



# **Panthers Handbook**

2018



**Official Kit Supplier to USA Rugby South**

# Why the Panthers Exist

USA Rugby South strives to provide the highest level of rugby development and success through competitions for its players, coaches and supporters within the southeast United States.

In this endeavor, USA Rugby South is proud to participate in a World Rugby sanctioned international competition.

## Panthers Objectives

- To provide an atmosphere of safety and enjoyment for all
- To ensure all players are treated fairly and equally
- To develop player skills, abilities and confidence to enable each player the capacity to reach their full potential
- To develop and improve management and coaching expertise
- To have clear and open communication with the players, management and staff
- To provide an environment which is conducive to enjoyable and successful Rugby
- To provide regular feedback to all players regarding their progress and development



# **Panther Pride -**

## **Code of Conduct**

All players, coaches, staff and supporters are considered to be ambassadors of the sport of rugby. They are viewed by members of the general public and media as examples of the sport and those who play it. As such, all are expected to behave with dignity both on and off the playing field.

Rude, profane, threatening or anti-social behavior of any sort which would reflect negatively on the image of the player, their club, USA Rugby South, USA Rugby or the sport of rugby in general is unacceptable.

## **Code of Conduct - Player**

Players are encouraged to:

- Recognize and appreciate the efforts made by coaches, match officials and administrators in providing the opportunity for you to play and enjoy the game of rugby. Most are volunteers.
- Understand the values of loyalty and commitment to the Panthers.
- Recognize that every player has a right to expect their involvement in rugby to be safe and free from all types of harassment or abuse.
- Listen and act on any instructions given to you by managers or coaches responsible for any activity you may be involved.
- Recognize that feedback to coaches and management is just as important as their feedback to you. Everyone benefits from honest dialog.
- Be responsible and safety conscious at all times.
- Safeguard your health; don't use any illegal or unhealthy substances.
- Recognize superior fitness as a primary asset to your rugby success.
- Respect other people and their possessions.
- Respect the opposition, its facilities and its traditions.

When Playing:

- Participate for your own enjoyment and benefit.
- Remember that skill development, fun and enjoyment are the most important parts of the game.
- Work equally hard for yourself and your team – both will then benefit.
- Recognize good play by ALL players on your team and by your opponents.
- Honor both the spirit and letter of the competition rules and live up to the highest ideals of ethics and sportsmanship.
- Play to the Laws of the Game and accept, without question, all the referee's decisions.
- Control your emotions. Verbal or physical abuse of teammates, opponents, match officials or spectators IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. Treat all as you would like to be treated.

## Code of Conduct - Coach

- Seek to maximize the participation and enjoyment of all players regardless of ability; treat all players as equals, regardless of their talent.
- Actively discourage foul play and/or unsportsmanlike behavior by players.
- Show concern and caution towards all sick and injured players.
- Follow the advice of a physician and/or sports trainer to the letter when determining when an injured player is ready to recommence training or playing.
- Teach players that an honest effort and competing to the best of their ability is as important as victory.
- Maintain appropriate, professional relationships with players at all times.
- Maintain a thorough knowledge of the Laws of the Game and keep abreast of current coaching methods; maintain or improve your current accreditation level.
- Always consider the health, safety and welfare of the players.
- As coach, conduct yourself at all times in a manner, and in all situations, that shows leadership, respect for the game of Rugby and respect for all those that are involved in the game.

## Dress Code

### Travel Attire

Polo shirt (USA Rugby South Polo preferred)  
Casual slacks or shorts – Jeans are permitted if clean and neat  
Trainers or casual shoes - NO FLIP FLOPS  
Torn, dirty or wrinkled clothes are NOT acceptable.

