



2020

RANKING OF SPORTS CITIES

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New York City Beats London to Reach the Top of the 2020 Ranking of Sports Cities.

For the first time in the eight-year history of the ranking, New York City takes the lead edging out seven-time winner London which takes second place. Paris, Los Angeles and Lausanne remain in the top five of the best sports cities around the world.

In search of the city best associated with sport, BCW (Burson Cohn & Wolfe) is delighted to publish its annual Ranking of Sports Cities of the top 50 sports cities from around the world. The ranking focuses primarily on the viewpoints of International Federations (IFs) and sports media, combined with an analysis of the association between sport and a city in the digital environment. The latter consists of the total number of mentions of the word “sport” associated with the name of the city on social media platforms as well as blogs and websites.

In today’s globalised world, the competition for attention is fiercer than ever. One way to draw attention to a city is through sports. Indeed, with its massive media reach, sport gives cities the opportunity to not only talk about what they can do well but, more importantly, demonstrate it. Sports is, therefore, a unique opportunity to move people’s perception and thereby contributes to a city’s positive brand image.



Lars Haue-Pedersen
Managing Director
Burson Cohn & Wolfe – Sports Practice
Lausanne, Switzerland, February 2020



HIGHLIGHTS

From the 2020 Ranking of Sports Cities

- > New York City ranks first for the first time in the eight-year history of the ranking. A major step up from last year's ranking as New York City jumps five places.
- > London takes second place, losing its status as the world's leading sport city – a status which the city has held for the past seven editions of the ranking.
- > Paris keeps its third position, a rank that the city has held for the past two years since it was elected as the 2024 Olympic Games host.
- > Rounding out the top five finishers are Los Angeles, which has moved down two places to fourth, and the Olympic Capital, Lausanne, which retains its fifth position.
- > The competition is fierce as Tokyo comes out of the top five and takes the sixth position despite the upcoming Olympic Games which the city is preparing to host this summer.
- > The host city of the 1992 Summer Olympics and home to world-famous FC Barcelona maintains its seventh rank for the third consecutive year.
- > Manchester, the host city of leading football clubs Manchester United & Manchester City, continues its spectacular rise into the top 10 of the world's leading sports cities by finishing eighth, moving up a total of 27 spots in the last two years. While Manchester went from tenth to the eighth spot, it was a literal swap with Madrid which fell to tenth place this year but still maintained a stronghold in the top 10.
- > Toronto, host city of the Toronto Maple Leafs and the recent NBA Champion Toronto Raptors, is up 11 places from last year's ranking taking the ninth position.
- > Cities that have significantly moved up on this year's ranking include Copenhagen (+11 ranks), San Francisco (+14 ranks), Dallas (+17 ranks), Singapore (+8 ranks), Torino (+13 ranks) and Montreal (+7 ranks).



RESULTS

Of the 2020 Ranking of Sports Cities

2020	CITY	2019	2018	2020	CITY	2019	2018
1	New York (USA)	6	9	26	Singapore (SIN)	34	31
2	London (GBR)	1	1	27	Vancouver (CAN)	30	12
3	Paris (FRA)	3	3	28	Dubai (UAE)	22	26
4	Los Angeles (USA)	2	2	29	Montreal (CAN)	36	27
5	Lausanne (SUI)	5	4	30	Pyeongchang (KOR)	29	19
6	Tokyo (JPN)	4	5	31	Torino (ITA)	44	43
7	Barcelona (ESP)	7	7	32	Budapest (HUN)	25	41
8	Manchester (GBR)	10	35	33	Edmonton (CAN)	31	8
9	Toronto (CAN)	20	15	34	Rio de Janeiro (BRA)	18	25
10	Madrid (ESP)	8	29	35	Baku (AZE)	38	40
11	Boston (USA)	13	18	36	Sochi (RUS)	26	39
12	Copenhagen (DEN)	23	18	37	Stockholm (SWE)	41	44
13	Chicago (USA)	12	20	38	Rome (ITA)	28	28
14	Berlin (GER)	14	14	39	Amsterdam (NED)	39	22
15	Buenos Aires (ARG)	17	17	40	Indianapolis (USA)	42	47
16	Beijing (CHN)	9	10	41	Cape Town (RSA)	46	23
17	Sydney (AUS)	11	6	42	Seoul (KOR)	45	X
18	Atlanta (USA)	19	38	43	Calgary (CAN)	32	13
19	Glasgow (GBR)	16	21	44	Istanbul (TUR)	37	45
20	Melbourne (AUS)	15	11	45	Salt Lake City (USA)	X	X
21	San Francisco (USA)	35	32	46	Gold Coast (AUS)	X	X
22	Munich (GER)	27	24	47	Minsk (BEL)	X	X
23	Dallas (USA)	40	46	48	Auckland (NZL)	43	30
24	Moscow (RUS)	24	42	49	Helsinki (FIN)	47	36
25	Doha (QAT)	21	34	50	Mexico City (MEX)	33	X

