



Alachua County Sports and Events Center Transition Update



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Background

- The Alachua County Sports and Events Center opened in spring 2023.
- Funded by \$30 million of Tourist Development Tax.
- On July 8, 2025, the Board voted unanimously to terminate the agreement with the operator, following a notice of default issued on June 6, 2025.
- The termination is effective September 30, 2025, with Alachua County assuming full operations on October 1, 2025.



A cross-functional internal team has been collaborating on the transition process, resulting in the updates being presented today.





Facility Features and Amenities

- **130,000+ SF total**
- 90,000 SF uninterrupted floor space
- 18 volleyball courts
- 10 high school regulation basketball courts
- 21 pickleball courts
- 6 indoor batting cages
- 6,700+ SF cheer studio
- 3,500 spectator seats
- 1,900+ SF of multi-purpose meeting space
- 2,500+ SF of high-performance center space
- 1,200+ SF training room
- 2 lobby and pre-function areas totaling over 6,300 SF
- Warming kitchen and concessions areas
- Integrated floor power and network connectivity
- Indoor banked Mondo track
- Mezzanine, conference room and office space (2nd floor)
- Office space for the Gainesville Sports Commission





Funding Source

Tourist Development Tax - Paid by Visitors - Not Residents

The Alachua County Sports and Events Center is funded through the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) a tax collected on paid overnight stays in hotels, motels, short term rentals, and other accommodations by visitors to Alachua County. Residents do not pay this tax unless they stay in paid lodging.

Tourist Development Tax (TDT) Alignment

- **Economic Reinvestment:** TDT revenues are strategically reinvested into tourism-related facilities, programs, and marketing initiatives that drive visitation and generate measurable economic benefits for Alachua County.
- **Long-Term Economic Impact:** This facility serves as catalyst for hosting major tournaments, conferences, and special events, resulting in significant visitor spending across lodging, dining, retail, and more.
- **Revenue Growth Cycle:** Increased visitation expands TDT collections and related sales tax revenues, creating a reinvestment cycle that supports continued infrastructure development, destination marketing, grant programs, and enhanced visitor experiences, strengthening the local economy.



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Core Goals

1. Drive Economic Impact

Attract tourism-generating sports tournaments, events, and visitors that generate new spending, grow tax revenues, support Alachua County businesses and jobs.

2. Elevate Alachua County's Profile

Position the County as a world-class sports and events destination regionally, nationally, and internationally, generating positive media exposure and marketing value.

3. Ensure Financial Sustainability

Maximize facility revenue through rentals, concessions, sponsorships, and partnerships to support ongoing operations and reinvestment.

4. Provide Local Access

Balance major events with opportunities for residents, schools, and local organizations to access the facility during non-event times.





Tourism and Economic Development

The proposed operational model creates a dedicated **Sports and Events Tourism Division** within the department of Tourism and Economic Development.

This division, led by a Sports Tourism and Events Manager, will:

- Develop and implement strategies to attract regional, national, and international events.
- Strengthen Alachua County's brand as a premier sports and events destination.
- Support local organizations in accessing the facility during non-tourism event periods.
- Maximize facility revenues to ensure financial sustainability and reinvestment in the Center.
- Act as the General Manager of the facility and support uses of other County facilities including West End Park and more.



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Proposed Operational Approach

The facility has been operating as a public-private partnership.

This transition plan proposes a **Direct Public Management** (Government-Run) operational approach. This will maximize public oversight and responsibility while ensuring alignment with the primary purpose of the facility as a tourism and economic development investment. Under this model, the facility is operated directly by Alachua County with the County overseeing staffing, programming, booking, facility maintenance, financial management, and more.

All revenues generated support the direct operations expenses. While direct public management carries more operational responsibility, this model allows Alachua County to fully capture revenues, retain control of programming, and reinforce the facility as a public asset.



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Proposed Operational Approach

There are three primary usage scenarios for the facility:

1. **Facility rentals** for sporting and all other event types;
2. **Hosted/bid events** that are attracted through application processes (eg: WMA; NAIA)
3. **Created/owned events** These are events that are created and operated by the County.

