

# 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.

### 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.
- Opening in 2026, 17th Street Regional Park will become one of Sarasota County's premier sports venues, featuring 15 tournament-ready fields, a championship softball stadium, covered batting cages, and amenities designed to host regional and national events year-round.
- 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 County's oldest continuously running BMX track.



Nathan Benderson Park

### Sarasota County Facilities

- Sarasota County is home to two MLB training stadiums.
  - Cool Today 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 17 years.
  - Both facilities can be reserved for tournaments, concerts, or related activities.
- Nathan Benderson Park is home to a world-class rowing and paddling venue that has hosted the World Rowing Championships, U.S. Olympic Team Trials, and numerous national and international competitions.
- Equestrian Events take place at Venice's Fox Lea Farm tear-round and at the Sarasota Polo Club grounds seasonally.
- 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.
- Sarasota BMX, the nation's oldest continuously operating BMX track, hosts elite competitions ranging from USA BMX championship events to the UCI BMX Racing World Cup, which returns to Sarasota County in 2026 and 2027.
- 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.