With each edition of the poll, the three lowest ranked cities drop off the list, and the top three non-listed cities named by the survey respondents are added. New cities which will be added to the 2021 edition of the ranking are:

Marseille (FRA)

Milan (ITA)

Oslo (NOR)

More detailed results of the ranking are available upon request.

FIVE KEY LEARNINGS

From the results of the 2020 Ranking of Sports Cities

The 2020 Ranking of Sports Cities allows to compare the success of various sports strategies developed by cities. Here are five interesting key learnings to draw from this year's results.

1 THE OLYMPIC RINGS CONTINUE TO SHINE STRONGLY ON ANY CITY ASSOCIATED WITH THEM

It is no coincidence that six of the top 10 sports cities in the world have already hosted or will host the Olympic Games or Youth Olympic Games. Of course, most of these cities are also very active in organising other major international sporting events. However, the Olympic Games seem to be the most effective platform for conveying the positive values of sport as can be seen from the results. Another advantage of the Games is that they are attributed to the cities long before they take place, which gives the hosts an ample opportunity to use them to talk about sport, as in the case of Tokyo, Paris or Los Angeles. And it doesn't stop once the Games are over - London is proof of this having stayed at the top of the ranking for seven consecutive editions. However, after several years, it appears that London's association with sport is slightly less strong than it once was since it now ranks second.

2 BEING HOME TO MAJOR LEAGUE SPORTS TEAMS IS A PERMANENT OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIES TO TALK ABOUT SPORT

No need to be a baseball fan to know the New York Yankees or a football fan to have heard about Manchester United or Manchester City. Major sports leagues are a big business for cities because they can generate substantial revenues from franchises. But, perhaps more importantly, a successful sports team is an excellent source of promotion for cities - because it means that a city's name is mentioned in the many sports media that represent an important part of mass media. Manchester (Manchester City & United), Madrid (Real Madrid) or even Chicago (Chicago Bulls) are successful examples. But New York City excels particularly in this category with no less than 11 big league sports teams. And what makes the difference with other cities is that New York also host major sports such as the New York Marathon and the US Open.

3 SUCCESSFUL SPORTS CITIES ARE ALSO ACTIVE ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

As we evolve in an increasingly digital world, it is becoming more and more important for cities that wish to associate their image with sport to be active on social platforms. Sport is also played outside the stadium - the more successful sports cities have developed their own digital strategies to engage with their communities. Looking solely at the results from the digital landscape analysis, New York City is well ahead of the pack with a total of 2'342'620 online mentions in connection with sports followed by London (1'392'564 online mentions) and Los Angeles (1'329'604 online mentions).

4 HAVING A STRONG SPORTS EVENTS HOSTING STRATEGY PAYS-OFF IN THE LONG-TERM

Cities that think strategically about which events to host can also make a splash. In this context, what matters is to attract attention through the results achieved by hosting a sporting event - such as an increase in the practice of sport, the attraction of young talents or the promotion of the economic sector - rather than through an audience record. This is a particularly effective long-term strategy. The best example of this is perhaps the City of Copenhagen, and more generally Denmark, which has been strategically hosting major events year after year. Copenhagen's efforts have been paying-off, especially this year, as it gained 11 places in the ranking.

