

Sports ETA
SPORTS EVENTS & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Playing by the Rules:

7 Ways Identity Management Helps You Run Better Events and Grow

Presented by

***Playbook*365**



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Introduction

Imagine this: It's the state championship. Two teams are about to take the field. Then, a parent challenges the eligibility of a player on the opposing team.

Staff scramble to find documents. Coaches argue. Parents and operators worry. Will the team forfeit? Will there be refunds? Will the kids get a chance to play?

Instead of excitement and cheers, frustration fills the venue...



Unfortunately, situations like this happen every year in youth sports, and many are entirely preventable.

At the center of these disputes is a critical but often overlooked function: identity management.

From age verification and roster accuracy to coach certifications and compliance, identity management helps ensure athletes are eligible, information is accurate, and competition is fair.

When identity management works, events run smoothly. Teams trust the process. And families feel proud and delighted to come back.

When it doesn't, the consequences can be immediate:

- Game delays
- Frustrated participants
- Compliance issues
- Lost revenue
- Damage to event reputation

As youth sports continues to grow, the stakes are getting higher.

This white paper explores why identity management matters more than ever and where most event operators struggle. Then it provides proven plays to help you create smoother events, deeper trust, and long-term growth.

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1

Why Identity Management Matters More Than Ever

Youth sports is bigger and more competitive than ever.



Families are investing more in travel, training, equipment, and fees. At the same time, tournament operators are managing larger events, more player data, and increasing compliance requirements, all with lean staff and tight timelines.

Getting identity management right gives you a competitive advantage.

“The scale of events has outgrown the systems operators are using,” explains Billy Becher, founder, Playbook365. “Many juggle multiple apps, spreadsheets, texts, emails, and paper forms for each event.”

This challenge isn’t limited to a handful of organizations.

“We see it in almost every sport and throughout the country,” says Sebastian Quinn, national partnerships director, Travel + Leisure. “Compliance and identity management are more important than ever on the playing field and in business.”

As organizations grow, maintaining impartial competition becomes more difficult. Operators must verify eligibility, enforce rules, and protect participant data while delivering fun, memory-making experiences.

The operators who get identity management right gain a competitive advantage. They improve the experience, drive revenue, and create a stronger basis for growth.

To understand why, let’s take a closer look at what identity management means today.

BY THE NUMBERS

- **Impact:** Youth sports is a powerful economic engine. In the U.S., participatory sports travel, driven primarily by youth and amateur sports, generated \$149.1 billion in total economic impact in 2025. [Sports ETA 2026 State of the Industry Report](#)
- **Time Commitment:** The average parent spends 3 hours and 23 minutes on days their child has practice or a game on tasks such as driving, communications, and equipment prep. Convenience is a priority! [Project Play, Aspen Institute](#)
- **Parent Spend:** Family spend on youth sports in the U.S. rose 46 percent, 2019 – 2024, now averaging \$1,016 on a child’s primary sport. [Project Play](#)
- **Participation:** More than 27.3 million U.S. youth, ages 6–17, participated in organized sports in 2023, according to the latest data (~55% of kids). High school participation reached a record high of 8.26 million in 2024–25. [Project Play, National Federation of State High School Associations](#)

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What Exactly Is Identity Management in Youth Sports?

Identity management is the process of collecting, verifying, and managing athlete and team data. The purpose is to ensure information is accurate and that each player is eligible and competing at the right level.

This process touches crucial parts of the event lifecycle:

- Registration, scheduling, rosters, and reporting
- Age verification
- Player profiles and documentation
- Coach certification and background checks
- Data flow across systems

“Effective identity management improves compliance, safety, and the participant experience,” Becher explains.

“It also makes life easier for participants,” he continues. “Parents and coaches shouldn’t have to keep providing the same identity details on different platforms. They should enter information once and reuse it for different sports, organizations, and seasons.”

The challenge? For too many operators, these advantages aren’t the norm.

