

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR FLORIDA SPORTS TOURISM

# THE VICTORY STAND



SPRING 2026



FLORIDA<sup>TM</sup>  
SPORTS  
— FOUNDATION —



# PLAY WITH A PURPOSE!

# VICTORY VISION

Opening reflections and vision for FSF's future.

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



**Maicel Green, President/CEO**

As I reflect on where we are as an organization, I am incredibly proud to share that the Florida Sports Foundation is celebrating 35 years of impact, leadership, and growth. I want you all to feel this pride with us, as your support has been essential to our journey.

It is truly inspiring to see how far we have come. Over the years, Florida has established itself as a leader in the sports industry, and we are honored to be recognized by Sports ETA as #1 in the nation for participatory sports and #3 in spectator sports. This recognition is a testament to your dedication and belief in our shared mission, which should fill you with pride and motivation.

What makes this achievement especially meaningful is its impact beyond the field of play. Sports in Florida are more than competition—they are a driving force for economic growth, tourism, and opportunity across our state. Your efforts help create jobs, generate economic impact, and bring people together, strengthening our community and shared purpose.

As President & CEO, I am truly grateful for the partnerships and collaboration that make this work possible. This is a shared success, and I am thankful to be on this journey with all of you.

The future is bright, and I am excited about what we will continue to accomplish—whether through new programs, expanded partnerships, or innovative initiatives—together. Stay tuned for upcoming opportunities to be involved and help shape our continued success.

## MEET OUR BOARD

Since April 2019, the Governor appoints members of the FSF Board, ensuring alignment with statewide leadership and oversight priorities.

HB5 aligns the FSF board appointment policies with gubernatorial appointment policies. It also requires each gubernatorial appointee to complete the gubernatorial appointments application, reinforcing a consistent and transparent selection process.



**Jesse Biter**  
Biter Enterprises, Chairman



**Michael Dyer**  
Sports Marketing Independent



**Jay Feaster**  
Tampa Bay Lightning



**Sean Flynn**  
SureAthlete



**Dan Malasky**  
IMG Academy



**Marc Weinroth**  
Miami Dolphins



**Caroline O'Connor**  
Miami Marlins



**Michelle McGann Satter**  
LPGA Tour

### FLORIDA SPORTS FOUNDATION

1203 Governor's Square Blvd, Ste 300  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

### CONTACT US

850.577.7200  
info@playinflorida.com

### VISIT US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



# TAG YOU'RE IT!

Featured Plate: Teams, stories, and impact behind Florida's specialty sports tags.

## WHERE TEAM PRIDE MEETS REAL IMPACT

A Florida Pro Sports license plate is more than a symbol of team pride. It is a direct investment in Florida's future.

With every plate purchased and renewed, fans help support youth programs, community initiatives, and sporting events across the state. Proceeds benefit the Florida Sports Foundation and the youth foundations of the 10 Florida professional sports teams with supporting license plates.

These plates do more than show support. They help fund real opportunities created by the youth foundations of Florida's professional teams. In the first two quarters of the 2025-26 fiscal year, from July through December 2025, the Florida Sports Foundation provided **more than \$217,000 to team charities.**

**Funding Impact Across Florida:** A breakdown of funds distributed by the Florida Sports Foundation to professional team charities through specialty license plate proceeds.

- Bucs Care Foundation – \$72,395
- The Miami Foundation (Heat) – \$72,368
- Miami Dolphins Foundation – \$16,990
- The Lightning Foundation, Inc. – \$16,294
- Miami Marlins Foundation – \$10,928
- Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation – \$9,804
- Florida Panthers Foundation – \$7,170
- Orlando Soccer Foundation – \$4,799
- Rays Baseball Foundation – \$3,273
- Orlando Magic Youth Foundation – \$3,424

## Show your team pride and help move Florida forward!

From neighborhood fields to statewide competitions, every plate plays a bigger role in building a stronger, more active community. Together, these small acts of support add up to something greater.



Show your team pride and make an impact with your favorite team's specialty license plate.

This partnership turns team pride into real support for youth programs across Florida.