### Training Attire

All players will wear USA Rugby South training tops

### Post Match/Official Function Attire (#1's)

Khaki dress pants  
USA Rugby South Navy Polo  
Casual shoes, socks and belt (No Trainers)  
*Khaki is a shade of brown (Grey & black pants do not meet the code)*  
*Shoes and belt should match – your choice black or brown.*

### Management

Dress Shirt, Tie and Blazer are always acceptable and may be required in some situations

### Team Meal Attire

USA Rugby South Shirt (T, Training or Polo)  
Casual Pants or shorts - Jeans are acceptable if clean and neat.  
Trainers or casual shoes - NO FLIP FLOPS  
Torn, dirty or wrinkled clothes are NOT acceptable.

# Finances

All costs associated with the Panther program(s) are paid by the participants – players, coaches and support staff. We do our best to minimize cost but there are requirements that are imposed on us that we must adhere and some of these costs may be to the benefit of an opponent and not directly to us.

Should you not be able to commit to the cost of the program, you are still encouraged to participate but you must be up front with management about your particular circumstances.

Once selected into a team you will be told the total cost to participate at that venue and requirements for payment. Everyone shares equally in the total cost associated with a venue. It is understood that everyone needs accurate costs as early as possible.

Some venues are more costly than others. If we host a Rugby Americas North (RAN) game for instance, we are required to provide transport in this country for our opponent. We receive the same when we are hosted.

In general, RAN games that we host can cost \$250+ each and RAN venues in foreign countries can cost \$400+ each. Non-RAN games will be less expensive.

Some but not all items of expense that everyone needs to be aware of are:

- Field/Equipment Expense
- Referee Expense
- Medical Support – Trainers, Doctors, Ambulance
- Medical/Travel Insurance
- Team Meals
- Motel/Hotel Accommodation
- After Match Function
- Opponent Transportation Expense

# Selection Policy

Selection into the Panthers is available to all men at least 18 years of age. A relationship with South clubs is preferred but not required. Additionally, anyone previously associated with any Panther program will always be welcome. **Once a Panther, always a Panther!**

The coaching staff is entrusted and empowered to select teams having the best chance of success. A defined group of players will also provide input into the selection process.

Some areas of consideration in no particular order for selectors are:

- Player skill set for a particular game
- Overall player fitness
- Overall player commitment to the entire Panther schedule

Upon selection to a particular venue, everyone will be told the cost to attend that venue and payment is required immediately. **Everyone is expected to meet the deadline for payment and selectors will be instructed to replace those that don't.**

**All Players must be currently CIPP registered with USA Rugby to participate in the program.**

# **Nutrition and Hydration for Rugby Players - Condensed Version**

**(Full Version Follows)**

## **Gaining Muscle Mass**

The goal for many development Rugby Union players is to achieve gains in lean body mass. Given their already high energy requirements and training load consuming sufficient energy and nutrients to achieve such lean body mass can be difficult. Players should consume ~6 meals/snacks a day, with a focus on nutrient dense carbohydrate rich foods that also provide moderate amounts of protein. Planning of these meals and snacks ahead of time is vital to ensure they do not miss meals and/or make poor choices due to lack of access or availability to suitable foods.

Another key strategy is through the strategic intake of appropriate foods/fluids during and after hard training sessions. Intake of carbohydrate during a session (e.g. sports drink, gels) can not only help to enhance training performance through provision of fuel for the working muscles. During the immediate post training period (strength and practice) it is important players consume a snack that contains both a good source of carbohydrate and protein. There is a 1-2 hour window after training where maximum glycogen uptake by the large muscle groups is in effect in which the first hour allows the greatest uptake. Fueling the body during this window allows the body to adapt to the physiological stress allowing the body to become fitter, stronger and faster. Glycogen uptake after this window is delayed and promotes a slow recovery. A serious athlete may need to consume between 7-12 g of carbohydrate per kg body weight (2.2lbs/kg) each day to ensure adequate glycogen stores. Providing a range of appropriate snacks (e.g. yogurt, liquid meal supplements) for the whole team at the training venue is an effective way to reinforce positive behaviors relating to this aspect of nutrition recovery.