“Effective identity management makes life easier for participants. Parents and coaches should enter information once and reuse it for different sports, organizations, and seasons.”

~ Billy Becher



3 | When Identity Management Misses the Mark

In many organizations, identity management breaks down long before game day.

Families use one system to register, another to view schedules, and a third to communicate with coaches. Operators duplicate work, moving back and forth between platforms.

“Families juggle multiple apps,” Becher points out. “Operators piece together bits of information instead of managing it. That’s a poor user experience.”

The root problem is simple: the systems don’t communicate.

DROPPED HAND-OFFS

Information moves constantly between families, teams, clubs, leagues, governing bodies, and operators. Too often, data gets siloed in disconnected systems.

As a result, the same info must be entered, verified, and updated repeatedly. Records become fragmented, and documents get outdated. Staff spend precious time tracking down information that should be easily available.

“The main problem we’re solving for is the repetitive, tedious administrative tasks that parents, coaches, and administrators must do just to participate in youth sports today,” says Nelson Gord, national director of partnerships, Playbook365.

“The process is so inefficient,” agrees Brandon Magierowski, chief operations officer, 2D Sports. “It takes way too many steps and way too many man-hours just to verify rosters and identification.”

Eligibility questions surface at the worst possible moments. Coaches scramble to locate documents. Staff spend hours resolving issues that could have been prevented long before games start.

The result is a process that consumes time, creates frustration, and makes it harder to deliver the premier experiences everyone wants.



“The main problem we’re solving is the repetitive, tedious administrative tasks parents, coaches, and administrators must do to participate in youth sports today.”

~ Nelson Gord



4 | The Impact

Disconnected systems can also hurt event quality and customer satisfaction.

CHAOS AND FRUSTRATION

The most visible consequences often appear on game day.

Eligibility questions and roster disputes can derail an event.

“These problems are preventable,” Becher points out. “When identity management happens late, or not at all, operators are left resolving issues at the game instead of preventing them beforehand.”

“Many families download different apps to register, communicate, follow schedules, and track performance,” says Cameron Korab, founder, *Youth Sports Business Report*. “When those systems don’t talk to each other, parents can’t get a grip on when the next game is. You can see where they get frustrated.”

What should be a thrilling experience turns into an administrative burden.

OPERATIONAL DRAG

The impact reaches beyond one event.

“Every time a coach wants to add a guest player, our staff has to manually research that athlete,” explains Stephanie Trahan, controller and head of risk management, 2D Sports.

“We determine what team they’re on, what level that team competes at, and whether the athlete is eligible,” Trahan continues. “We repeat that process over and over to maintain a fair level of competition.”

“We’ve compromised everybody’s time because of all the layers in the process,” Gord says. “We’re trying to simplify things, so people only go through it once rather than a dozen times every year. That’s something the market has been missing.”



“Your job as a coach is to help develop the person and the player. Every minute they spend on administrative tasks is going to rob time away from their core focus.”

~ Nelson Gord



FINANCIAL FALLOUT

Inefficiencies eventually show up on the bottom line.

Bad experiences can damage your event reputation, making it harder to attract top teams.

“Without proper player identification and age verification, coaches begin asking questions on specific players,” Magierowski notes. “This can create distrust between teams and even between coaches and operators.”

Once trust begins to erode, the consequences can go well beyond a single game or tournament.

“Poor compliance has a trickle-down effect,” says Quinn, “You could be looking at insurance challenges, refunds, credits, lost sponsor confidence, and lower customer retention.”

SECURITY BREACHES

When families provide personal information across multiple platforms, the risk of exposure increases.

“Every time you enter data on a different site, there’s a chance for something to go awry,” Gord points out.

As identity information becomes scattered across systems, you have less visibility into where data is stored, who can access it, and how it’s protected.

“Your family’s data could live on dozens of different data sets,” Korab explains. “You’re dealing with minors. That’s really important data, sacred data.”

