

Spectator sports, event promoters, artists and related industries, 2020

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Operating revenues for spectator sports, event promoters, artists and related industries plunge amid pandemic restrictions

The operating revenues of spectator sports, event promoters, artists and related industries decreased by 33.9% to \$7.0 billion in 2020, their lowest level since comparable data became available in 2012.

Businesses in these industry groups were largely unable to operate in the first few months of the pandemic, as many provinces mandated shutdowns of non-essential businesses and severely limited public gatherings. [The gross domestic product for the broader sector, including performing arts, spectator sports and related industries, and heritage institutions](#), fell by 47.0% in 2020.

Spectator sports accounted for the largest share of total operating revenues (37.7%), followed by promoters (presenters) of performing arts, sports and similar events (29.8%); independent artists, writers and performers (26.4%); and agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers and other public figures (6.1%).

Modified Stanley Cup playoffs helped mitigate the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the spectator sports industry

The spectator sports industry is composed of sports teams playing in front of a paying audience, horse racetracks, racing events and independent athletes. Operating revenue in this industry fell by 31.4% to \$2.6 billion in 2020, driven largely by a significant loss in revenue in Ontario (-\$719.0 million), Alberta (-\$152.4 million), British Columbia (-\$129.5 million) and Quebec (-\$106.5 million). This decline partly reflects a sharp decrease in admissions to live events, as cancellations and restrictions on the number of spectators allowed forced most professional leagues to complete the remainder of their seasons behind closed doors.

E-commerce in the spectator sports industry accounted for 7.0% (\$143.2 million) of total sales, down 5.7 percentage points from 2019. Operating expenses in this industry decreased 22.2% to \$3.0 billion in 2020, resulting in a negative operating profit margin (-14.6%).

Cancelled events dampen event promoter revenues in 2020

As most high-profile events were forced to cancel in 2020 because of ongoing public health restrictions, industry revenues declined by 46.0% to \$2.1 billion. In addition, the industry typically benefits from international visitors, but with border restrictions in place during most of the year, [international travel to and from Canada](#) dropped 73.2% compared with 2019.

Operating expenses did not fall as much (-42.4%) as revenue. After declining 6.5 percentage points, the operating profit margin turned negative in 2020 (-4.1%).

Businesses in Quebec reported the biggest loss (-\$632.1 million), followed by businesses in Ontario (-\$454.2 million), Alberta (-\$255.5 million) and British Columbia (-\$234.3 million).

E-commerce accounted for 22.4% (\$297.0 million) of total sales in 2020, compared with 26.7% in 2019.

Little reprieve from the pandemic in 2021

Operating revenues of spectator sports, event promoters, artists and related industries are expected to have dwindled further in 2021, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt business operations throughout the year. The shortened 2020/2021 National Hockey League season, paired with restrictions limiting arena attendance, will



lead to declining admission receipts and concession sales. On average, these account for more than 50% of total industry sales. The continued rescheduling or cancellation of events amid the successive waves of the pandemic also weighed on industry revenues. However, the extent of the impact will vary across the industry groups.

Note to readers

Data for 2018 and 2019 have been revised.

Data are collected for the 12-month fiscal period that ends between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021. This means that some businesses reported for a year in which the majority of their operations took place before the pandemic. Because of this, the effects of the pandemic are not fully reflected in this reference year, but will extend into the estimates for reference year 2021.

These and other data related to the arts, culture, heritage and sports sectors can be found at the [Culture statistics](#) portal.

Available tables: [21-10-0169-01](#), [21-10-0170-01](#), [21-10-0234-01](#), [21-10-0254-01](#) and [34-10-0164-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5132](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).