## **Creatine supplementation**

While few studies have looked at the effects of creatine supplementation on rugby performance, the nature of the game would suggest that it may be of benefit. Further, use during a resistance training block, where athletes are trying to increase size/strength, may also be warranted. More significant gains, however, can be made through a well-structured training and eating plan that promotes sufficient energy intake. Hydration before a Game--hyper hydration This is the strategy for loading more water into the body so as to be insured against dehydration especially during a game. Do not try any new strategy for the first time on match day. All strategies should be well rehearsed during practice. Daily fluid requirements is 35-45 ml per kilogram of body weight. For an average 200lb (90kg) player this means drinking between 3 and 4 liters (100 to 135 oz) of water each day. The simplest and most practical drink is water. However, water does not provide the most rapid form of water replacement in the body. A dilute carbohydrate and electrolyte drink will deliver water faster to the body (G2). Normal sports drinks should only be consumed during and immediately following training or a game. They should not be consumed regularly throughout the day. Excessive consumption of sports drinks can have adverse long term effects on teeth and can also contribute to excess fat storage (dilute 75% for daily consumption).

Hydration during a Game Is vital that players implement strategies that allow them to start each match well hydrated and that they use any breaks in play as an opportunity to top up fluid levels during the game. This is especially important when playing in hot and humid conditions.

Promoting recovery after a game While a game of rugby union is unlikely to deplete muscle carbohydrate (glycogen) stores completely the loss will still be significant. Additionally, there is

evidence to suggest that excessive muscle damage caused by the contact in tackle and time spent in isometric contraction (scrum) may slow down the rate of recovery. It is therefore vital that players consume adequate amounts of carbohydrate, especially during the immediate post game period, to promote rapid refueling. Failure to do so will impair recovery. The addition of protein in the recovery foods and fluids consumed after the match will help promote muscle repair. Note that consumption of alcohol will impair glycogen re-synthesis, prolong soft-tissue injuries slow down the process of rehydration. So eat and drink for recovery first then partake! Athletes should aim to consume 125-150% of their estimated fluid losses in the 4-6 hours after exercise. Unless there is simultaneous replacement of electrolytes lost in sweat consumption of a large volume of fluid may simply result in large urine losses. We recommend G2 (not as much sugar but all the electrolytes). Real Food vs Supplements Many athletes think sports food supplements to be the only and/or best way to meet their recovery goals. Unless constrained by poor availability or lack of time, athletes are best advised to favor real food/fluid options that allow them to meet recovery and other dietary goals simultaneously.



# Nutrition and Hydration for Rugby Players

## Gaining Muscle Mass

The goal for many development Rugby Union players is to achieve gains in lean body mass. Consuming sufficient energy and macronutrients to achieve such gains can be difficult, given their already high energy requirements and training load. To achieve the level of energy intake required, players should consume ~6 meals/snacks a day, with a focus on nutrient dense carbohydrate rich foods that also provide moderate amounts of protein. Planning of these meals and snacks ahead of time is vital to ensure they do not miss meals and/or make poor choices due to lack of access or availability to suitable foods.

Another key strategy in promoting gains in or at least maintaining lean body mass is through the strategic intake of appropriate foods/fluids during and after hard training sessions. Intake of carbohydrate during a session (e.g. sports drink, gels) can not only help to enhance training performance through provision of fuel for the working muscles and central nervous system, but also make it easier to meet overall daily energy requirements. During the immediate post training period (both team and weights sessions), it is important players consume a snack that contains both a good source of carbohydrate and protein. There is a 1-2 hour window after training where maximum glycogen uptake by the large muscle groups is in effect in which the first hour allows the greatest uptake. Fueling the body during this window allows the body to adapt to the physiological stress allowing the body to become fitter, stronger and faster. Glycogen uptake after this window is delayed and promotes a slow recovery. A serious athlete may need to consume between 7-12 g of carbohydrate per kg body weight (2.2lbs/kg) each day to ensure adequate glycogen stores. Providing a range of appropriate snacks (e.g. yogurt, liquid meal supplements) for the whole team at the training venue is an effective way to reinforce positive behaviors relating to this aspect of nutrition recovery.

