Executive Summary

By

Center for Tourism Research & Development
Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management
University of Florida
P.O. Box 118208
Gainesville, FL 32611, USA
(352) 392-3992 (phone)
(352) 392 7588 (fax)

Submitted to:

Gainesville Sports Commission
300 East University Avenue, Suite 100
Gainesville, FL 32601

2008
Executive Summary

Project Description and Methods
- The aim of this project was to investigate the perceptions and behaviors of the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event spectators and coaches. To collect data from the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event spectators and coaches, two methods were used: A self-administered on-site survey for spectators and a web-survey for coaches. Both surveys included questions regarding attitudes and perceptions toward the event and destination, event satisfaction, intentions to attend the next event and return to the destination, and tourism related activities, accommodations, and spending patterns. Five hundred and forty six \( (N=546) \) spectators were intercepted while 130 e-mail invitations were sent for coaches. The response rate for the spectators was 87.2% \( (N=476) \), whereas the response rate of the coaches was 30.0% \( (N=39) \).

The Participants
- Around two thirds of the spectators (67.0%) were female, while the majority of coaches (83.0%) were male. The average ages of the spectators and coaches were 45 and 44 years old, respectively. A large percentage of the spectators (73.0%) and coaches (63.0%) had earned more than $80,000. The majority of spectators (85.0%) and coaches (79.0%) indicated they live with another adult in their household. Slightly less than half of the spectators (49.0%) reported they live with two children in their household, whereas one third of the coaches (33.0%) indicated two children live in their household, and 30% of the coaches reported one child lives in their household.

The Findings
- Trip Characteristics
  - Most spectators (94.0%) and all coaches (100.0%) were not Alachua County residents. A large percentage of the spectators (96.0%) and the coaches (97.0%) traveled more than 50 miles from their home residence. Almost all spectators (97%) and all coaches (100.0%) indicated the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event was the primary purpose of their trip to Gainesville.
  - More than half of the spectators (55.8%) reported the location of the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event had “somewhat” to “a lot of influence” on their decision to attend the event.
  - The travel party size of spectators ranged from one to six adults and the travel party size of coaches ranged from one to eight adults. The median travel party size of both the spectators and the coaches were two adults and two minors.
  - Most spectators (97.0%) and coaches (80.0%) were related to the players of the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event as their daughters.
  - Almost all spectators (97.0%) and all coaches (100.0%) reported the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event was the primary purpose of their trip to Gainesville.
  - Around half of the spectators (43.0%) and coaches (54.0%) stayed in Gainesville three days including their event participation days and nights.
Tourism Activities and Accommodations
- The majority of spectators (87.0%) and coaches (70.0%) dined out in the Gainesville area during their stay. Another activity pursued by a large percentage of the spectators (57.0%) and coaches (49%) was shopping. A large percentage of the spectators (53.0%) and the coaches (62%) also participated in a university sport event.
- The majority of spectators (80.0%) and coaches (90.0%) stayed in hotels/motels.
- Each travel party of spectators and coaches spent $680 and $1,050 respectively for the duration of their stay. The “per day” spending per travel party was calculated to be $226 for spectators and $350 for coaches.

Tourism Spending
- The data suggested that each travel party of spectators and coaches spent $680 and $1,050 respectively for the duration of their stay. The “per day” spending per travel party including accommodations was calculated to be $226 for spectators and $350 for coaches.

Participation Patterns of Soccer Athletes in Soccer and Physical Activities
- Nearly one third of the soccer players (29.0%) have been playing soccer for 7-8 years, followed by 5-6 years (26.0%), 9-10 years (17.0%), and 3-4 years (14.0%).
- One third of the soccer players (33.0%) have been on a travel team for soccer tournaments for 1-2 years and equally, one third of the players (33.0%) have been playing with a travel team for 3-4 years.
- The soccer players practice soccer on average 2.63 times during a regular week, engage in casual play on average 2.95 times weekly, and participate in other sports on average 2.12 times per week.

Attendance Patterns at the Soccer Events
- Roughly two thirds of the spectators (61.0%) and half of the coaches (53.0%) indicated they were attending the Gator Soccer Showcase event for the first time.
- Approximately one third of the spectators (29.0%) have attended similar sport events from 1 to 5 times in the last three years, followed by 6 to 10 times (27.0%), and 21 times or more (16.0%). More than one third of the coaches (36.0%) have coached similar sport events from 11 to 15 times in the last three years, followed by 16 to 20 times (19.0%).
- Around half of the spectators (51.0%) have never traveled to Alachua County to attend sport events in the past five years excluding this trip, whereas 16% of the spectators have visited Alachua County once in the past five years, followed by two times (13.0%).

Perception of the Gainesville 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase Event
- When asked about their perception of the overall image of the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event, most spectators (96.0%) and all coaches (100.0%) indicated a somewhat to extremely positive perception of the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event.
- The 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event was perceived by the coaches as “competitive” ($M=5.47, SD=1.37$), followed by “valuable” ($M=5.43, SD=1.19$), “active” ($M=5.38, SD=1.40$), and “joyful” ($M=5.37, SD=1.24$).
Two thirds of the coaches (61.0%) indicated the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event was better to much better compared to other soccer events.

**Satisfaction with the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase Event**

- Most spectators (91.0%) and coaches (98.0%) were somewhat to extremely satisfied with the overall event experience. A large percentage of the spectators (76.0%) and coaches (90.0%) were somewhat to extremely satisfied with the registration process. A majority of the spectators (83.0%) and coaches (85.0%) were somewhat to extremely satisfied with the administration of the soccer games. A large percentage of the spectators (84.0%) and coaches (77.0%) were somewhat to extremely satisfied with the quality of the sport facilities. A majority of the spectators (89.0%) and coaches (95.0%) were somewhat to extremely satisfied with the overall event organization.

**Attitudes and Intentions Related to the Next Gator Soccer Showcase**

- Most spectators (93.0%) and coaches (89.0%) thought it would be pleasant to attend or coach sport events such as the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event. Most spectators (91.0%) and all coaches (100.0%) also thought it would be valuable to attend or coach events such as the Gator Showcase event.
- A large percentage of the spectators (80.0%) and coaches (92.0%) indicated they plan to attend or coach an event such as the 2008 Gator Soccer Showcase event in the next year.

**Alachua County as a Vacation Destination**

- A large percentage of the spectators (69.0%) and coaches (63.0%) have never visited Alachua County for vacation purposes in the past five years.
- Less than two thirds of the spectators (60.0%) and 41.0% of the coaches were somewhat to extremely positive with the overall image of Alachua County as a vacation destination. A majority of the spectators (85.0%) and coaches (95.0%) were somewhat to extremely positive with the image of Alachua County as a sport event destination.
- One quarter of the spectators (25.0%) and 39.0% of the coaches indicated they somewhat to totally agreed with the intention to stay/return to Alachua County for a vacation.

**Project Lead Coordinator: Dr. Kyriaki Kaplanidou**