



# The Impact of the Community First Champion Center

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Opened in November 2019, the Community First Champion Center was built to help positively impact the Fox Cities economy through spending by out-of-area sports teams in area businesses. In its first five years of operations, the facility has done so much more than that.

The main goal of economic impact and tourism generation has certainly been met. In 2024, 70 tourism-generating events took place at the Champion Center. Hockey, volleyball, and basketball tournaments made up the majority of these events along with figure skating, wrestling, and adaptive soccer competitions. An estimated 15,000 hotel room nights and over \$6 million of direct visitor spending was generated by the visitors at these events. A steady four years of growth led to the 2024 numbers that shattered the pre-opening projections that we had hoped for when ground broke in 2018.

While those figures are massively important to local businesses and our community as a whole, we would be missing out on so much of the story of the Champion Center, if I stopped here.

Nearly every weeknight of the year, up to 30 teams with hundreds of area youth athletes will practice at the Champion Center. Area teams will host hundreds of games, especially hockey games, every year in the facility. Each summer dozens of hockey, volleyball, and basketball camps will take place with hundreds of participants. Open skate, golf simulator rentals, and open pickleball play allow for the general public to get some great physical activity in a state-of-the-art facility.

If you are a parent of a youth athlete in travel sports, you likely know the financial and time strains that are caused by many weekends of travel. At each weekend tournament hosted at the Champion Center, a handful of local teams will register to play. Those families get one more weekend to sleep in their own beds while still letting their child play in a high-level competition.

The Champion Center employs seven full-time staff members who lead the operations of the building along with 35 part-time staff members. Many of those part-timers are students that are learning valuable skills that they will take with them into adulthood.

Roughly 99% of the activities in the facility are for youth 18 and under. In addition, 59% of the users of the facility are female athletes. We know that participation in youth sports positively impacts the development of our children and we hope the Champion Center is helping play a small role in that development.

None of these positive outcomes would be possible without the support of so many: Municipal staff and elected officials, hoteliers, business sponsors led by our naming rights partner Community First Credit Union, event directors, club administrators and coaches, referees, facility staff, and so many more. Thank you to everyone who has contributed in some way to an incredibly successful first five years of the Community First Champion Center and to the bright future ahead of us!

For more information on the Community First Champion Center, go to: [www.championcenterwi.com](http://www.championcenterwi.com).