

S P O R T S E V E N T H O U S I N G



Sports ETA
SPORTS EVENTS & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

**10 Ways to Ace Sports Event Housing &
Build Successful Events for Years to Come**

Part 2 of 4

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Playbook₃₆₅

*A special series of white papers
for rights holders and organizers*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
What Is a Sports Event Housing Program?	2
9 Ways to Win with Great Housing	3
Is Your Housing Program Doing All It Can for You? Take Our Audit and See	6
10 Ways to Level up Housing and Event Success	8
#1: Know all the ways housing companies can help	8
#2: Knock it out of the park with customer service	10
#3 & #4: Weigh the revenue vs. costs of outsourcing	11
#5: Use this one move to score better terms in hotel negotiations	12
#6: Collaborate with hotels to improve the customer experience	14
#7: Understand the critical role of NSOs	15
#8: Technology: Simplify registration, housing with a one-stop shop	17
#9: Communicate openly to enrich the customer experience and grow your events	18
#10: Build a true partnership for longterm success	19
Conclusion.....	20

1

From John David, President & CEO of Sports ETA



Welcome to the second report in our series on sports event housing.

Our new guide comes on the heels of Sports ETA's *State of the Industry Report*, which revealed sports is the top generator of hotel room nights in 63 percent of destinations.

Sports travel jumped from 66.5 million room nights in 2021 to more than 73.5 million in 2023.

There's no doubt about it, this is an exciting time for sports event housing. Many destinations provide generous sponsorships to attract youth and amateur teams. They also welcome travelers with sports-friendly hotels that understand the unique requirements and opportunities of sports travel.

Our new housing guide shows how you can reap the benefits of this booming market.

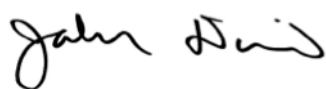
The comprehensive report features a self-guided mini-audit to help determine if you're making the most of this opportunity. Then, it shares best practices from four leading sports housing pros.

Whether you're an industry veteran or just starting out, you'll get time-tested strategies to:

- ✓ Maximize housing performance
- ✓ Secure coveted destination grants and sponsorships
- ✓ Enrich communities
- ✓ Create joyful, unforgettable memories for players and families

Let's get started!

Yours in Sport,



John David
President & CEO
Sports Events & Tourism Association



2

What exactly is a sports event housing program?

A housing program is like your secret playbook. It provides a framework to manage housing strategically. So, you reduce costs for your teams, streamline operations, mitigate risk, and drive more revenue.



Housing plays a critical role in event success. Commissions and rebates from room nights help offset event expenses. For many rights holders, housing is a game-changer for covering costs.

But sports travel is about more than what happens on the courts and fields. A great housing program also enhances customer experiences, fosters loyalty, and helps ensure the success of your events year after year.



3

Reap the benefits.

Most event operators hire a third-party company to manage their event housing. Others choose to handle it themselves. Whatever your path, a great housing program offers significant advantages like the ones below.

1 COMPETITIVE RATES

When athletes, teams, and families attend a sporting event, lodging is typically their largest expense.

An effective housing program provides safe accommodations near sports complexes. Attendees enjoy discounted group rates and amenities like free breakfast and parking to reduce travel costs.

“Leading sourcing and housing companies have established relationships with major brands at the CEO level,” explains Trish Quillen, Vice President of Global Accounts at ConferenceDirect.

“We receive preferred terms clients can’t get dealing directly with the hotel,” Quillen continues. “That’s due to the sheer volume of our buying power. We leverage that buying power to negotiate lower rates and concessions and protect your interests within your contract.”