## Creatine supplementation

While few studies have looked at the effects of creatine supplementation on rugby performance, the nature of the game i.e. a series of high intensity efforts with variable recovery periods, would suggest that it may be of benefit. Further, use during a resistance training block, where athletes are trying to increase size/strength, may also be warranted. That said, especially with younger athletes, it's important to recognize that more significant gains can be made through a well-structured training and eating plan that promotes sufficient energy intake, while meeting other sports nutrition goals e.g. re-fueling.

## Hydration During a Game

Though the impact of dehydration on rugby performance has not been well investigated, studies of simulated match play in other team sports have shown that it can have a negative impact on movement patterns and skill level. Therefore it is vital that players implement strategies that allow them to start each match well hydrated and that they use any breaks in play (e.g. try conversions, injury) as an opportunity to top up fluid levels during the game. This is especially important when playing in hot and humid conditions.

## **Promoting recovery after a game**

While a game of rugby union is unlikely to deplete muscle carbohydrate (glycogen) stores completely, it is likely that, especially for the backs, the loss will still be significant. Further, there is some evidence to suggest that excessive muscle damage (caused in rugby by the contact incurred during the game and time spent in isometric contraction, especially by the forwards), may slow down the rate of glycogen resynthesis and an intake greater than that typically recommended may be needed to overcome this. It is therefore vital that players consume adequate amounts of carbohydrate, especially during the immediate post game period, to promote rapid refueling of glycogen stores. Failure to do so will likely slow down the recovery process and by extension, compromise training performance between matches. The addition of protein in the recovery foods and fluids consumed after the match will help promote muscle protein synthesis.

As with other team sports, a culture of consuming alcohol after games still persists in rugby union, which will hinder the recovery process in a number of ways. It will impair glycogen re-synthesis, prolong the extent of any soft-tissue injuries or bruising and as it acts as a diuretic, it will slow down the process of rehydration. Further, players are less likely to adhere to optimal recovery nutrition practices when they are drinking alcohol.

## **Rehydration**

The majority of athletes will finish training or competition sessions with some level of fluid deficit. Research suggests that many athletes fail to adequately drink sufficient volumes of fluid to restore fluid balance. As a fluid deficit incurred during one session has the potential to negatively impact on performance during subsequent training sessions, athletes need to incorporate strategies to restore fluid balance, especially in situations where there is a limited amount of time before their next training session. Athletes should aim to consume 125-150% of their estimated fluid losses in the 4-6 hours after exercise

(Refer to the “How much do athletes sweat?” Fact Sheet for advice on how to monitor fluid losses during exercise). The recommendation to consume a volume of fluid greater than that lost in sweat takes into account the continued loss of fluid from the body through sweating and obligatory urine losses. Fluid replacement alone will not guarantee re-hydration after exercise. Unless there is simultaneous replacement of electrolytes lost in sweat, especially sodium, consumption of a large volume of fluid may simply result in large urine losses. The addition of sodium, both in the drink or the food consumed with the fluid, will reduce urine losses and thereby enhance fluid balance in the post exercise period. Further, sodium will also preserve thirst, enhancing voluntary intake. As the amount of sodium considered optimal for re-hydration (50-80 mmol/L) is in excess of that found in most commercially available sports drinks, athletes may be best advised to consume fluids after exercise with everyday foods containing sodium. In considering the type of fluids needed to achieve their re-hydration goals, athletes should also consider the length of time before their next session, the degree of the fluid deficit incurred, taste preferences, daily energy budget, as well as their other recovery goals. With the latter, athletes can simultaneously meet their refueling, repair and contribute to their re-hydration goals by consuming fluids that also provide a source of carbohydrate and protein e.g. flavored milk, liquid meal supplement.

