

# Competitive Sports

## IN SARASOTA COUNTY

Sarasota County is a leading destination for sports tourism in Southwest Florida due to its tropical climate, wide array of facilities, and strong community engagement and support. The top sports in the county are rowing, baseball, swimming, and equestrian. However, the diversity of high-quality, flexible venues in the area makes every sport possible.

Major upcoming secured events include the 2023 World Baseball Classic and the USRowing Masters National Championships 2023.

### Sarasota County Facilities

- › Sarasota County is home to two **MLB spring training stadiums**. **CoolToday Park**, home to the 2021 World Series Champion Atlanta Braves, opened in 2019 in South Sarasota County and held its inaugural season for spring training in 2020. **Ed Smith Stadium**, home to the Baltimore Orioles, has been an attraction in North Sarasota for over 10 years. Both can be reserved for tournaments, concerts, or related activities.
- › **Nathan Benderson Park** is an expansive community park that includes North America's premier rowing course, regatta center, and paddling facility. Since 2009, NBP is where Olympians and world champions are made. Among numerous past events are the the 2016 and 2020 U.S. Olympic Team Trials in rowing and sprint canoe/kayak, seven USRowing Youth National Championships, three NCAA Rowing Championships, the 2022 International Dragon Boat Federation Club Crew World Championships, and the Modern Pentathlon World Cup.



Coming events include the International Canoe Federation world championships in stand-up paddling and the world cups in canoe sprint, canoe marathon, and dragon boat paddling.

- › **Selby Aquatic Center**, an outdoor swimming and aquatics facility, features a 50-meter pool and 1,200 seats for spectators to watch swimmers contend for titles. Additional area competition pools are located at Arlington Park and North Port Aquatic Center, which debuted in South Sarasota County in 2020.
- › **Sarasota BMX Track** is home to a dual-purpose amateur and Supercross track and has served as the venue for the UCI BMX Supercross World Cup, USA BMX Gator Nationals, and USA BMX Sunshine State Nationals.
- › Famed **golf facilities** in the region include **The Resort at Longboat Key Club**, **The Ritz-Carlton Sarasota**, **TPC Prestancia**, and **The Concession Golf Club**, the only course in the world with both Jack Nicklaus and Tony Jacklin's design imprint.
- › **Equestrian** events take place at Venice's **Fox Lea Farm** year-round and at the **Sarasota Polo Club** grounds seasonally.



### Competitive Sports Highlights

- › Visit Sarasota County's (VSC) Sports Grant program helps support locally organized and/or annual events in need of financial support. To qualify for funding, each event must produce a minimum of 100 room nights in Sarasota County.
- › The U.S. Masters Swimming Summer National Championships will be held in Sarasota in August 2023.
- › Nathan Benderson Park is one of the few 2,000-meter international rowing courses in North America approved by the International Rowing Federation.
- › Sarasota BMX Track is the country's oldest continuously running BMX track.
- › Sarasota County has a strong history of supporting customized and unique sporting competitions ranging from coastal rowing to ultimate Australian football.
- › Sarasota County is only a 74-mile drive to Raymond James Stadium, home of the 2020 Super Bowl Champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers; 70-mile drive to Amalie Arena, home of the 2021 Stanley Cup Winner Tampa Bay Lightning; and a 54-mile drive to Tropicana Field, where the Tampa Bay Rays play.