

Hidden Valley Oklahoma Research (HVIOR) Oklahoma USSSA Baseball & Softball Economic Activity (2001–2026)

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Statewide Tournament Participation, Economic Activity, and Event Host Analysis

Doctoral Executive Summary

Executive Overview

The Hidden Valley Oklahoma Research (HVIOR) initiative analyzed statewide United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) baseball and softball tournament activity across Oklahoma from 2001 through 2026. Using longitudinal event data aggregated into the Hidden Valley dataset and visualized through AppSheet dashboards, this research examines the operational scale, financial estimates, participation trends, and event-host distribution of one of Oklahoma's largest youth sports ecosystems.

Rather than evaluating a single tournament, municipality, or sports complex, this study evaluates **twenty-six years of statewide activity** to understand the cumulative impact of tournament baseball and softball on Oklahoma communities. The analysis combines tournament registrations, estimated team entry fees, modeled gate receipts, concession estimates, umpire compensation, event income, event net revenue, and estimated community economic impact to establish a comprehensive statewide picture of organized youth sports.

The findings indicate that youth tournament sports have evolved into a significant economic sector whose influence extends well beyond the playing field. Tournament activity generates direct revenue through registration and event operations while also producing substantial secondary economic effects through lodging, restaurants, fuel purchases, retail spending, and regional tourism. The data further suggests that tournament production is concentrated among a relatively small number of event hosts, highlighting the importance of understanding scheduling practices, facility access, and governance within Oklahoma's youth sports economy.

Purpose of the Research

The primary objectives of this research are to:

- Document the scale of statewide USSSA tournament activity between 2001 and 2026.
- Estimate direct tournament-related financial activity using consistent analytical assumptions.
- Examine long-term participation and revenue trends.
- Compare baseball and softball tournament economics.
- Evaluate event-host concentration and statewide distribution.
- Demonstrate the broader economic significance of youth sports to Oklahoma communities.
- Establish a repeatable research framework for municipal, regional, and statewide analyses within the Hidden Valley Oklahoma Research initiative.

This report is intended to support future research, public discussion, economic development planning, transparency initiatives, and informed decision-making regarding youth sports infrastructure.

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Key Statewide Findings

The statewide dashboard indicates substantial cumulative activity across the twenty-six-year study period.

Approximate statewide findings include:

Category	Estimated Value
Registered Teams	≈166,000
Team Entry Fees	≈\$36 million
Gate Fees	≈\$28 million
Concession Revenue	≈\$34 million
Umpire Compensation	≈\$31 million
Event Net Revenue	≈\$104 million
Total Event Income	≈\$139 million
Estimated Economic Impact	≈\$93 million

These values represent modeled estimates derived from the Hidden Valley dataset and should not be interpreted as audited financial statements.

Twenty-Six Years of Growth

The annual Team Entry Fee graph illustrates sustained expansion across Oklahoma's tournament sports industry.

The progression can generally be divided into five phases:

Phase I: Foundation (2001–2005)

Tournament activity steadily increased as organized travel baseball and softball expanded throughout Oklahoma.

Characteristics include:

- modest tournament schedules
 - increasing participation
 - expanding sanctioning
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Phase II: Expansion (2006–2011)

Growth accelerated significantly.

Additional tournaments, facilities, and organizers entered the marketplace, producing larger annual registration totals and increasing financial activity.

Phase III: Maturity (2012–2019)

Tournament activity stabilized at historically high levels.

Annual participation remained consistently strong while tournament infrastructure continued to develop throughout the state.

Phase IV: Pandemic Disruption (2020)

The dashboard reflects a temporary reduction in tournament activity consistent with nationwide COVID-19 disruptions.

Although participation declined, tournament activity remained substantial.

Phase V: Recovery and Record Activity (2021–2026)

Tournament participation rapidly recovered.

Recent seasons represent the highest annual activity observed during the study period, demonstrating continued demand for organized youth baseball and softball.

Baseball and Softball Comparison

The statewide comparison illustrates important distinctions between baseball and softball.

Baseball generated approximately:

\$21 million

in estimated Team Entry Fees.

Softball generated approximately:

\$15.5 million

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during the same period.