Community Access & Engagement

Multiple sports organizations have approached staff to explore potential partnerships, underscoring strong interest in local access to the facility. This plan responds to that demand by broadening community engagement, ensuring revenue generation and supporting operational efficiency by creating new opportunities for local groups to utilize the Center, rather than duplicating or competing with recreational programs already operating by community organizations.



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Staffing

Full Time Staffing: Three new positions are proposed to support the transition and ensure successful ongoing operations:

1. Sports Tourism and Events Manager
2. Sports Tourism and Events Coordinator
3. Maintenance Mechanic

Part Time and Temp Staffing – Event staff and concessions

Along with other County departments, existing **Tourism and Economic Development staff** will support all aspects of the facility including staffing, marketing, promotions, etc.





Calendar – 2025 Agreements

Existing events through December 2025:

1. **Gujarati Samaj of Gatorland, Inc. GARBA 2025** October 3-5, 2025
2. **Gas South Family Fun Day** October 19, 2025
3. **Alachua County Public Schools ACPS Magnet Showcase** October 25, 2025
4. **Tu Fiesta Radio Festival** November 1, 2025
5. **Sun Country Sports Center 2025 Teddy Bear Invitational** November 7-9, 2025
6. **Infinity Con** November 13-15, 2025
7. **University of Tennessee Foundation, Inc. Rocky Top on the Road Tailgate** November 22, 2025
8. **Buchholz Wrestling Bobcat Round-Robin** December 12, 2025



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Calendar – 2026 Agreements

Existing agreements for 2026 event rentals.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Peach Belt Conference | Peach Belt Conference M/W Indoor Track and Field Championship |
| 2. Excel Events | Excel Events Volleyball Tournament |
| 3. Gator Open, LLC. | Gator Open |
| 4. On the Radar Hoops | Battle at the Beach |
| 5. YBOA, Inc. | YBOA Gator Super National |
| 6. Florida Region of USA Volleyball, Inc. | Molten Boys Southeastern Championships |
| 7. Gainesville Sports Commission | 9th Annual Indoor Pickleball Showcase |
| 8. Gainesville Sports Commission | Jimmy Carnes Indoor Track & Field Meet |
| 9. Dynasty Hoops, LLC. | 4th Annual National Tune Up |
| 10. Gainesville Sports Commission | NAIA Indoor Track & Field National Championship |
| 11. University Athletic Association, Inc. | Florida Volleyball Camp |
| 12. Fish and Wildlife Conservation | NASP Florida State Tournament |



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Budget: Year 1 Overview

Revenues

Program Rentals	\$290,000 (weekday)
Event Rentals	\$630,000 (weekends)
Room Rentals	\$60,000
Sponsorships	\$50,000
Concessions	\$650,000
Total Revenue	\$1,680,000

Expenses

Personnel Services	\$ 425,000
Operations	
Event Contracts	\$ 418,000
Concessions	\$ 150,000
Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 115,000
Master Association Dues	\$ 65,000
Utilities	\$ 366,000
Operation and Supplies	\$ 257,000
Cost of Risk	\$ 300,000
Program Event Supplies	\$ 61,000
Operations Total	\$1,732,000
Total Expenses	\$2,157,000

**Estimated Year 1
revenues cover 78% of
estimated operating
and personnel
expenses.**

**Tourism operating
reserves will cover the
necessary additional
budget expenses.**





Operational Priorities & Next Steps

Partnerships & Rentals Continue collaboration with existing renters and engage new organizations seeking to utilize the facility.

Event Readiness Prepare for the upcoming track season (January–March) and plan staffing for fall events, including the large-scale music event scheduled for November 1, 2025.

Concessions Planning Develop and refine food and beverage operations to support event needs and revenue goals.

Facility Operations Maintain ongoing facility reviews, finalize service agreements, and janitorial and maintenance plan.

Staffing & Workforce Hire and onboard three full-time employees to support operations and event execution.

Marketing & Communications Create updated promotional materials while executing a communications strategy to enhance awareness and bookings.

Rates & Policies Finalize the facility rate sheet, rental policies, and standardized facility use agreement template.



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