

Charlotte's got game. Take in expertly manicured greens or root for the home team under a picture-perfect Carolina blue sky. From the rapids at the U.S. National Whitewater Center to 180 mph thrills at Lowe's Motor Speedway, Charlotte's recreational pursuits are ample and impressive. The Queen City is home to the NFL, the NBA, the PGA, NASCAR, and beyond. Over 80 expertly manicured public and private golf courses offer up some of the world's best golfing. And two scenic lakefronts as well as miles upon miles of green spaces are idyllic destinations for those who enjoy the great outdoors.



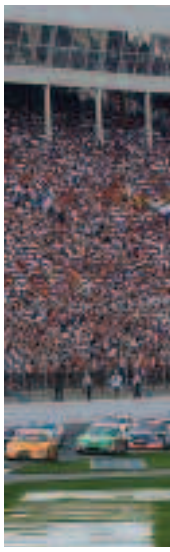
sports & recreation

Professional sports thrive in the Queen City providing spectators with a chance to cheer for their favorite players and get caught up in the excitement of their favorite teams. Behind the leadership of head coach John Fox, the **NFL Carolina Panthers**, contenders in Super Bowl XXXVIII, charge the field each fall in hopes of a Super Bowl title. Located on 33 acres of land in Center City Charlotte, Bank of America Stadium, a 72,500 seat, open-air, natural grass stadium, is home to the Carolina Panthers and also serves as a perfect place for special events, dinners, meetings and outings. This facility, the finest in its field, offers a variety of venue options to fit any game plan. panthers.com

The NBA's newest and 30th franchise, the **NBA Charlotte Bobcats** call the 18,500 seat Charlotte Bobcats Arena home. Designed to represent the Charlotte area's diverse urban culture as well as the strength, stability and foundation of the city's heritage, the Arena is centrally located in Center City and is just a short walk from area restaurants, shopping, and the hub for the highly anticipated light rail rapid transit system. With supporters such as NBA legend Michael Jordan and rapper Nelly backing the team, the Bobcats have a bright future ahead of them. bobcatsbasketball.com

Start your engines! Home to the **NASCAR NEXTEL All-Star Challenge, Coca-Cola 600** and the **Bank of America 500**, Lowe's Motor Speedway hosts some of the hottest auto racing events in the nation that attract more than a million fans to Charlotte each year. Visitors to the track can enjoy the race from every angle on more than 167,000 permanent seats. Or if you're not quite the spectator, jump into the driver's seat at the Richard Petty Driving Experience or Jeff Gordon Racing School to take in heart pounding laps around the speedway. lowesmotorspeedway.com

To enjoy the thrill of America's favorite pastime while in the Queen City, look no further than the AAA **Charlotte Knights**, the minor league team of the Chicago White Sox. Each summer, the team takes the field in nearby Fort Mill, South Carolina. A recent proposal plans to relocate the team's stadium to Center City. By moving the Knights, affordable family-oriented entertainment for both visitors and Charlotteans alike will be made much more easily accessible while providing valuable economic development opportunities to Center City. charlotteknights.com



Charlotte has a hockey heritage dating back to 1956, when the Eastern Hockey League's (EHL) Baltimore Clippers moved to the area. When the team stayed in Charlotte, they adopted the **Checkers** moniker, derived from the hockey term "checking." The team has been providing affordable family entertainment ever since and can be seen at Bobcats Arena. gocheckers.com

The **Queen's Cup Steeplechase**, inaugurated in 1995, is Charlotte's annual horse race held on the last Saturday of every April. Thousands come to see the most athletic thoroughbreds compete at speeds of up to 30 miles per hour. The new state-of-the-art racecourse at Brooklandwood is considered to be one of the finest steeplechase racecourses in the nation by both spectators and horsemen alike. Sundress-clad ladies and seersucker-sporting gentlemen can be found enjoying the loads of festivities during the event's six races. Be sure to don your most elegant hat to compete in the annual hat contest. queenscup.com

