

RYAN NEAL DUNCAN

Bartow, Florida 33830

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Strategic tourism and sports marketing executive with more than 26 years of experience in destination marketing, sports tourism, event management, economic development, sponsorship generation, community engagement, and public sector leadership. Proven track record of driving tourism growth, managing multi-million-dollar budgets, recruiting national and international sporting events, and building strong relationships with stakeholders, civic organizations, media partners, and community leaders.

Experienced in leading high-performing teams, developing strategic partnerships, generating substantial sponsorship revenue, and positioning Polk County as a premier destination for sports tourism and leisure travel. Recognized for collaborative leadership, operational excellence, and the ability to align tourism initiatives with broader county economic development goals.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Tourism & Destination Marketing
- Sports Tourism Development
- Event Recruitment & Management
- Sponsorship Development
- Budget Management
- Economic Development
- Stakeholder Relations
- Public Speaking & Media Relations
- Strategic Planning
- Team Leadership & Employee Development
- Community Engagement
- Partnership Development
- Television & Radio Production (Anchor & Host)
- Crisis Management & Operational Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

POLK COUNTY TOURISM & SPORTS MARKETING

Senior Sales & Events Manager

April 2019 – Present

- Selected to lead the sports tourism operation for Polk County Tourism & Sports Marketing while continuing oversight responsibilities across multiple operational areas.
- Direct strategic planning and execution for sports tourism initiatives that contribute significantly to Polk County's tourism economy.
- Helped guide the division through the COVID-19 pandemic, leveraging sports tourism as an early driver of economic recovery and regional and state visitation.
- Directly responsible for more than 300 annual events generating over \$200 million in economic impact.
- Manage budget development, operational oversight, industry research, and tourism trend analysis for sports and leisure travel sectors.
- Directly responsible for coordinating and organizing all aspects of the Sports & Special Events Committee; the official sports advisory committee for the Tourism Development Council.
- Maintain active partnerships with the accommodations industry through sports and special events as well as our digital network software Play Easy. PCTSM utilizes this software to connect PCTSM sports event organizers, facility owners, attractions and local businesses.
- Support recruitment and retention of national and international sporting events that generate substantial economic impact for Polk County.
- Provide leadership in communication strategy, stakeholder engagement, employee coordination, and operational planning.
- Oversaw the direct recruitment of the following National Governing Bodies to the Lake Myrte Sports Park (PCTSM Headquarters): USA Water Ski & Wake Sports, Pan American Lacrosse Association, American Power Boat Association, US Youth Soccer Regional Office.
- Actively review travel trends nationally and locally. Including but not limited to STR Reports, Key Data and the Tax Collector monthly revenue reports.
- Actively utilizing and analyzing Placer.ai to review traffic analytics for sports and special events occurring in Polk County.
- Coordinate with county departments, community organizations, venue partners, and tourism stakeholders to align divisional goals with broader county priorities.
- Actively serving on Polk County BoCC Safety Committee.

Senior Business Development Manager

January 2006 – Present

- Oversee Polk County Tourism & Sports Marketing's corporate sponsorship program, generating more than \$500,000 annually in cash revenue and cost savings, and approximately \$150,000 in non-paid media value (Bright House Network, The Ledger Media Group, Hall Communications).
- Recruiting and maintaining relationships with United States Olympic Committee National Governing Bodies.
- Research, develop and sustain long term sponsorships by building relationships with the following private sector investors in multiple event facilities: Coca Cola, Publix Super Markets, Orlando Health, LEGOLAND Florida Resort, AdventHealth, etc.
- Manage major division initiatives including the Polk County All Sports Awards and Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.
- Assist with management and oversight of multi-million-dollar departmental budgets.
- Coordinate elements of the Detroit Tigers partnership and related promotional activities.
- Lead radio and television production efforts supporting tourism and sports marketing initiatives.
- Manage and grow one of the most successful internship programs in the country with numerous former interns in leadership positions across the county, state and nation. Leading the program furthered my cross departmental exposure and input.
- Represent Polk County Tourism & Sports Marketing through public speaking engagements, civic presentations, and community outreach events.
- Build and maintain extensive relationships with tourism professionals, event organizers, media partners, sponsors, elected officials, and community stakeholders.
- PCTSM liaison to the Central Florida Development Council.
- Actively assisted Lakeland Linder Airport in the recruitment of commercial air service.

GREATER BARTOW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Director of Membership & Special Events

March 2000 – January 2006

- Led membership growth, retention, and non-dues revenue generation for the Chamber.
- Developed and managed special events that served as primary revenue generators for the organization.
- Oversaw community and civic initiatives including the State of the City Luncheon, Bartow Youth Villa Classic, Mayor's Prayer Breakfast, Youth Leadership Bartow, Education Committee, and Tourism Committee.
- Built strong partnerships with local businesses, civic leaders, and community organizations.
- Served in leadership roles for Bartow Relay For Life, helping generate hundreds of thousands of dollars for the organization.
- Led the Chamber Tourism Marketing Committee where we partnered with the City of Bartow, Bartow CRA and Main Street Bartow in the promotion of Bartow attractions that included but were not limited to the Polk County Historical Museum and Genealogical Museum; L.B. Brown House, The Wonder House, Homeland Heritage Park and the Historic Bartow Golf Course.
- Participated in and graduated as a member of the Leadership Bartow Class 9.

EDUCATION

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY – Terre Haute, Indiana

Bachelor's Degree in Recreation & Sports Management

1994 – 1999

- Sigma Nu Fraternity

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- President, Bartow High School Athletic Booster Club (2019–2026)
 - Directly oversaw revenue generation that saw continuous growth with more than \$1.3 million dollars raised during the seven years.
- Florida Sports Foundation Summit Steering Committee (2024-2025)
- Vice-President, Florida Sports Hall of Fame (2012–2020)
- Board Member, Florida Sports Hall of Fame (2010–2020)
- Chairman, Bartow Relay For Life (2005–2006)
- Vice Chairman, Bartow Relay For Life (2004)
- Leadership Bartow Class 9

HONORS & RECOGNITION

- Sports ETA Sports Tourism Organization of the Year (2025)

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Extensive experience managing high-profile events and tourism partnerships.
- Strong communication and relationship-building skills with public officials, tourism partners, sponsors, and community leaders.
- Demonstrated ability to lead collaborative initiatives across multiple departments and organizations.
- Deep understanding of sports tourism trends, destination marketing strategies, and economic impact development.
- Proven leadership experience within Polk County civic, tourism, and sports organizations.