

NASC's Humble Beginnings

Sixteen people squeezed together around a table in St. Louis in 1991, eager to talk, ready to listen. All 16, from cities as diverse as New York and Sioux City, Iowa, worked in similar roles — bringing in and running sporting events. But until that day, most of them operated in their lonely silos, with no process for trading ideas or getting feedback from like-minded professionals.

"It was the right people, at the right time for the right idea," said Denny Gann, president of DJG Consulting, who came to that first meeting on behalf of Sioux City.

That meeting formally became the National Association of Sports Commissions in 1992. That idea became the sports tourism industry, a sprawling enterprise that generates close to \$10 billion annually in direct visitor spending nationwide, outstripping visitor spending from professional and college sports but with far fewer headlines.

Sports tourism's biggest thrust is youth and amateur sports, which means, nationally, communities are earning \$10 billion a year from hosting sports events



From the beginning, the NASC mission was to bring sports commissioners together to share best practices and promote industry learning.

from travel soccer tournaments for pre-

teens to marathons to U.S. Olympic trials.

A Culture Of Competition And Sharing

The interesting thing about the NASC is that its members are both competitors, who bid fiercely for the same tournaments, and at the same time, colleagues, who freely share among themselves relevant information about their wins and losses.

Hill Carrow, CEO of Sports and Properties in Raleigh, N.C., as well as the Triangle Sports Commission and the USA Masters Games, was a key proponent for the industry to take the open-information approach.

After a few stalled attempts (including a meeting that attracted only one person), Carrow pulled together enough people interested in landing an Olympic festival to have that first 1991 meeting.

"We realized that, yes, landing a festival is fantastic, but look at how many Olympic sports there are and how many

SEE NASC, PAGE 2A

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NASC, FROM PAGE 1A

events that can translate into," said Carrow. "At the time, there were 300 governing bodies. We thought, hey, this thing has got some legs. It's a cash business that brings money directly to communities."

Dramatic Growth

Since that beginning, the NASC has grown to 800 members nationwide, primarily sports commissions, with constant networking and phone calls crisscrossing the industry among the 2,000 active individuals engaged in the association.

At the nexus is Don Schumacher. One of the original 16, representing Cincinnati, Schumacher eventually became the NASC's executive director, connecting members to each other, helping members set their own course and piloting the helm of a fast-growing, constantly changing industry.

"We didn't have a clue what we were getting into," said Schumacher. "All we knew was that, as a group, we enjoyed pursuing events for our arenas and stadiums and providing opportunities for people to buy tickets and get television coverage. We did recognize that we were the very first organization to represent the hosts of those events. Over the years, we've brought in CVBs, events rights-holders and vendors. We're now a full-service organization that brings knowledge and best practices to a wide swath of the industry."

"When we sat down at the first meeting, people had probably never heard of Sioux City, but we were all there — New Orleans, Los Angeles, Dallas, New York, Raleigh, Cincinnati — on an equal basis, throwing in ideas," said Gann.

That grassroots, egalitarian approach is at the root of the NASC's success, said Janis Schmees Burke, CEO of the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority. "It is truly a member-driven organization; ideas bubble up from the members and the NASC germinates them. I credit Don with that, for always remembering where this organization started, while at the same time shaping our organization and industry for the future."

Schumacher pointed out that some of the field's most knowledgeable professionals may work in "Small Town, U.S.A.," and the NASC ensures that that wealth of knowledge doesn't go untapped."

Carey Harveycutter laughs now at how naive he was 26 years ago. "We



In addition to providing networking for colleagues, NASC meetings are a venue for marketers of products and services to the industry, addresses from industry experts and recognition.



didn't understand a thing about sports marketing," the director of tourism for Salem, Va., said. "We just thought, hey, let's bid for this NCAA Division II softball tournament. We sent it in and we got it. We didn't have a clue."

