

Charlotte native Zack Luttrell was a freshman in college during the Carolina Panthers' inaugural season — though living in Greensboro, he was a loyal fan from the jump. Upon graduation, Luttrell moved to Philadelphia, where he struggled to find a bar or restaurant where he could watch Panthers games. "I was living in Eagles country — and it was during our one and fifteen season — I knew something had to change," Luttrell told CharlotteFive.

Since then, Luttrell has led the charge improving the fan base culture and ensuring Panthers fans across the country — even the world — never have to watch alone. Years after returning to Charlotte from Philadelphia, Luttrell and friend Joe Ryan were at an away Panthers game. During that 2008 game, in Atlanta, the pair decided to form a sort of fan club.

More than a decade later, the Roaring Riot has more than 40 chapters with over 7,000 members worldwide. Nowadays, Roaring Riot hosts tailgates at home Panthers games, organizes trips for fans to attend away games together and curates experiences for fans to interact with players. "Our experiences are built around the community," Luttrell said. "It's incredible when you have a group of fans sitting together at an away game and the home team can hear you — you can really influence the game."

Check out Roaring Riot, the Carolina Panthers worldwide fan club More than a decade after it started, the Panthers fan club has more than 40 chapters with over 7,000 members worldwide.

Growing the Riot

After the 2008 Panthers-Falcons game, Luttrell and Ryan decided to organize a group of Panthers fans to jointly attend the 2009 Panthers-Falcons game in Atlanta. Pictures from this era show fans in Jon Beason, Jake Delhomme, and Steve Smith Sr. jerseys. After this first outing, Luttrell knew that the energy was infectious.

Each year, Roaring Riot's trips grew in numbers. "In 2013, we took 100 people to Miami. In 2014, we took another 100 people to Tampa. In 2015 — well, that was wild," Luttrell said. That wild trip? Roaring Riot organized more than 550 Panthers fans to attend the season opener in Jacksonville. What's more is that Roaring Riot rented out all of the poolside cabanas at the Jaguars' stadium.

Each season, Roaring Riot has gotten more ambitious with its trips. In 2019, the group took more than 1,000 Panthers fans to London for the franchise's first ever game in The Big Smoke. "That many fans together in a different country marching to the stadium together gives me goosebumps," Luttrell said.

Roaring_Riot_2022-02125.jpg Roaring Riot fans gather before a home game on Morehead Avenue near Bank of America Stadium.

More than a tailgate

In addition to crafting great travel experiences for Panthers fans, Roaring Riot provides fun in the Queen City before home games. Roaring Riot tailgates, which take place at the corner of West Morehead Street and South Cedar Street draw north of 1,000 fans per event. The group has partnerships with Pepsi, Jack Daniels, Tito's, and NoDa Brewing – keep an eye out for NoDa Brewing's Roaring Riot lager at Bank of America Stadium and in local grocery stores.

Roaring Riot partners with chef Hunter Smith to create a special menu for every home tailgate. "Smith is such a talented chef and he gears each menu towards the opposing team," Luttrell said. When Buffalo visits, expect lots of wings. When the Saints come to town, gumbo and po-boy sandwiches are aplenty. "But his barbecue is my favorite," Luttrell said. "It's hands down the best barbecue I've ever had."

These tailgates are more than just a great party, however – dubbed a "Tailgate With a Purpose," the proceeds from each event support the Roaring Riot Foundation. Created in 2017, the foundation creates incredible

Panthers experiences for fans in need. One notable experience led Chancellor Lee Adams to the Panthers 2019 game in London. Roaring Riot Foundation has also partnered with West Charlotte High School, providing the school's marching band with an incredible experience.

Roaring_Riot_2022-08366.jpgThe Roaring Riot tailgate on Morehead Street is accessible for group members only.

Fans far and wide

Over the years, the Roaring Riot has attracted many fans — including former Panthers quarterback Cam Newton. In a 2017 interview with the Roaring Riot, Newton said he “appreciate[s] them more than they would probably say they appreciate me.”

Luttrell has met at least one international Panthers fan who fell in love with our team due to Cam. “He told me — your quarterback — he’d get hit and every time, he’d just get up and smile. I thought that was special,” Luttrell said. Worldwide, fans grow an affinity for the Panthers, and often connect with a Roaring Riot chapter. “Germany’s Roaring Riot chapter has more than 200 fans — hardcore fans,” Luttrell said.

When asked about his favorite moments in Panthers history, Luttrell brings it back to the fans. “I couldn’t necessarily name a game moment, just growing our community, Luttrell said. “Our philosophy of keeping the group together really helps.”

Roaring_Riot_2022-08369.jpgRoaring Riot member Chase Hollar does his best Elvis impression.

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