This indicates that baseball accounted for a somewhat larger share of statewide registration revenue during the twenty-six-year study period.

However, both sports contribute significantly to Oklahoma's youth sports economy.

Gate Revenue

The dashboard estimates approximately:

\$28 million

in statewide gate revenue.

Gate estimates were modeled using standardized assumptions regarding:

- roster size
- accompanying spectators
- admission pricing

Actual attendance may vary considerably by:

- tournament size
- age division
- geographic location
- weather
- event duration

Consequently, modeled gate estimates should be interpreted as analytical approximations rather than audited totals.

Concession Revenue

Estimated concession activity approaches:

\$34 million

statewide.

Tournament concessions represent an important secondary revenue source that supports event operations while contributing additional economic activity within host communities.

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Umpire Compensation

The dashboard estimates more than:

\$31 million

in umpire compensation.

These estimates are based on minimum game assumptions and standardized compensation rates.

Actual compensation likely varies according to:

- age division
 - tournament classification
 - championship assignments
 - travel reimbursement
 - regional differences
-

Event Net Revenue

Estimated statewide event net revenue exceeds:

\$104 million

This illustrates the substantial financial scale of organized tournament operations beyond basic registration revenue.

Total Event Income

Estimated statewide event income approaches:

\$139 million

This represents the cumulative financial activity generated through tournament operations across Oklahoma during the study period.

Estimated Economic Impact

One of the most significant findings is the estimated statewide economic impact approaching:

\$93 million

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Although this figure reflects modeled calculations rather than audited economic studies, it illustrates the substantial role youth sports may play within Oklahoma's broader economy.

Tournament spending extends into:

- hotels
- restaurants
- fuel
- retail
- entertainment
- local tourism
- municipal tax collections

These secondary expenditures frequently exceed direct tournament revenues.

Event Host Distribution

The statewide event-host graph demonstrates that tournament production is concentrated among a relatively limited number of organizations.

Several hosts account for disproportionately large shares of statewide tournament activity.

This observation does not imply misconduct or preferential treatment. Rather, it identifies an area for additional research concerning:

- scheduling practices
- facility availability
- market concentration
- operational capacity
- contractual relationships

Understanding these factors may assist municipalities, facility owners, and policymakers in evaluating long-term sports tourism strategies.

Research Methodology

The Hidden Valley Oklahoma Research methodology incorporates:

- event-level tournament records
- team registration data
- AppSheet dashboard analytics
- standardized financial assumptions
- longitudinal trend analysis
- sport-specific comparisons

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- host distribution analysis

Financial estimates were developed using consistent analytical assumptions to permit meaningful comparisons across municipalities and years.

Research Limitations

Readers should recognize several important limitations.

The dashboard estimates do not constitute:

- audited financial statements
- verified municipal accounting records
- official USSSA financial reports
- certified economic impact studies

Certain calculations—including gate fees, concessions, umpire compensation, and community economic impact—are modeled estimates based upon standardized assumptions.

Verification through contracts, accounting records, tax collections, receipts, and facility agreements would be necessary to establish audited financial conclusions.

Conclusions

The Hidden Valley Oklahoma Research dataset demonstrates that organized USSSA baseball and softball have become major contributors to Oklahoma's youth sports economy over the 2001–2026 study period. The analysis indicates approximately 166,000 registered team entries, more than \$36 million in team entry fees, approximately \$28 million in modeled gate revenue, about \$34 million in concession activity, over \$31 million in estimated umpire compensation, roughly \$104 million in event net revenue, approximately \$139 million in total event income, and an estimated statewide economic impact approaching \$93 million.

Beyond these financial estimates, the research documents sustained long-term growth, the resilience of tournament participation following the COVID-19 disruption, and the increasing importance of sports tourism to Oklahoma communities. It also highlights opportunities for future research regarding event-host concentration, facility utilization, governance, and the role of public records in validating financial and operational assumptions.

As the statewide foundational report within the Hidden Valley Oklahoma Research initiative, this executive summary establishes a consistent analytical framework that can be applied to municipalities, sports complexes, and individual facilities throughout Oklahoma, enabling meaningful comparisons while promoting transparency, accountability, and evidence-based discussion of youth sports economics.