If only he'd always had the NASC as a go-to source, he said. "If you want to bid on XYZ event, you can always call someone and get the real skinny. They'll tell you, 'those are the worst people to work with,' or 'they charged a high fee that

didn't translate into room nights.' Even though we go head to head competing for bids, we always give each other unparalleled inside knowledge."

Addressing the Full Range of Needs in Sports Tourism

People involved in the sports tourism business know the job isn't only sales.

"Once an event operator has said yes to a community, the sports commission's

job has just begun," said Schumacher.

Sports commissions produce and execute sports events for tournament owners, but also create their own events from scratch. Sports commissions, which usually operate with a minuscule staff, are often charged with handling permits from multiple municipalities, publicity, coordinating the multiple entities that may own the fields or courts, ensuring sufficient

SEE NASC, PAGE 4A



**Happy 25th Anniversary,
National Association of Sports Commissions!**

**And a special congratulations to
Don Schumacher
For 23 years of dedication as the Executive Director!**

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NASC

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NASC, FROM PAGE 2A

security, organizing volunteers, finding sponsors and raising funds. People working in the industry must be flexible, light on their feet, ready to shift when priorities change. If traditional youth baseball is on the decline, Tough Mudder events and extreme sports are on the rise. Sports commissions have to be ready.

Because the sports tourism industry has flown under the radar for years, even students in sports masters programs haven't always recognized the potential career and financial opportunities the industry can afford.

"When a student at Ohio University told me recently that he was planning to make sports tourism his career, it was music to my ears," said Schumacher. "One of my biggest concerns going forward is that as the industry grows, it's populated by young people who lack the training to understand sports tourism and how relatively more difficult it is than traditional convention sales."

Moving to the Next Phase of Growth and Inclusion

Now that the NASC has saturated sports commissions nationwide with education, knowledge and necessary competitive tools, Schumacher said the organization's future will include reaching out to less traditional players, such as major sponsors, major venue owners and municipal parks and recreation departments.

Although sports tourism doesn't garner national headlines, cities and poten-



NASC meetings can also offer the chance to experience, first-hand, the latest trends in sports such as whitewater rafting competitions.

tial rights holders have taken notice of the dollars flowing into successful sports destinations. The caution, Schumacher said, is that a community cannot simply throw up a multi-field soccer complex, then sit back and wait for the money to roll in.

"We have to get to the leadership of the overall tourism industry," said Schumacher. "The average CEO of a CVB doesn't know the entirely different needs of his sports salesman from convention sales. But he needs to understand the crying need for a person who can handle the \$6 million and 3,000 people in town for a three-day event. There must be greater emphasis on objective feasibility studies before facilities are built rather than, unfortunately too often, the

other way around."

Municipalities interested in funding sports facilities must first look to the needs of their own residents. Will residents use the facilities when no tournaments are in town? Schumacher said an unused complex can quickly become a drain on the local taxpayers.

"We want to teach people to crawl, then walk, then run," said Schumacher.

As Schumacher gets ready to hand the reins over to incoming president and CEO Alan Kidd, he said the NASC has accomplished most of the goals of the original 16 in St. Louis. The future, he said, is to build new platforms for membership and continue to meet challenges in an ever-evolving industry for young members and seasoned veterans.

By The Numbers

- **809** member organizations
- **2,699** sport tourism professionals at member organizations
- **49** states represented
- **7** nations represented
- **\$9.45 billion:** Annual visitor spending
- **7:** Average number of staff members at each organization
- **740** volunteers on average for each organization
- **28** average number of events our members host per year

■ **56%** of population age 6 and up participate in at least one high calorie-burning activity

■ Rugby and lacrosse have seen highest growth in participation over last

5 years

Priorities of sports destinations

1. Visitor spending
2. Marketing their region
3. Supporting their local sports franchises and venues
4. Represent the sports industry in their community
5. Create community activities
6. Serve as sports advocates
7. Sports philanthropy
8. Health and fitness



Congratulations, Hill!

Congratulations on your induction into the inaugural class of the NASC Sports Tourism Hall of Fame!

