

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

**ECONOMIC  
PULSE**


## THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SPORTS IN YELLOWSTONE COUNTY



**Yellowstone County is experiencing a once-in-a-generation investment in athletic infrastructure development.**

The city's strategic focus on sports infrastructure is part of a broader economic development strategy that leverages Billings' role as a regional hub to attract visitors, generate hotel stays, and boost spending in local businesses.

**Why is this a slam dunk for our community?**

Facilities like this bring family-friendly recreation into focus, serving as a tool for talent attraction and retention for adults and opening positive opportunities for the next generation. A 2023 Victus Advisors study revealed that Billings has been held back by venue quality, with only Dehler Park rated above average. The new investments directly address these identified gaps.

### THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION: THE LONG-TERM AND COMMUNITY-WIDE BENEFITS OF ATHLETICS

- 1 Regular physical activity** benefits health in many ways, including less obesity
- 2 Sports participation** is a significant predictor of young adults' continuation of sports and physical fitness as adults
  - a. Adolescents who play sports are 8x more likely to be active at age 24 than adolescents who do not participate in sports.**
- 3 Active communities** are healthier
  - a. The Aspen Institute examined the top 10 cities (overall ranked) to understand the values, capital and financial investments, and environments of a successful community. A community that invests in sport and recreation is more competitive and vibrant according to the rankings.**
- 4 Sports activities** help children develop and improve cognitive skills
- 5 Participation in athletics** can be a higher predictor of college attendance
- The benefits extend to the workplace. A survey of 400 female corporate executives found that **94% played a sport.**
- 7 Social connectedness** for the children and parents who rally around a common cause and team.
- 8 Community Pride**

Consider this: Regardless of whether you have a child or not, supporting activities and athletics in our communities has a multi-faceted benefit: better health outcomes and less strain on our healthcare system, more connectedness and community pride, workplace and talent attraction benefits, and a more vibrant community overall.

Source: The Aspen Institute, Project Play

### LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

*Athletic opportunities for all City of Billings Parks and Recreation Programming by the numbers:*



#### SUMMER CAMPS

**439** KIDS IN DAY CAMPS | **567** KIDS IN SPORTS CAMPS | **88** KIDS IN SPECIALTY CAMPS

#### COMMUNITY POOLS

**42,370** VISITORS AT ROSE AND SOUTH PARK POOLS | **\$93,605** IN CONCESSIONS



**Spotlight:** The City of Billings has a FREE Rec2U program in parks across the city that was utilized by 3,000 local kids. This is **more than double** last year's attendance.

Source: City of Billings, Big Sky State Games, Yellowstone Valley Special Olympics

### WE'VE GOT THE SPIRIT

#### High School Sports in Yellowstone County

*Our high schools have collectively earned hundreds of state championship titles in our decades of competition.*



Billings Senior **Girls Wrestling** hold the record for all-time and consecutive state championships



Billings West

- **Boys Golf** hold the state record for all-time championships  
- **Boys Tennis** hold the state record for all-time championships



Billings Central

- **Girls Soccer** hold the state record for all-time and consecutive state championships  
- **Swimming** hold the state record for all-time championships

Billings now offers high school baseball and flag football for boys and girls.

Source: Montana High School Association

## COLLEGIATE COMPETITION IN BILLINGS



MSU-Billings Yellowjackets is a member of the NCAA Division II Great Northwest Athletic Conference.

**THEY HAVE 262 ATHLETES COMPETING IN THEIR 15 ATHLETIC PROGRAMS.**

Source: Montana State University-Billings



Rocky Mountain College Battlin' Bears has **421 STUDENT-ATHLETES COMPETING** in the NAIA Division I. This accounts for 55% of degree-seeking undergrads who've committed to pursuing academics and athletics on campus.

Source: Rocky Mountain College

# THE BALL IS IN OUR COURT



## WHAT'S NEXT FOR SPORTS VENUE DEVELOPMENT

*Did you know: Billings hasn't opened a major new sports facility since Dehler Park in 2008. Beginning with the MetraPark Outdoor Arena in 2025, we're slated to see over \$60 million dollars invested in community sports and recreation.*

### METRAPARK OUTDOOR ARENA

## This \$2.5 million investment

seats 3,200 people for outdoor rodeos and equine events.

