MORE THAN A GAME

How sports tourism brings visitors, investment and lasting opportunity to the Enid region

When people picture economic development, they often think first of manufacturing plants, new retailers or business recruitment. In Enid, another powerful part of that story is unfolding on our ballfields and soccer pitches: sports tourism.

Hosting a national championship is about far more than the competition itself. Each event brings athletes, coaches, families, officials and fans into our community. They stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants, purchase fuel, shop locally and explore Enid between games. Those purchases introduce new dollars into the local economy—supporting businesses, jobs and public services.





Enid's success did not happen overnight. The community has spent decades building the facilities, partnerships, volunteer base and reputation required to host events at a national level. The NJCAA Division II Baseball World Series at David Allen Memorial Ballpark is the clearest example. After 17 years of hosting the championship through consecutive three-year agreements, Enid secured a long-term extension that keeps the event here through May 2038.

> *"Sports tourism isn't charity. It's strategy, and Enid is getting very good at it."*
>
> JEREMY HISE, VICE PRESIDENT, NORTHERN OKLAHOMA COLLEGE–ENID, AND NJCAA DIVISION II BASEBALL WORLD SERIES HOST

That long-term commitment is more than a vote of confidence in one venue. It reflects the work of organizers, sponsors, volunteers, businesses and residents who consistently create a championship experience. It also gives Enid a reliable platform for attracting visitors and showcasing the community year after year.

Baseball established the foundation. Now that success is extending to soccer.

In 2025, the NJCAA Division I Women's Soccer National Championship came to Advance Soccer Complex. The tournament generated an estimated $950,000 in direct and indirect economic impact and approximately 1,315 hotel room nights. Thousands of visitors experienced Enid not simply as a tournament site, but as a community with quality facilities, welcoming people and the capacity to deliver a premier national event.

"The Advance Soccer Complex is more than a place to play. Its an economic engine that brings in visitors, fills hotels and restaurants, supports local businesses and help strengthens Enid through sports tourism!""

MIKE STEINKE, ADVANCE SOCCER COMPLEX, AND PRESIDENT ENID SOCCER CLUB

That performance helped position Enid for its next opportunity: the 2027 NJCAA Division II Men's and Women's Soccer National Championships, scheduled for November 10–14 at Advance Soccer Complex. Two championships will again bring student-athletes and supporters from across the country—and another meaningful infusion of visitor spending.

The return extends beyond hotel rooms and restaurant receipts. Successful events build Enid's visibility and reputation. A parent visiting for a championship may return for a vacation. A coach, official or sponsor may discover a business opportunity. A student-athlete may begin to see Enid as a place to attend college, start a career or build a life.

Sports tourism also strengthens assets residents use throughout the year. National events help maximize public and private investments in facilities while supporting employment in hospitality, retail, food service, transportation and entertainment. Just as importantly, they give the community a shared opportunity to volunteer, welcome visitors and show its pride.

The competition for national events is real. Communities across the country invest in facilities and pursue championships because they understand the economic and reputational value. Enid's advantage is not a single tournament or venue; it is a proven record of partnership and hospitality.

As we look ahead, every tournament should be viewed as both an event and an economic development opportunity. When Enid fills the stands, it also fills hotel rooms, restaurant tables and visitors' impressions of our community. The games may last only a few days, but the value they create can strengthen our region for years to come.



PHOTO BY HUDSYN CHILDS

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