

The Potential of The North Sumatra Sports Center Area as a Tourist Destination in The Development Of Sports Tourism

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Abstract — *The North Sumatra Sports Center holds significant potential to develop as a sports tourism destination, contributing to the region's tourism sector. Strategically located, this area not only offers world-class sports facilities but also showcases stunning natural landscapes and a rich cultural heritage, making it an attractive destination for both domestic and international tourists. The development of comprehensive sports infrastructure, including stadiums and training areas, presents an opportunity to tap into the global interest in both recreational and professional sports. The potential for developing sports tourism in North Sumatra includes hosting various sporting events, ranging from local and national to international competitions. Sports activities such as football tournaments, cycling races, and water sports can serve as unique attractions for tourists seeking to engage in sports while exploring the region's natural beauty. Additionally, supporting facilities such as accommodations, restaurants, and other tourism activities can enhance the area's appeal as a well-rounded tourist destination. The success of this sports tourism development requires collaboration between the government, private sector, and local communities to provide the necessary infrastructure and services. Through this approach, the North Sumatra Sports Center is expected to evolve into not only a sports hub but also a premier tourism destination that can positively impact the local economy, create employment opportunities, and improve Indonesia's international tourism profile.*

Keywords: Sports Center, North Sumatra, sports tourism, tourist destination, tourism development, international sports, tourism sector

I. Introduction

B.1 Research Background

Tourism today plays a role not only as a sector that contributes foreign exchange to the country, but also as a driving force for regional development through significant economic contributions (Alastri, 2019). The diversity of tourism potential in Indonesia, both natural and artificial tourism, is the main factor in the development of the tourism sector in various regions (Nurhidayati et al., 2025). One of the approaches that is growing is sports tourism, which combines sports activities with tourist experiences. Sport tourism can increase the attractiveness of a destination through the organization of national and international sports events, while supporting regional economic growth (Wardana, 2017).

Sport tourism is growing rapidly in Indonesia thanks to its various advantages, such as climatic conditions that favor outdoor activities, as well as natural wealth that includes

mountains, rivers, lakes, and the sea that are ideal for various sports activities (Damanik, 2019). One of the largest sports events in Indonesia, the National Sports Week (PON), is held every four years involving all provinces in Indonesia. In 2024, PON XXI will be held in the provinces of North Sumatra and Aceh, based on the Decree of the Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Indonesia No. 71 of 2020 which stipulates the two provinces as the host of the event (Decree of the Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Indonesia No. 71 of 2020, 2020).

As part of the preparation for PON XXI, North Sumatra built the North Sumatra Sport Center, an integrated sports area located in Sena Village, Batang Kuis District, Deli Serdang Regency. This development is not only aimed at meeting the needs of sports facilities during the PON event, but also has the potential to be a sports tourism center that can attract tourists in the long term. With facilities that meet national and international standards, this area has the opportunity to be developed as a sustainable sports tourism destination.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore the potential of the North Sumatra Sport Center in supporting the development of sport tourism and how this area can have an economic, social, and cultural impact on the community and local government.

This research is important because there has not been a comprehensive study on the potential development of the North Sumatra Sport Center as a post-PON XXI sports tourism destination. The findings of this study are expected to be an initial reference in the preparation of regional development strategies, which integrate economic, social, and cultural benefits in a sustainable manner.

B.2 Limitations of Research Problems

The limitations of the problem in this study aim to make the research process focused. These restrictions include:

- **Regional Coverage:** This research was conducted in the North Sumatra Sport Center area, Sena Village, Batang Kuis District, Deli Serdang Regency. The focus of the study is to see the potential in the area in supporting tourism activities, especially sports tourism.
- **Data Period:** The data used in this study is limited to the most recent data available until 2024. Historical data prior to that year will not be analyzed, unless deemed relevant to provide supporting context.



B.3 Problem Formulation

Sports tourism is increasingly developing and becoming a strategy in increasing the attractiveness of tourist destinations and providing economic and social impacts for the host region. The North Sumatra Sport Center was built as part of the preparation for the XXI National Sports Week (PON) in 2024 with the main goal being a sports facility. However, the potential of this area as a sports tourism destination has not been studied in depth. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the main questions:

- What is the potential of the *North Sumatra Sport Center Area* in the development of sports tourism in *Deliserdang Regency*, North Sumatra Province?