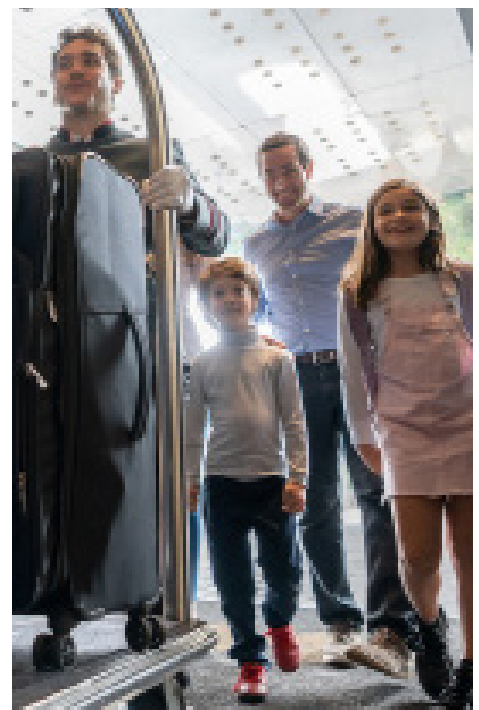
2 LESS RISK

Does your hotel contract shield you from steep cancellation fees if your event gets rained out or teams get disqualified and leave early? Does it protect you if the hotel is unable to honor your room block after you’ve registered athletes and booked facilities for your big event?

Rights holders can run into trouble when employees sign legal agreements without fully understanding the potential consequences. By contrast, group housing specialists have backgrounds in hospitality and know the legal and financial implications of hotel contracts.

3 GREATER EFFICIENCY

Picture this: You need to give accurate numbers to destinations, but you don’t have the ability to track room nights or the manpower to call hotels for pickup reports.



In addition, you must contact hotels for commissions and rebates. You're also calling attendees to find out where they're staying. And families are texting complaints about their hotels.

"These are red flags that it's time to raise the white flag and ask for help," says Mike Hill, Vice President of Sales and Business Development at GroupHousing Travel. "Housing companies know the ins and outs of hotels. We take care of lodging, freeing up rights holders to focus on running their tournaments."

4 BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

For many families, the weekend is about more than what happens on the rinks and fields. CVBs and sports commissions share destination knowledge and perks to turn trips into "playcations" (getaways centered on sports).

Partnering with CVBs and sports commissions is like giving your event the home-field advantage because they know the terrain so well.

Destination experts share insider tips on area restaurants and attractions. Finding the right activities or the perfect restaurant for a team dinner can turn a good trip into a memorable moment of the season.

5 EASY BOOKING

Don't let families waste time scouring the Internet for hotels. Guide them to host hotels in your program instead.

Modern housing platforms offer something for everyone, from budget-friendly accommodations to luxurious resorts. Housing providers create shortlists with the amenities participants want so parents can book rooms with just a few clicks from their cell phones.

6 MORE FUN

Housing players in different places lessens the athlete's experience. On the other hand, putting everyone in one hotel builds camaraderie and adds to the fun.

"Assign rooms together in a block and negotiate complimentary meeting space," recommends Heidi Galbraith-Kermes, National Director of Lodging at Oakwood Lodging Group, the housing provider for The Ripken Experience® tournaments. "Teams can have nighttime pizza parties there and meetings over breakfast before heading out together for the game."



7 CUSTOMER INSIGHTS

Housing management technology captures a goldmine of data.

“You can gain insights on customer lodging behavior and preferences,” explains Heather Raburn, Director of Partnership Marketing at Ripken Baseball. “Data-rich reports identify trends to drive smart decisions for business success.”

8 ECONOMIC IMPACT

Many destinations offer grants and sponsorships for sports events. However, to secure these benefits, you must provide reporting on your event’s impact.

“Share room pickup reports demonstrating your event’s impact,” advises Craig Karus, Director of Sport Experiences at Prep Network. “For example, I can pull up data showing that, historically, an event has filled 90 percent of its room block. That’s a compelling event story to tell CVBs and sports commissions.”

Historical room night data is easy to gather through housing technology or your lodging company. But if you can’t provide proof of your event’s impact, it can hurt your bottom line.



9 FUTURE EVENTS

This data is essential for bidding on future events.

Work to establish a ratio of room nights per attendee. Rights holders often know how many athletes they can expect for a future event. By understanding your average room night per attendee, you can quickly illustrate to a prospective host the impact of your event.

For example, if you know an event will attract 1,000 athletes and your ratio is 4 room nights per athlete, you can generate an estimated 4,000 room nights.

Knowing your average room nights per participant is one of the biggest keys to success for bidding future events.

4

Is your housing program doing all it can for your business?

If you hesitated to answer this question for even a moment, you're on the right page. This self-guided mini-audit is for event rights holders and organizers who want to improve their housing game.

Your lodging program should work hard for you day and night. That's why it's important to view it through a critical lens.

Ask yourself: Does your approach to housing make it easy for people to attend your events? Does it give you tools to control costs and leverage spend? By taking our mini-audit, you'll know what's working and what needs improvement.

