

CHARLOTTE

Sensational Sports and Recreation

WITH THE NFL'S CAROLINA PANTHERS and NBA's Charlotte Bobcats calling Charlotte home, this city is the pinnacle for professional sports — as well as recreation and tourism. Whether it's a mountain bike ride along a trail or world-class golf at the Wells Fargo Championship, 50 laps in the pool or 600 laps at Charlotte Motor Speedway, there is something for everyone. Charlotte spectators can cheer the home team in just about any sport as well as enjoy the city's many beautiful parks, specialized facilities, annual festivals and other community events.

The city's mild climate makes it perfect for outdoor activities and competitive events most of the year. Charlotte hosts many foot races (5K and 10K) annually, and a marathon has been run every year in Charlotte since 1977. For those who need variety in their competitive workout, Mecklenburg County is home to three major triathlons, which each year attract a total of 1,750 participants.

The Catawba River and its system of man-made lakes provide many activities for water lovers. The river

**OVER 72,000 FANS
REGULARLY ATTEND
PANTHERS HOME GAMES.**

is home to the new U.S. National Whitewater Center, which was the training grounds for Olympic athletes. Located just 30 minutes north of the city, Lake Norman has 520 miles of shoreline and is the state's largest man-made lake. Sailing, wind surfing, power boating and fishing are just a few of the activities to be enjoyed on this 34 mile long lake.

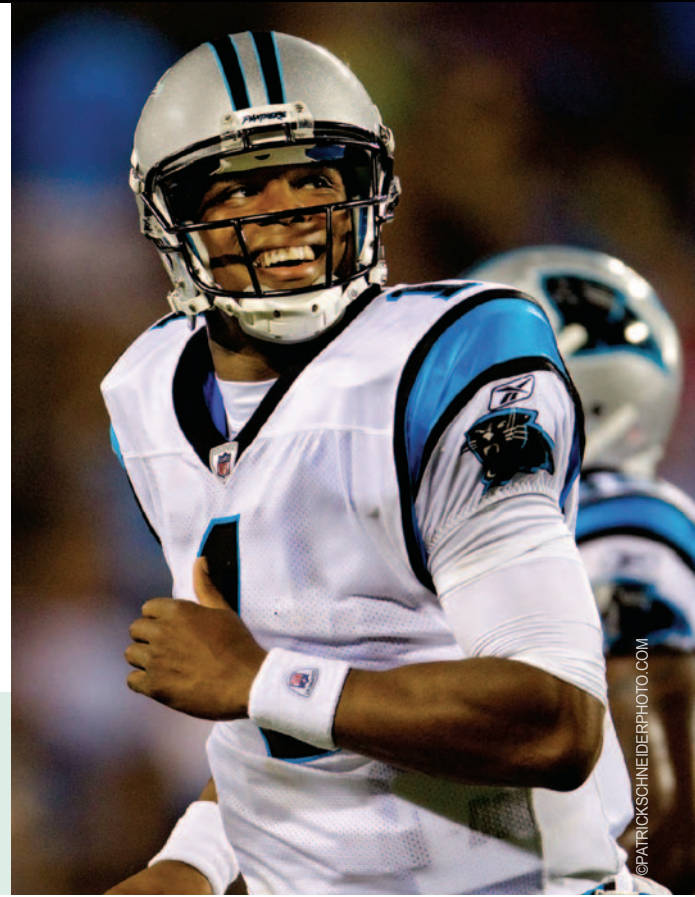
Spectacular Spectator Sports

Charlotte is a national sports hub, home to NFL, NBA, NASCAR, AAA Baseball, AIFA (Arena Football), MLL (Lacrosse), USL (Soccer) and an NHL/AHL affiliate.

NFL — The Carolina Panthers www.panthers.com

Bank of America Stadium, in downtown Charlotte, has 73,778 seats with a typical total annual attendance of more than 670,000 fans. The \$187 million state-of-the-art facility, designed specifically with football in mind, gives every spectator a clear view of the playing field.

This team began when NFL owners unanimously selected Carolina as the 29th NFL franchise on October 26, 1993. Just ten years later, in 2003, the Panthers won the NFC Championship Game against the Philadelphia Eagles and proceeded to play in Super Bowl XXXVIII against the New England Patriots. In 2005, the Panthers finished 13-6



and made their third trip to the NFC championship in just 11 seasons as a franchise. Their successes continue, the 2010 average attendance was 72,597 which was one of the highest in the NFL for that season.

NASCAR — stock car racing www.charlottemotorspeedway.com www.nascarhall.com

Charlotte is the "pit stop" for all things NASCAR and was chosen as the home of the new NASCAR Hall of Fame and Museum in 2006. The \$195 million dollar facility opened in 2010, and is located in the heart of downtown Charlotte.