For youth sports organizations, collecting personal information comes with a responsibility. Protecting that information helps safeguard athletes and preserve trust with families.

Fortunately, identity management doesn’t need to be a struggle.

Successful operators have a playbook for managing compliance. These smart moves below prevent problems before they reach the court or field.

Use them to drive more registrations and keep your events running smoothly.

5

7 Ways Identity Management Helps You Win

Effective identity management creates trust and becomes the engine behind memory-making, scalable events.

The difference between chaotic tournaments and stellar ones often comes down to a set of best practices.

These proven plays below simplify operations. They make youth sports better for everyone: athletes, parents, coaches, and operators.

1. PROVIDE ONE PROFILE PER PLAYER

One player, one record.

For starters, every athlete should have a single profile that serves as the source of truth for identity information, eligibility, and participation history.

“A unique identifier that follows the athlete could help relieve a lot of the fragmentation across youth sports,” Korab says.

Forget recreating records for every different sport, club, and event. Instead, use one profile that works wherever the athlete competes.

“The player profile gives you a uniform view of eligibility,” Quinn explains. “Organizations don’t need to track approval on their own. The system sets a centralized compliance status for each athlete and works across platforms.”

Result: Faster verification and a reliable foundation for everything that follows.

“Organizations don’t need to track approval on their own. The system sets a centralized compliance status for each athlete and works across platforms.”

~ Sebastian Quinn



2. CENTRALIZE DATA

Get everyone on the same page.

With player accounts established, the next step is to bring athlete and team data together.

“A secure, centralized database would solve a lot of issues,” Korab notes. “Event identity management would be a core element of it.”

The reason is simple: When data lives in one place, operators, coaches, and families can quickly access the information they need without hunting through different systems.

“If there’s a checkmark on a dashboard, a coach can immediately confirm a player’s eligibility,” Trahan says. “That eliminates a lot of phone calls, emails, and texts.”

Result: Less time chasing information and more time improving event experiences and growing your business.



“A secure, centralized database would solve a lot of issues. Event identity management would be a core element of it.”

~ Cameron Korab

3. GIVE PARENTS EASY ACCESS TO DATA

Improve accuracy at the source.

Let the parents update their child’s profile.

They shouldn’t have to update the same information in scores of different places.

“Compliance issues crop up when it matters most,” Becher says. “For instance, when teams are trying to take the field or a coach is racing to beat a roster deadline. Everyone scrambles the night before to track down the most recent documents.

“Parents need to update their child’s information from one central location that syncs automatically to other sports platforms,” Becher adds.

Result: Less friction, more reliable data, and better game days.

4. TRACK COMPLIANCE

Stay ahead of the clock.

Compliance isn't one-and-done. Background checks expire, and regulations vary by state.

"Set your software to trigger reminders," Quinn advises. "Also run compliance audit reports before each event. This is especially important if you handle tournaments in multiple states. Many have different legal requirements. Proactively managing compliance at the operator level is crucial."

Result: A reliable view of compliance across your events and peace of mind knowing that everyone meets the same standard.

5. ENFORCE CONSISTENTLY

Call the game the same way every time.

With verification set, your next move is enforcement.

Lock rosters well before game day to prevent last-minute changes that can wreak havoc on your plans.

Modern tournament management software promotes matchup integrity by locking approved rosters before scheduling. No unauthorized changes allowed.

At the same time, these solutions support flexibility.

"For example, you can grant exemptions for players who exceed age limits but still meet grade criteria," Becher says. "Or, set them to allow guest players but limit the number each team can add."

Result: Flexibility and control plus impartial competition with consistent rules.



6. LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD

Build trust through fair play and transparency.

“We have a rule that you can’t pick up a triple-A or major player to play down in a double-A competition,” Magierowski explains.

“By identifying the athletes’ skill levels, we know they belong in a specific classification,” he continues. “If we provide an equal playing field, it’s a better experience because players know they have a fair chance of winning.”