You'll also gain powerful insights into how a great housing program can boost staff efficiency, increase registrations, and grow your events.



Mini Sports Event Housing Audit

Read the statement below. For each statement, choose a number from 1 to 5 that best matches your agreement level. 1 means you strongly DISAGREE, and 5 means you strongly AGREE.

Rate your agreement using this scale:

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neutral 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly Agree

STATEMENTS	SCORE (1-5)
Personal Preferences	
1. We're too busy running tournaments to also handle housing.	
2. We want to actively manage the athlete housing experiences ourselves.	
3. The potential revenue outweighs the cost of managing athlete housing internally.	
4. The potential revenue of handling housing ourselves does not outweigh the effort and cost.	
Hotel Expertise	
5. Our team is skilled at negotiating hotel rates and concessions.	
6. We have longstanding relationships with hotels in our destinations.	
7. We have direct relationships with market specialists at the national sales offices.	
8. Our technology makes event registration and hotel booking seamless.	
Communications with Housing Partners	
9. We explain event and housing goals and strategies to our lodging specialists up front when we start planning the event.	
10. Our relationship with our housing provider is a true partnership focused on event success.	

Mini-Audit Complete. Congratulations!

By taking this audit, you've made a significant step toward leveraging housing to increase registration, revenue, and customer satisfaction. The next section will help you analyze each audit question.

5

Level up Your Sports Event Housing Game

Below, you'll find game-changing moves tied to each audit statement on the previous page. Consider these insights and tips from four of our industry's top housing pros. Then, decide which ones you'd like to include in your playbook.

Even if you're already an event housing all-star, there's always room for improvement when it comes to driving more revenue, reducing costs, and giving your customers incredible experiences that make them eager to return year after year.

AUDIT STATEMENT #1: You're too busy running tournaments to manage housing.

Rights holders and organizers face the challenges of having a heavy workload and small staff. Many turn to housing companies to ease the load.

Housing companies specialize in the hotel side of sports travel.

"We help rights holders maximize profits and lighten their workload," Hill explains. "We're an extension of their team, assisting with contracts, comp rooms, and every aspect of housing. This frees up organizers to do what they do best – run their events."

Let's take a closer look at some ways housing companies help.



Housing companies specialize in the hotel side of sports travel.



Acing Customer Service

There's more to sports event housing than many people realize.

Sourcing and contracting take a lot of time. But most of the housing company's responsibilities lie in customer support. As tournaments grow, the demand for accommodations increases, requiring specialists to address travelers' needs.

"Service is a pillar of a great housing program," Galbraith-Kermes emphasizes. "Many customers treat tournaments like family getaways. They expect excellent service and want to know it will be a great vacation for the whole family."

She recommends that rights holders have a team to assist guests promptly.

"We try to answer customer calls within the hour and at very least the same business day," Galbraith-Kermes says. "If it's after hours, we respond the next morning. It's crucial to monitor voicemail constantly after hours. If there's an emergency, you can jump in and fix it fast."

Building Loyalty

Stellar service goes beyond answering questions. Gathering feedback is an essential part of the job.

"You need people who listen actively and value customer input," Raburn says. "The goal is to gain insights about customers' lodging preferences and trends to improve your program continually. It's about building loyalty and trust. So, when families return, they book through you again and tell others about you when they get home."



What do housing companies do?

Housing providers are the ultimate utility players, ready to jump in and fill different roles. Services vary by company and can include the following:

- Build and deliver RFPs
- Secure room blocks
- Handle hotel contracts on behalf of rights holders
- Negotiate favorable group rates and concessions
- Reduce risks like high cancellation fees
- Help rights holders secure grants, funding, and services from CVBs and sports commissions
- Monitor pricing to ensure customers get the best available rates
- Distribute housing information to teams
- Provide easy booking
- Manage room blocks
- Handle comp rooms
- Enforce compliance with stay-to-play policies
- Provide customer support
- Deliver real-time reporting on housing performance
- Analyze data to identify trends
- Gather guest feedback to improve future events
- Manage reconciliation and invoicing
- Collect commissions and rebates from hotels
- Capture room pickup
- Show economic impact

AUDIT STATEMENT #2: You want to actively manage the athlete housing experience.