Thank you to our CEO, Hill Carrow, for 16 years of great TSC leadership and for founding the National Association of Sports Commissions, the world's number one sports tourism organization. From three attendees at your first meeting in 1989 to 1,000 at the 2017 Symposium, it has been quite a ride for the NASC!

We are proud of you for continuing to lead the way in sports tourism, becoming the first NASC member heading both an Active member and Rights Holder member simultaneously. Here's to many more years of great sports tourism achievements for you, the TSC, and the NASC!

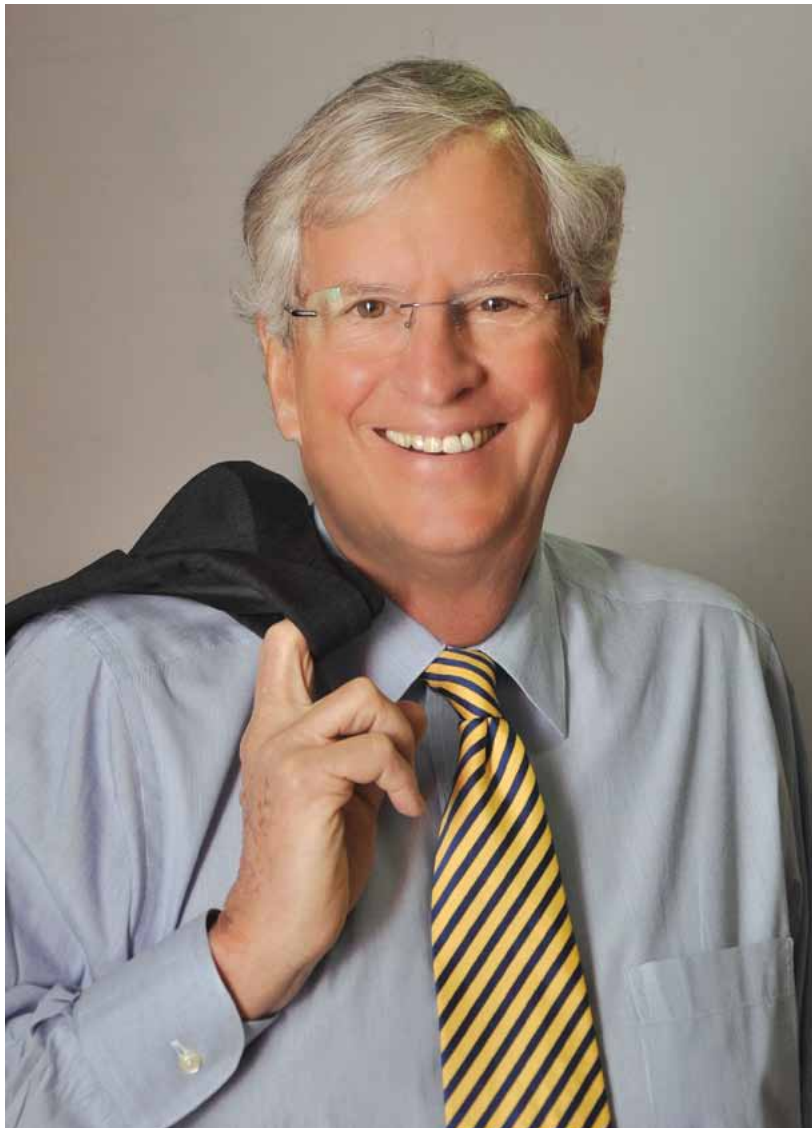


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CONGRATULATIONS
NASC on your 25th Anniversary
and to Hill Carrow & Don Schumacher
on your distinguished careers &
and induction into the
NASC Hall of Fame.

THANKS FOR BEING
GREAT TEAMMATES





After 25 years of growing the NASC, Schumacher prepares to hand the reins over to a new generation

Teaching classes in Ohio University's renowned sports masters program. Writing a book. Consulting. Building a new website. Becoming a prolific video blogger. Don Schumacher may be retiring from his post as the National Association of Sports Commissioners' only executive director but his plans for the future are anything but retiring. Well, he may throw in a bit more fishing and golf, if he finds time.