Charlotte Motor Speedway is the largest sports facility in the Southeast and recognized as one of the finest NASCAR facilities in the U.S. It is also used for race team testing and automobile manufacturing research. The Speedway has 140,000 permanent seats and capacity for nearly 40,000 more spectators in the infield of the 1.5-mile super speedway. As one of the busiest sports facilities in the country, Charlotte Motor Speedway hosts three series of racing:

Sprint Cup Series: NASCAR Sprint All-Star Race, Coca-Cola 600, and Bank of America 500; Nationwide Series: Top Gear 300 and Dollar General 300 and the Camping World Truck Series: North Carolina Education Lottery 200.

The Coca-Cola 600 has the second-largest attendance of all sporting events in the nation.



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Golf — The Wells Fargo Championship www.quailhollowchampionship.com

Golf lovers are fortunate to have the PGA's Wells Fargo Championship played in Charlotte each year during the first week in May.

The Wells Fargo Championship is one of the top events on the PGA TOUR, where such prestigious players as Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Jim Furyk and Vijay Singh compete at Charlotte's Quail Hollow Club. Over its nine years, the Championship has raised over \$12.5 million for charity. The Quail Hollow Club will also host the 99th PGA Championship in 2017.

In addition, the Augusta National is not too far away for Masters' enthusiasts. Nor is the Verizon Heritage at Harbour Town Links in Hilton Head.

Soccer — Charlotte Eagles and Lady Eagles www.charlotteeagles.com

The Charlotte Eagles are a men's soccer team that plays in the Second Division of the United Soccer League (USL). It is the second toughest division and the foundation of professional soccer in the United States.

The Charlotte Lady Eagles play in the W-League of the USL where in their first year of play (2001), they were the W-2 National champions. Both Eagles' games can be attended at various soccer fields in the Charlotte area.

Arena Football — The Carolina Speed www.carolinaspeed.com

The Carolina Speed, a minor-league arena football team, began their third season in March 2009. The Speed is one of 12 teams in the American Indoor Football Association (AIFA) and plays in the Eastern Conference — East Division.

NBA — The Charlotte Bobcats www.nba.com/bobcats

When the Charlotte Hornets relocated from Charlotte to New Orleans the NBA promised Charlotte a new team. Black Entertainment Television founder Robert Johnson was awarded the franchise in 2004 making him the first majority African American owner in U.S. professional sports. The Bobcats began playing in the Time Warner Cable Arena, a new \$260 million arena built in the center city specifically for the NBA. In 2010, Michael Jordan, of basketball fame, announced he was buying the majority ownership of the team. By year end, he had brought back Paul Silas as the new head coach.

The Time Warner Cable Arena is also used for the Charlotte Checkers (NHL) as well as concerts and other major events such as the Democratic National Convention in 2012.

Baseball — The Charlotte Knights www.charlotteknights.com

The Charlotte Knights are the Chicago White Sox's AAA affiliate, so watching a game in Charlotte is just one step below major league. Games are held at Knights Stadium, a \$15 million, 10,000-seat facility opened in 1990. Plans are, however, underway to build a new stadium in downtown Charlotte.

Hockey — The Charlotte Checkers www.gocheckers.com

In 2010 the old ECHL Charlotte Checkers Ice Hockey Team became a member of the Western Conference of the American Hockey League. The team is the AHL affiliate of the Carolina Hurricanes of the National Hockey League. The new Checkers played their first home game in the Time Warner Cable Arena on October 15, 2010 in front of 12,512 spectators. This attendance set a record for a hockey game in Charlotte. This record was broken again in 2011.



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The Speed play their home games in Bojangles' Coliseum located in downtown Charlotte.

Lacrosse – Charlotte Hounds www.charlottehounds.com

Major League Lacrosse is expanding into Charlotte for the 2012 season. The Charlotte Hounds are part of a seven team league and will play home games at Memorial Stadium in uptown Charlotte.

Roller Derby www.charlotterollergirls.com, www.racecityrollerderby.com

Charlotte is home to two flat track roller derby teams: Women's Flat Track Derby Association's Charlotte Roller Girls and the Race City Roller Derby's Charlotte Speed Demons.

Competitive Class Act: Collegiate Sports College Football — The Belk Bowl www.meinekecarcarebowl.com

The Belk Bowl game pits an ACC team against a Big East team. The first game hosted in Charlotte (Virginia vs. West Virginia) set a record for the largest crowd at 75,535 attendees, making it the second highest attended inaugural bowl game in NCAA history. The Bowl has averaged over 62,000 attendees per year over its ten-year history.

College Basketball — The CIAA Tournament www.ciaatournament.org

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) moved its tournament to Charlotte in 2006. Since that time, it has called Charlotte home. In 2011 the CIAA Tournament set attendance records by drawing over 190,000 fans during the week-long event.

The tournament is made up of 10 historically Black colleges situated on the East Coast, and the tournament's goal is to raise money for CIAA scholarship funds. The CIAA is more than a basketball tournament, it also features various entertainment and well-known celebrities.

