time as Toyota Field hosted UNA vs. Jacksonville State in front of 10,000 fans.
- Kayak Bass Fishing launched its headquarters at Ditto Landing in a multi-year agreement that brings its national championship to Huntsville three times in the next decade.





Gulf Coast Regional



Ballin' on the Bay



BORN TO CELEBRATE

Estimated Economic Impact	\$18,413,157
Number of Events	39
Room nights	31,758

- The Gulf Coast Regional Volleyball brought 242 teams including 38 grassroots teams, that generated 1,138 room nights – an increase of 71 from the year prior.
- The 2022 Ballin' on the Bay basketball event brought in a record 118 teams, with 76 of those teams coming from five different states.
- The Gulf Coast Challenge filled Ladd-Peebles Stadium with a crowd of 32,900.





Tuscaloosa Gauntlet



TUSCALOOSA

TOURISM & SPORTS

Estimated Economic Impact	\$17,755,000
Number of Events	45
Room nights	16,453

- Professional golf debuted in Tuscaloosa with the LPGA Epson Tour's *Tuscaloosa Toyota Classic at Ol Colony*.
- In conjunction with the Alabama Marines Foundation, Tuscaloosa built a state-of-the-art Marine-style O-Course, hosting its first homegrown obstacle course race, the *Tuscaloosa Gauntlet*.
- Brought the *USTA Wheelchair National Championships* from St. Louis, MO., in conjunction with our yearly Collegiate Wheelchair Tennis Tournament, The Alabama Open.





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*Note: All Estimated Economic Impact numbers come from each member DMO and the calculator that they use.