Some rights holders prefer to manage the customer experience themselves. So, they hire people to do the job in-house.

“I like to personally ensure everything runs smoothly for teams from start to finish,” Karus says. “I visit the market and meet with the sports commission or CVB. I check out hotels to see if they’re close enough to the venue. And I make sure teams won’t be driving with traffic and sitting in gridlock on their way to an 8:00 a.m. game.”

Whether you manage housing yourself or outsource, these plays below help ensure epic experiences for young athletes and their families:

Customer Service: 5 Ways to Win

- 1 Build a team.** Raburn recommends having the staff to handle each part of the customer journey. “First, our travel specialists help families plan their trips,” she explains. “Next, our concierges assist onsite when guests come for the tournament. Finally, our customer care reps conduct follow-ups to learn from customers so we can continually enhance our programs.”
- 2 Present a comprehensive offering.** Understand families’ diverse tastes to provide the best choices. “Teams and sports have different preferences,” Hill points out. “Some want full-service to luxury, while others favor budget-friendly hotels. Understand what the event organizer and participants want and present the best options to fit their needs.”
- 3 Monitor pricing.** Make sure you get the best available rates for your hotel type. Rates fluctuate with market conditions. Include a rate parity clause in all hotel contracts to guarantee athletes and their families get the lowest available rate for the category during their stay.
- 4 Keep customers in the loop.** For example, if you enforce stay-to-play, explain its perks. “Let families know this policy keeps entry fees down and offsets facility costs,” Karus advises. “Plus, you can track housing data to show economic impact for destination grants and sponsorships.”
- 5 Be flexible.** “We don’t require 100% participation in stay-to-play in some scenarios based on team and parent engagement,” Karus adds. “This way, families can use hotel rewards points if they want. Flexibility helps our business grow. It shows we’re empathetic and willing to work with families to keep costs down and provide a true service.”



AUDIT STATEMENTS #3 & #4: You understand the potential revenue does/ does not outweigh the cost of managing housing internally.

The decision to outsource or manage lodging internally depends partly on how many hotel room nights you generate annually.

Use the formula below to find the most profitable option.

Revenue [commissions + rebates] vs. Cost [salary + technology + money left on the table]

Revenue

Revenue is the hotel brand's commission, typically 7% - 10% of the room rate.

In addition, revenue includes the rebate you negotiate into the room rate. Rebates are intended to offset event operation costs, not to drive bottom-line revenue for the organization.

Best practices call for responsible rebates. "I don't recommend charging more than 10%," Karus advises. "It's better for your business and customers to drive more room nights with lower rates."

Costs

Costs include wages plus technology and money left on the table. Let's examine each of these separately.

- **Wages:** As mentioned, hiring people to handle customer service is crucial. You also need specialists with backgrounds in hospitality who understand hotel contracts to avoid costly mistakes.
- **Technology:** A successful sports-travel program requires housing management software. Make sure you can access the platform and monitor real-time reservation trends. Modern solutions make it easy to capture room nights even when families book outside the group block.
- **Money left on the table:** Housing companies handle lodging for many events. They leverage their brand spend enterprise-wide to negotiate collectively from a stronger position than on a single event. As a result, athletes and teams enjoy discounted rates and concessions. These savings drive higher attendance to your events.

Bottom Line

After weighing these factors, some rights holders decide that the potential revenue outweighs the costs. Others conclude that managing housing requires a lot of time and work.

If you don't have the resources or if you'd rather focus your energy on running legendary events...

... it's good to know you can increase revenue, reduce risk, and improve the customer experience by relying on housing companies for lodging support.

What's the difference between commissions and rebates?

Hotel commissions are set by the brand and typically don't affect room rates.

Rebates, on the other hand, raise room rates for the total amount charged. For example, a \$10 rebate increases a \$169 room rate to \$179 – as a direct cost to the event participant. Responsible rebates are essential to encourage participation.

AUDIT STATEMENT #5:
Your team is skilled at negotiating hotel rates and concessions.

Want to score more points with customers? They're already spending money on tournament fees, food, parking, gas, and sometimes plane tickets. Here's how to help them get the best bang for their buck with hotels.

Get the best rates.

Pro Tip:
NEVER tell a destination they've won your business before negotiating hotel terms.

Why? Because as soon as you announce you're holding your championship in a particular destination, hotels know you're coming, and you lose your leverage.