B.4 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

- To study and find out the potential of the *North Sumatra Sport Center Area* in the development of sports tourism in *Deliserdang Regency*, North Sumatra Province which has been and is being built.

B.5 Research Benefits

Research related to the influence of urban facilities and infrastructure on the attractiveness of community living is expected to provide benefits both theoretically and practically. Some of the benefits of such research can be detailed as follows:

- Theoretically: This research is expected to enrich the theoretical study of the potential of sports tourism in the Sport Center Area. The results of this research can contribute to developing a theory about the potential of sports tourism in the Sport Center area located in urban areas that act as a buffer for large cities. This research can also be a reference for future studies that want to explore the relationship between sports tourism and the Sport Center area located in urban areas.
- Practical: The results of this research can be used by local governments and regional planners as a reference in planning the development of the North Sumatra Sport Center in the aspect of sports tourism. By understanding the potential of sports tourism, policymakers can design a strategy for the development and development of the North Sumatra Sport Center that is more targeted. For tourism business actors, this research can be valuable information about the potential of the tourism industry in the North Sumatra Sport Center area. This can help them in determining relevant locations and facilities for tourism business development that suits the needs of the community.

B.6. Frame of Mind

The framework of thinking in this study is designed to explain the logical flow of research in studying and knowing the potential of the North Sumatra Sport Center Area in the development of sports tourism in *Deliserdang Regency*, North Sumatra Province which has been and is being built.

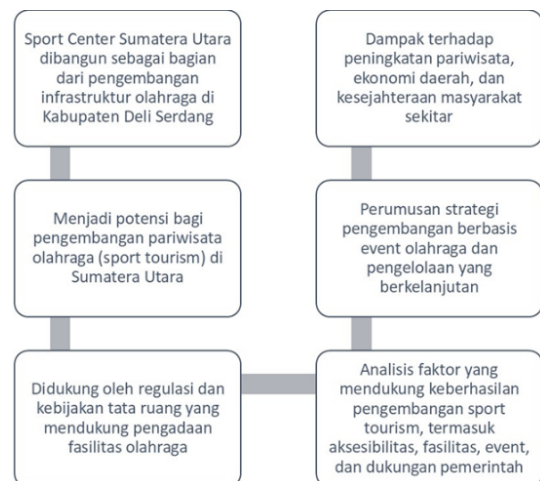


Figure 1. Frame of Mind
Source: Author, 2025

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

D.1 Sport Tourism as a Tourism Development Strategy

Sport tourism is a combination of sports activities and tourist experiences that create attraction for tourists and have an economic impact on the destination. Gibson, (1998) Explains that Sport Tourism consists of three main categories, namely: Active Sport Tourism (tourists who actively participate in sports activities), Event Sport Tourism (tourists who travel to watch or attend sports events), and Nostalgia Sport Tourism (tourists who visit historical places related to sports). This concept has been developed by various countries as a strategy to increase the attractiveness of destinations through the organization of sports events, the development of supporting infrastructure, and the diversification of tourism products.

In the tourism sector, the role of sports is growing and has a significant influence on the economy and socio-culture of the local community. Professional sports require athletes and their support teams to travel to compete and train in various locations (Higham & Hinch, 2010). This creates opportunities for destinations to develop world-class sports facilities that not only support competitive activities but also attract recreational sports tourists.

In addition to professional sports, recreational sports also contribute to the development of tourist destinations. Recreational sports are often performed by tourists in a variety of tourist attractions, both those designed specifically for sports activities and those that offer an additional experience for visitors (Weed & Bull, 2012). Competitive sports are formal, structured, and goal-oriented, leaving little room for imagination or fantasy (Mihalic, 2003).

On the other hand, recreational sports serve as entertainment and leisure activities that provide an opportunity for individuals to play and enjoy free time (Mihalic, 2003). Many destinations are developed specifically for recreational sports tourism, such as ski resorts in the Alps that attract tourists with winter sports facilities (Hudson, 2003). In addition, these destinations can also provide infrastructure and facilities for the training of professional athletes, thereby expanding the economic and social benefits of sports tourism. An approach based on local potential and character has also proven effective in supporting regional tourism development. (Siregar et al., 2023) shows that the night tourism strategy in

Berastagi City, North Sumatra, which prioritizes the local wisdom of the Karo Tribe, is able to encourage community involvement, open up art and culinary business opportunities, and strengthen the region's identity as a sustainable cultural tourism destination. These findings are proof that the integration of local cultural values and modern tourism concepts such as sport tourism can complement each other to create more inclusive and far-reaching destinations.

