

• With its NBA, NFL and WNBA triumphs, Charlotte is being recognized as a national sports hub.

## Sensational Professional Sports, Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

With the NBA's Charlotte Bobcats and NFL's Carolina Panthers both calling Charlotte home, this city is the "cat's meow" for professional sports—as well as recreation and tourism. Whether it's a mountain bike ride along a trail or trailing Tiger Woods at the Wachovia Championship; 50 laps in the pool or 600 laps at Lowe's 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 (5-K and 10-k) 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 manmade lakes provide many activities for water lovers. The river is home to the new US National Whitewater Center, which will be 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, WNBA, NASCAR, AAA Baseball teams and an NHL affiliate.

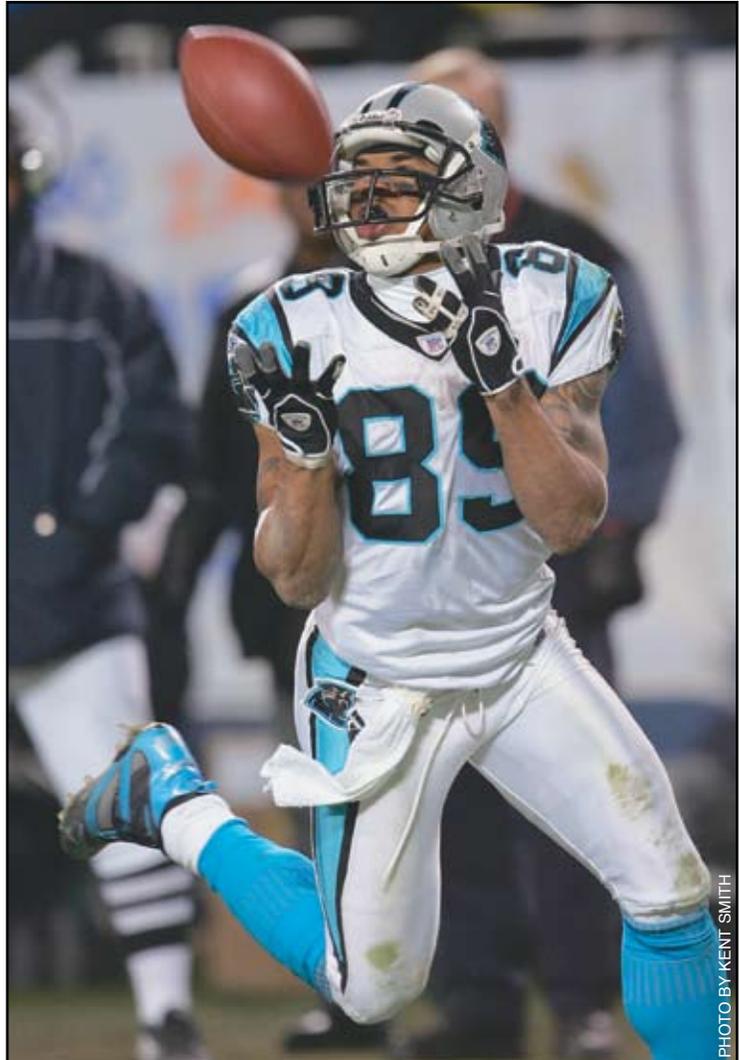
**NFL—The Carolina Panthers**  
[www.panthers.com](http://www.panthers.com)

Bank of America Stadium, in downtown Charlotte, has 73,258 seats with a total attendance of 670,204 for the 2005 regular season. The \$187 million state-of-the-art facility, designed specifically with football in mind, gives every spectator a clear view of the playing field.

- NFL owners unanimously selected Carolina as the 29th NFL franchise on October 26, 1993.
- In 2003, the Panthers won the NFC Championship Game against the Philadelphia Eagles and pro-

ceeded 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.