"A better strategy is to establish all your negotiable needs in advance with your sourcing agency before you engage housing," Quillen points out. "Negotiable needs include bed types, concessions, such as Internet, food and beverage discounts, and function space for team breakfasts, to name a few.

"You'll save more money by locking in rates and concessions on the front end during sourcing, not after you award the destination your event," Quillen adds.





Rack up concessions.

You're bringing all this business to the destination. Leverage that potential revenue and your buying power to negotiate generous concessions for attendees and your organization.

Consider perks like these for your attendees and staff:

- Free night: Score one free night when you book five.
- Team huddle space: Reserve a block of 15 rooms and get discounted meeting space. Perfect for pre-game pep talks and evening pizza parties.
- Complimentary rooms, Internet, and food for your staff.
- Parking discounts: Many hotels charge for parking now but will cut you a deal.

Comp rooms and free breakfasts add up fast. Great value encourages families to come back.

Reduce risk.

A hotel contract is your ultimate defensive line, protecting you from financial risks that could blindside your event.

Imagine you're bringing thousands of people to a destination. But an even bigger conference announces it's coming to town. What's stopping your hotel from relocating your room block to a different property?

"It's crucial for you and your event partners to agree on terms upfront at the sourcing and contracting phase of your planning, not later when you're booking accommodations," Quillen emphasizes.

"Leading sourcing and housing companies have contract service specialists with deep experience in hospitality. They can protect you from financial and contractual risks." – Trish Quillen

Top Hotel Concessions

These perks add value to sports travel:

- Flexible cancellation policies
- Comp rooms based on the group's total pickup
- Complimentary amenities (breakfast, Wi-Fi, parking, audio-visual equipment, room upgrades)
- Quick check-in for teams (Goodbye, groups of rowdy young athletes waiting in line)
- No minimum night restrictions (unless required by the event organizer)
- Waived fees for early check-in and late check-out (for those overtime games)
- No early departure fees (for athletes that don't make it to the finals)
- Space-available upgrades
- Waived deposit fees
- Extra reward points (Use them for future family vacations!)

AUDIT STATEMENT #6: **You have longstanding relationships with hotels.**

To get the best rates and concessions, you need outstanding relationships with hotels in your destinations. These tactics will help you build mutually beneficial partnerships.



Give and take.

Flexibility is a hallmark of a standout housing program.

Tournaments, weather, and rosters change. Cultivate strong relationships with hotels built on flexibility for athletes who must cancel, add, or subtract nights.

“When hotels in your program make requests about room blocks, do your best to accommodate them,” Galbraith-Kermes recommends. “Chances are good that they’ll help you when you need to make changes. A great hotel partner knows you’ll be back with more business in the future.”

Set expectations.

Certain sports, like soccer, book early, while others tend to wait. It helps to have a housing provider that understands reservation trends.

Pro Tip: Use housing data to identify patterns for teams and sports. Then, let your hotel partners know what to expect.

“You might tell them they won’t see pickup till four weeks out because that’s when players qualify,” Karus notes. “Or give hotels a heads up that reservations will pick up after the high school basketball season ends on a certain date. That’s when families start thinking about club ball.”

Keep hotels in the loop.

How do you avoid holding rooms you don’t end up filling?

You or your housing provider should communicate proactively with hotels to mitigate potential issues.

Experienced housing companies can tell months in advance if a tournament is showing slow pickup. Review registration lists and brackets at 75, 60, 45, and 30 days out so you can make necessary adjustments with hotels to mitigate any issues leading up to the event. Also, evaluate the local vs. out-of-town team mix to anticipate housing needs, as this will change in each destination.

“Hotels value a housing partner who’s in constant contact,” Quillen explains. “Make sure your team updates hotels on housing trend requirements so they can adjust room blocks to avoid overbooking.”

Play the long game.

“Send emails to hotels a couple of days before the event thanking them for taking care of your teams,” Karus recommends. “Invite them to contact you if they need assistance. This simple gesture shows you’ll be back and you want to build a true partnership with them.”

AUDIT STATEMENT #7:
You have direct relationships with market specialists in the national sales offices.

Despite the best plans, the unexpected happens. A flight gets delayed. An athlete arrives to check in at 8:00 p.m. without a confirmation number, and the front desk can't find it either.

Build direct relationships from the property to the brand level for speedy resolutions.

