

PRESS RELEASE

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TRI-CITY CHILI PEPPERS HONORED AS 2024 CPL ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR

Cosmically-Charged Year Propels Chili Peppers to New Heights

HOLLY SPRINGS, NC – The Coastal Plain League announced this afternoon that the Tri-City Chili Peppers have been honored as the 2024 CPL Organization of the Year.

“It is hard to put into words how great it feels to be recognized as the CPL Organization of the Year,” said Chili Peppers co-owner Chris Martin. “When we look around the CPL there are so many exceptional teams that we look up to. This award is not possible without the loving support of our players and coaches, sponsors, fans, staff, and the guidance of the league front office and teams in the CPL. Our league is one of the best in the country and we are blessed to be a part of the CPL!”

Tri-City was chosen after collecting input from team owners, front office staff, league officials, players, coaches, and umpires on every part of an organization’s operation. This included everything from operations (e.g., streaming, scoring, game day ease, etc.) and overall atmosphere at the stadium to community involvement, fan engagement and innovated creativity.

“The Chili Peppers have truly set the bar for creativity and fan engagement this year,” remarked CPL Commissioner Chip Allen. “Their innovative approach, highlighted by the Cosmic Baseball experience, has not only captivated fans but has redefined what it means to connect with the community. This recognition as Organization of the Year is a testament to their vision, passion, and relentless commitment to delivering an unforgettable experience for everyone who walks through their gates.”

Prior to the season starting, Tri-City increased the number of luxury suites due to the high demand from the season before, as well as other seating options that were new to Shepherd Stadium. Their overall sponsorship increased by 10% from a year ago and they now have a waitlist for sponsors as they look toward the 2025 summer. They saw upticks in overall ticket sales (75% increase), attendance (over 45,000), group outings (75% increase), merchandise in both the form of online sales (in terms of overall dollar value) growing by 1,142% while comparable in-stadium sales increased by 249%. Their overall community involvement also grew to its largest in the club’s four-year history with a number of new partnerships that benefited a vast array of groups and causes.

“Receiving the CPL’s Organization of the Year Award for 2024 is a testament that dreaming big, challenging one’s creativity and hard work can pay off in a tremendous way,” stated Tri-City General Manager Rob Perez. “We started the year off with high hopes and aspirations for a new entertainment idea and knew if done right, would create a special experience for our fans. With

support from amazing sponsors and partners, we were able to turn a dream into a reality and transform our organization as well. Poised on the cusp of something even more special, we're ready to take our next big step in 2025."

And as the overall operation for the club continued to exist at a high level, it was an innovative venture called Cosmic Baseball that saw their success soar to new heights.

A new "version" of baseball that utilizes highly reactive neon uniforms and equipment under black lights and a mostly dark stadium was the brain child of team co-owner Chris Martin. Working with a number of specialists and staff, including Perez, the team was able to outfit their stadium where it was UV reactive, making for an environment to something out of the movie *Tron*. And from the moment this concept became a reality, Cosmic Baseball and the Chili Peppers had taken the nation by storm. They were even highlighted internationally.

Overall, this new venture was covered by many major sports and news networks, including ESPN, MLB Network, The Today Show, FOX News and CBS Sports, as well as popular blogs, vlogs, and websites such as Barstool Sports and "The King of JUCO" Youtube channel. Originally planned for four exhibition games, the demand for tickets saw the club add two more contests, each of which were sold out to account for nearly 14,000 fans alone. And their online presence skyrocketed as well, as the club gained nearly 13,000 new followers on Instagram, 2,500 on Facebook, and growing their TikTok following to over 18,000.

"Fan engagement is at the heart of our organization's core," continued Martin. "We strive to make baseball fun for families - young and old. The Year of Cosmic Baseball was a big part of our success. The CPL - both the league office and other teams - was all-in from day one and I cannot thank them enough for their immediate support. This was a great addition to our overall operation and it was just the beginning as we will look to bring Cosmic Baseball to a whole new level in 2025."

About Coastal Plain League

The Coastal Plain League is the nation's premier summer collegiate baseball league. The CPL is currently comprised of 15 franchises playing in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. To date, the CPL has had over 1,800 alumni drafted, and 194 alums make their Major League debut. Most notable alumni include Justin Verlander, Ryan Zimmerman, Mark Reynolds, Kevin Youkilis, Chris Taylor, Alec Bohm, Jake Cave, Chas McCormick and NFL Super Bowl champion Russell Wilson. For more information on the Coastal Plain League, please visit the league website at www.coastalplain.com, and be sure to follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok @CPLBaseball.

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