

Potentials and prospects of sport tourism in Malaysia: a theoretical perspective

Abstract

Sport tourism has become a popular sub-sector in the tourism industry today. The success in organizing the World Conference on Sport Tourism in Barcelona, Spain 2001 was the beginning of more serious attention being paid to this sector and more widespread coverage in the years ahead. Until the early 1990s, tourism and sports existed as two distinct areas of activities. Until then, many scholars, decision-makers and governments involved in the field of tourism and sports perceived the profits for both sectors independently from one another, whereas the benefits generated by the synergy of both is far greater. In Malaysia, the success in organizing the race Le Tour de Langkawi in 1996 was a turning point in the government's focus on the development of the sport tourism sector. Currently, Malaysia is known for organizing several world-class sport events, among them the Royal Langkawi International Regatta (January), Ironman Triathlon (February), Formula 1 Grand Prix Malaysia (March), FEI Showjumping World Cup (May), PetronasPrimax 3 MerdekaMillineum Endurance Race (July), Super GT (August), Malaysian Motorcycle Grand Prix (September), A1GP Malaysia (November) and Monsoon Cup (December). All these world-class sporting events bring substantial returns to the society and the nation. The advantages of sports as a tourism attraction include the length of time in which the events take place, extensive publicity coverage through the print and electronic media, sponsorship from various domestic and multinational companies and business opportunities provided to local residents during the event.