In some cases, sports activities may not be the main motivation for a person to visit a destination. However, these activities are often offered as part of a wider travel experience to increase the attraction of the destination and encourage increased tourist spending (Mihalic, 2003). For example, beach resorts that provide golf facilities or hiking trails, which not only attract sports tourists but also increase the diversification of tourism products (Higham & Hinch, 2010). Thus, sport tourism can serve as a sustainable tourism development strategy and contribute to local economic growth.

The construction of road infrastructure not only supports the distribution of goods, but also increases accessibility to tourist areas, as shown in a study by (R. S. Nasution et al., 2025) about Nibung Bay, Tanjungbalai. The improvement of the road network has proven to be able to strengthen local economic growth and open up new potential in the tourism sector, especially in areas with strategic potential.

D.2 Sport Center North Sumatra as a Sport Tourism Destination

The North Sumatra Sport Center, located in Sena Village, Batang Kuis District, Deli Serdang Regency, is a strategic project designed to support the implementation of the XXI National Sports Week (PON) in 2024. The construction of this area began with the laying of the first stone on August 14, 2020 by the Governor of North Sumatra, Edy Rahmayadi, as part of efforts to improve sports infrastructure in the province sumutprov.go.id, 2020, 2023)

With an area of 300 hectares, this Sport Center not only functions as a sports center, but is also designed to include commercial and educational zones to ensure its sustainability after the 2024 PON ends. The facilities built include the main stadium, athletic intermediate stadium, martial arts sports hall (GOR), athlete's guesthouse, and various other supporting facilities. The local government hopes that this area can become a center for sustainable sports activities and attract sports tourists (sumutprov.go.id, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2025).

Its strategic location, adjacent to Kualanamu International Airport, provides accessibility advantages for athletes, officials, and tourists who come to North Sumatra. This ease of access is one of the main factors in increasing the attractiveness of the area as a sports tourism destination. This is in line with the local government's policy in promoting North Sumatra as the center of national and international sports activities. In addition, Batang Kuis District, where this Sport Center is located, has been stipulated in the Regional Spatial Plan (RTRW) of Deli Serdang Regency as an Area Service Center (PPK). The region is designed to be a regional center of trade and services, agriculture and plantations, housing and settlements, and educational and sports centers. In addition, Batang Kuis is also designated as a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Area, which supports the concept of mass transportation-based development to

improve community connectivity and mobility (Purba et al., 2024).

The construction of the main stadium, with a contract value of IDR 587 billion, is targeted to be completed in less than a year. This reflects the commitment of the local government in providing international standard sports facilities that not only function as a venue for PON XXI, but can also be used for various other sports events. In addition to the main stadium, the construction of supporting facilities such as access road networks and other supporting infrastructure continues to be accelerated to ensure the readiness of the region ahead of the biggest sporting event in Indonesia (sumutprov.go.id, 2020b, 2025)

With careful planning and support from various parties, the North Sumatra Sport Center is expected to become a new icon for this province as well as act as a catalyst for local economic growth. Through the development of sports tourism and the organization of national and international sports events, this region has the potential to attract tourists, increase investment, and strengthen North Sumatra's position on the map of Indonesia's sports industry.



Figure 2. Main Stadium of Sport Center North Sumatra
Source: kominfo.jatimprov.go.id

D.3 Factors Determining the Success of Sport Tourism

The success of tourism development planning is influenced by various key factors, including environmental carrying capacity, quality of human resources, structured planning systems, use of technology, and transparent and sustainable funding. The physical environment, both natural and artificial, must be maintained to remain a tourist attraction, while competent human resources play an important role in improving the quality of services. Careful planning, with a clear vision, mission, strategy, and policies, needs to be supported by the use of information technology in data management and promotion. In addition, funding involving the government, business actors, and the community must be managed fairly and efficiently to ensure the sustainability of the tourism sector (Akbar et al., 2025; M. Y. Nasution & Nuraini, 2024).