# AMATEUR ALL-STARS

Spotlighting the passion and talent rising through Florida's amateur sports scene.

## FLORIDA SENIOR GAMES LIFELONG COMPETITION

The Florida Senior Games is the state's only Olympic-style sports festival for athletes age 50 and over.

Now in its 35th year, the Games continue to show the spirit of competition has no age limit. Athletes from across the state and the nation gathered in Florida's Sports Coast/Pasco County in December, to compete in one of 23 sports offered, demonstrating dedication, perseverance, and a passion for staying active. The Games created a strong sense of community and camaraderie among athletes who share a love for sports and healthy living. For more information on competing in the 2026 Florida Senior Games or one of the 21 Florida Senior Games Series Qualifiers leading up to December, please visit [floridaseniorgames.com](http://floridaseniorgames.com).



## SUNSHINE STATE GAMES RETURNS IN 2026

The Sunshine State Games returns for the 46th year of providing Florida amateur athletes of all ages the opportunity to compete in 11 sports beginning in May and continuing through June.

The 2026 Calendar of Events begins on Sunday, May 10 with Artistic Roller Skating, at Palm Beach County Astro Skate, in Greenacres. The following weekend, the skating continues on ice at the 38th Sunshine State Games Figure Skating Championships at Advent Health Center Ice, in Wesley Chapel.

During the traditional Sunshine State Games month of June, nine sports will be in action during all four weekends of the month. Longtime favorites, Archery, Swimming and Table Tennis will be held in Alachua County. Artistic Swimming, another favorite, will be contested at the FAST Facility in Ocala.



The very popular Water Polo tournament returns to Broward County and the Coral Springs Aquatic Center. Competition and registration information for the various Sunshine State Games sports can be found at [sunshinestategames.com](http://sunshinestategames.com).

# FUN FIRST, FITNESS FOREVER

Encouraging kids to stay active through play, movement, and healthy habits.

## INSPIRING LIFELONG MOVEMENT

The **Fun First, Fitness Forever** initiative, led by the Florida Sports Foundation in partnership with the Florida Department of Health and the Florida Department of Education, aims to raise awareness about youth wellness and garner support for promoting fun physical activity. This collaboration is key to helping Florida’s youth build healthy habits that last a lifetime.



## YOUTH FIRST, FUN ALWAYS

Through school-based programming and community engagement, the initiative introduces accessible, age-appropriate opportunities for students to stay active. A pilot phase in select districts will lay the groundwork for future statewide expansion and connect participants to events like the Sunshine State Games, inspiring community pride and involvement.

As an in-school initiative, the program brings unique opportunities directly to students many of whom may otherwise have access to structured athletic experiences by creating a supportive and engaging environment, **Fun First Fitness Forever** ensures that every student can participate, learn, and thrive. The program will launch its pilot phase in select school districts during the spring and fall of 2026. This initial rollout marks the beginning of a broader effort to make fitness fun, accessible, and sustainable for students across the state.



# THE ASSIST

Funding opportunities, grant highlights, and tips to help you succeed.

## THE PARTNER ADVISORY COMMITTEE



We are excited to introduce the Partner Advisory Committee, a new initiative designed to strengthen and enhance the partnership between our industry partners and the Florida Sports Foundation. This committee brings together a group of valued partners from across the state to provide insight, guidance, and collaborative input as we continue to grow and shape our programs.

The Partner Advisory Committee will play an important role in ensuring our foundation continues to reflect the needs and priorities of Florida's sports community.

By bringing together a variety of perspectives and real-world experience, this group will help us make thoughtful decisions, maximize our impact, and continue supporting meaningful sports development opportunities throughout the state.

We are truly looking forward to the collaboration, ideas, and innovation this committee will bring as we continue to strengthen and evolve our grants program.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.



## DRIVING IMPACT ACROSS EVERY LEVEL

The Florida Sports Foundation's grant program supports a wide range of sporting and community events across the state:

- **Premier Events:** Large-scale events that drive tourism and economic impact
- **Community & Emerging Events:** Local events with growth potential
- **Industry Support Programs:** Initiatives that strengthen Florida's sports ecosystem

Each program ensures funding is both impactful and accountable, supporting initiatives aligned with statewide goals for tourism, youth engagement, and sports development.

