



# Travel Sports: The Value Beyond Competition

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Travel sports are a great opportunity for athletes to develop their skills and take their game to the next level. Athletes learn the physical skills of their sport, team work, how to overcome tough losses, and celebrate hard fought victories. Beyond the playing surface and after the final buzzer, the value of youth sports continues through team bonding, exploring new cities, and quality family time.

## **Team Bonding**

The valuable time before, after, or between matches is the perfect time for team bonding between athletes as well as parents. When looking for hotels for a tournament, finding a hotel with team friendly amenities and getting the whole team to stay together provides the foundation for team bonding. Meal time is often a great opportunity either at breakfast or dinner for the team to gather together and fuel up. Going out to a local restaurant or gathering together for a pizza party in the hotel lobby or meeting room is a great opportunity for everyone to eat and socialize. Gathering together around a hotel pool is also a great opportunity for the athletes to work off some energy and for parents and coaches to get to know one another. A team movie night or game night in someone's room is also a great option to rest athletes while also still building that team comradery. As a volleyball coach myself, team dinners and game nights with our athletes is where we made the best memories of the season.

## **Traveling & Exploring New Cities**

Travel sports is one of the best opportunities to embrace and explore new cities. The travel sports season is made up of tournaments and competitions at a variety of facilities and destinations across the state, the Midwest, and even the US. Traveling to these events brings an added element of fun to experience something new, play new teams, try new restaurants or see new things that you can't see or experience back at home. For some families, traveling for sports is considered their family vacation and travel sports provide a great opportunity to extend a long weekend or build a vacation after the competition to continue to explore.

## **Quality Family Time**

Beyond the team bonding and exploring new cities, travel sports is one of the only avenues of forced time together as a family. We live in a fast-paced world with kids in school and activities, and jobs and travel sports can be that one common element that unites a family together for a weekend. Whether that is travel time together in the car going to and from the competition, cheering the team on, or having one meal together as a family, travel sports provides that opportunity for family time that might otherwise become lost in a busy day to day schedule.

The next time you travel for sports, I encourage both athletes and families to take advantage of time before or after games to get the most out of each travel sports experience.