"My wife Mary's only fear is that I won't learn to relax," Schumacher said. "But I can make a video blog just as easily from the beach as I can from here in Cincinnati."

When Schumacher hands over the reins to the NASC's new president and CEO, Alan Kidd, he will leave behind an organization that he helped build from scratch an organization that gave definition to the annual \$9 billion sports tourism industry.

Schumacher came to what is now called sports tourism in a roundabout way. He went to Northwestern University on a track scholarship, graduating in 1962 with a masters degree and the determination to become an industrial film producer. He landed a job

with Hanna-Barbera Productions, the creators of Scooby-Doo, Tom and Jerry and many other popular cartoon series. Eventually, the parent company, Taft Broadcasting, sent him to Cincinnati to serve as director of sponsorships and sales for the company's theme park, King's Island.

One day, his boss informed Schumacher

"Don tells it like it is ... That's why I admire him and why so many people rely on him."

Peter Bowden

President and CEO of the Columbus, Ga., Convention and Visitor Bureau

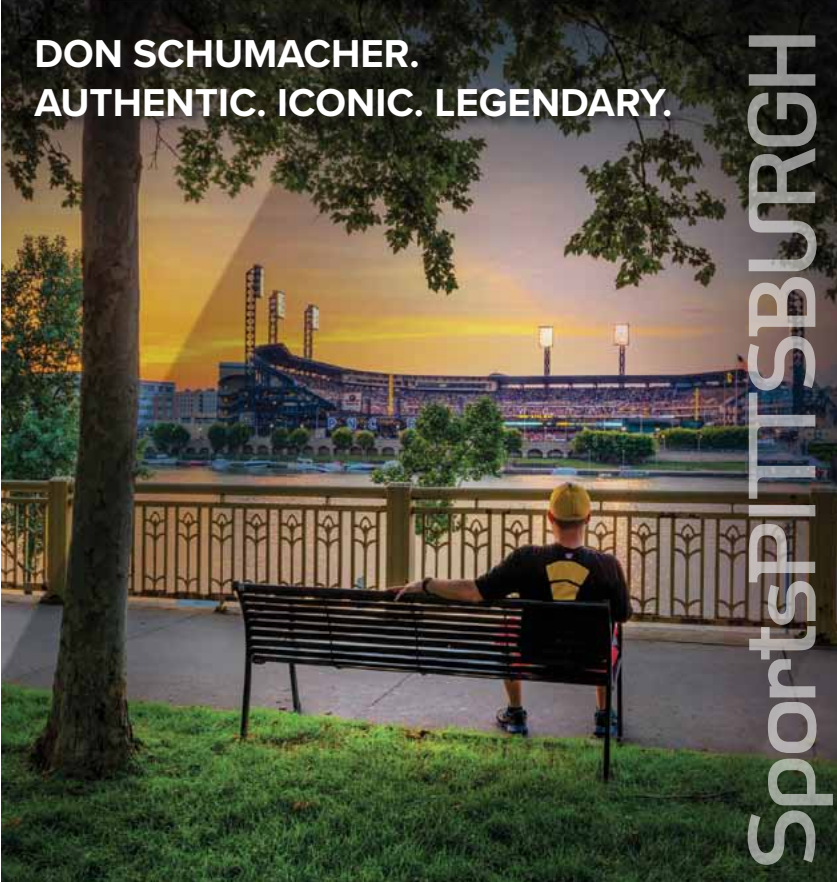
he was now the general manager of the new College Football Hall of Fame and Galbreath Field.


"And, 'oh yeah, we're opening in 24 hours with high school football,'" Schum-

SEE SCHUMACHER, PAGE 5A

**DON SCHUMACHER.
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Don Schumacher isn't just a leader in our industry, he's *the* leader. Someone who shares our passion for iconic moments.

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When he left Northwestern with a Masters, Don Schumacher was focused on a career in industrial films landing his first job with Hanna-Barbera.