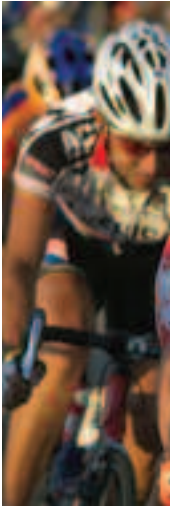
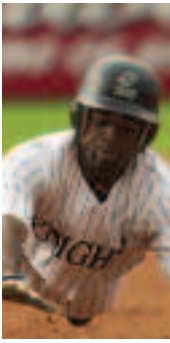
Ready to welcome U.S. Olympic-caliber athletes and adventure seekers alike, the U.S. **National Whitewater Center** (USNWC) features the world's largest manmade whitewater river with class III-IV rapids. In addition to the river, more than 5,700 square feet of climbing surface, 11 miles of running, hiking, and biking trails, and extensive ropes courses complete this outdoorsman's paradise. An official Olympic training site, the USNWC hosts several amateur kayaking and canoeing competitions throughout the year. The Center is equipped with a 500-seat outdoor amphitheater with a "Red Rocks" backdrop and a fresh-market healthy restaurant offering alfresco dining. For meetings, a 2,400 square foot conference center offers state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment and Wi-Fi. usnwc.org

Take your pick from over 80 golf courses in the Charlotte area and tee off. The renowned **Ballantyne Golf Resort**, named one of the "Top 38 Golf Resorts in the World" by *PGA Magazine*, is home to the Dana Rader Golf School. This School features a nationally acclaimed team of PGA and LPGA instructors and is ranked on *Golf Magazine's* prestigious list of the world's "Top 25 Golf Schools." The **Wachovia Championship**, recognized as one of the premier events on the PGA Tour, has been held at the Quail Hollow Club since 2003. wachoviachampionship.com

On the waters of two major manmade lakes within 20 minutes of Charlotte – **Lake Norman** to the north and **Lake Wylie** to the south – water recreational pursuits are a way of life. The largest manmade body of fresh water in North Carolina, Lake Norman supplies 520 miles of breathtaking shoreline. Nestled along the banks of Lake Norman are the lake towns of Cornelius, Davidson and Huntersville. The area continues to grow by leaps and bounds and is now a major vacation and residential community. Meanwhile, Lake Wylie continues to welcome enterprising individuals, growing families, and active retirees to its surrounding lake communities. Its 325 miles of shoreline are ideal for boating, fishing, water skiing and sailing. Both lakes hosted the **2004 CITGO Bassmaster Classic**, pitting the top anglers in the world against one another in an all-out, three-day tournament hailed as the professional bass fishing's world championship. In addition to Union County's Cane Creek Park also offers a 1,050-acre facility with a 350-acre trophy bass lake.

Those who appreciate the beauty of the great outdoors are sure to be impressed with some of Charlotte's loveliest green spaces. Set off by nine distinctly themed gardens, **Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden** also features a visually-striking visitors pavilion with a stained-glass dome, 12 intricate fountains, a grassy outdoor amphitheater for events, and a scenic Woodland Trail. **Wing Haven Gardens and Bird Sanctuary** offers a peaceful haven maintained for wild birds and animals, while the **McGill Rose Garden**, just minutes from Center City, features 230 varieties of roses.

Carowinds, just a short drive from Center City, is a 108-acre theme and water park, featuring over 50 world-class family and thrill rides and movie-themed attractions. Eight heart-pounding coaster rides and the Aussie-inspired Boomerang Bay with 16 acres of splash-tastic fun are enough to make anyone feel young at heart. Crowd favorites include the "Endless Summer on Ice" show, the "Nickelodeon™ Celebration Parade" with a vivacious troupe of Nick characters, and everyone's favorite flipping Viking ship – the Southern Star. carowinds.com



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