Transparency helps you develop trust and grow.

“People see on our website that we know how to assess players, and everything is verified,” Trahan says. “New customers are more likely to register for our events because everything is there in black and white. They can see we have a transparent process that ensures equal competition.”

Result: Fairer competition, increased revenue and participation.

“New customers are more likely to register for our events... They can see we have a transparent process that ensures equal competition.”

~ Stephanie Trahan



7. IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS

Make sure everyone knows the play.

Dependable communication starts with accurate identity data.

When athlete, coach, and family information is stored in one connected system, updates reach the right people in the right moment from a single point of truth.

Coaches receive consistent event information. Parents get alerts in real time. Staff focus less energy on answering repetitive questions and more on supporting participants.

Mobile access makes vital updates available whenever and wherever they’re needed.

Result: Fewer missed messages and a better experience for everyone.

6

Technology: New Playbook for Events on an Upward Trajectory

For years, identity management happened within individual leagues, clubs, and tournament platforms.

But kids don't live in just one sport or team, and the systems supporting them haven't kept pace.

Fortunately, things are changing for the better...

A new generation of identity management software helps organizations connect the platforms they already use to deliver better experiences for families, coaches, and operators.

Breakthrough solutions like Playbook365 SportID let organizations create unique digital identities that work across sports, events, and platforms. Instead of recreating records every time athletes join a team or club, their identity information travels with them.

These tools act as a hub, bringing everything together in one secure, connected identity system. They save you time while helping you enhance your events and grow your business.

Below are four capabilities that make modern identity management possible.

1. ONE CONNECTED IDENTITY

One athlete, one identity, everywhere they play.

No need to flip back and forth between apps.

"With new identity software, families, coaches, and operators can log on with a single sign-on no matter what platform they use," Becher explains. "The system automatically associates them with the right athlete, team, and club."

This secure digital ID simplifies everything from registration to eligibility and onsite check-in. It delivers a better experience for everyone, from sign-up through championship games.

"The connectivity is a huge win for operators," Gord says. "Now, you don't need to start from scratch every time you launch an event."

Outcome: More registrations, higher retention, and a basis for ongoing growth.

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~ Nelson Gord



2. EVENT-READY DOCUMENTS

Store once, use everywhere.

Forget hunting down birth certificates the night before a game.

To eliminate this headache, modern identity management software links verification documents to the athlete's profile. So, docs are ready in an instant whenever you need them.

No need to upload the same records again and again. Families submit docs once and reuse them for different sports, leagues, and seasons.

Outcome: Huge efficiency gains and confidence from knowing everyone is game-ready.

3. FAST TRACKING

Stay ahead of the issues.

Nobody wants to find out on Friday night that a coach's background check expired.

Compliance requirements change. Background checks expire. Documents go missing. Keeping up manually can become overwhelming, especially if you manage large multi-state events.

The good news: modern identity management solutions automate compliance tracking. Instead of relying on spreadsheets, real-time reporting lets you see at a glance who's compliant and who isn't.

"Many insurance companies won't cover a youth sports event unless all coaches, staff, and volunteers prove they passed background checks," Quinn points out.

For fewer surprises and eleventh-hour scrambles, let automated reporting help you identify gaps well before competitions start.

Outcome: Lower risk, more control, and stronger trust in your events.

4. DATA-BACKED DECISIONS

See the bigger picture.

While compliance is vital, the value of centralized identity data goes beyond audits.

Modern reporting tools help you identify trends, measure performance, and improve your events over time.

For example, use these solutions to:

- ✓ Identify teams that consistently miss roster deadlines
- ✓ Spot recurring compliance problems before they show up on the field or court
- ✓ Compare performance for different events and seasons
- ✓ Monitor participation trends to support planning

These insights help you assign resources better and deliver more consistent experiences for all your events.

