

## Chad Culver

# Visit Knoxville Sports Commission

**What is your title, and how long have you held the position with Visit Knoxville?**

Senior Director- Sports Commission, Four years and nine months

**What is your current organizational structure?**

Visit Knoxville is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, private company that works together with the community, business leaders, and local and state government to further develop Knoxville as a premier destination for visitors, meetings/conventions, sporting events, and film production.

**What is the structure of your Board of Directors?**

Visit Knoxville is governed by a board of 9 community leaders who willingly commit their time to nurture our efforts to be an economic driver for the Knoxville/Knox County area. Our board has six county appointments, three city appointments, and two independents.

**Is your organization focused on the quality of life events, room night creation, or both?**

I think for us to be successful that we need a little bit of both. We are always driven to book room nights for Knoxville/Knox County, which is our overall goal. When we have a chance to do things that help with our community's quality of life, it is a win for everyone. A prominent example that comes to mind is planning to host the 2019 Bassmaster Classic; we needed to expand the boat ramp in downtown Knoxville. This extension was completed for the event but will benefit our community for years to come.

**What would you say are your "bread and butter" sports?**

The cool thing about Knoxville is we can do it all. Downtown's location on the Tennessee River and two miles from the Urban Wilderness bring outdoor sports into play. The Knoxville Convention Center is very open to any sports that can utilize their facility. We also have the University

*Knoxville  
 Mission*



HALL OF FAME

BOB MURPHY    BOBBY FRANKS  
NATHAN HAYNES    JIMMY HAYNES  
BOB MURPHY    BOB MURPHY  
BOB MURPHY    BOB MURPHY



of Tennessee and its world-class facilities less than one mile from downtown.

**Are they so because you have state of the art facilities catering to those sports? What annual projects/events do you work on, and how do you enhance them from year to year?**

We try to build and get better every year. We worked for a couple of years to build our inventory to host tournaments in our convention center. We can now have tournaments with 15 basketball or 22 volleyball courts on any weekend. Every year we look at what we need to move forward and try to focus on that area.

**Can you host large events during the larger collegiate sports seasons?**

Absolutely, we can do large events any time of year. We are used to hosting events throughout the year, whether during college football season or college basketball season. This college town atmosphere adds to the visitor's experience and makes them want to come back. There is nothing like it.

**Describe the seasonality of Knoxville tourism and how you use it in your approach to recruit and create new events.**

Knoxville is a town that offers four distinct seasons with an overall mild climate and a full calendar of events. This allows sporting events to provide experiences like none other to their teams and attendees. Whether it's a festival on Market Square, a sporting event, or an opportunity to get out and explore our outdoors,

there is always something happening in Knoxville. That's a draw for Knoxville.

**Your organization recently won SportsETA's Sports Commission of the Year award. What sets Knoxville apart from other destinations?**

I tell people all the time that I am so lucky to wake up every day and sell my city. I fell in love with Knoxville in the mid-1990s, and nothing has changed. The momentum we have in sports is fantastic, and I feel that is because we have everyone swimming in the same direction. We continue to set all-time attendance records for some significant events because people want to visit, and the people of Knoxville/Knox County want to host them and show off the cool place we all call HOME!!!

**Fun personal questions:**

***Besides your hobbies, what do you enjoy doing when you are not working?***

I love to spend time with family and friends but mostly my wife and three kids; if it can happen at the beach or in the mountains, that makes it even better.

***What is the most prized possession you have in your office?***

Every year during the holidays, my oldest son comes to work with me for a day. He always leaves me a note with the date. I have the last three years on my desk. Those are pretty cool to me.

***What is your favorite sporting event annually?***

That's a close one. The opening game in Neyland Stadium is hard to beat, but Sunday at The Master's is pretty special too.