

Panama City Beach – All-Sport, All-Season Ready

Known for having some of the world's most beautiful beaches, Panama City Beach, located on Florida's panhandle midway between Pensacola and Tallahassee, is a hotbed of amateur sports. Most of the city's sports visitors come from Georgia and Texas, followed by Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi; states where, for most people, it's a six- to eight-hour drive.

In the sports world, Panama City Beach, with 16,000 hotel rooms and a population of 14,000, is known for hosting championship events. The city is home base for the Grand Slam World Series of Baseball, which features more than 350 teams in four weeks. The United States Fastpitch Association also calls Panama City Beach home. Its annual World Series draws close to 400 teams. Additionally, the World Sports League holds its annual Gulf Coast National Championships in Panama City Beach, attracting more than 300 teams.

Frank Brown Park, the city's main facility, is booked solid during the summer months. The park, which recently underwent a \$4.5 million renovation, features nine baseball/softball fields, a T-ball field, six soccer fields, a basketball court, tennis courts, Aquatic Center, walking trails and 20-acre festival site. But, to become a year-round



With nine baseball/softball fields, Frank Brown Park boasts a full schedule during the summer.

sports destination, the city needed to create more fields.

In May 2019, the city will celebrate the grand opening of the \$37 million Panama City Beach Sports Park and Stadium Complex. With 13 multipurpose sports fields, including nine with artificial turf and four with natural grass, the city will be able to offer facilities for the "rectangular" sports — lacrosse, soccer, football, rugby and Ultimate frisbee. The fields are being designed so they can also accommodate baseball and softball.

The complex, one of the largest in the southeast, is located on 210 acres of land donated by the St. Joe Company, a land development company

headquartered in nearby Watersound. The complex will be operated by Sports Facility Management, located in Clearwater.

"The opening of the Panama City Beach Sports Complex will help us become a year-round destination because the majority of the rectangular sports take place in the fall, winter and spring," said Richard Sanders, vice president of sports marketing and special events for the Panama City Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau.

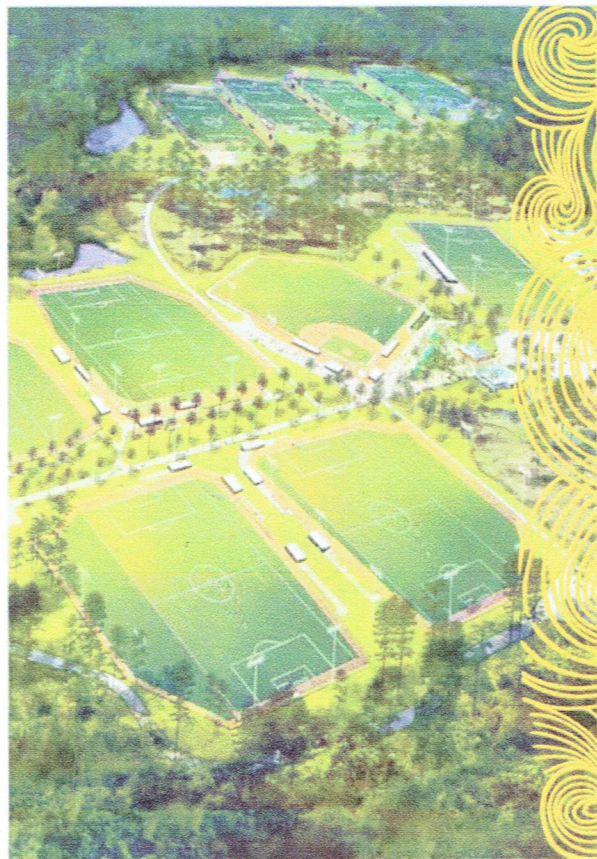
Projections call for 29 events in the first year, increasing to more than 50 in years three and four. Through these events, the city expects to fill 60,000-

75,000 room nights, added to the current total of more than 100,000. This will pump an extra \$23.2 million into the local economy in year one. The complex could also generate an additional 100-150 jobs, from onsite management and operational staff, to game officials and concession workers.

"The demand we have from outside organizations is tremendous, so we anticipate we'll open with a good schedule of soccer, lacrosse and flag football," said Sanders. "Sports we haven't been able to accommodate in the past because of the lack of quality championship fields."

The city is not stopping with the outdoor fields. Phase two is already on the drawing board. A 108,000-square-foot indoor facility will house a combination of eight basketball courts, 16 volleyball courts and 24 pickleball courts, as well as gymnastics, wrestling and weightlifting. The facility can also be configured for concerts and trade shows.

"These projects will solidify Panama City Beach as a 12-month destination for sports," said Sanders. "The demand has been there for years. This has been a 10-year project in the making that is now real. We're super excited about this new facility."



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PANAMA CITY BEACH SPORTS COMPLEX
AT BREAKFAST POINT

The new sports complex in Panama City Beach is on the horizon!
This world-class, 210-acre facility will accommodate a variety of large-scale sports tournaments, benefiting the local community and also encouraging newcomers to discover even more ways to have fun in the sun at the REAL. FUN. BEACH.

PlayPanamaCityBeach.com

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