



Ocala/Marion CVB

Ocala, Florida, hosts many sporting events—including soccer tournaments—at the Ocala Rotary Sportsplex and Big Sun Soccer Complex.

\$1 million Grand Prix at the HITS Post Time Farm, which is developing a new jumping field. The circuit draws 3,500 horses and 7,500 riders and contributes about \$50 million to the local economy.

Another success story for Ocala was the Fishers of Men Southeast Regional Championship in 2011, held at Rodman Reservoir on the St. John's River. "The reason we chose Ocala was the willingness of the CVB to work with us," said Bobby Eads, senior vice-president of the Fishers of Men National Tournament Trail. "When we first started chatting, they immediately wanted to fly us there at no cost to show us locations and the community. It was the first sign of how things would be." Because Eads lives in Indiana, the CVB did most of the event-planning legwork, he said, and when the championship began, staff had arrived at the site by 4 a.m. for the boat check and remained through the entire event.

Area venues include the Ocala Rotary Sportsplex, with 11 baseball fields and three soccer fields; the Ocala Regional Sportsplex for volleyball, bas-

ketball, football and soccer; and the 11-field Big Sun Soccer Complex.

Greenville: City of Cycling

Greenville, South Carolina, is gearing up to host the International Cycling Union's 2014 Para-Cycling World Championships, considered the Super Bowl of para-cycling. It will mark the first time in 16 years the race has been held in the United States.

"The championship is usually held in much larger cities," said Gary Cherrett, senior manager of convention sales and sports tourism for the Greenville Convention & Visitors Bureau. "We got it because of our experience of hosting previous events for USA Cycling."

The world championships, scheduled from August 28 to September 1, are expected to draw more than 400 elite competitors from around the world.

"The stage is set to hold this world event and do what Greenville has done



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for other successful events," said Keri Hall with Notus Sports, a nonprofit sports and event management group that helped oversee the bid process.

Greenville is appealing to cyclists for its mix of terrain and elevation changes near the Blue Ridge Mountains. "Within 40 minutes, they can get up to the mountains with freshwater lakes, great hiking and white-water rafting. All of that combines to make a unique experience for them," Cherrett said. "And our

price point is also very inexpensive in regards to the region."

Of course, it's not all cycling. This year's sports schedule has ranged from the Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association National Championships, held in May at Wenwood Soccer Complex, to the USA National Karate Championships and U.S. Team Trials, scheduled for July 10-14 at the 15,000-seat Bi-Lo Center. And summer baseball, a popular mainstay, is played at the

5,700-seat Fluor Field, home to the Greenville Drive, an affiliate of the MLB Boston Red Sox.

Greenville also maintains strong partnerships with Furman University and neighboring Spartanburg when additional venues are necessary. In 2012, the National Softball Association Girls Fastpitch World Series welcomed 160 teams to Spartanburg's new multi-purpose Tyger River Park.

Greensboro: Tournament Town

As the home of the Atlantic Coast Conference, Greensboro, North Carolina, has been a longtime host to a variety of collegiate sports, rightly claiming the moniker of "Tournament Town" and focusing on championing sports tourism. "The focus doesn't make us unique but it does lead to the next question of 'What makes us successful to attract sports?'" said Kim Strable, president of the Greensboro Sports Commission.

Part of the answer is Greensboro's natural attributes, which include generally mild temperatures, an easily accessible location and proximity to both mountains and beaches.

USA Gymnastics announced in May that Greensboro had been awarded the AT&T American Cup in 2014. "We were impressed with the facilities, the hospitality, enthusiasm of the local community and the commitment of city officials," said Steve Penny, president of USA Gymnastics. Competition is scheduled to be held at the 23,500-seat Greensboro Coliseum Complex.

Greensboro has hosted numerous events including the 2012 Olympic Trials for synchronized swimming. That event was held at the Greensboro Aquatic Complex, which was completed in August 2011 and features 78,323 square feet of indoor space. "The city made us feel like our event was the daughter of the city," said Duke Zielinski, president of USA Synchro. "We couldn't believe how the city welcomed us."

The Greensboro Coliseum has played a big part in the ACC Basketball Tournament tradition, having hosted years of play for both men and women. The facility is currently undergoing a \$24 million face-lift.

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