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Florida Sports Foundation awards Florida Sports Commissions for their efforts

JUPITER – The Florida Sports Foundation (FSF), the state’s leading sports promotion and development organization, presented six awards to recognize Florida communities and sports commissions for their outstanding efforts in sports tourism in the State of Florida. The events were awarded or held between April 1, 2016 and April 15, 2017

The awards were presented at the FSF’s annual Sports Summit, held this year in Jupiter, held in conjunction with the Palm Beach County Sports Commission. The awards presented included:

Best Awarded Event of the Year: Miami Super Bowl 2020, Greater Miami CVB (Awarded 11/4/16)

Large Market Event of the Year: 2017 College Football Playoff National Championship, Tampa Bay Sports Commission (Held 1/6-9/17)

Mid-Market Event of the Year: Easton Gator Cup, Newberry, Gainesville Sports Commission (Held 5/26-30/16)

Small Market Venue of the Year: Champions Park, Newberry, Alachua County, Gainesville Sports Commission

Small Market Event of the Year: Babe Ruth Softball 12U & 16U World Series, Treasure Coast Sports Commission (Held 7/28-8/3/16)

Venue of the Year – International Polo Club, Wellington, Palm Beach County Sports Commission

“The State of Florida offers facilities in every part of the state that can host a wide variety of sports events,” said Senior Vice President Stephen

Rodriguez. "Sports organizers from national governing bodies of sports to the NFL know what Florida has to offer and the awards given today show the opportunities and amenities of all Florida host communities. Florida's Sports Commissions bring over 3,000 sporting events to the state annually and provide a significant impact to the Florida tourism industry and economy."

A detailed description of the six awards follows.

**Best Awarded Event of the Year (Awarded between 4/1/16 – 4/15/17)
Miami Super Bowl 2020, Miami Dade CVB (Awarded 11/4/16)**

Super Bowl LIV (54) will be held at Hard Rock Stadium in February 2020. It will be a record 11th Super Bowl in South Florida breaking a tie with New Orleans. It will be the first Super Bowl since 2010 in Miami-Dade County and will come during the NFL's celebration of its 100th anniversary. Early plans call for transforming Downtown Miami into "Super Bowl Park" for the thousands who are expected to visit South Florida.

**Large Market Event of the Year (Hosted between 4/1/16 – 4/15/17)
2017 College Football Playoff National Championship, Tampa Bay Sports Commission (1/6-9/17)**

The College Football Playoff National Championship's first visit to the Southeast United States drew an estimated 200,000 people to Tampa Bay in January 2017. Attendance records for six of the College Football Playoff's events were broken, including Playoff Fan Central, AT&T Playoff Playlist LIVE!, Extra Yard 5K, Taste of the Championship, Extra Yard for Teachers Summit and Media Day. From Saturday, January 7 through Monday, January 9, area hotel occupancy experienced increases of 30% or more compared to the year prior. Sunday night's occupancy represents an increase of 57.6% compared to the year prior. The event generated more than \$96 million in media exposure for the Tampa Bay area and the #TAMPABAY2017 hashtag generated over 108 million impressions on Twitter and Instagram.

**Small Market Venue of the Year
Champions Park, Newberry, Alachua County, Gainesville Sports Commission**

The park located west of Gainesville, hosted over 15 major events. The GSC Funded 11 events and for every \$1 in grant fund given to the park, \$32 were created in Alachua County. The 11 GSC funded events resulted in 21,159 total attendees including 17,129 from out of state that created 6,239 hotel room nights for an impact of over \$690,000.

**Small Market Event of the Year (Hosted 4/1/16 – 4/15/17)
Babe Ruth Softball 12U & 16U World Series, Treasure Coast Sports
Commission (7/28-8/3/16)**

The two age group World Series Championships featured the top 24 teams in each age group that advanced through local district and state competition before landing in Florida's Treasure Coast. The two age groups combined for a total of 1,425 players and created 1,890 room nights and \$4.1 million in economic impact for Martin and St. Lucie Counties. Games were played at Pineapple Park in Jensen Beach and Halpatioke Park in Stuart.

**Mid-Market Event of the Year (Hosted 4/1/16 – 4/15/17)
Gator Cup, Newberry, Gainesville Sports Commission, (Hosted May 26-30,
2016)**

While this is an annual local created event, what made the 2016 event special was winning the bid to host the USA Olympic Team Trials as the last chance for men and women to qualify in the US to go to the 2016 Olympics in Rio. During the Olympic Trials the top 8 men and women were eliminated down to the top 4, a 3 person team with one alternate archer. This was not only great marketing for the local community but also for the State of Florida to host an Olympic Qualifier before Rio. Over 600 people attended the five-day Gator Cup Tournament and Olympic Team Trial. Over 80% of participants were from out-of-state and over 95% of participants were from out-of-county with 38 states represented and archers from Canada, Trinidad and Bermuda. 1,138 room nights were produced with over a \$175,000 direct local hotel impact and a direct Economic Impact of \$452,067.

**Venue of the Year
International Polo Club, Wellington, Palm Beach County Sports
Commission**

The International Polo club hosts the top three polo competitions in the U.S. annually, between January and April, and is positioned in the center of one of the most prominent equestrian communities in the country. However, the Polo Club is one of the most versatile and flexible sports venues in Florida. The Palm Beach County Sports Commission utilized this venue to host some of the largest sports events in the nation, including the American Youth Soccer Organization National Games, the national Hockey Festival, and two Lacrosse Tournaments that drew over 100 teams. Between the Polo season and Palm Beach County Sports Commission events, the Club generated nearly 35,000 room nights and a \$37 million economic impact for the County.

Nearly 50 Sports Commission representatives and 30 presenters from national sports events attended the two-day Summit in Jupiter. For highlights of the 2017 FSF Sports Summit, visit <http://www.flasports.com/2017/05/24/2017-fsf-sports-summit/>.



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