“First and foremost, know your property contacts,” Hill says. “Everyone on our team has experience working in a hotel, CVB, or sports commission. And so, we understand how to reach the right person who can make decisions and fix an issue fast.

“Also, cultivate direct relationships with the brands,” he continues. “I have the cell phone numbers of all our national reps. I can call them for help even if it’s 10:00 at night. For large tournaments, we have staff in place 24/7. If a housing issue arises, we can jump in and handle it.”



Build direct relationships from the property to the brand level for speedy resolutions.





What's a Sports-Friendly Hotel?

The future is bright for sports event housing. Many brands have sports-friendly hotels to maximize the opportunities for sports travel.

So, how do you know if a hotel is sports-friendly?

“For starters, ask yourself if they want your business,” Hill advises. “Some hotels pull out all the stops. They welcome athletes at the front desk with balloons and signs like, ‘Welcome to the U 14 Girl’s All-Star Team. We’re happy you’re here!’”

Other hotels greet families with gift bags, offering free passes to area attractions and discounts at nearby restaurants. In addition, some hotel companies have developed certification programs specific to sports tourism.

Here are some essential qualities of a sports-friendly hotel:

- Proximity to sports venues
- Flexible cancellation policies
- No attrition penalties
- Best available rates for its category during your stay
- Comp rooms for staff
- Friendly staff that welcomes athletes
- Gathering places where teams can hold meetings and hang out after games
- Easy-to-clean rooms, walls, and floors
- Proximity to family-friendly restaurants and attractions
- Restaurants and bars where parents can celebrate after games
- Kid-friendly amenities like pools and basketball courts
- Complimentary breakfast, parking, and Wi-Fi

Special Amenities for Certain Sports and Teams

- Workout facilities
- Storage space for equipment
- Menu options for athletes with special dietary requirements

AUDIT STATEMENT #8: **Your technology makes registration and housing a breeze.**

Do your event registration and booking systems work well together? This is important so families can skip signing up twice.

Integrated technology means travelers can register for the event and receive custom hotel recommendations on a single booking link. Everything works seamlessly. Parents can book accommodations on their phones in a couple of clicks.

Goodbye, housing free-for-all.

If you let people make reservations at any hotel they want, you'll lose control, your attendees will pay more, and you'll leave money on the table.

For starters, you can't manage your customers' housing experience. This causes complaints. For instance, parents want to know why they didn't get the free breakfast and the lenient cancellation policy that other team families enjoyed.

Second, if a booking link is broken, it's unclear who should fix it. "Working with a housing company makes reservations easy," Quillen explains. "The booking experience is the same across all brands because it's all managed through a central location, making it easy to secure the best hotel rooms for everyone's needs."

Third, when parents book hotels outside your program, there's no way to capture your event's impact. By contrast, with a housing program, you get real-time reporting on room nights. You can even capture reservations made outside the group block. As a result, it's easy to deliver a comprehensive picture of economic impact.

Finally, you can use housing data to negotiate hotel rates and concessions. "When you can present your event and say, 'This is the value of the business we're bringing to your hotel and destination,' your event becomes far more attractive," Quillen says.



“Leverage your housing data to save your organization and attendees money.”

– Trish Quillen

AUDIT STATEMENT #9: **You explain event and housing goals and strategies to our housing specialists when you start planning the event.**

In group housing, as in sports, teamwork drives success. But how do you ensure that your teamwork shines?

Follow these best practices for successful partnerships between rights holders and housing providers.

United Front

Choose a housing company that understands what you're trying to achieve. You want a partner you trust to act as an extension of your team.

"It's crucial to present a unified front," Hill notes. "Whatever the event organizer has on their agenda, a good housing partner follows suit.

**"Housing companies are like referees in a major sporting event. They're there to help, but they shouldn't be the focus."
– Mike Hill**

Same Page

Meet with your housing provider on a routine basis.

"Regular check-ins keep everyone on the same page," Karus notes. "Have a checklist to ensure all event details align with the hotel contract and everyone has the same expectations about room allocations."

How often should rights holders meet with their housing provider?

That depends on factors like event size, complexity, and timing. You may meet monthly, six months out, and then weekly or even daily as game day approaches.

Frequent Updates

When you have open communications, you discover little things that add a lot to an event.