## **Hyperhydration**

This is the strategy for loading more water into the body so as to be insured against dehydration especially during a game. It is important to become accustomed to this strategy during training. Remember, do not try any unusual strategy for the first time on match day. All strategies should be well rehearsed and practiced long before the playing season begins.

Thirst is not always a good guide of your fluid requirements, so it is advisable to drink more than normal.

A good yardstick for daily fluid requirements is 35-45 ml per kilogram of body weight. For an average 200lb (90kg) player this means drinking between 3 and 4 liters (100 to 135 oz) of water each day. The simplest and most practical drink is water. However, water does not provide the most rapid form of water replacement in the body. A dilute carbohydrate and electrolyte drink will deliver water faster to the body, e.g. specially formulated sports drinks. However, sports drinks should only be consumed during and immediately following training or a game. They should not be consumed regularly throughout the day. Excessive consumption of sports drinks can have adverse long term effects on teeth and can also contribute to excess fat storage.

## **Rugby 7's – A recovery and re-hydration challenge**

The importance of adequate fuel and fluid intake is vital for players involved Rugby 7's tournaments, where they can play up to three games a day, over 3-4 days, often in very hot and humid conditions. During the tournament players are encouraged to monitor their daily hydration status, noting urine color and/or large decreases in their morning body mass. In between matches, players may use a combination of sports drinks, oral re-hydration formulas and liquid meal supplements, along with a range of carbohydrate rich portable snack foods, to help re-fuel and re-hydrate. While they will be provided with buffet style meals at the tournament hotels, players are encouraged to focus on carbohydrate rich options to re-fuel and include fluids to aid in hydration.

## **Muscle Repair and Building**

Prolonged and high-intensity exercise causes a substantial breakdown of muscle protein. During the recovery phase there is a reduction in catabolic (breakdown) processes and a gradual increase in anabolic (building) processes, which continues for at least 24 hours after exercise. Recent research has shown that early intake after exercise (within the first hour) of essential amino acids from good quality protein foods helps to promote the increase in protein rebuilding. Consuming food sources of protein in

meals and snacks after this “window of opportunity” will further promote protein synthesis, though rate at which it occurs is less.

Though research is continuing into the optimal type (e.g. casein Vs whey), timing and amount of protein needed to maximize the desired adaptation from the training stimulus, most agree that both resistance and endurance athletes will benefit from consuming 15-25g of high quality protein in the first hour after exercise. Adding a source of carbohydrate to this post exercise snack will further enhance the training adaptation by reducing the degree of muscle protein breakdown. Table 2 provides a list of carbohydrate rich snacks that also provide at least 10g of protein, while Table 3 lists a number of everyday foods that provide ~10g of protein.

## **Immune System**

In general, the immune system is suppressed by intensive training, with many parameters being reduced or disturbed during the hours following a work-out. This may place athletes at risk of succumbing to an infectious illness during this time. Many nutrients or dietary factors have been proposed as an aid to the immune system - for example, vitamins C and E, glutamine, zinc and most recently probiotics - but none of these have proved to provide universal protection. The most recent evidence points to carbohydrate as one of the most promising nutritional immune protectors. Ensuring adequate carbohydrate stores before exercise and consuming carbohydrate during and/or after a prolonged or high-intensity work-out has been shown to reduce the disturbance to immune system markers. The carbohydrate reduces the stress hormone response to exercise, thus minimizing its effect on the immune system, as well as also supplying glucose to fuel the activity of many of the immune system white cells.

