The full economic impact of Sun Devil Athletics: $99.5M

Ticketed Olympic sports, including hockey and gymnastics, bring in $45 million to Arizona's GDP

By Marshall Terrill , ASU News
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Arizona State University's intercollegiate varsity sports teams give fans plenty to cheer about on the field and off — including the impact they have on the state's economy.

According to a new report, Sun Devil Athletics has a $99.5 million total economic impact on the state's gross domestic product.

That staggering figure underscores just how much of a financial force Sun Devil Athletics is — and it's not just football. Excluding the gridiron, ASU's other ticketed Olympic sports teams contributed nearly $45 million to state GDP last year.

From basketball and baseball to gymnastics and hockey, each program contributes to the Valley's economy through ticket sales, tourism and local spending. The ripple effect extends far past campus — fueling restaurants, hotels, retail and jobs across Tempe and Maricopa County.

"Football might dominate in the fall, but Sun Devil basketball, hockey and baseball drive business to the metro area, and Tempe in particular, throughout the year," said Anthony Evans , director of the L. William Seidman Institute in the W. P. Carey School of Business.

Sun Devil Football a touchdown for Arizona's economy

Game days brings significant dollars to state GDP, city of Tempe

The study presents an analysis of the total economic impacts of the infusion of new dollars associated with all Sun Devil Athletics ticketed games and events in the city of Tempe and Maricopa County economies.

Up to 600 ASU athletes are supported by more than 750,000 fans each year, according to the report.

Those numbers highlight the dual role of Sun Devil Athletics as both a community touchstone and an economic engine. The programs don't just draw crowds for competition — they create opportunities for civic pride, youth engagement, and regional and national visibility that extends well beyond the scoreboard.

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> **Graham Rossini**
> ASU athletics director

"These numbers reaffirm what we've always known: Sun Devil Athletics is a powerful driver of economic impact for the Valley. Beyond competition, our programs unite communities and showcase Arizona State University on the national stage. But these results also remind us that we must do more," Sun Devil Athletics Director Graham Rossini said. "When Sun Devil Athletics thrives, everyone benefits — local businesses, community partners, alumni and fans alike. That's why we work every day to build the support necessary to further invest in our coaches and student-athletes, strengthening our athletics brand, the university and the Valley as a whole."

In the 2024–25 season, Sun Devils Athletics hosted 162 ticketed home events with a total attendance of 635,510. People at those events include media covering the games, visiting teams, tourists and fans who live inside and outside Maricopa County.

Troy Scoma, who owns Cactus Sports on Mill Avenue in Tempe, has been selling ASU merchandise since 1992. He said ASU football jerseys and other related apparel made up most of his business in the past, but now it's closer to almost 50%. He said other varsity sports are starting to fill in those gaps.

"If the teams play well, then our sales really pick up," said Scoma, who graduated with a business degree from ASU in 1991. "Hockey's been great ever since the university built Mullett Arena. We see an uptick in traffic when there are home games for hockey and basketball. The same goes for baseball. It all helps."

The breakdown of the sports teams listed in the report

Sun Devil Football

State GDP for Maricopa County: $54.8 million.

Labor income in Maricopa County: $34.7 million.

Direct taxes for the city of Tempe: $1.1 million.

Sun Devil Men’s and Women’s Basketball

State GDP for Maricopa County: $15.8 million.

Labor income in Maricopa County: $9.9 million.

Direct taxes for the city of Tempe: $287,000.

Sun Devil Baseball

State GDP for Maricopa County: $10.9 million.

Labor income in Maricopa County: $6.4 million.

Direct taxes for the city of Tempe: $140,000.

Sun Devil Men’s Hockey

State GDP for Maricopa County: $8.5 million.

Labor income in Maricopa County: $5.3 million.

Direct taxes for the city of Tempe: $264,000.

Sun Devil Softball

State GDP for Maricopa County: $4.5 million.

Labor income in Maricopa County: $2.6 million.

Direct taxes for the city of Tempe: $118,000.

All other ticketed Olympic sports (gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, volleyball and wrestling)

State GDP for Maricopa County: $5.1 million.

Labor income in Maricopa County: $3.1 million.

Direct taxes for the city of Tempe: $109,000.

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Main image



ASU volleyball player Argentina Ung sets up the ball during a matchup against the University of Arizona at Desert Financial Arena on Oct. 9, 2024. Photo by ASU