First-Class Tourism Facilities US National Whitewater Center www.usnwc.org

The U.S. National Whitewater Center (USNWC) is an outdoor adventure center along the Catawba River, that provides the world's most unique outdoor recreation and environmental learning experience. The USNWC is just 15 minutes from downtown Charlotte. Since its opening, Olympic-caliber athletes, weekend warriors and casual observers are able to experience this world class sports and training center. The facility includes hiking and mountain biking trails, Eco Trekking, a high ropes course, a 57 foot climbing tower, a zip line and flat and whitewater kayaking.

Carowinds Amusement Park www.carowinds.com

Located on the North and South Carolina border, this 122 acre theme park offers more than 100 breathtaking rides, such



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AT CAROWINDS, THE INTIMIDATOR, NAMED FOR DALE EARNHARDT, IS THE TALLEST ROLLERCOASTER AT THE PARK AND COST \$23 MILLION TO BUILD.

as the \$23 million Intimidator, the park's tallest rollercoaster, as well as water parks. Carowinds has a variety of shows and attractions at the recently renovated Palladium; kids can enjoy Snoopy and Peanut Starlight Spectacular — a million dollar walk through lights and a stunning fireworks show.

Another amphitheater, Verizon Amphitheatre, opened in 1991. This 19,000-seat facility hosts a variety of entertainment including rock concerts, Broadway shows and classical programs.

Robust Recreational Options

Charlotte also has a wealth of opportunities for those who want to participate rather than watch. A great place to start is at the area's parks:

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department www.parkandrec.com

Mecklenburg County has more than 210 parks with tennis courts, swimming pools, golf courses, community centers, bowling alleys, picnic areas, ball fields, fitness trails, mountain biking, fishing, soccer fields, disc golf courses, playground equipment, skate parks, a dirt bike track and an indoor water park which opened in 2002. Specialized facilities include the Latta

Plantation Park with its equestrian center, raptor center and canoeing. Numerous organized sports programs are available to residents of all ages. For information concerning the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Park and Recreation Programs, call (704) 336-3854. Parks Locator Map can be found at: <http://maps.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/website/parklocator>

Swimming and Gyms at the Aquatic Center are operated by the Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation Department. Featuring a 50-meter pool and a 25-yard pool with handicap accessibility, this outstanding facility offers an incredibly wide variety of programs for all ages and abilities. Charlotte also offers other public and private facilities for swimming. Visit the "Park and Rec" department at www.charmeck.org for further information.

The YMCA of Greater Charlotte is one of the largest YMCA programs in the country with 19 facilities and over 150,000 members (www.ymcacharlotte.org). The metro area is also home to a variety of private gyms, indoor rock walls, in-line and ice hockey rinks and many other facilities to stay active all year long.

Queen City Croquet Club

The Queen City Croquet Club offers lessons, equipment and tournaments at various country clubs and golf courses in the Charlotte area. The organization is non-profit and works with local communities and businesses.

Golf

An avid golfer does not have to drive far to find quality golfing in the Charlotte area. Two of Golf Digest top courses in North Carolina are in Charlotte at the Charlotte Country Club and the Quail Hollow Club. Charlotte has 21 private and 69 public and semi-private golf courses.

Disc "Frisbee" Golf

The Charlotte area has become a haven for disc golf and has 22 disc golf courses for the public to enjoy. The Charlotte region hosts at least two major tournaments a year and currently has the most and finest quality courses of any city in the U.S.

Mountains or Beach: Only Two Hours Away

There are an unlimited number of attractions within hours of Charlotte. For those who love to stroll amidst natural splendor and view spectacular mountain scenery, a drive along the Blue Ridge Parkway is less than two hours away. The North Carolina Mountains are also home to several ski and snowboarding areas that offer fun and challenging slopes. Adventure in the mountains continues throughout the year with whitewater rafting



hitting its peak season in the spring and rock climbing, backpacking, camping and mountain biking trips possible almost year round.

In addition, the golf capital of the world is but a short two hour trip to the Pinehurst-Southern Pines area. Steeped in tradition, the eight courses of Pinehurst proper are renowned for their quality and subtleties. Their premier course, Pinehurst No. 2, is rated as having some of the finest greens in the world.

Cuisine and Culture is Always on the Calendar

Charlotteans love to socialize and celebrate; as a result, the community calendar is full of events (www.charlottesgotalot.com). These include Speed Street, a huge outdoor festival held downtown in conjunction with NASCAR's Coca-Cola 600 race. The Carolina Renaissance Festival and the Loch Norman Highland Games are hosted in nearby Huntersville. If one likes fall colors, the Festival in the Park features arts, crafts, music and entertainment in a setting of full fall colors. Cultural celebrations occur at different times throughout the year, including Greek, Italian, Indian, Native-American, Latino and Asian festivals. Taste of Charlotte Festival each year celebrates local cuisine and attracts top celebrity chefs to the area, and the Charlotte Shout Festival also offers a celebration of the arts and culinary exploration.

To receive a free brochure about North Carolina's many exciting and diverse attractions, call 1-800-VISIT NC.

