

Spectator sports, event promoters, artists and related industries, 2021

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Spectator sports, event promoters, artists and related industries continue to struggle in 2021

In 2021, the operating revenue of spectator sports, event promoters, artists and related industries rose 7.8% to \$7.4 billion but were 30.1% lower than the level observed in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Rolling COVID-19 health restrictions in 2021 continued to disrupt this subsector, as businesses had to adapt to operating with limited or no live audiences. Businesses in the spectator sports industry group (-3.4%) and the promoters (presenters) of performing arts, sports and similar events industry group (-2.4%) were affected by public health restrictions because they rely on larger, in-person events to generate much of their revenue. However, independent artists, writers and performers (+32.1%) as well as agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers and other public figures (+19.0%) fared better in 2021, as operating revenue rose.

Spectator sports (34.3%) accounted for the largest share of total operating revenue, closely followed by independent artists, writers and performers (33.0%); promoters (presenters) of performing arts, sports and similar events (26.1%); and agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers and other public figures (6.6%).

Spectator sports have limited spectators

The spectator sports industry group, composed of sports teams playing in front of a paying audience, horse racetracks, racing events and independent athletes, saw operating revenue decline for the second straight year in 2021. Operating revenue decreased 3.4% to \$2.5 billion in 2021, while expenses fell 7.0%, resulting in a profit margin of -11.3%. Salaries, wages, commissions and benefits decreased 9.8%.

This decline in operating revenue reflected a much smaller number of admissions to live events in 2021 than in previous years. For much of 2021, sporting events were played in mostly empty stadiums and arenas. Notably, regular season National Hockey League (NHL) games in Canada occurred with no live audience. Other sporting events in outdoor arenas were allowed a limited number of spectators but were still required to enforce physical distancing and other COVID-19 health and safety regulations.

Large events are cancelled for a second straight year

Successive waves of the pandemic in 2021 caused many large events to be cancelled or rescheduled for the second consecutive year. Businesses in the promoters (presenters) of performing arts, sports and similar events industry group saw their revenue decrease by 2.4% from 2020, with the largest declines being observed in Ontario (-\$71.5 million) and Quebec (-\$60.8 million). Operating expenses decreased 7.2%, leading to a profit margin of 1.9%, while salaries, wages, commissions and benefits (+0.7%) remained relatively unchanged.

Turnaround in 2022

In 2022, businesses in the spectator sports, event promoters, artists and related industries subsector were able to operate without restrictions for the first time since the pandemic began. The removal of capacity restrictions and physical distancing requirements made larger events and bigger crowds possible. The NHL was able to play a full regular season for the first time in two years, with all Canadian teams welcoming back fans. This bolstered economic activity as the [gross domestic product for the broader sector, including performing arts, spectator sports and related industries and heritage institutions](#), increased 61.6% in the first three quarters of 2022 compared with the same period in 2021. Detailed financial statistics for the spectator sports, event promoters, artists and related industries subsector in 2022 will be provided following survey data collection in 2023. They will provide information about the impacts of the removal of capacity restrictions.



Note to readers

Data for 2019 and 2020 have been revised.

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

The [Arts and Culture Data Viewer](#), a new interactive tool that allows users to easily break down economic and social data from Statistics Canada on arts and culture by geographic area and other dimensions, is now available.

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).