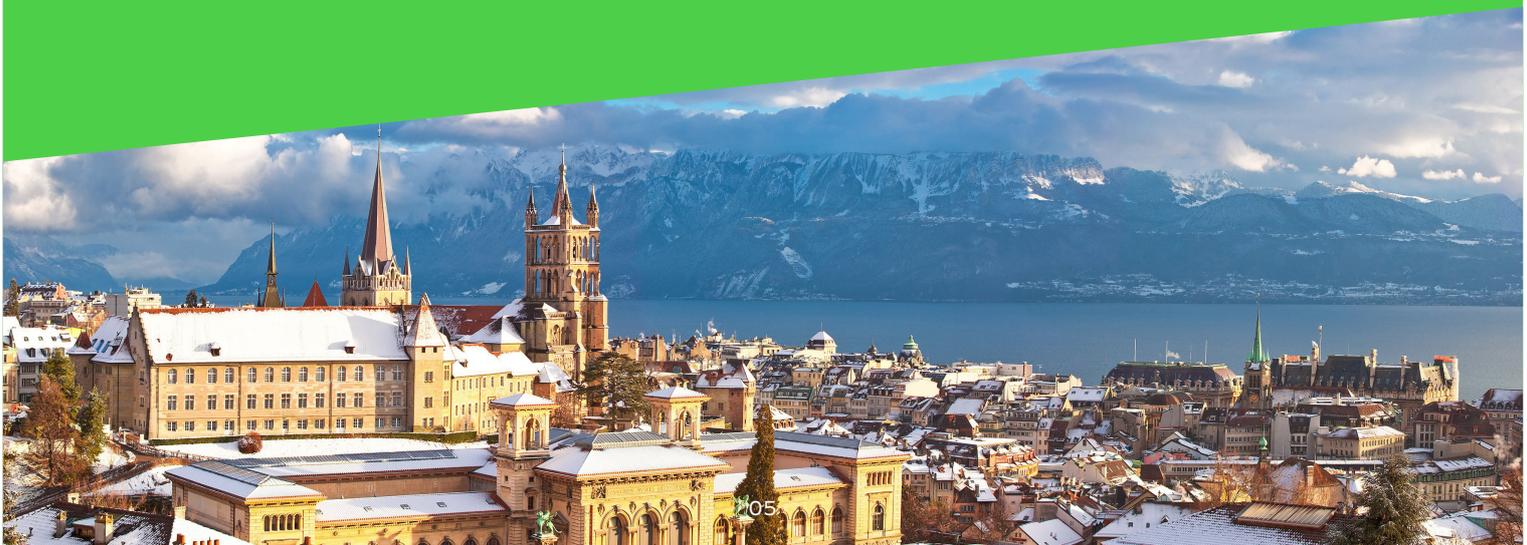
5 TALKING ABOUT HOSTING AMBITIONS CAN DRAW ATTENTION TO CITIES

Sometimes, just talking about hosting ambitions or being involved in a host selection process can generate strong media attraction for cities. Examples include Gold Coast, the host of the 2018 Commonwealth Games, which is now debating the possibility of hosting the Olympic Games in 2032. Another example is Calgary, which had discussions and debates around its potential Winter Olympic Games bid for 2026. However, the flip side of the coin for this kind of strategy is that it usually only provides impressive results in the short-term if no follow-up sports activities are organised.

What makes the City of Lausanne, Switzerland special?

How can a city of 140'000 inhabitants catch up with cities such as New York or London?

Lausanne is home to more than 50 international sports federations, including the International Olympic Committee. In addition to its deep roots in international sport, this year alone the city has hosted the Winter Youth Olympic Games and will stage several matches of the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship. It is therefore the combination of being at the heart of international sports decisions and hosting international sporting events that gives Lausanne such a special place in the sports industry.