*This facility opened in the summer of 2025 with a sold-out event, Rodeo Billings, that garnered 6,500 ticket sales and brought in \$700,000 of direct economic impact to our community.*



### BILLINGS TENNIS AND EDUCATION CENTER

## A \$14 million

public-private partnership, tentatively planned for the Amend Recreation Campus.



Phase 1 includes **66,565 square feet** featuring six state-of-the-art indoor tennis courts, a retail pro shop, locker rooms, and classroom spaces.

Phase 2 would add four additional covered outdoor courts. This project is currently in the fundraising phase.

### THE AMEND RECREATION CAMPUS: A triumph of sports and collaboration

#### Signal Peak Ice Arena

*This state-of-the-art twin-sheet hockey facility is a testament of community collaboration.*

## The \$16 million dollar investment

will bring local and regional programming and economic impact to the Amend Recreation Campus. This project is set to open in April of 2026.

#### ARC Sports Courts

The ARC Sports Courts will be a public, multi-use facility bringing 58,000 square feet of activity space to Billings. This investment will feature four NCAA-sized basketball courts that can convert into eight volleyball courts. This

**\$20 million dollar investment** includes TIF funding through the South Billings Urban Renewal Association (SBURA). This project is set to open in 2026.



### DAYLIS STADIUM

An iconic Billings venue being reimagined for future generations. Billings Public School's main athletic complex will have a

## \$14.9 million dollar upgrade

that includes renovations to the west grandstands, a new turf field, and expanded track. There will be four new locker rooms, increased restrooms, a premium concession area, and west entry space. **Projected to open in 2026.**



**THE FLYING PICKLE:** Billings' newest premier pickleball facility, the Flying Pickle will occupy **50,000 square feet** in a high-traffic area in Billings' west end, showcasing 14+ courts, a restaurant, pro shop and event/conference space.



*This will be the largest pickleball facility in Montana. Projected to open in 2026.*

Source: Visit Billings, Billings Chamber of Commerce, Yellowstone County

## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SPORTS TOURISM

**Sports Tourism is unique because it brings bursts of economic impact to our community over a period of days. A mix of indoor and outdoor facilities gives us the competitive advantage of hosting these opportunities year-round.**

*Let's recap some of our community's largest sporting events in 2025 and their economic impact:*

#### Montana High School Association (MHS) State Wrestling Championships - Feb. 13-15, 2025

- 1,000 participants
- 11,000+ spectators over three days
- Estimated economic impact: **\$3 million**

#### Big Sky Volleyfest - May 2-4, 2025

- 300 teams = 3,000 players/coaches
- *Many participants travel with family members/friends*
- Estimated economic impact: **\$3 million**

#### Special Olympics State Summer Games - May 14-16, 2025

- 1,050 participants
- *Many participants travel with family members/friends*
- Estimated economic impact: **\$1 million**

#### Big Sky State Games - July 18-20, 2025

- The Big Sky State Games "brings our state together through sport", drawing 8,000 competitors to Billings each year.
- Estimated economic impact: **\$2 million**

*The Brass Tax: More state-of-the-art facilities will draw more competition and programming to our community, in turn making it possible for families to have less of a need to travel to give their kids athletic opportunities at all levels of competition.*

*The reverse is true: More families from across the region will travel to Billings, staying in our hotels, supporting our retail, restaurants, small businesses, and other amenities. This further solidifies our dominance as a regional hub.*

Source: Visit Billings

Note: These are estimates based on educated formula calculations involving number of participants and spectators



### BANANA BALL IS COMING TO BILLINGS

August 20-22, 2026

*This ultra-popular event has sold out every game they have ever played, even the games that don't feature the Savannah Bananas, the original team.*

Banana Ball (the larger group) is now comprised of six teams in its roster. The two that will come to Billings are the Party Animals and the Firefighters.

The group is planning to sell between **4,600-5,000 tickets** per night, which means we will see between **14,000-15,000 fans** for the three-game series next August 20-22, 2026.

There will be a regional draw to see this viral and entertaining event. According to estimates, approximately one-third of fans will travel from across the region.

**The estimated economic impact could be upwards of \$2 million dollars.**

*A ticket lottery is open at [bananaball.com](http://bananaball.com).*

Source: Visit Billings, Savannah Bananas

# Banana Ball