## **How does recovery eating fit into the big picture of nutrition goals?**

To optimize recovery from a training session, meals (which generally supply all the nutrients needed for recovery) must either be timetabled so that they can be eaten straight after the work-out, or special recovery snacks must be slotted in to cover nutrient needs until the next meal can be eaten. For athletes who have high-energy needs, these snacks make a useful contribution towards their daily kilojoule requirement. When there is a large energy budget to play with, it may not matter too much if the snacks only look after the key recovery nutrients - for example carbohydrate e.g. sports drink. On the other hand, for those athletes with a low energy budget, recovery snacks will also need to contribute towards meeting daily requirement for vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. Snacks that can supply special needs for calcium, iron or other nutrients may double up as suitable recovery snacks. e.g. yogurt

## **Real Food vs Supplements**

Many athletes fall into the trap of becoming reliant on sports food supplements, believing this to be the only and/or best way to meet their recovery goals. This often results in athletes “doubling up” with their recovery, consuming a sports food supplement that meets certain recovery goals e.g. liquid meal supplement, then following this up soon afterwards with a meal that would help them meet the same recovery goal e.g. bowl of cereal with fresh fruit. Unless constrained by poor availability or lack of time, athletes are best advised to favor real food/fluid options that allow them to meet recovery and other dietary goals simultaneously. This is especially important for athletes on a low energy budget.

## **What are some other the practical considerations for recovery eating?**

Some athletes finish sessions with a good appetite, so most foods are appealing to eat. On the other hand, a fatigued athlete may only feel like eating something that is compact and easy to chew. When snacks need to be kept or eaten at the training venue itself, foods and drinks that require minimal storage and preparation are useful. At other times, valuable features of recovery foods include being portable and able to travel interstate or overseas. Situations and challenges in sport change from day to day, and between athletes - so recovery snacks need to be carefully chosen to meet these needs.

## Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol has had a long time association with sport, with its consumption believed to be a vital component of team spirit and camaraderie. It has also been synonymous with the myth of being a good source of carbohydrate, a steadier of nerves and a substance which is simply sweated out of the body.

Alcohol can be an enjoyable part of social life, with consumption being kept to a sensible level. Excessive alcohol consumption can adversely affect long term health, with the side effects being liver and neurological damage. Alcohol consumption can also exhibit negative effects on both sporting performance and recovery.

Alcohol can affect balance, hand-eye coordination and reaction time. It may also decrease strength, speed, power, muscular and cardiovascular endurance, with the possibility of impairing body temperature regulation during prolonged exercise. Alcohol acts as a diuretic, having a negative effect with respect to hydration. It also reduces the muscles ability to replenish glycogen stores. Both dehydration and inadequate fuel stores limit performance and have a negative influence on recovery.

Alcohol also lengthens the recovery and rehabilitation time of soft tissue damage and bruising. It has a vasodilatory effect, increasing bleeding and swelling to the damaged tissue. Even a single episode of heavy drinking will interfere with recovery and adaptation after exercise. Long term repeated misuse of alcohol will result in a deterioration in sporting performance.

### **Table 1 - Carbohydrate-rich recovery snacks (50g CHO portions)**

- 700-800ml sports drink
- 2 sports gels
- 500ml fruit juice or soft drink
- 300ml carbohydrate loader drink
- 2 slices toast/bread with jam or honey or banana topping
- 2 cereal bars
- 1 cup thick vegetable soup + large bread roll
- 115g (1 large or 2 small) cake style muffins or similar
- 300g (large) baked potato with salsa filling
- 100g pancakes (2 stack) + 30g syrup

### **Table 2 - Nutritious carbohydrate-protein recovery snacks (contain 50g CHO + valuable source of protein and micronutrients)**

- 250-300ml liquid meal supplement
- 300g creamed rice
- 250-300ml milk shake or fruit smoothie
- 600ml low fat flavored milk
- 1-2 sports bars (check labels for carbohydrate and protein content)
- 1 large bowl (2 cups) breakfast cereal with milk
- 1 large or 2 small cereal bars + 200g carton fruit-flavored yogurt