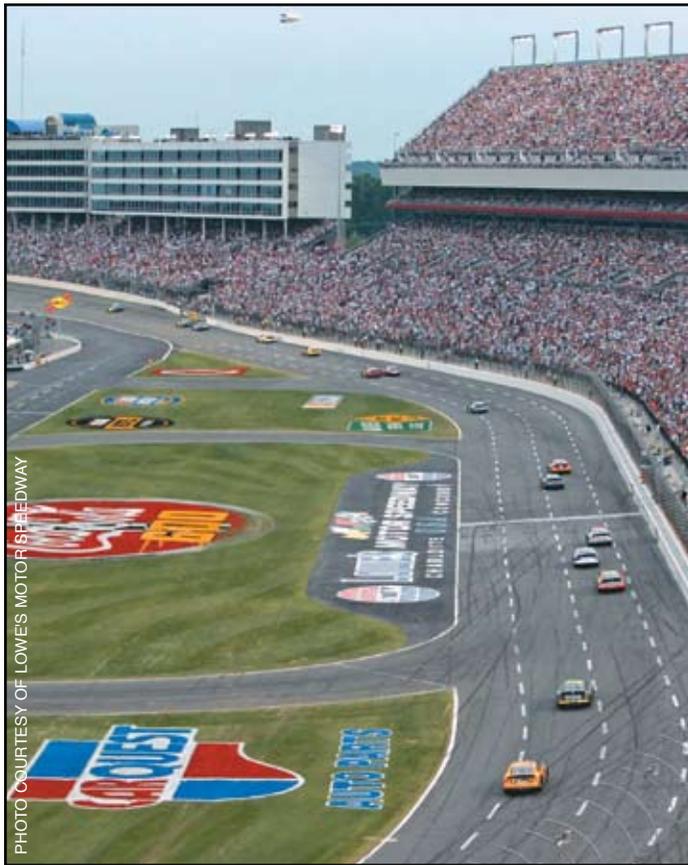


**NASCAR — stock car racing**  
[www.lowesmotorspeedway.com](http://www.lowesmotorspeedway.com)

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 \$154.5 million dollar facility will open in 2009, and will be located in the heart of downtown Charlotte.

- Lowe's Motor Speedway is the largest sports facility in the Southeast and recognized as one of the

*Over 71,000 fans regularly attend Panthers home games.*



*Charlotte is the "pit stop" for all things NASCAR and will open a \$154 million Hall of Fame and Museum in 2009 in downtown Charlotte.*

finest NASCAR facilities in the U.S. It is also used for race team testing and automobile manufacturing research.

- The Speedway has 167,000 permanent seats and capacity for nearly 40,000 more spectators in the infield of the 1.5-mile super speedway.
- One of the busiest sports facilities in the country, Lowe's Motor Speedway hosts three series of racing:
  - Nextel Cup Series: NASCAR Nextel All-Star Challenge, Coca-Cola 600, and Bank of America 500;
  - Busch Series: Carquest Auto Parts 300 and Dollar General 300
  - Craftsman Truck Series: Quaker Steak & Lube 200

### **NBA — The Charlotte Bobcats** [www.nba.com/bobcats](http://www.nba.com/bobcats)

The newest addition to Charlotte's sports scene in 2004 is the NBA expansion team, the Charlotte Bobcats.

- The NBA granted Charlotte an expansion team to begin play in 2004; it made history being owned by Robert Johnson, the founder of Black Entertainment Television, and the first Majority Black owner in Major Professional sports.
- The \$264 million Bobcats arena built in the center city, supports not only the Bobcats, but also the

Charlotte Sting (WNBA) as well as the Charlotte Checkers (NHL). The arena is also used as a concert venue with large shows such as the Rolling Stones and U2.

### **WNBA — The Charlotte Sting** [www.wnba.com/sting](http://www.wnba.com/sting)

- One of the inaugural members of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), the Charlotte Sting celebrate their 10th anniversary in 2006 by moving to their new state-of-the art home: Charlotte Bobcats Arena.
- With basketball legend Muggsy Bogues leading the way, the Sting look to return to the franchise's winning tradition that has featured seven play-off appearances and a trip to the 2001 WNBA finals.

### **Baseball — The Charlotte Knights** [www.charlotteknights.com](http://www.charlotteknights.com)

- The Charlotte Knights are the Chicago White Sox's AAA affiliate, so play 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.