In the context of sports tourism, these factors also play a crucial role in its development. Sport tourism is a rapidly growing sector and has great potential in supporting the tourism industry and the local economy. Its success is determined by various aspects that affect the attractiveness and sustainability of the destination. Based on previous studies (Damanik, 2019; Mihalic, 2003), there are several

main factors that play a role in supporting sport tourism, including:

- Accessibility

Accessibility is a key factor in attracting sports tourists. The ease of transportation to the location, whether by land, sea, or air, plays an important role in increasing the competitiveness of sports tourism destinations (Higham & Hinch, 2010). Supporting infrastructure such as airports, highways, and efficient public transportation can facilitate the movement of athletes, officials, and tourists. Study Weed & Bull (2012) shows that good accessibility has a direct impact on increasing the number of tourist visits in international sporting events.

- Facilities and Infrastructure

The quality of sports facilities and accommodation is an important factor in supporting the sports tourist experience. Successful sports tourism destinations usually have stadiums, sports arenas, training centers, and adequate accommodation facilities to accommodate athletes and tourists (Higham & Hinch, 2010). In addition, the availability of supporting facilities such as fitness centers, hospitals, and recreational areas also increases the attractiveness of the destination (Hudson, 2003).

- Events and Activities

The type and frequency of sports activities held greatly affect the success of sports tourism. Destinations that regularly hold sporting events, both on a national and international scale, tend to be more attractive to tourists (Weed & Bull, 2012). In addition to professional sports competitions, recreational events such as marathons, sports festivals, and physical activity-based tours (e.g. hiking, biking, or diving) can also be a major attraction for tourists with a recreational sports interest (Higham & Hinch, 2010).

- Government Support

Policies, regulations, and promotions carried out by the government play an important role in supporting the development of sport tourism. This support can be in the form of providing infrastructure, providing incentives for sports event organizers, and promoting destinations through global marketing campaigns (Hudson, 2003). Study Damanik (2019) He also emphasized that synergy between the public and private sectors in the management of sports tourism can increase the competitiveness of destinations and encourage local economic growth. Synergy between stakeholders—government, the private sector, and the community—is the key to creating an effective, adaptive, and long-term oriented management system (Ramadhani & Nuraini, 2024).

However, the success of the tourism sector in increasing regional economic growth depends not only on the increase in the number of tourists, but also on the consumption patterns and fiscal contribution of tourists in the destination. Sugiarto et al. (2023) revealed that in North Tapanuli Regency, the number of tourist visits and restaurant taxes did not have a significant influence on economic growth and PAD. This shows the need for a more strategic and participatory approach in maximizing the economic impact of tourism activities, including sports tourism, by encouraging tourist spending, providing supporting facilities, and an adaptive tax system.

Adequate land transportation infrastructure is an important factor in supporting the successful development of sports tourism areas. As stated by Sinar et al. (2023), the development of road networks in strategic areas such as

Padang Lawas Regency must pay attention to integration with production centers, economic zones, and public facilities, including in the context of supporting tourism and sports activities. High accessibility to sports venues will encourage visitor participation, accelerate logistics flows, and strengthen regional connectivity which ultimately impacts the local economy.

By considering these factors, strategic management of sports tourism can increase the number of tourists, extend the duration of visits, and provide a sustainable economic impact for destinations that develop this sector.

III. METHOD

This research uses a desk study approach, which is a documentary study of secondary data from scientific journals, research reports, government policies, and online media publications (Nuraini, 2019, 2024). The data was analyzed in a qualitative descriptive manner through the identification of the main themes relevant to the success factors of sport tourism. This research focuses on four main aspects in analyzing the potential of the North Sumatra Sport Center area as a sports tourism destination, namely: accessibility, facilities and infrastructure, events and promotions, and government support. These aspects are identified based on a literature study and a theoretical framework on the determinants of the success of sport tourism.

IV. Results and Discussion

To maintain consistency, the discussion structure in this study is arranged into three main parts: (1) Identification of the characteristics of the North Sumatra Sport Center, including the location, area area, and supporting facilities; (2) Evaluation of the potential of the area as a sports tourism destination based on four main aspects of the study; (3) Formulation of a sustainable sports tourism development strategy to support tourism attractions and socio-economic benefits in the region.

