



Sports ETA
SPORTS EVENTS & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

**Unlocking the Value of Earned Media:
The Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator as a Game-Changing
KPI for the Sports Events & Tourism Industry**



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AUDIENCE

This white paper is intended for sports tourism associations, rights holders and public entities seeking to increase awareness through earned media strategies. By leveraging earned media, stakeholders can measure and report this metric as a new key performance indicator. The Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator provides the resources to track and measure earned media coverage for organizations, events, people and advocacy movements.

1 | Introduction

The sports events tourism industry is in growth mode with cities, counties, and states vying to host events from the traditional weekend tournament to the made-for-TV sporting event and the mega sports event.

Traditionally, metrics such as visitor spending and hotel occupancy rates have been used to measure success in the sports events tourism industry. Earned media is an additional metric to monitor and report along with these important tourism indicators. Earned media—the unpaid, organic publicity generated by media coverage, influencer mentions, and social sharing—represents an untapped opportunity to measure and report the broader impact of sports events.

The Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator offers a groundbreaking solution for the industry to do so. By quantifying earned media value (EMV), this tool enables destinations to capture the intangible yet powerful value of media impressions and overall media awareness of a destination, event or advocacy movement.

EMV is also a vital data point for Rights Holders to showcase the true impact of their events, extending beyond traditional metrics like room night generation. For events that may not drive significant overnight stays, EMV highlights their broader value through media exposure, audience reach, and brand visibility. Utilizing the Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator empowers Rights Holders to quantify and present this impact effectively. By including EMV in their event RFPs, Rights Holders can provide a more comprehensive and compelling case for the strength, relevance, and overall economic value of their events.

This whitepaper explores the importance of this innovative metric, how the calculator works, and its transformative potential as a key performance indicator (KPI).



How we estimate the value of media coverage gained through non-paid media channels such as press coverage, social media content or word-of-mouth referrals:

- **Advertising Value Equivalency:**

This calculates the equivalent of ad costs of earned media coverage based on reach, placement and audience demographics.

- **Impressions-based Calculator:**

This estimates the value of earned media by multiplying the number of impressions or views by an audited cost per impression.

- **Social Media Reach Calculator:**

This estimates the potential reach of earned media coverage on social media platforms based on follower count, engagement rates and virality.



2 | The Evolution of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in Sports Events Tourism

Traditionally, the success of sports tourism has been measured by:

- **Economic Impact:** Revenue from visitors, including accommodations, dining, and transportation.
- **Room Nights:** A key tourism metric often referred to as “heads in beds,” measuring the total number of hotel room nights generated by an event. This figure is crucial for evaluating economic impact, as it directly correlates with tax revenue derived from **bed taxes**—a tax applied to each hotel night, typically calculated as a percentage of the total room rate. Bed tax revenue often plays a vital role in funding local tourism, infrastructure, and community development initiatives.
- **Hotel Metrics:** Occupancy rates and average daily rates (ADR) during events.
- **Attendance Figures:** Numbers of participants and spectators.

Earned media represents a critical piece of the puzzle, capturing the influence and reach of the event beyond direct economic contributions.

While these metrics are essential, they don't fully account for the broader, intangible benefits of hosting events. Earned media represents a critical piece of the puzzle, capturing the influence and reach of the event beyond direct economic contributions.



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Understanding Earned Media Value

Earned media refers to unpaid publicity, including:

- Traditional media coverage (TV, radio, print).
- Online mentions in news outlets and blogs.
- Social media sharing by attendees and influencers.

The value of earned media lies in its ability to:

- Enhance destination branding.
- Drive future tourism and business.
- Establish the host city as a premier sports destination.

However, measuring earned media has been a challenge. The Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator bridges this gap by providing a consistent, quantifiable metric.

CREATING EARNED MEDIA

Think of earned media as content you create and organically—yet strategically—share with a variety of stakeholders from media outlets, donors/sponsors, board members and event participants to name a few. To effectively create an earned media program, it's recommended to use a variety of media and plot the content themes and distribution dates on a calendar to help track and measure.



TYPES OF CONTENT AND HOW TO MEASURE:

- TV interviews: earned media value and number of media impressions
- Radio interviews: earned media value and number of media impressions
- Newspaper/online articles: earned media value and number of media impressions
- Blogs (sports, city booster, news): social shares, website views
- Podcasts (sports, city booster, news): social shares, website views
- Influencer campaigns for events and special promotions: social shares, website views
- Social media short videos: social shares, website views
- Thought leadership blog or editorials: social shares, website views
- Email to stakeholders (include media): open rates

Once you “calendarize” your content plan, the KPIs will be easier to track on a monthly dashboard.

