



1910  2010

Pacific National Exhibition

AN EMPIRE LEGACY

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Vancouver, British Columbia: In the timeline of any city there are places that become immortal in its growth, locations that become legend in the fabric of its local culture.

Empire Stadium, located on 14 acres at the Pacific National Exhibition at Hastings Park in East Vancouver, is one of them. For 39 years, Empire Stadium captured the collective imagination of Vancouverites experiencing the thrill of a football game held outdoors on a warm September afternoon; or the hysteria of a once-in-a-lifetime concert; or the pageantry of a visit by royalty.

The allure of Empire spanned several generations, and nostalgia for the memory of the open-air stadium that was once the grandest in the country continues today.

Arguably one of the Top 10 wonders of the Canadian sports world, Empire Stadium was the setting of many historic milestones.

- Empire Stadium is the site of one of the most important moments in sports history – the August 7, 1954 ‘Miracle Mile’ during the British Empire and Commonwealth Games. The most famous event of the Games was the One Mile Race in which both John Landy and Roger Bannister ran the distance in under four minutes (Bannister 3.58.8; Landy 3.59.6). The race's end is memorialized in a statue of the two (with Landy glancing over his shoulder, thus losing the race) that stood outside the stadium until its demolition. The statue is now located near the south-west corner of Hastings Park at the intersection of Renfrew and Hastings Streets.
- Empire was home to the first Grey Cup west of Ontario in 1955 (Empire hosted the Grey Cup a total of seven times: 1955, 1958, 1960, 1963, 1966, 1971 and 1974).
- The first soccer match at Empire Stadium was played on Saturday, June 9, 1956, when Everton of the English First division faced Aberdeen,

winner of the Scottish League '54-'55. This was the first match between two professional touring teams ever held in BC.

- The stadium was also home to the Vancouver Whitecaps of the North American Soccer League during the 1970s and early 1980s, as well as the Vancouver Royals of the same league for their only year of play in 1968. The first Whitecaps game at Empire was played May 5, 1974 vs. San Jose Earthquake with the last game played June 1, 1983.
- In 1970, Empire Stadium became the first facility in Canada to have an artificial playing surface installed, made by 3M, under the brand name "Tartan Turf" (natural grass, 1954-1970; artificial turf, 1970-1993).
- Empire Stadium was the home venue of the BC Lions from 1954 – 1982. The first game happened on August 11, 1954, when the BC Lions took on the Montreal Alouettes.

As well, Empire Stadium is where the citizens gathered to experience many other historic events in the City of Vancouver's coming of age, including concerts by The Beatles and Elvis Presley. Perhaps most notable, however, was its visit by the Queen and Prince Philip on July 15, 1959.

The last football pass, high school or otherwise, was thrown in Empire Stadium more than 16 years ago. The last musical notes have also not been heard for 16 years. But the legacy of the stadium continues to this day, as the stories and memories from one of Vancouver's most revered sporting venues live on in the generations of fans who shared them together.

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Owned by the City of Vancouver, the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) is a healthy and vibrant non-profit charity organization dedicated to providing over 3 million visitors a year with first-class cultural, sporting and family entertainment events. Founded in 1910, the PNE operates from a 114-acre site at Hastings Park, a multi-facility venue in Vancouver where the organization operates four activity streams: an annual 17-day Fair, Playland Amusement Park, maintenance and care of the Hastings Park site and management of the site's year-round facilities. These facilities are utilized to celebrate a variety of hockey, amateur sporting, music, community, social, cultural and commercial events throughout the year.

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