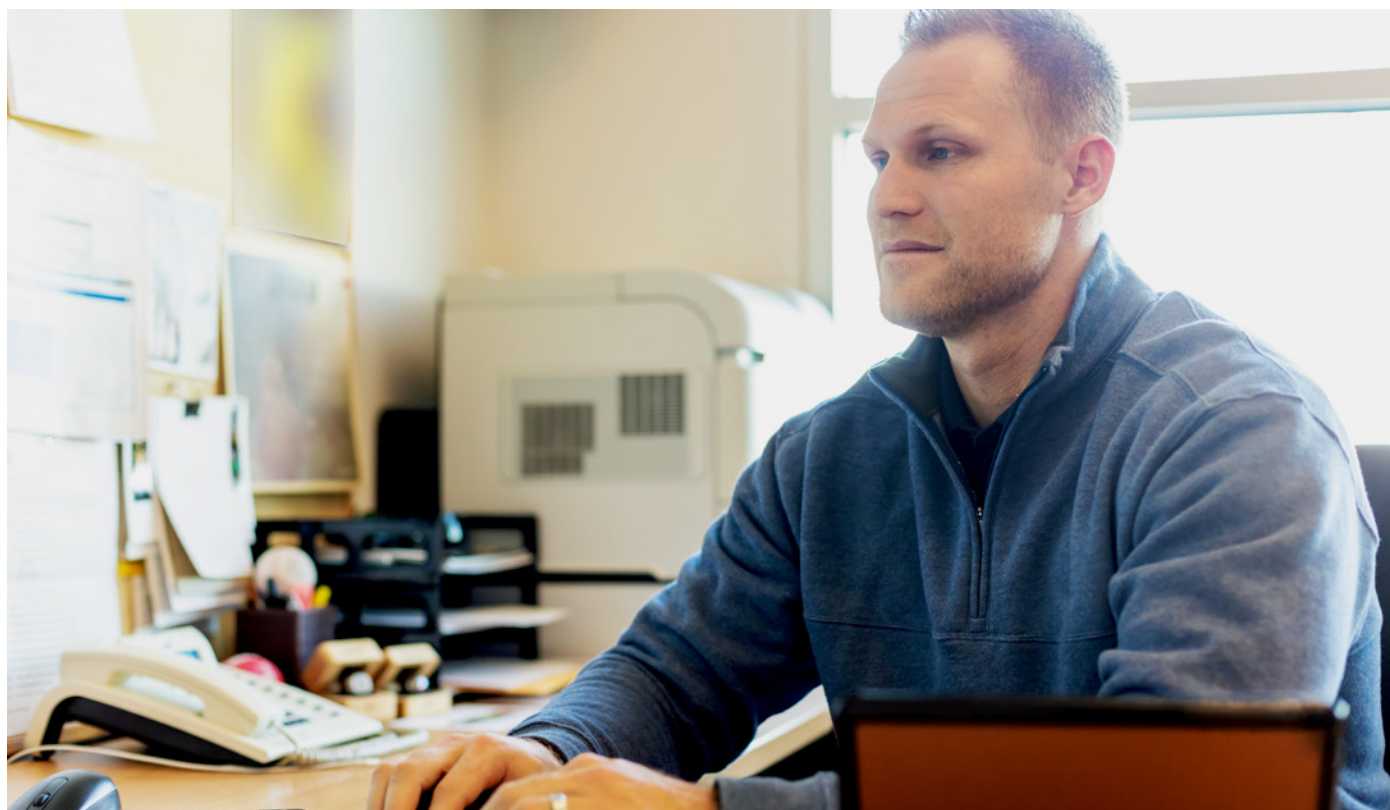
Outcome: Better planning and smarter decisions to drive revenue and participation.

BOTTOM LINE

Innovations in identity management help you run a tighter, more consistent game. They also offer a framework to use as you expand into new events and markets.

When systems work together, your events run like clockwork, and fans appreciate it.