### **Hockey — The Charlotte Checkers** [www.gocheckers.com](http://www.gocheckers.com)

The ECHL affiliate of the National Hockey League's New York Rangers, recently celebrated their 10th anniversary in the Queen City.

- 12 Checkers players rose through the ranks to reach the NHL. It is this type of talent that propelled the team to the 1995-'96 ECHL's Riley Cup championship.
- The Checkers play their 36 home games in the Bobcats Arena for 6,810 fans.

### **Golf — The Wachovia Championship** [www.wachoviachampionship.com](http://www.wachoviachampionship.com)

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

- The Wachovia 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 Country Club.
- Over its four years, the Championship has raised over \$6 million for charity.

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

## Soccer — Charlotte Eagles and Lady Eagles [www.charlotteeagles.com](http://www.charlotteeagles.com)

- The men's team plays in the A-league of the United Soccer Leagues (USL), their toughest division.
- The Charlotte Lady Eagles play in the W-leagues where in their first year of play (2001), they were the W-2 national champions.
- Eagles' games can be attended at various soccer fields in the Charlotte area.

## Competitive Class Act: Collegiate Sports

### College Football — The Meineke Car Care Bowl

[www.meinekecarcarebowl.com](http://www.meinekecarcarebowl.com)

- Meineke Car Care 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 65,000 attendees per year over its three year history.

### College Basketball — The CIAA Tournament

[www.ciaatournament.org](http://www.ciaatournament.org)

The 61st Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) tournament was hosted in uptown Charlotte in 2006, and will return over the next few years.

- 12 historically Black colleges situated on the East Coast comprise the CIAA, and the tournament's goal is to raise money for CIAA scholarship funds.
- More than a basketball tournament, CIAA also features various entertainment and well-known celebrities.

## First-Class Tourism Facilities

### US National Whitewater Center

[www.usnwc.org](http://www.usnwc.org)

- The U.S. National Whitewater Center 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 10 minutes from center city Charlotte.
- Olympic-caliber athletes, weekend warriors and casual observers will be able to share this world class sports and training center.



## Paramount's Carowinds Amusement Park

<http://www3.paramountparks.com/carowinds>

- 105-acre theme park located on the North and South Carolina border.
- Carowinds offers more than 100 breathtaking rides, such as BORG Assimilator, the park's tallest rollercoaster, as well as water parks.
- Carowinds has a variety of shows and attractions at the newly renovated Palladium; kids can enjoy Nickelodeon™ Central, a theme area based on characters and shows from the popular children's brand.

Another amphitheater, Verizon Ampitheatre, 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 Parks and Recreation Department (704) 336-3854

- Over 200 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, a skate park, 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.
- Organized sports programs are available to residents of all ages. For information concerning the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Park and Recreation

*At Paramount's Carowinds, the BORG Assimilator is The Carolinas' first flying coaster; it soars riders through eight inversions, most while flying facedown.*

## Mountains or Beach: Vacation is 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 seven courses of Pinehurst proper are renowned for their quality and subtleties. Their premier course, Pinehurst No. 2, is rated as one 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.visitcharlotte.com](http://www.visitcharlotte.com).

- Speed Street, a huge outdoor festival, is 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.
- Festival in the Park features arts, crafts, music and entertainment.
- 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 Shout! festival also offers a celebration of the arts and culinary exploration.



Programs, call (704) 336-3854 or visit [www.parkandrec.com](http://www.parkandrec.com).

- Parks Locator Map: <http://maps.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/website/parkfacility>
- Swimming and Gyms at the Aquatic Center 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 of [www.charmeck.org](http://www.charmeck.org) for further information.
- YMCA Metro Charlotte is one of the largest YMCA programs in the country with 19 facilities and over 150,000 members ([www.ymcacharlotte.org](http://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.

## 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 Quail Hollow.

- Private courses: 21
- Semi-Private courses: 13
- Public courses: 23

## Disc "Frisbee" Golf

Charlotte has become a haven for disc golf and has 17 disc golf courses for the public to enjoy. The Charlotte region hosts two major tournaments a year and currently has the most and finest quality courses of any city in the US.

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