

## **Sports create “campfire moments.”**

As Dawn Hudson said so well, sports are uniquely capable of bringing people from all walks of life together to enjoy a unique experience. And there’s a worldwide appetite for this type of experience and connection. Professional teams want to tap into this global opportunity—and the travel industry provides access.

## **Global sports fans = new international travelers.**

The NBA has been building its presence in China for many years. This generates new players and fans abroad who want to visit the U.S. and see their favorite athletes. A good example: The large contingent of Chinese fans who traveled to witness Kobe Bryant’s last professional game.

## **Sports draw a different kind of visitor.**

Sports attract new people to new destinations. Places like Las Vegas haven’t had the opportunity to draw sports fans on a regular basis. They do now with the opening of T-Mobile Arena and, soon, the new Raiders stadium. Travel leaders are also leveraging new arenas to create more reasons for meeting planners to book conferences and trade shows in their destinations.

## **It’s more than a game.**

Sports stadium developments and entertainment districts like Texas Live! create opportunities for people to gather every night of the week, not just on game day. These immersive entertainment environments give visitors plenty of reasons to arrive early, stay late, and come even on non-game days.

## **New arenas create new attractions.**

Sports facilities can transform overlooked neighborhoods into destination attractions. Before the opening of the Nationals Park or Capital One Arena in Washington, D.C., there was little reason for travelers to visit those neighborhoods. Now, they are the fastest-developing neighborhoods in D.C.—another reason for teams and travel leaders to partner together.

## **Think beyond the stadium.**

NYC & Company’s work with sporting events like the New York City Marathon is a great way to create another powerful draw for international visitors, who will bring their families and supporters.

## **There’s a new market emerging.**

More young women and girls are playing and following sports worldwide. This is a major growth opportunity for sports teams looking to expand their international fan base—and savvy travel leaders looking to tap into a new market.

## **Show the win-win.**

There are multiple ways to build partnerships between local travel leaders and sports teams—you just need to start the conversation. Teams take their role in the community very seriously, but tend to focus mainly on philanthropy. Travel leaders can show teams how they can positively impact the community by welcoming more visitors.

## **The future is evolving.**

We cannot underestimate the impact of the eSports phenomenon and gaming technologies on traditional sports viewership and participation. The travel industry should continue to monitor the changing landscape of sports into the future, assessing its impact on evolving traveler demographics and trends.