Add earned media results to your annual impact report for ...

- **Public/private grants** that ask for earned media insights
- Earned media coverage can be used as **its own news**
- **Sponsors/corporate partner reports**, especially if involved in coverage
- **Leadership media coverage** (how many interviews did your CEO conduct last year and what was the value?)
- Use media coverage for industry and local **award entries**
- Year-over-year results of **media coverage**



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Overview of the Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator

The Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator is an online tool designed to quantify the monetary value of earned media coverage.



KEY FEATURES:

- Calculates earned media value based on media reach, impressions, and engagement rates.
- Customizable for different event sizes and media types.
- Provides detailed reports for stakeholders.

BENEFITS:

- Demonstrates return on investment (ROI) to sponsors and local governments.
- Helps benchmark the success of events.
- Supports strategic planning for future bids.



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How the Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator Works

To begin building a report, visit the Sports ETA website and complete the form with the following fields (reports are provided within 5-7 business days):

First/Last Name

Name of Member Organization

Email

Mobile Phone Number

City/State

Credit Card Number

Date Range for Report (1/1/2024-12/31/2024)

Key Words (please list as many key words as you can, i.e. full name of the event, organization, featured participants)

This Exact Phrase

Any of These Words

None of These Words

COST STRUCTURE

- \$3,000 yearly subscription includes 15 reports including an annual Earned Media Report and 14 individual reports
- \$2,500 yearly subscription includes 11-15 reports including an annual Earned Media Report
- \$2,000 yearly subscription includes 5-10 reports including an annual Earned Media Report
- \$1,500 year subscription includes 1-4 reports including an annual Earned Media Report



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SPORTS ETA'S

Earned Media Calculator

Introducing the Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator, a new tool to guide members in tracking earned media metrics to add to your impact reporting. The report can be used for your annual report, grant and funding reports along with proof of performance reports for your clients and partners.

The Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator is a tool used to estimate the value of media coverage gained through non-paid media channels such as press coverage, social media content, or word-of-mouth referrals.

The media measured will include:

- TV
- Radio
- On-line/print and social media

It will be collated during an exact date, either annually or from the initial start of your event promotional period. Earned media key words that may be reported include: Organization Name, Event Hosted Name, CEO media coverage, etc.

[Download Sample Report](#)



The Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator formula will comprise:



Advertising Value Equivalency



Impressions-Based Calculator



Social Media Reach Calculator

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Case Studies: Success Stories Using the Calculator

CASE STUDY 1: THE CAITLIN CLARK EFFECT ON CENTRAL INDIANA

In anticipation of the WBNA's #1 draft pick to the Indiana Fever, a Ball State professor calculated the economic impact that Caitlin Clark would have on Central Indiana with additional tickets sold, hotel rooms booked, restaurants and retail expenditures. In April 2024, the research via a press release was distributed to Indiana media and sports business media yielding \$300,000 in earned media coverage and a media audience of more than 15 million in just a few days. Because of the number of initial stories garnered, the data continues to be sourced in reporting about the Caitlin Clark Effect on Central Indiana.

Ball State, Game Day Studies: 'Caitlin Clark Effect' Means Millions of Dollars, Media Exposure for Central Indiana

MUNCIE, Indiana (April 8, 2024) – With University of Iowa women's basketball superstar Caitlin Clark expected to go to the Indiana Fever with the first-overall pick of the 2024 WNBA Draft on April 15, the choice is not only a boost for the Fever's roster—it is also expected to mean a significant economic impact for Central Indiana.

According to a study conducted by Dr. Michael Hicks from the Miller College of Business at Ball State University, Ms. Clark's addition to the Fever roster is expected to bring an estimated 26,000 more fans to Fever games throughout the season, at least 10,000 of whom will be coming from outside the region and will spend money in hotels, restaurants, and other entertainment venues during their stay.



MEDIA REPORT

MEDIA BREAKDOWN

Total
Impressions: 15,588,730
Value: \$300,881

Print/Online
Impressions: 13,318,660
Value: \$129,977

Broadcast
Impressions: 2,270,070
Value: \$170,904

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



FOX59 (Indianapolis, IN)
04.17.24



WTHR (Indianapolis, IN)
04.16.24



WEHT (Evansville, IN)
04.15.24



KJLB FOX (Davenport, IA)
04.15.24



WISH-TV (Indianapolis, IN)
04.15.24



WPTADT (Ft. Wayne, IN)
04.14.24



KCCI (Des Moines, IA)
04.14.24



Indy Star
04.12.24



EssentiallySports.com
04.13.24

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CASE STUDY: FLYING PIG MARATHON NAMED #1 MARATHON IN AMERICA

Readers of *USA Today* voted the Flying Pig Marathon as the #1 Marathon in America last year and organizers of the road race weekend leveraged this designation in marketing, merchandise and programming. Each year more than 40,000 runners and walkers compete in a Flying Pig race--there are nine races from which to choose--from the Friday Night One Miler to the Full Marathon on Sunday.