In the end, better execution leads to rewarding experiences that keep families returning and bringing friends.



7 | The ROI of Getting Identity Management Right

Using the latest best practices and technology, identity management becomes a key driver of event success.



The payoff shows up throughout your business, from streamlined operations to accelerated growth. You'll see huge time savings, more registrations, and a growing roster of loyal fans.

Here are six ways identity management helps your business win.



1. Greater Efficiency

What: Staff enter info once, and it automatically flows across sports, organizations, and seasons.

Why This Matters: Your team devotes less time to repetitive administrative tasks.

Business Impact: That frees you up to spend more time developing new programs and expanding your business.

2. More Championship Moments

What: Effective identity management and compliance level the playing field.

Why This Matters: Tournaments are more fun and feel more professional.

Business Impact: You build trust, attract stronger teams, and increase customer retention.

3. Less Risk & Stronger Margins

What: Identity management software enforces rules consistently ahead of time.

Why This Matters: It spares you from difficult "Your team's disqualified" conversations.

Business Impact: Your events have fewer disruptions and refunds, resulting in lower operating expenses.



4. More Revenue

What: Full rosters are available right at registration.

Why This Matters: That gives you more time to market team merch and tickets.

Business Impact: You drive more revenue and engagement.

5. Better Teamwork

What: Your events are consistent, and your data is reliable.

Why This Matters: Destinations know they can work with you and plan with confidence.

Business Impact: You build long-term partnerships and create more consistent experiences throughout your events and markets.

6. More Growth

What: Identity information follows the athlete across sports, seasons, and events.

Why This Matters: You spend less time managing data and more time growing your business.

Business Impact: You can expand into new sports, events, and markets without adding the same level of administrative burden.

**Using the latest
best practices and
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8

Checklist: Your Identity Management Playbook

Wondering where to begin?

Use this checklist to evaluate your current approach and identify opportunities for improvement.

STATEMENTS	YES	NO
People		
Staff know your process for verifying compliance before each event.		
Coaches and parents receive clear rules on eligibility and documentation before registration.		
Processes		
You identify and resolve issues up front during registration.		
Rosters are completed before scheduling.		
You enforce firm submission deadlines.		
Eligibility standards are applied consistently across events.		
Data		
Player and team information lives in one central location.		
Identity data is secure and accessible only to authorized users.		
Your system flags duplicate, inconsistent, or incomplete records immediately.		
Technology		
Your software identifies eligibility issues in real time based on predefined rules.		
Documents can be uploaded once and reused across sports, seasons, and platforms.		
Compliance reminders are automated.		
Experience		
Families, coaches, and staff don't need to enter the same information repeatedly.		
Coaches can confirm player eligibility from one dashboard.		
Mobile check-in is quick and easy with a QR code tied to each player profile.		
Families trust that competition is fair and transparent.		
Participants can easily see that compliance requirements are met.		

How Did You Score?

By completing this checklist, you've made an important step toward leveraging identity management to save time and grow revenue.

How many boxes can you check?

- **14–17:** Firm foundation in place.
- **9–13:** Good progress, but opportunities remain.
- **0–8:** Significant opportunities to improve efficiency, trust, and event quality.

9

Conclusion

Whether you're checking "Yes" for every box on the checklist or simply starting out on your identity management journey, the opportunity is clear.

Identity management may happen behind the scenes, but its impact is front and center.

Events run better when identity information is accurate and standards are consistent. Staff focus less on chasing paperwork. Coaches spend less time resolving disputes. Families gain confidence that competitions are well organized, and their favorite young athletes have a fair chance to win.