"We meet with our tournament directors weekly," Galbraith-Kermes says. "We alert them about emerging issues like slow pickup months in advance, and they share tournament updates.

"Let's say you add a Thursday night home run derby to a tournament for the next few weeks," she continues. "Your customer service team can spread the word to guests on the fence about arriving early."

**"Having open lines of communication adds excitement, enhances the experience for players and fills hotel rooms for extra nights."
– Heidi Galbraith-Kermes**

How do you find a great housing partner?

Request recommendations from colleagues and friends. Asking key questions of prospective housing partners is helpful, too. Here are five questions Karus recommends:

1. What technology do they use?
2. How do they resolve hotel issues like lost contracts or rooming lists?
3. What's their approach to customer service?
4. How quickly do they answer customer inquiries?
5. What's their responsiveness to commissions and rebate payments

AUDIT STATEMENT #10:
Our relationship is a true partnership focused on event success.

Remember, the event is the star of the show. Every decision should make the event better for the people who attend it.

Teamwork

Each team member has a job to do. Rights holders know their events inside and out.

“Our job as a housing company is to fill hotels,” says Hill. “We know destinations, hotels, CVBs, and sports commissions. That’s our world. It’s what we’ve done for decades. This is how we help event owners.”

Collaboration means everyone wins. Rights holders drive more registrations. Parents save money. And kids have a better time at your events.

Eye on the Prize

Having a shared goal is crucial.

“If you hire a housing company, make it a true collaboration,” Hill emphasizes. “You want a partner you can work side-by-side with to reach the common goal of producing a successful event.”

Collaboration means everyone wins.

“Rights holders and housing companies must look to the end goal and work together to succeed and grow the event.”

– Mike Hill



6

Conclusion

Sports event housing is your secret playbook. When used right, it boosts registration, builds camaraderie, and improves event success.



Unfortunately, many rights holders and organizers don't use their housing program to its full potential.

This special report provides insights, tips, and tools to help you get the most from your housing program:

- A quick self-guided mini-audit to see how your current program measures up
- Proven strategies from housing pros
- Tactics to make your events more profitable, efficient, successful, and fun

A great housing program is about more than filling rooms. It's about creating experiences that make athletes and families thrilled to come back.

We hope you found helpful strategies in this report to create championship-level events that keep satisfied customers returning year after year.



Our Experts



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About Sports ETA



As the only non-profit 501(c)3 trade association for the sports and events tourism industry in the United States, Sports ETA is the most essential resource for sports commissions, sports destinations, sports event owners, and industry partners. We believe sports tourism and the events that our members own and host have the power to transform society for the better. Our passion is to help sports events and tourism professionals achieve previously unimaginable levels of performance. We do this by nurturing a community of smart, creative, and interesting people: our members. Visit sportseta.org.

Playbook 365

Playbook365 is an all-in-one sports-event management software that puts all the essential tools in one place. No more hopping back and forth between apps. Playbook365 simplifies event management from start to finish. The solution combines tools for team registration, multi-venue scheduling, scoring and bracketing, waiver management, email and text communications, marketing, group housing, analytics, and reporting. Organizers save time and delight customers with a simple one-stop shop. Visit playbook365.com.

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The logo for Playbook365, with "Playbook" in a yellow, italicized sans-serif font and "365" in a black, bold sans-serif font.

Photo by Paulo Almeida

The logo for Travel + Leisure, with "TRAVEL+" in a bold, black, sans-serif font and "LEISURE" in a bold, black, sans-serif font below it.

About Travel + Leisure

As the world's leading membership and leisure travel company, Travel + Leisure Co. (NYSE:TNL) transformed the way families vacation with the introduction of the most dynamic points-based vacation ownership program at [Club Wyndham](#), and the first vacation exchange network, [RCI](#). The company delivers more than six million vacations each year at 245+ timeshare resorts worldwide, through tailored travel and membership products, and via [Travel + Leisure GO](#) - the signature subscription travel club inspired by the pages of Travel + Leisure magazine. With hospitality and responsible tourism at the heart of all we do, our 18,000+ dedicated associates bring out the best in people and places around the globe. We put the world on vacation. Learn more at travelandleisureco.com.



Glossary



Housing Terms

Amenity: Items and services hotels offer guests to enhance their stay, including in-room extras (toiletries, robes) and on-property premiums (dining, pool, fitness center, spa, playground). Use of some on-property amenities has a fee.