Run along the streets of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, the Flying Pig Marathon also enjoys six hours of live TV coverage on Cincinnati's NBC affiliate, always on the first Sunday in May from 5 am to 11 am. This coverage is also valued as part of the annual media report.

In 2024, the Flying Pig Marathon realized 2,915 media stories, a 25 percent increase over media stories from the previous year. This media was valued at \$10.4 million with a reach of 400 million media impressions. A portion of the growth can be attributed to the *USA Today* designation.

As a best practice, the Flying Pig Marathon uses their earned media value reports in a number of ways:

- Sponsor Recaps and proof of performance reports
- Grants applications and reports to Hamilton County, Ohio to showcase percentage of media coverage in the county and outside the county
- Annual impact report for donors



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7 | The Role of Earned Media in Destination Branding

Earned media amplifies a destination's brand, positioning it as a premier sports tourism hub. High-quality media coverage:

- Attracts future events.
- Engages residents and stakeholders.
- Creates a lasting legacy for the host community.

The Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator provides the data needed to highlight these benefits. For one such analysis, we go to Pensacola, Florida, where past Sports ETA Board Chair Ray Palmer runs Pensacola Sports. Ray's team used earned media efforts to add \$821,000 in earned media value last year.

In 2023, Pensacola Sports earned 914 media stories with a variety of story lines to enhance their awareness as a sports destination:

- Pensacola Sports' 69th annual awards banquet
- Hercules Tires Sun Belt Conference Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments on sale
- Sun Belt conference basketball championship will bring fans and economic impact to city of Pensacola
- Pensacola Beach Firefighters Challenge April 14 and 15
- Pensacola seeing economic impact while hosting NAIA Men's Lacrosse Invitational



Total Number of Media Stories: 914

- **TV: 56**
- **Radio: 74**
- **Print/On-line: 784**

Total Earned Media Value: \$821,762

Total Number of Media Impressions: 31,756,309



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Best Practices for Leveraging Earned Media Data

- 1. Incorporate EMV in Reports:** Include earned media metrics in post-event recaps.
- 2. Engage Stakeholders:** Share EMV data with sponsors, local officials, and media partners.
- 3. Use Data for Strategic Planning:** Identify high-performing media channels to optimize future campaigns, both paid and earned.

Identify high-performing media channels to optimize future campaigns, both paid and earned.



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Add Earned Media to Your Impact Measurement for Sports Events Tourism



The Sports ETA Earned Media Calculator represents a significant step forward for the industry. By quantifying the value of earned media, it empowers destinations to demonstrate ROI, enhance branding, and secure future events.

As the sports events tourism industry continues to grow, adopting innovative metrics like earned media value will be essential for success.

Learn More: [Visit the Sports ETA website](#) to start using the Earned Media Calculator today.

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About Us



Our Expert

Jackie Reau is CEO of Game Day, a media and marketing agency based in Cincinnati that focuses on sports and cultural events. Jackie has more than 25 years of experience in media relations and has been an adjunct professor in Sports PR at University of Cincinnati and Xavier University. She is also the founder and President of Cincinnati Fear, a professional esports organization.

Game Day, an award-winning media and marketing agency founded in 2002, is based in downtown Cincinnati and led by co-founders Betsy Ross and Reau. The agency provides full-service capabilities to achieve the business objectives set forth by our clients. Game Day has been the PR Partner for Sports ETA for more than a decade.



Sports ETA

As the only 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.



Our Sponsor

The Fort Worth Sports Commission is a 501(c)3 focused on enhancing the image, economy and quality of life for the community through the power of sports. Additionally, we remain committed to leveraging to the power of sport to benefit our local partners and residents. We actively pursue high-profile events that bring national exposure to Fort Worth while driving thousands of athletes, coaches and fans to our great city.

This past year alone, the Fort Worth Sports Commission secured 125 events that will bring more than 500,000 visitors to area restaurants, hotels and attractions – equating to more than \$83 million in Direct Spending. For more information on what we do and the impact those events are having, [click here](#).