- 220g black beans or similar on 2 slices of toast
- 1 bread roll with cheese/meat filling + large banana
- 300g (bowl) fruit salad with 200g fruit-flavored yogurt
- 2 pieces of toast with thick spread peanut butter + 250ml glass of milk
- 300g (large) baked potato + cottage cheese filling + glass of milk

**Table 3 - Foods providing approximately 10g of protein.**

#### Animal based protein

- 40g of cooked lean beef/pork/lamb
- 40g skinless cooked chicken
- 50g of canned tuna/salmon or cooked fish
- 300 ml of milk/glass of Milo
- 200g tub of yogurt
- 300ml flavored milk
- 1.5 slices (30g) of cheese
- 2 eggs

#### Plant based protein

- 120g of tofu
- 4 slices of bread
- 200g of baked beans
- 60g of nuts
- 2 cups of pasta/3 cups of rice
- .75 cup cooked lentils/kidney beans

#### Source:

1. Australian Institute of Sports Nutrition
2. Irish Rugby Football Union

# IF YOU SEE A PANTHER

(January 26, 1980)

The Panther is one of the most endangered animals. It may well be teetering on the very verge of extinction.

The decline of the panther has been under way at least since the arrival of white man. Like other large carnivorous animals, the species cannot live in dense concentrations. It takes an enormous area to support each individual. Therefore, when one or two of the animals are killed, the panther population over many square miles is eliminated. This elimination process started with the early settlers who attempted to destroy panthers at every opportunity because of losses to livestock and imagined fears for their lives.

The panthers which survived this persecution were probably those which showed the greatest fear of man and the greatest reluctance to appear in open areas. Then, when deer were nearly eradicated in the 1930's to control the fever tick, panthers strayed from the relative safety of their normal haunts in search of prey. This resulted in more hunting pressure by ranchers and almost led to the final doom of the animal.

Partial protection was given to the now rare panther in 1950. At this time, panthers could still be hunted only during the open season for deer and animals that were found destroying livestock could be taken by special permit at any time. In 1958, the panther was removed from the native game animal list and given complete legal protection.

Since then, even with panthers legally protected from deliberate killing, human commercial developments and long term economic projects have continually encroached upon the diminishing critical panther habitat. At the present time, it is not known whether or where a viable or reproducing population of panthers still occurs in Florida. A few indisputable records of the species exist but they are mostly of dead animals and altogether do not reveal a particular population that might be in any way feasible to manage.

If the panther is to be saved from extinction, the first step is to find a viable population. If you see a panther or its sign, you should do your best to collect some tangible evidence of the animal's presence.

Although, there is a great deal of variation in color, the Florida panther is usually a uniform rusty or tawny cinnamon-buff color (deer-colored) on the back and whitish underneath. The tip of the tail, back to the ears and sides of the nose are dark brown or blackish. Panther kittens are yellowish-brown with dark brown or blackish bands around the tail until they are approximately six months of age and have blue eyes. Although many people have the misconception that panthers are black, there has never been a black panther.

Adult panthers are usually silent but they are capable of most of the 9 gradations and tones of the domestic cat, only much louder. These sounds include purring, mewing, caterwauling and spitting notes. The caterwauling is reputed to sound like a woman screaming.

The principal foods of the panther are the white-tailed deer, wild hogs and raccoons. They will however take almost any other prey of suitable size. If the prey is a deer, the killing bite will be on the back of the neck or the base of the skull. The canine tooth holes will be two inches apart.

The bobcat lacking the jaw power and weight for the neck bite and head twist attacks by leaping on the animal and riding it while biting into the throat to suffocate it and sever the jugular vein. A bobcats canine teeth are only one inch apart at most.

If you are one of those people lucky enough to see a panther or its sign, you'll always have a good story to tell your grandchildren. You might be able to look back with pride some day and say, "I helped save the panther from extinction."

We think that the panther will survive as we have started today with a new breed of panthers.

**At last report, we heard that the Panthers had survived and beat the Mustangs 12 to 0 in Louisiana.**

