

SPORTS TOURISM

Definition

Sports tourism refers to international trips specifically taken to watch sporting events.

Common examples include international events such as world cups (soccer, rugby, cricket, etc), the Olympics and Formula 1 Grand Prix, regional events (such as the soccer European Champions League), and individual (non-team) participant sports such as tennis, golf and horse racing.



Estimate of Global Market Size

The most popular global sporting events are the soccer FIFA World Cup and the Olympics, followed by the European Football Championships. However other popular sporting events also attract a large number of international visitors. These include the Rugby Union World Cup and Formula 1 Grand Prix.

- The FIFA Football World Cup held in France in 1998 attracted 900,000 international football fans and generated \$12.3 billion.
- It is estimated that the 2000 Olympics in Sydney generated 111,000 additional international arrivals to Australia specifically travelling for sports tourism.
- Euro 2004 (the European Football Championships) attracted 500,000 sports tourists to Portugal, generating \$320 million for the Portuguese economy.
- The Monaco Grand Prix (which alongside the Indy 500 and Le Mans is one of the most famous motor racing fixtures of the year) attracts 200,000 visitors over its four-day duration.
- The 2007 Cricket World Cup staged in the Caribbean was thought to have generated an additional 100,000 visitors who travelled specifically for the tournament.

Whilst the number of sports tourists fluctuates on an annual basis depending on the events taking place (it is greatest during FIFA World Cup and Olympics years), on average an estimated 12 million international trips are made for the main purpose of watching a sporting event.

Potential for Growth

Increased media exposure of sporting events over the last decade has raised the profile of many sports, and although TV coverage is better than at any time in the past, an increasing number of sports fans want to experience live events.

The media also has the ability to make national and international icons of sporting stars, thereby generating greater demand, as fans want to see their sporting idols “in the flesh”.

Sporting events themselves are being made increasingly appealing to attend, with greater levels of comfort, and other events – such as festivals - being created around them (such as horse racing weekends, boating regattas, etc).

Low-cost regional airlines (and more affordable long haul flights), are also driving demand for sporting events as flights become more convenient, more regular, and of course more affordable.

Overall, the sports tourism niche market is expected to grow annually at around 6% for the next five years.

Brief Profile of Consumers

Sports tourists are more easily profiled according to the sports they follow. However, in general terms the bulk of the market tends to be young - between 18 and 34 years, and in the C1 and C2 (middle) socio-economic groups. This would also be the typical profile of a sports tourist following soccer matches.

Rugby and cricket followers tend to be slightly older and with greater disposable income. Horse racing has a broad range of followers with no clear demographic structure. Followers of athletics tend to be young, low spenders, whilst those following the Formula 1 Grand Prix circuit tend to be skewed towards males in their 40s with above average disposable income.

Main Source Markets

The main source markets for sports tourism are those that are most interested in the main international sports. These include:

- United Kingdom
- United States
- Germany
- Italy
- Spain
- Scandinavia
- Australia
- South Africa

Main Competing Destinations

The main competing destinations tend to vary depending on where the large events, such as the FIFA World Cup and Olympics are held. However, those holding key annual tournaments of global sporting interest include:

- United States
- United Kingdom
- France
- Australia
- Spain

For specific sports, such as golf, motor racing, or yachting, this list of competing destinations would vary considerably.

Key Tour Operators

There are a large number of sports tour operators. However most of them operate at a very local level, principally serving a specific soccer club for example. However, there are a few that operate as international sports tour operators offering a wide range of sporting events in different countries. It is not uncommon, in particular for the much sought-after events, to find tour operators offering flights and accommodation but without tickets.

Sports Tours International

United Kingdom

<http://www.sportstoursinternational.co.uk>

91 Walkden Road, Walkden, Manchester, M28 7BQ

Tel: 0161 703 8161

Fax: 0161 703 8547

Premiere Sports Travel

United States

<http://www.sportstravel.com>

201 Shannon Oaks Circle, Suite 205, Cary, North Carolina 27511

Tel: 800 924 9993, 919 481 9511

Fax: 919 4811337

Key Points for Marketing and Distribution

Magazine specialising in the sports related travel and events industry

<http://www.sportstravelmagazine.com>

National newspapers, both broadsheet and tabloid depending on the type of sports tour being marketed, are likely to be the most effective way for tour operators to distribute their products, as well as directly through sporting associations and clubs.

United States: USA Today (travel section)

<http://www.usatoday.com/travel>

United States: New York Times (travel section)

<http://travel.nytimes.com>

United Kingdom: The Times (travel section)

http://travel.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/travel

Germany: Faz Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

<http://www.faz.net>

Additional Information

Information, media and business-to-business marketing services

<http://www.sportbusiness.com>