# GAME CHANGERS

Home to world-class events, elite athletes, and unforgettable championship moments.

## TAMPA SPORTS COMMISSION DELIVERS BIG HOCKEY MOMENT



How about the show the Tampa Bay Lightning, the NHL, Raymond James Stadium and the Tampa Bay Sports Commission put on for the 2026 Stadium Series Game between the Lightning and the Boston Bruins?

Nearly 65,000 fans packed the stadium, witnessing the spectacle in temperatures hovering in the 40s. Lightning players arrived in full Tampa Bay Buccaneers throwback creamsicle uniforms, stepping off the bus led by Baker Mayfield. A crew of pirates welcomed players and fans alike to Raymond James Stadium during pre-game ceremonies, while ESPN's pre-game hosts embraced the theme, donning Revolutionary War patriot and pirate attire. The night delivered even more drama on the ice: an overtime 6-5 shootout victory capped off by a tense tussle between the Lightning and Bruins goalies at center ice.

"It was perfect weather out there," Lightning defenseman Ryan McDonagh told NHL.com. "Felt like a classic outdoor game. The ice was great. The crowd was with it the whole game. ... It was incredible. I think if the fans were here tonight, they got their money's worth and then some."

## FLORIDA HOSTS COLLEGE FOOTBALL'S BIGGEST STAGE

Every day is gameday in Florida. The 2025 College Football season concluded at Hard Rock Stadium, in Miami Gardens, in January. It wasn't the first time the eyes of college football fans were trained on Miami.

Besides the 11 Super Bowl's played in Miami, the 2026 College Football Playoff Championship Game, played at Hard Rock Stadium, was the 16th National Champion crowned since 1970 in the Southeast Florida hub of sports.

The Indiana Hoosiers completed their storybook 2025 season, with a win over the Miami Hurricanes, who were looking to add a sixth National Championship trophy to their collection.



College football contributes to the \$146 million in economic impact annually. Teams from 30 states came to Florida during the regular season for games against Florida teams. The 2025-26 College Football Bowl Season brought 11 teams and their fans to Florida for football games.

# PLAY MAKERS

Celebrating the people behind the plays who move Florida sports forward.

## HONORING VETERANS IN COMPETITION

The National Veterans Golden Age Games, to be held **June 27 – July 2, 2026**, in Tampa, is 39 years strong and the only multi-sport competition in the world designed to improve the quality of life for all older Veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities.

The Veteran's Administration hosts the event in a new city each year as Veterans look forward to a reunion with their community of brothers and sisters, just as they did in military service.

The Tampa Convention Center will be the hub of activity with athlete registration, an athlete village, wellness expos, the Parade of Athletes Ceremony and a host for 10 sports, including 3-on-3 Basketball, Billiards, Bocce, Horseshoes, Pickleball, Powerlifting, Sport Shooting events, Shuffleboard and Table Tennis.

Registration is closed, but check out the evens in downtown Tampa at [department.va.gov/veteran-sports/national-veterans-golden-age-games](https://department.va.gov/veteran-sports/national-veterans-golden-age-games). The event is a recipient of a Florida Sports Foundation grant.



## VOLUNTEERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Volunteers are the backbone of many sports events and programs in Florida. With upcoming events like the National Veteran's Golden Age Games, in Tampa, and the Sunshine State Games in various locations statewide, here's some opportunities to get involved.

To volunteer at the Golden Age Games, June 27 – July 2, visit [40goldenagegames.my-trs.com](https://40goldenagegames.my-trs.com).

For Sunshine State Games volunteer opportunities, visit [sunshinestategames.com/volunteers](https://sunshinestategames.com/volunteers).

There's a job for everyone at a sports competition, whether it be checking in athletes, delivering meals to other volunteers and event staff personnel at different sites, or score keeping and timing.

Further down the road the 2026 Florida Senior Games will also need volunteers. Make new friends and be amazed at the performances of Florida's Finest Athletes, aged 50 and over. Visit [floridaseniorgames.com/volunteers](https://floridaseniorgames.com/volunteers) for more information about the 35th Annual Florida Senior Games, in December, in Pasco County.

