



## Beers, Brats, and Baseball: Everyone knows America's national pastime, but what about their state's?

Despite holding oversized cultural and historical importance as the United States' de facto national sport, "baseball" is surprisingly absent among the list of official "state sports" in the 17 states that have legislatively declared one - only being adopted by **New York** in 2021. To put it into perspective, more states (**South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming**) have "rodeo" as their official state sport than the colossi of the baseball diamond, football gridiron, or basketball court combined.

The sports officially recognized by state legislatures vary widely from the obscure "pack burro racing" (**Colorado**) to the anachronistic "jousting" (**Maryland**) and the trendy "pickleball" (**Washington**) to competitions linked to the country's Native peoples such as "dog mushing" (**Alaska**), "lacrosse" (also **Maryland**), or "outrigger canoe paddling" - also known as "Heihei wa'a" (**Hawaii**).

In the CSG South region, only three states have officially designated one sport above all others as the official competitive representation of the state. Despite many sports to choose from in its quiver, **Missouri** adopted "archery" as its official sport via [House Bill 1738](#) (2022). **North Carolina** raced ahead of the Show-Me State as it embraced "stock car racing" as its official sport more than a decade earlier in 2011 ([Senate Bill 322](#)). However, **Texas** was the first Southern state to grab the proverbial bull-by-the-horns and designate an official sport (rodeo) back in 1997 by way of [House Concurrent Resolution 21](#).

| TABLE 1        | Enacted Official State Sports Legislation             |   |
|----------------|---|---|
| State          | Bill (Year)   | Description   |
| Alaska         | <a href="#">Session Law 38 (1972)</a>                 | Established dog mushing as the official sport of the state.                                     |
| California     | <a href="#">Assembly Bill 1782 (2018)</a>             | Designated surfing as the official sport of the state.  |
| Colorado       | <a href="#">House Joint Resolution 1008 (2008)</a>    | Instituted skiing and snowboarding as the official state winter recreational sports.            |
|                | <a href="#">House Joint Resolution 1021 (2012)</a>    | Recognized pack burro racing as the official summer heritage sport of the state.                |
| Delaware       | <a href="#">House Bill 235 (2014)</a>                 | Designated bicycling as the official state sport.   |
| Hawaii         | <a href="#">House Bill 2173 (1986)</a>                | Enshrined outrigger canoe paddling, or <i>Heihei wa'a</i> , as the state's official team sport. |
|                | <a href="#">House Bill 2967 (1998)</a>                | Denoted surfing, or <i>He'e nalu</i> , as the official state individual sport.                  |
| Maryland       | <a href="#">House Bill 80 (1962)</a>                  | Created jousting as the official state sport.   |
|                | <a href="#">Senate Bill 428 (2004)</a>                | Established lacrosse as the state's official team sport.  |
| Massachusetts  | <a href="#">Senate Bill 1851 (2006)</a>               | Verified basketball as the official state sport.  |
|                | <a href="#">Senate Bill 1627 (2014)</a>               | Added volleyball as the state's official recreational and team sport.                           |
| Minnesota      | <a href="#">House File 2088 (2009)</a>                | Adopted ice hockey as the official sport.   |
| Missouri       | <a href="#">House Bill 1738 (2022)</a>                | Designated archery as the state's official sport.   |
| New Hampshire  | <a href="#">Senate Bill 412 (1998)</a>                | Selected skiing as the official state sport.  |
| New York       | <a href="#">Senate Bill 5363 (2021)</a>               | Established baseball as the official sport.   |
| North Carolina | <a href="#">Senate Bill 322 (2011)</a>                | Adopted stock car racing as the state's official sport.   |
| North Dakota   | <a href="#">Senate Bill 2229 (2023)</a>               | Denoted the official state sport to be curling.   |
| South Dakota   | <a href="#">House Bill 1078 (2003)</a>                | Designated rodeo as the official state sport.   |
| Texas          | <a href="#">House Concurrent Resolution 21 (1997)</a> | Enshrined rodeo as an official state sport symbol.  |
| Washington     | <a href="#">Senate Bill 5615 (2022)</a>               | Adopted pickleball as the state's official sport.   |
| Wyoming        | <a href="#">House Bill 271 (2003)</a>                 | Established rodeo as the state's official sport.  |

## **Honorable Mentions**

[Florida Senate Bill 266 \(2012\)](#) would have designated the state's official sport "automobile racing." Despite being in pole position as the originator of what would become NASCAR, most famously racing the oval on Daytona Beach in 1948, the Tarheels lapped the Sunshine State as the official racing state.

[Arkansas House Concurrent Resolution 1012 \(2023\)](#), signed into law, named May as "Bike Month" and noted that - as the state had yet to adopt an official sport - this measure is the first step in the process of designating "cycling" as the official sport of Arkansas. When it finally pedals past the finish line, the Natural State will join **Delaware** as the second state to cement bicycling as a state symbol.

**Figure 1. The United States of Sports**

