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DIGGING IT

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The Vans Triple Crown of Surfing includes three events for men and three for women, all at different beach venues on the North Shore of the Hawaiian island of Oahu.

For those who want to see the sights by foot, the annual Los Angeles Marathon is run every March, with 25,000 annual participants.

"Sports fans are great because when they come to town, they treat it like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Martinez said. "It's a very special

moment, and I think a lot of them say 'I'm going to go all out and enjoy this.'"

Honolulu: **Aloha Athletics**

Hawaii is a world leader in attracting visitors, and the state's sports scene is a big reason. Honolulu, on the island of Oahu, offers everyday temperatures in the 80s, cultural attractions, colleges and universities, Waikiki Beach and plenty of sports.

"Honolulu is the perfect sports destination," said Michael Story, tourism brand manager at the Hawaii Tourism Authority. "We have varying elevations, which bring various outdoor resources into play, from some of the best beaches in the world to rain forests for unbelievable views when hiking."

One way to combine Honolulu sightseeing with athletics is the Honolulu Marathon. One of the largest marathons in the world, it attracts up to 30,000 runners. Held the second Saturday of each December, the

marathon starts in Ala Moana Beach Park and winds around Diamond Head to Waikiki's Kapiolani Park.

The National Football League traditionally holds its annual Pro Bowl at Aloha Stadium. After a year away in 2010, the game will return in 2011 and 2012. The 50,000-seat stadium is the biggest multisport facility in the state, and it plays host to the University of Hawaii football, soccer and baseball. In golf, the Sony Open, a PGA Tour event, is held every January at Waialae Country Club.

Another multisport venue is the Central Oahu Regional Park, which can accommodate archery, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis and baseball. The Diamond Head Tennis Center has 10 courts and seating for 1,000. One court is stadium size for tournament play, and the complex sits in the shadow of Diamond Head, the giant volcano that provides a bookend to Waikiki's skyline.

Sacramento: Capital Sports

Sacramento, seat of the Golden State's government, is also home to a wide range of sports. Pro basketball, ice skating, racquetball, softball, equestrian sports, aquatics and others take place around the calendar in the city's 310 annual days of sunshine. "Sacramento is a great sports town. Our enthusiasm for sports of all types is contagious," said Brad Hillard, director of sports development at the Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Arco Arena is one of the busiest venues in Sacramento, with 200 spectator events each year. Home to the NBA Kings and WNBA Monarchs, the 17,317-seat venue also plays host to college basketball and gymnastics championships.

Memorial Auditorium was built in 1926 and renovated in 1996. One block from the convention center, it seats up to 4,000 and can host basketball, wrestling and mixed martial arts.

One of the biggest venues in town is the Sacramento Convention Center. Across the street from the Capitol, the convention center has 200,000 square feet of space that can be configured in a variety of ways.

Soccer facilities include Estadio Azteca Indoor Soccer Arena, which

was remodeled in 2005, and Arden Indoor Soccer Arena.

Anchorage: Frontier Sports

Alaska offers up a climate for winter sports that other Pacific states can't match. But in addition to the sports suited for snow and ice, Anchorage has plenty to offer planners who are

interested in all athletics, both indoor and outdoor.

"This is a special place for winter sports—downhill and cross country skiing and some great hockey facilities," said Jack Bonney, public relations manager at the Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The Dena'ina Civic & Convention Center has held the Native Youth Olympics, the Iditarod Musher's Banquet and the Visitor Industry



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Anchorage CVB

The annual 1,161-mile Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race begins on the first Saturday in March in Willow, near Anchorage, Alaska.

Charity Walk. Sullivan Arena is flexible in seating configurations (7,500 for basketball, 6,400 for hockey) and has played host to Alaska Aces Hockey, the Kendall Hockey Classic and the Great Alaska Shootout.

Mulcahy Stadium is the largest outdoor baseball stadium in Alaska (capacity 5,300) and underwent a renovation earlier this year. Kincaid Park is home to the annual Tour of Anchorage ski marathon.

Eugene, Oregon: Track Town

Eugene has a lasting place in the world of sports. Especially when it comes to recreational running, some of America's healthy habits can be traced back to Eugene.

While at the University of Oregon, track coach Bill Bowerman teamed up with athlete Phil Knight to create the company that would become Nike. Eugene is still tops for track, and most of the action takes place at Hayward

Field. Used solely for track and field, Hayward Field was built in 1919 and has hosted multiple NCAA championships, many national championships and Olympic trials.

But there is a lot to Eugene away from the track. "It's hard to find a sport that you couldn't participate in here in Eugene," said Janis Ross, vice-president of convention and sports marketing at Travel Lane County.

A big addition is scheduled to open in December 2010. The Matthew Knight Basketball Arena, capacity 12,500, will begin hosting University of Oregon basketball for the 2011 season.

Spokane: Winning in Washington

Spokane has a team for all seasons—it's home to the WHL Chiefs, the baseball Indians, the af2 Shock, and the soccer Spiders and Black Widows.

"Spokane is a unique market," said Eric Sawyer, president and CEO of the Spokane Regional Sports Commission.

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“There are not a lot of pro sports, so there isn’t a lot of competition taking away from whatever event is happening. Tournament planners know they can come and own the city.”

Avista Stadium has hosted Spokane baseball since it opened in 1958. The ballpark holds 7,162 fans who come to see the Spokane Indians, a class-A affiliate of the MLB Texas Rangers.

Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena opened in 1995 with seating for up to 12,000, depending on the configuration. Hockey, arena football, basketball and other events are contested there. Spokane has also gotten on the map thanks to Gonzaga University, whose basketball team advances in the NCAA basketball tournament most years.

The Pacific States: Perfect Combination

With top pro franchises and college and university programs, the Pacific region is an American sports



Visit Spokane

giant. With beautiful weather, fine facilities, helpful volunteers and cities eager to show themselves to visitors, sports planners have plenty of choices in the Pacific States. ■

The USA Volleyball Pacific Northwest Qualifier, which was held in March over two weekends, attracted more than 400 teams to three venues, including the Spokane Convention Center.



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