There is a role for everyone at a sports competition, from athlete check-in and scorekeeping to timing and delivering meals to fellow volunteers and event staff across multiple venues. Looking ahead, the 2026 Florida Senior Games will also be seeking volunteers. Make new friends and be inspired by the performances of Florida's finest athletes, ages 50 and over. For more information about volunteering at the 35th Annual Florida Senior Games, taking place in December in Pasco County, visit [floridaseniorgames.com/volunteers](https://floridaseniorgames.com/volunteers).

# FUEL UP

Smart nutrition and athlete-approved recipes to power your performance.

## POWERING PERFORMANCE: SMART SNACKS FOR GAME DAY



Athletes perform best when their bodies are properly fueled. Snacks that combine carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats—such as fruit with nut butter, yogurt with granola, or whole-grain crackers with hummus—can help maintain energy and focus before practices and competitions.

Eating a light snack about 30 to 60 minutes before activity can provide the energy needed to perform without feeling too full. After exercise, choosing nutrient-rich foods helps support recovery and keeps athletes ready for the next challenge.

## HYDRATION MATTERS: STAYING ENERGIZED IN FLORIDA'S HEAT

Hydration is vital for athletes, particularly in Florida's warm and humid climate. Drinking water consistently throughout the day helps sustain energy, regulate body temperature, and reduce fatigue during training and competition.

Developing good hydration habits before, during, and after activity supports peak performance and promotes faster recovery.



## RECIPE SPOTLIGHT: PERFORMANCE POWER SMOOTHIE BOWL



### Ingredients:

- 1 frozen banana
- ½ cup frozen berries
- ½ cup Greek yogurt
- ½ cup almond milk (or milk of choice)
- 1 tablespoon peanut or almond butter
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- ¼ cup granola

### Instructions:

1. Place bananas, berries, yogurt, almond milk, and nut butter in a blender and process until smooth.
2. Pour the mixture into a cereal bowl.
3. Sprinkle with chia seeds and granola.
4. Enjoy a nutrient-dense snack packed with protein, fiber, and natural energy.

### Why It's Great for Athletes:

This smoothie bowl provides carbohydrates for energy, protein for muscle recovery, and healthy fats to keep you full and fueled.

# RALLY POINT

Where Florida's sports community connects, celebrates, and shares.

## COMMUNITIES IN MOTION

Across Florida, sports continue to serve as a powerful way to bring communities together.

One of Florida's prime examples of this effort is the 21 Florida Senior Games Series Qualifiers taking place from January to November, to serve as qualifiers for the Florida Senior Games. Between January and April, 10 local qualifiers were held and 11 more begin in September and run through November. For athletes aged 50 and over it's a great opportunity to keep active and enjoy the camaraderie of like-minded individuals making the best of their lives after turning 50.

Visit [floridaseniorgames.com/all-sports-schedule](http://floridaseniorgames.com/all-sports-schedule) to view the remaining Florida Senior Games Series Qualifiers across 11 locations beginning in September. Upcoming locations include Pensacola, Gainesville, Jacksonville, Sanford, Tampa, Ormond Beach, Martin County, Pinecrest, and Cutler Bay.

For registration details and participation information, visit the website to get started.



## GROWING YOUTH SPORTS

Sunshine State Games events give young Floridians a true Olympic-style experience close to home, with festivals held across the state for amateur athletes of all ages and skill levels. Through this Florida Sports Foundation program, youth develop their physical talents while experiencing the excitement of multi-sport competition in a safe, welcoming environment.

For many young athletes, the Sunshine State Games are the first step in a lifelong sports journey, with more than 200,000 participants since 1980. Many have chased national and international dreams, while countless others have gained confidence by setting goals, training with teammates, and achieving personal bests.

Beyond medals, Sunshine State Games weekends unite communities and inspire teamwork, discipline, and respect that last beyond the field.



# ON DECK

A quick look at upcoming competitions and events across Florida.