METHODOLOGY

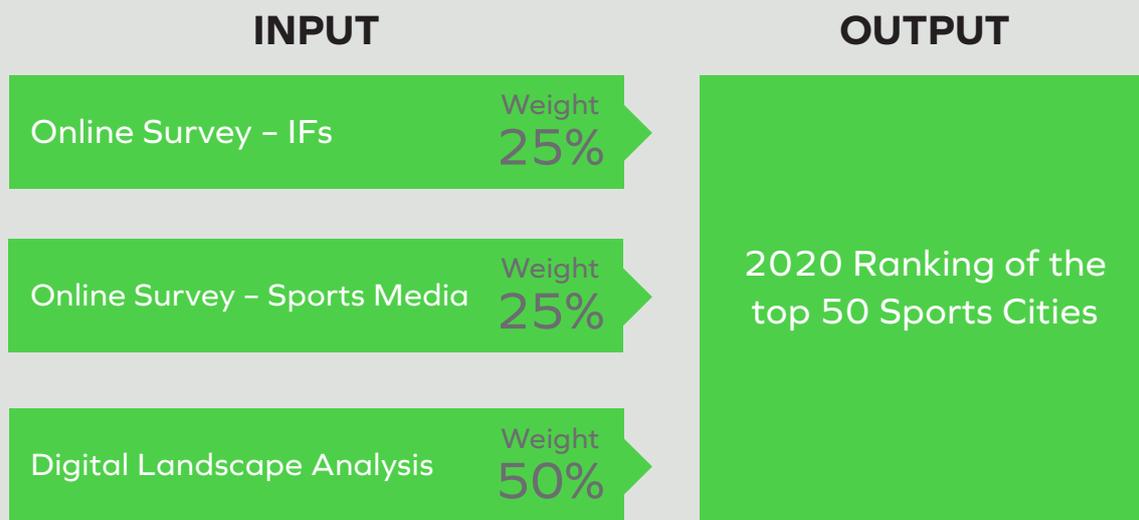
Of the 2020 Ranking of Sports Cities

The '2020 Ranking of Sports Cities' ranks the top 50 sports cities from around the world on the basis of a combination of perception-based analysis and in-depth quantitative analysis.

More precisely, it focuses on the viewpoints of International Federations (IFs) Presidents, Secretary Generals and Heads of Events as well as more than 700+ sports media representatives.

In addition, an in-depth analysis of the association between sport and a city in the digital environment was conducted using the social media analytics tool Sysomos. The analysis consists of the total number of mentions of the word "sport" associated with the name of the city on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram or Facebook but also blogs and websites.

With the intention to illustrate the undeniable power and importance of being digitally present, the results of the digital analysis (0.50) were weighted higher compared to the opinions of IFs (0.25) and media representatives (0.25).



The ranking is initially built around a group of 50 cities selected in 2012 through criteria such as staging recent and upcoming Olympics or other major multi-sport Games, hosting professional sports teams as well as organising major championships or world-class events such as tennis Grand Slams and Formula 1 races. With each edition of the poll, the three lowest ranked cities drop off the list, and the three top-named cities by the survey respondents are added – representing a turnover of 24 new cities.

About Burson Cohn & Wolfe

BCW (Burson Cohn & Wolfe), one of the world's largest full-service global communications agencies, is in the business of moving people on behalf of clients. Founded by the merger of Burson-Marsteller and Cohn & Wolfe, BCW delivers digitally and data-driven creative content and integrated communications programs grounded in earned media and scaled across all channels for clients in the B2B, consumer, corporate, crisis management, CSR, healthcare, sport, public affairs and technology sectors. BCW is a part of WPP (NYSE: WPP), a creative transformation company. For more information, visit www.bcw-global.com.

Based on extensive experiences, BCW has recently launched BCW Eventus™, a new model for attracting, activating and assessing the world's biggest sporting events – and therefore supporting cities in moving up to the next level

For more information

Should you have any questions about the Ranking of Sports Cities please contact us:



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