SCHUMACHER, FROM PAGE 6A

Schumacher remembered, laughing. "He said, 'Just don't let anybody die.' Seventy-two hours later I was in the sports tourism business. I had to figure it all out on the fly."

Schumacher went on to a long and successful career bringing outstanding sporting events to Cincinnati, from World Figure Skating Championships to the NCAA Hockey Championship to the NCAA Women's Final Four.

Don Schumacher: Just What the NASC Needed

When the NASC members realized

that hiring a general administrative firm wasn't a good fit for their sports-tourism focus, they turned to Schumacher to oversee the NASC's operations and to build the fledgling association.

"Don, with his long history of bringing sports to Cincinnati, was a natural for the role," said Hill Carrow, a founder of the NASC and CEO of the Triangle Sports Commission in Raleigh, N.C. "He understood exactly what all of us needed to be good at our own organizations, which freed the rest of us to tend to our own knitting."

Every city has unique capabilities and different sports tourism goals. Every sports commission is different with its own local flavor of politics. Over the next 25 years, Schumacher and the NASC became the nexus, turning the far-flung, disparate players into a professional industry with a common set of standards and values, building education for both newly minted professionals and old hands.

Schumacher may be best known in the field for his ability to help communities determine exactly how to best bring sports tourism dollars to their town, and in an objective, honest way.

"Don tells it like it is," said Peter Bowden, president and CEO of the Columbus, Ga., Convention and Visitor Bureau. "That's why I admire him and why so many people rely on him. You can take what he says to the bank. It might not be what you want to hear — sometimes the truth hurts — but it will be exactly what you need to hear for your business."

The words "honest," "fair," "passionate" and "loyal" crop up frequently in conversations about Schumacher. Not to mention "true leader."

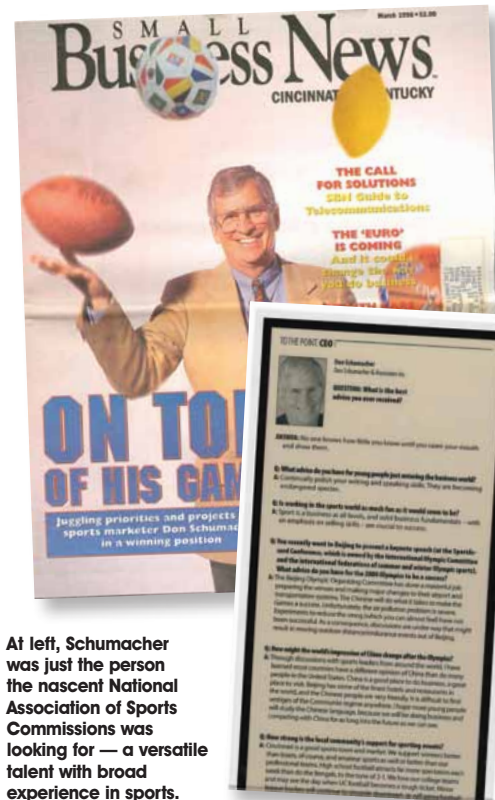
Providing Advice and Guidance to Members

"Don was very helpful during our lean years of the Great Recession," said Pete Garlock, director of sales for the Aurora Area



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At left, Schumacher was just the person the nascent National Association of Sports Commissions was looking for — a versatile talent with broad experience in sports. At right, Of the many assets Don Schumacher brought to his position, giving sound advice on a wide variety of topics was one many remember and appreciate the most.

Sports Alliance in Illinois. "During 2008 and 2009, he made sure there were reasons for us all to keep participating and to stay afloat. Only a true leader could guide us through that time."

Another description of Schumacher: "deeply knowledgeable."

"Don is so well connected across the industry, with ties everywhere, Europe, Asia, Australia," said Mike Anderson, the chairman-elect of the NASC and executive director of the Myrtle Beach Regional Sports Alliance. "If you want an educated answer, go to Don Schumacher."