The benefits go beyond efficiency. When you get identity management right, you:

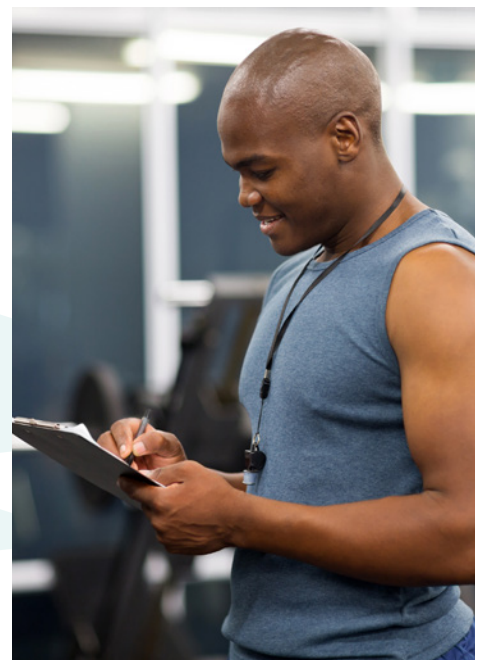
- ✓ Strengthen your reputation
- ✓ Boost registration
- ✓ Drive revenue
- ✓ Create a strong framework for growth

By embracing modern identity management, you deliver better experiences and position yourself to thrive for years to come.

Because when identity management works behind the scenes, everyone can focus on what matters most: helping young athletes develop skills, grow, and build a lifelong love of sport.



By embracing modern identity management, you deliver better experiences and position yourself to thrive for years to come.



ABOUT US

Our Experts



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Sports ETA

As the non-profit 501(c)(3) trade association for the sports events and 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.

Playbook365

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.

Playbook365 is part of **Travel + Leisure Co.** (NYSE:TNL), the world's leading membership and leisure travel company.



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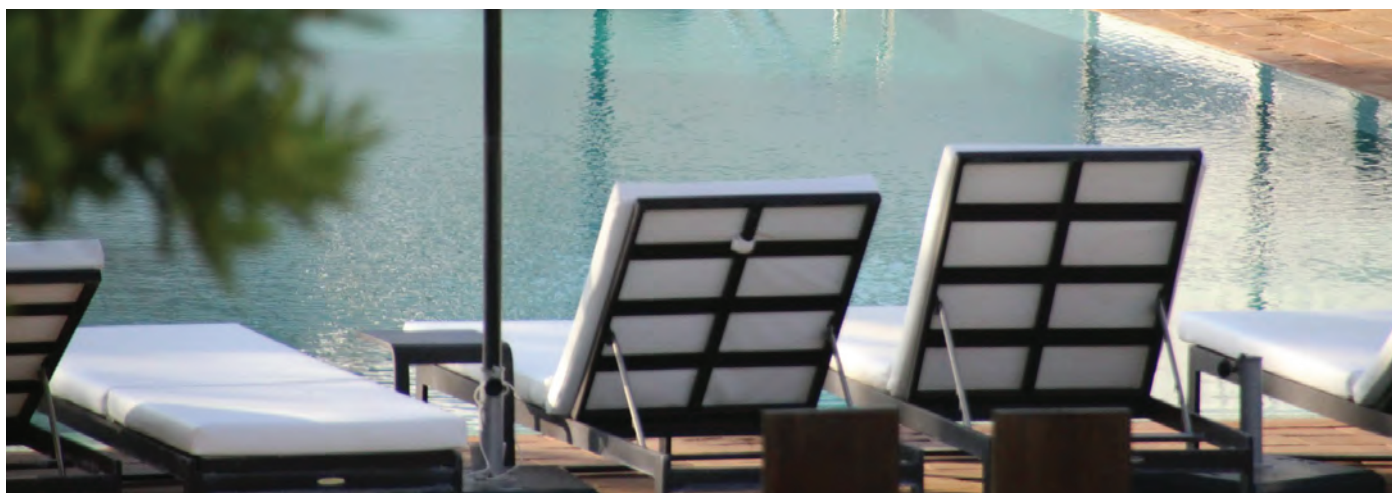


Photo by Paulo Almeida

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

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.