E.1 Identification of the Potential of North Sumatra Sport Center

The North Sumatra Sport Center is an integrated sports area built in Sena Village, Batang Kuis District, Deliserdang Regency, as part of preparations for the XXI National Sports Week (PON) in 2024. Geographically, the location of this area is very strategic because it is not far from Kualanamu International Airport, which is the main entrance to the North Sumatra region. This ease of access makes the Sport Center area have great potential to be developed as a sports tourism destination.

In terms of physical character, the North Sumatra Sport Center has an area of about 300 hectares and is designed with national-scale facilities, such as the main stadium, athletic intermediate stadium, martial arts building, athletes' guesthouse, and other supporting infrastructure. This facility was built to support various sports in the PON XXI event, but also has the capacity to organize other sports events in the future. This opens up opportunities for the region to transform into a sports tourism center in North Sumatra.

In addition, the environment around the area also strengthens the development potential. Batang Kuis District has been designated as one of the Regional Service Centers (PPK) in

the Regional Spatial Plan (RTRW) of Deliserdang Regency, which is directed to become a center for economic, service, and transportation activities. Batang Kuis was also developed with a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) approach, which emphasizes the importance of mass transportation connectivity. The suitability of this spatial planning policy is an important supporting factor in integrating the Sport Center area with the surrounding regional network.

By considering the strategic location, scale of facilities, and regional spatial support, the North Sumatra Sport Center has strong potential to be developed as a sustainable sports tourism destination. This potential not only supports the growth of the tourism sector, but can also have a significant economic and social impact on the community and local governments.

E.2 Analysis of Factors Affecting Sport Tourism

The development of the North Sumatra Sport Center as a sports tourism destination is greatly influenced by several main factors that have been identified through literature studies and secondary data. Based on an analytical approach in sport tourism (Gibson, 1998; Higham & Hinch, 2010), four important aspects that affect the region's success in attracting sports tourists are accessibility, facilities and infrastructure, events and promotions, and government support. These four aspects are analyzed as follows:

1. Accessibility

North Sumatra Sport Center has a very strategic geographical position, located only 5.6 km from Kualanamu International Airport and 4.4 km from Batang Kuis Station. This area is located on the main route connecting Medan City and Deliserdang Regency, and has direct access to the national road network. In addition, this area is planned to be integrated with mass transportation systems such as LRT and BRT, although until now it is still in the planning stage and has not been realized. Even so, its proximity to major transportation infrastructure provides added value in terms of affordability, and makes this area very potential to support the mobility of athletes, officials, and tourists in the context of sports tourism development. Integration with the concept of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) also strengthens the role of the region as a hub for sports and tourism activities based on high accessibility.

2. Facilities and Infrastructure

The Sport Center is built on an area of 322.89 hectares, which is divided into two large zones and designed as an international sports complex. This zone includes:

- Major sports venues, such as the main football stadium, intermediate athletic stadium, martial arts arena, velodrome, national standard swimming pool (aquatic), and archery, hockey, and equestrian (equestrian) arenas.
- Wisma Atlet (Athletes Village) for the accommodation of athletes and officials.
- Commercial zones, including hotels, shopping malls, convention halls, hospitals, and entertainment facilities.



Figure 3. Master Plan Sport Center Prov. NORTH SUMATRA Source: www.sumutprov.go.id

Facilities and infrastructure in the North Sumatra Sport Center area were built to support the implementation of PON XXI and are designed with the potential for long-term use as a sports tourism destination. This construction process has been supported by the preparation of a Detailed Engineering Design (DED) which began in 2020. The area is equipped with various major sports venues, such as football stadiums, martial arts GORs, aquatic arenas, velodromes, and athletes' guesthouses as accommodation facilities. Supporting facilities such as road networks, drainage, and lighting have also been designed to support the smooth running of activities during the event.

In addition to the core facilities, the area also includes green open space zones and commercial areas that provide added value in terms of comfort and tourist experience. However, complementary infrastructure outside the core area, such as public accommodations (hotels), local public transportation, and supporting tourist attractions, still needs to be strengthened so that the region can provide a more comprehensive and sustainable sports tourism experience.

3. Events and Promotions

The North Sumatra Sport Center is the main venue for PON XXI in 2024, which will compete in more than 25 sports, including popular branches such as football, badminton, boxing, pencak silat, karate, and swimming. PON as the largest sports event in Indonesia is a strategic momentum to introduce this region to the national public and open up opportunities to make it a sports tourism destination.