Attrition: A clause included in a hotel contract to ensure a group fulfills its contractual obligation for rooms by the cutoff date.

Attrition fee: A penalty incurred for unsold rooms in your room block after the cutoff date.

Best available rate: A pricing model hotels use to provide the lowest possible rate on a given date. Hotels analyze market conditions, such as occupancy and demand, to define the rate. This pricing strategy is based on ever-changing factors, so the best available rates fluctuate.

Cancellation clause: A provision in a hotel contract detailing the terms and conditions under which a company can cancel or terminate the agreement or reservation.

Cancellation penalty: A fee for failure to comply with the terms of the cancellation clause. Rules are different for individuals and groups. Hotels stand to lose more money on group cancellations, so group penalties are typically stricter.

Commission: Payment made for bringing business to a hotel, typically a percentage of the room rate.

Comp rooms: Complimentary guest room(s) based on the number of rooms a group purchases. For example, receive one free night for every 50 rooms occupied.

Concessions: Special deals from a hotel, usually in the form of discounts or complimentary services. Concessions typically include free parking, complimentary guest rooms, suite upgrades, food & beverage discounts, storage space for sports gear, special meals for athletes, and more.

Cutoff date: The date when a hotel releases unused accommodations in a room block to the public for general sale.

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO): A non-profit organization that promotes tourism and events in the destination.

Economic impact: Net change in an economy caused by activity involving the acquisition, operation, development, and use of sports facilities and services. Economic impact includes money spent in the destination on expenses like hotel accommodations, dining, shopping, entertainment, and transportation.

Event housing management software: Technology to handle the housing needs of event participants. Modern solutions connect event housing and registration to capture more reservations, boost efficiency, and enhance the experience for players, families, and fans.

Event risk management: The process of identifying, evaluating, and limiting an event's exposure to risk. Effective event risk management helps organizations safeguard participants and avoid financial loss, reputational damage, and legal disputes.



Group booking: Reservation for a block of rooms for a specific group, typically starting at 10 rooms per night or more.

Group rate: The rate for accommodations in a room block for an event. Group rates are typically lower than individual rates because of the volume.

History: Record of an organization's previous events to help hotels manage expectations. History typically includes information on rooms contracted, actual pickup, meeting space, and food and beverage sales.

Housing bureau: Organizations, often part of a convention bureau, that manage the housing process for events in the destination.

Inventory: Guest rooms available for a hotel to sell.

No-show: A term used for a reservation made but not consumed. The participant does not check in, cancel, or change the reservation.

Rebate: A set dollar amount an organizer negotiates into the room rate that hotels pay to help cover the costs of an event.

Responsible rebates: An essential best practice. High room rates due to excessive rebates can prompt attendees to book outside the official group block.

Return on investment: A performance measure referring to the ratio between the net profit made and the cost of investment to produce an event.

Room availability: The number of guest rooms not booked at a hotel during a given time frame for different room types, such as standard, deluxe, or suite.

Room block: A designated number of hotel rooms set aside and often discounted for participants in tournaments, showcases, and other events.

Room block release date: The date when the hotel stops holding rooms exclusively for your group and makes them available to the public.

Room nights: The total number of guest rooms a planner commits to occupy in exchange for the contracted rate. Room nights equal the number of rooms times the number of nights reserved. A guest booking one room for three nights generates three room nights.

Room pickup: The number of sleeping rooms occupied from the total reserved.

Room rate: A fee charged for sleeping rooms. Types of rates include corporate, individual, group, and inclusive.

Rooming list: Roster of people needing accommodations. The list typically includes the room type and arrival and departure dates. Some properties also require passport numbers.

Sales coordinator/manager/representative: Hotel staff person responsible for selling guest rooms and function space.



Sports commission: An organization, usually under a county DMO or tourism office, that is responsible for driving visitation to the destination by hosting sporting events.

Stay to play: A policy requiring participants to use one of a preferred group of hotels to be eligible to participate in a sporting event. Guest rooms must be a part of the event's contracted inventory with the hotel.

Third-party housing company: An organization that works with organizers to find guest rooms and negotiate hotel contracts. Housing companies have long-established relationships with hotels. They negotiate competitive rates and concessions, reduce financial and contractual risk, and manage housing logistics efficiently.

