

Gateshead International Stadium (GIS) is a multi-purpose, all-seater venue in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, England. Originally known as the Gateshead Youth Stadium,[4] the venue was built in 1955 and has since been extensively redeveloped on three occasions. Its capacity of around 11,800[nb 1] is the greatest in the Metropolitan Borough of Gateshead, the third-largest in Tyne and Wear (behind St James' Park and the Stadium of Light), and the sixth-largest in North East England.[6]

The main arena is principally used for athletics. The inaugural athletics competition at the redeveloped venue, the 1974 "Gateshead Games", was instigated by Brendan Foster, a Gateshead Council employee at that time. By breaking the world record in the men's 3,000 m, Foster brought international publicity to the new stadium and began a tradition of athletics competitions at the venue, which has since hosted the British Grand Prix (2003–10) and the European Team Championships in 1989, 2000 and 2013. It is the only venue to have hosted the latter event three times. Five world records have been set at the stadium, including two by pole vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva and a tied 100 metres record by Asafa Powell in 2006.

Although Gateshead International Stadium primarily caters for athletics, it is the current or former home to teams in several sports. It has been used by Gateshead F.C. and its predecessors since 1973. It was home to the Gateshead Thunder rugby league club during their spell in the Super League, and the replacement Gateshead Thunder club played home games in the main arena, which was known as the Thunderdome when used by that team[7] until the club relocated to Newcastle in 2015. It has also been the home of Women's Super League 2 side Newcastle United Women since 2025.[8] Gateshead Harriers Athletic Club, which includes Foster and Jonathan Edwards among its life members, are the oldest tenants, having used the site since 1956. The stadium has also been used as a concert venue by numerous musical artists, including Little Mix, Guns N' Roses, Bon Jovi, Bryan Adams and Tina Turner.

History and development

The stadium is built on the site of two large chemical works opened in 1827 and 1834.[9][10] These works initially thrived, but by the early part of the 20th century, both were in terminal decline[11] and were demolished in 1932 to leave behind a 2-million-tonne heap of spoil.[9][12] This land, approximately 2 miles (3.2 km) east of the centre of Gateshead,[13] was cleared in 1942 but continued to lie derelict until the mid-1950s.[12]

In early 1955, Gateshead Council began work on transforming this land. The Gateshead Youth Stadium, built on the site of the old chemical works, was opened by Jim Peters on 27 August 1955.[2] Costing £30,000, the original venue contained little more than a cinder running track and an asphalt cycling track, though floodlights and a seating area were added soon after.[2] On 1 July 1961, the arena hosted its first major competition—the Vaux Breweries International Athletics Meet[14]—but according to sportswriter John Gibson, the Youth Stadium remained "little more than a minor track with a tiny grandstand and open terraces".