The potential of the region to hold regular post-PON sports events is huge, both in the form of official competitions, open tournaments, and community-based recreational sports activities. However, until now there has been no long-term promotional strategy that explicitly brands the area as a sports tourism destination. The lack of promotional materials, destination narratives, and planned future event agendas are a challenge in maintaining the existence of this area in the future.

Without the continuity of events and consistent destination promotion, the area is at risk of losing its appeal after the PON ends. Therefore, long-term success relies heavily on the management of integrated promotions and the development of

sustainable event programs that can attract tourists on a regular basis.

4. Government Support

The North Sumatra Provincial Government shows a strong commitment to the development of the Sport Center as a regional strategic project. This support is realized through budget allocation from the APBD from 2019 to 2021 to accelerate the construction of venues and supporting facilities, as well as the determination of this area in the 2019–2023 regional development priority program. The Sport Center area has also been integrated into the regional spatial plan (RTRW) as a strategic area that supports sports and tourism functions.

Government support is not only technical and physical, but also regulatory and institutional, as seen from the integration of cross-sector policies that support regional development. However, in order for this area to function sustainably as a sports tourism destination, it is necessary to strengthen professional management institutions, as well as policies that encourage the participation of the private sector and the sports community.

Synergy between stakeholders—government, the private sector, and the community—is the key to creating an effective, adaptive, and long-term oriented management system.

By considering the four main factors, it can be concluded that the North Sumatra Sport Center has strong potential to be developed as a sports tourism destination. However, to optimize its utilization, this region still needs to strengthen supporting infrastructure, the continuity of the event agenda, and an integrated promotional strategy to increase competitiveness at the national and international levels. The success of the development of this area in the long term depends largely on:

- Strengthening post-event promotion strategies,
- Readiness of non-sports supporting facilities such as tourist accommodation and attractions,
- Agenda for organizing routine events,
- As well as the sustainability of government support through destination management and promotion policies.

To provide a more comprehensive picture, the next section will discuss the opportunities and challenges faced in an effort to make the North Sumatra Sport Center a sustainable sports tourism center.

E.3 Opportunities and Challenges for Sport Tourism Development in North Sumatra

By considering the results of the identification and analysis that has been carried out, the North Sumatra Sport Center holds strategic opportunities to develop as a leading sports tourism destination. However, the development of this region is also faced with a number of challenges that must be managed strategically. The following table summarizes the main opportunities and challenges that need to be considered in formulating policy directions and strategies for the development of sport tourism in the region:

In formulating policy directions and strategies for the development of sport tourism in the region:

Table 1. Opportunities and Challenges for Sport Tourism Development in North Sumatra Sport Center

Aspects	Chance	Challenge
Accessibility	Location near Kualanamu International Airport and Batang Kuis Station.	Limited local public transportation (internal access to the area and micro-connectivity are not optimal).
	Integration plan with toll roads and mass transportation (LRT/BRT).	Dependence on infrastructure development that has not been fully realized.
Facilities and Infrastructure	The availability of complete sports venues and national/international standards.	There is no availability of complementary tourism facilities (public hotels, public open spaces, entertainment).
	There is planning for commercial zones: hotels, malls, convention halls, hospitals, etc.	Limited space that actively supports non-competitive recreational activities.
Events & Promotions	PON XXI is a moment of national recognition of the region.	There is no annual event calendar or post-PON sustainability program.
	The potential to host various popular and recreational sports.	The promotion and branding strategy of the area is still minimal and not integrated.
Government Support	The government's strong commitment through APBD financing and provincial strategic project status.	There is no professional and cross-sectoral area management institution.
	Integration into the RTRW and development priority programs 2019–2023.	Limitations of long-term financing schemes for regional operations.

The North Sumatra Sport Center has a great opportunity to be developed as a leading sports tourism destination in Indonesia. However, long-term success will be largely determined by sustainable management strategies, cross-sector collaboration, and the ability to build an integrated, visitor experience-oriented sports tourism ecosystem.