"For a person to have been in this industry as long as Don has and still be so passionate about it is amazing," said Nancy Yawn, director of the CVB for Round Rock, Texas. "Don is highly regarded by everyone. And he has earned that regard. He deserves to be in exactly the position he's in."

"The sports tourism industry has grown dramatically," said Marissa Werner, sports and entertainment sales manager for VISIT Milwaukee. "Numerous cities have begun to take notice. They can now see what this expanding market can mean to their overall economic health during low periods. I credit this in large part to the hard work Don Schumacher put forth to build the National Association of Sports Commissions."

"When our county increased our budget, making it possible for us to recruit even more events and host them in a meaningful way, the first person I called was Don Schumacher," said George Linley, executive director of Palm Beach County Sports Commission in Florida. "He came down to



Don Schumacher's broad experience across multiple sports, his deep understanding of the economics and impact of sports on communities and his passion for the business, made him an able advisor in many arenas.

give us the best guidance and advice and provide input on our best strategies. The simple fact that it was Don Schumacher himself who came gave our plans credibility within our community."

Leaving a Legacy of Progress and Success

"Don has always been a model for

me," said Steve Ducoff, president and CEO of the Association of Chief Executives for Sport. "He has been an outstanding face for our industry. Respect doesn't automatically go with a person's title. But Don has earned our industry's respect through word and deed over the last 25 years."

As Schumacher retires, he leaves behind a rock-solid foundation for his suc-

cessor, Alan Kidd, to expand the NASC's mission into untapped areas of the industry, such as bringing in new members from major sponsors and major venue operators.

"When we started, it was just a couple of us having chips and beer," said Carrow. "I never dreamed we could grow to this size. It's been an amazing run and Don has shepherded us right to this point."



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National Association of Sports Commissions names six to inaugural hall of fame class

The National Association of Sports Commissions is capping its 25th anniversary celebrations with the induction of its first-ever Hall of Fame class during the 2017 NASC Sports Event Symposium set for March 27-30.

The mission of the new Hall of Fame is to promote the professional management of sporting events, as well as the sport tourism industry as a whole, by honoring professionals who have exemplified the values of the NASC over the course of their careers.

The inductees are:

■ **Don Schumacher** has been the NASC's only executive director, successfully growing the organization from a handful of members to its current roster of 800 and turning the NASC into the go-to resource for the sports travel industry.

■ **Hill Carrow** also played a role in founding the NASC, as well as the North Carolina Sports Association and North Carolina Amateur Sports.

■ **Kevin Gray** was a founding member of NASC. During his 22-year tenure



Schumacher



Carrow



Gray



Hughes



McGraw



Schneider

with KC Sports in Kansas City, Gray helped generate more than \$700 million estimated economic impact. Gray died in 2011.

■ As Commissioner of the Gainesville Sports commission and owner of Event Service and Organization Professionals, **Jack Hughes** was a consultant for cities and sports commissions nationwide.

■ **Diane McGraw** was a founding member of the NASC and the first female

chair. She is currently the President of McGraw Productions, with offices in Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

■ Publisher **Tim Schneider** launched SportsTravel magazine in 1997, and also created the TEAMS Conference & Expo.



HILL CARROW INVENTED THE NASC!

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NASC inaugural hall of fame inductees

Inductee	Position, Company
Don Schumacher	Executive Director, NASC
Hill Carrow	CEO, Triangle Sports Commission
Kevin Gray	former President & CEO of the Kansas City sports commission.
Jack Hughes	former Executive Director of the Gainesville Sports Commission
Diane McGraw	President & Executive Producer, McGraw Productions
Tim Schneider	Publisher, Sports Travel

Winning takes talent, to repeat takes character.
-John Wooden



Don Schumacher's leadership and support in growing sports tourism for DMOs and the communities they serve has paved the way for stronger relationships and significant economic impact for cities across the country. These accomplishments reflect Don's true character of helping and encouraging others—and this truly defines winning!

Congratulations Don, on a job well done.



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