## A LOOK

**Easter International Cup Soccer Tournament (FSF Granted Event)**  
April 1-4, Kissimmee

**Girls Easter International Cup (FSF Granted Event)**  
April 1-4, Orlando

**Spring Concours Equestrian Series (FSF Granted Event)**  
April 1 – May 31, Sarasota

**Tropical 7's International Youth Rugby Sevens (FSF Granted Event)**  
April 2-4, Tampa Bay

**The Villages Senior Games (A qualifier for the 2026 Florida Senior Games)**  
April 17-26, Various locations in The Villages

**Varsity Cheer: The Youth Summit, Recreation Summit, The Celebration (FSF Granted Event)**  
April 23-26, Tampa Bay

**Home School Baseball World Series (FSF Granted Event)**  
April 26 – May 2, Polk County

**Sunshine State Games Artistic Roller Skating**  
May 10, Palm Beach County Astro Skate, Greenacres

**Sunshine State Games Figure Skating**  
May 15-17, Advent Health Center Ice, Wesley Chapel

**USA Volleyball Adult Open National Championship (FSF Granted Event)**  
May 22-27, Orlando

**Sunshine State Games Alachua/Gainesville Festival Weekend (Archery, Fuji BJJ, Swimming, Ultimate)**  
June 5-7, Various Alachua County Locations

**Prospect Select Baseball Classic and Classic Futures (FSF Granted Event)**  
June 5-15, West Palm Beach

**2026 US Rowing Youth National Championships (FSF Granted Event)**  
June 11-14, Sarasota

**Sunshine State Games Artistic Swimming**  
June 12-14, FAST, Ocala

**FIFA World Cup (FSF Granted Event)**  
June 15 – July 18, Miami

**PG Ultimate Baseball Championships & WWBA 13UNationalChampionship (FSF Granted Event)**  
June 15-July 1, West Palm Beach

**Sunshine State Games Water Polo**  
June 19-21, Coral Springs Aquatic Complex, Coral Springs

**Sunshine State Games Table Tennis**  
June 26-28, Legacy Park Multipurpose Center, Alachua



# STATUTES

Statutes supporting sports development, funding, and initiatives across Florida.

## **F.S.S. 288.1229**

### **PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS-RELATED INDUSTRIES AND AMATEUR ATHLETICS**

The Foundation shall assist the department in the promotion and development of the sports industry and related industries for the purpose of improving the economic presence of these industries in Florida. The promotion of amateur athletic participation for the citizens of Florida and the promotion of Florida as a host for national and international amateur athletic competitions for the purpose of encouraging and increasing the direct and ancillary economic benefits of amateur athletic events and competitions.

## **F.S.S. 320.08056**

### **SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES**

The department is responsible for developing the specialty license plates authorized in s. 320.08053.

## **F.S.S. 320.08058**

### **SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES**

FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SPORTS TEAM LICENSE PLATES. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles shall develop a Florida Professional Sports Team license plate as provided in this section for Major League Baseball, National Basketball Association, National Football League, Arena Football League, National Hockey League, and Major League Soccer teams domiciled in this state.

## **F.S.S. 1006.205**

### **FAIRNESS IN WOMEN'S SPORTS ACT**

It is the intent of the Legislature to maintain opportunities for female athletes to demonstrate their strength, skills, and athletic abilities and to provide them with opportunities to obtain recognition and accolades, college scholarships, and the numerous other long-term benefits that result from participating and competing in athletic endeavors.

## **CHAPTER 286**

### **PUBLIC BUSINESS: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

Reports statutorily required; filing, maintenance, retrieval, and provision of copies.

## **F.S.S. 288.11625**

### **APPLICATION FOR SPORTS DEVELOPMENT FUNDING**

HB 7095 created s. 288.11625, F.S., funding for the Sports Development Program. Entities seeking to receive funding under this program must complete the required application process, as specified. The annual application period is from June 1 through November 1.

## **F.S.S. 288.11631**

### **RETENTION OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL SPRING TRAINING BASEBALL FRANCHISES**

The Department of Commerce serves as the state agency for certifying qualified applicants to receive state funding for a facility for a spring training franchise under Sections 288.11631 and 212.20(6)(d)6.e, F.S.