E.4 Recommendations for Development Strategies

Based on the analysis of the potential, opportunities, and challenges of developing the North Sumatra Sport Center as a sports tourism destination, a comprehensive and sustainable strategy is needed. This strategy is prepared based on four main aspects: accessibility, facilities and infrastructure, events and promotions, and government support, as follows:

1. Accessibility

- Encourage the acceleration of the realization of regional integration with mass transportation modes such as LRT/BRT and planned toll road connections.
- Providing internal access to the area such as pedestrian-friendly pedestrians, bicycle lanes, and area shuttles so that the mobility of visitors within the sports center area becomes more comfortable.
- Develop a tourist-based transportation system (visitor transport mapping) to connect the area with surrounding cities such as Medan and Binjai.

2. Facilities and Infrastructure

- Equip the area with tourism supporting facilities, such as sports tourism-based hotels (sport hotels), tourist information centers, and recreational public areas (open parks, thematic food courts, etc.).
- Develop commercial zones thematically, such as sports-themed shopping zones or sports museums as educational tourist attractions.
- Maintaining the quality and maintenance of sports venues to meet national and international standards after major events such as PON XXI.

3. Events and Promotions

- Develop an annual event calendar that includes not only professional competitions, but also recreational and community sports, such as fun runs, bike races, or inter-campus/community tournaments.
- Building a regional branding strategy, for example through slogans, logos, and digital campaigns that emphasize the region's identity as a leading sports tourism destination in Indonesia.
- Collaborate with the media, travel platforms, and sports influencers to increase the exposure of destinations nationally and internationally.

4. Government and Institutional Support

- Establish a cross-sectoral and semi-independent regional management body, with the task of managing events, promotions, assets, and establishing strategic partnerships with the private sector.
- Develop regional regulations or incentive policies that support investment in the sports tourism sector and its supporting industries.
- Encourage collaboration between local governments, universities, the sports community, and business actors to create a participatory and innovative sports tourism ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine the potential of the North Sumatra Sport Center area as a sports tourism destination using a desk study approach. The analysis was conducted based on four main aspects: accessibility, facilities and infrastructure, events and promotions, and government support. Based on the results of the study, the following can be concluded:

1. The North Sumatra Sport Center has a strategic position geographically because it is close to Kualanamu International Airport and is integrated with the main road network and mass transportation development plans. This aspect of accessibility is one of the main strengths in supporting the development of sports tourism.
 2. The sports facilities built in this area are very complete and of national and international standards, including the main stadium, sports stadiums, athletes' homes, and commercial zones. This provides great potential to organize various sports events, both professional and recreational.
 3. The implementation of PON XXI in 2024 is an important opportunity to introduce this region widely. However, the success of the region as a sports tourism destination is highly dependent on the sustainability of events and consistent post-PON promotional strategies.
 4. The North Sumatra Provincial Government has shown commitment to the development of this area through financing, spatial planning, and physical development. However, the challenges of institutional, regional management, and long-term funding need to be addressed so that the region does not stop as a short-term project.
 5. To realize the North Sumatra Sport Center as a sustainable sports tourism destination, a comprehensive development strategy is needed, starting from improving supporting infrastructure, strengthening management institutions, to preparing promotional programs and integrated sports events.
- By considering the existing potential, opportunities, and challenges, this region can become a model for the development of region-based sports tourism in Indonesia, while providing significant economic, social, and cultural benefits for the community and local governments.

SUMMARY OF THE SHORT VERSION

This research shows that the North Sumatra Sport Center has great potential as a sports tourism destination, which is supported by its strategic location near Kualanamu Airport, the completeness of national and international sports facilities, and policy support from the local government. The existence of the main stadium, athletes' home, and

commercial zone makes this area worthy of development as a center for sports activities as well as event-based tourism. The implementation of PON XXI in 2024 is an important momentum to introduce this region nationally. However, long-term success is highly dependent on the continuity of event management, a strong promotional strategy, and the existence of a professional management institution.

Government support has been seen in the aspects of financing and spatial planning, but it still needs to be strengthened in terms of management, promotion, and tourism supporting infrastructure. Without a sustainable development strategy, the area is at risk of losing its function after the PON is completed.

Therefore, an integrated approach is needed that includes increased accessibility, facility optimization, a sustainable event agenda, and partnerships between the government, the private sector, and the sports community. With this strategy, the North Sumatra Sport Center can become an icon of sport tourism that provides sustainable economic and social benefits for North Sumatra and Indonesia.

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