



NHL outdoor games

⚠ This is an old revision of this page, as edited by FL0per (talk | contribs) at 04:54, 12 April 2018 (→top: *Maintenance update (nhl 2018 stadium series due date, plus a few stylistic "improvements"*)). The present address (URL) is a permanent link to this revision, which may differ significantly from the current revision.

The National Hockey League (NHL) first held a regular season outdoor ice hockey game in 2003, and since 2008 the league has scheduled at least one per year.

The NHL primarily uses three brands for outdoor games: the Heritage Classic, Winter Classic, and Stadium Series. The Heritage Classic has been infrequently held four times, and has thus far featured match-ups between Canadian teams. The 2003 Heritage Classic between the Edmonton Oilers and Montreal Canadiens was the first outdoor regular season game in NHL history. This led to the annual Winter Classic, held on New Year's Day in the United States, starting with the 2008 game between the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Buffalo Sabres. The NHL then started the Stadium Series in 2014 for additional outdoor games. The number of Stadium series games has since varied per season (four in 2014, two in 2016, and only one each in 2015, 2017, and 2018). Both the Winter Classic and the Stadium series featured match-ups between American teams, until the Toronto Maple Leafs' appearances in both the 2014 Winter Classic and the 2018 Stadium Series.



The 2012 Winter Classic at Philadelphia

To celebrate the NHL's 100 year anniversary in 2017, the league scheduled two special outdoor games: the NHL Centennial Classic between Detroit and Toronto on January 1 (through season 2016-2017) to kick off the year, and then the NHL 100 Classic on December 16 (during 2017-2018 season) between Montreal and the Ottawa Senators to commemorate the league's very first game, having taken place exactly 100 years before, between the same contenders. The four teams involved in said honorific matches, alongside Boston and New York, constitute the sprinkling count of the league's earliest members.

Prior to 2003, NHL teams had been involved in at least three outdoor exhibitions. Two of these came in the 1950s and were effectively informal scrimmages; in 1954, the Detroit Red Wings visited Marquette Branch Prison and played a match against the prison inmates in a fenced-off, open air ice rink, while in 1956, the Boston Bruins played a game against several local teams in Bay Roberts, Newfoundland. In neither case was a

formal game structure maintained or score kept, as the NHL teams hopelessly outmatched the hosts. In 1991, the Los Angeles Kings and New York Rangers played a pre-season game outside Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, in the first officially sanctioned outdoor NHL contest.

The NHL's outdoor series have proven wildly popular with fans and have led to numerous attendance records. The 2003 Heritage Classic drew 57,167 fans, a league record that stood until 71,217 fans in Buffalo set another NHL record in the inaugural Winter Classic in 2008. The 2014 Winter Classic, between Toronto and the Detroit Red Wings drew 105,491 fans, the current NHL record.

History

The first outdoor game on record to feature an NHL team was attempted on February 2, 1954.^[1] The Detroit Red Wings played an exhibition game on an outdoor ice surface, in 21 °F (−6 °C) degree weather, against the Marquette Pirates, an athletic club composed of inmates at Michigan's Marquette Branch Prison. The game, and the Pirates club, was allegedly organized as a way for Red Wings manager Jack Adams to make good with two convicted mafia members incarcerated at the prison. By the end of the first period alone, the Red Wings had amassed an 18–0 score against the prisoners; score keeping was abandoned after that point and the rest of the game effectively became an informal scrimmage.^[2]

Two years after the 1954 prison match, the Boston Bruins went on a postseason barnstorm of Atlantic Canada in April 1956, which included a stop in Bay Roberts, Newfoundland. On April 9, 1956 the Bruins played an exhibition game against teams from the Conception Bay North Hockey League on an outdoor artificial ice surface, under similar rules to those of the 1954 prison match. Four teams each played one period against the Bruins who dominated the game. Only one goal was scored on Terry Sawchuk by the local teams.^[3]

During their time at the Civic Arena, the Pittsburgh Penguins could have theoretically hosted an outdoor NHL game due to the arena having a retractable roof. (The arena was originally built for the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, who only stayed at the arena until 1973.) However, the roof was always closed during hockey games with both the Penguins and their AHL predecessors, the Pittsburgh Hornets, whom the Penguins replaced upon the 1967 NHL expansion. The roof was permanently closed after 1994 when the Penguins replaced the center scoreboard.^[4]

The first outdoor game between two NHL teams (and the first played to completion) was an official pre-season match-up on September 27, 1991. The game took place in the parking lot of Caesars Palace^[5] in Las Vegas, Nevada, and featured the Los Angeles Kings and the New York Rangers.^[6] The process of keeping the ice cool in the desert heat required three times as much coolant as a standard NHL rink.^[7] There were few problems despite temperatures that reached 95 °F (35 °C) during the day and a game time temperature of 80 °F (27 °C).^[7] During the contest grasshoppers began to jump onto the ice, where they would freeze or drown in water used to maintain the ice, and by the end of the second period the ice was littered with the bugs.^[6] Nearly 14,000 fans watched the Kings defeat the Rangers 5–2.^[8] Since 1997, the Los Angeles Kings have returned to Las Vegas to play an annual



The Flames and Canadiens at the 2011 Heritage Classic

indoors preseason game as part of the Frozen Fury series. As of the 2017-2018 season Las Vegas has its own NHL franchise. Interesting fact, future recording artist, a young Usher, sang The National Anthem for this match.

The first regular-season outdoor game in the history of the NHL took place on November 22, 2003, at Edmonton's Commonwealth Stadium, when the Edmonton Oilers played the Montreal Canadiens in the 2003 Heritage Classic.^[9] The Oilers had suggested the idea of hosting an outdoor game as early as the mid 1980s,^[10] but the genesis of the 2003 event was the "Cold War" outdoor game played two years prior between Michigan State University and the University of Michigan.^[11]

In 2005, NBC Sports Executive VP Jon Miller then pitched the concept an annual outdoor game as a television event to the NHL, "but they didn't find the concept workable."^[12] In December 2006, Miller found an ally in then-league Executive VP/Business & Media John Collins, who embraced the idea.^{[13][14]} This led to the inaugural Winter Classic game on January 1, 2008, with the Pittsburgh Penguins visiting the Buffalo Sabres at Ralph Wilson Stadium.^[9]

On May 1, 2013, the NHL announced that the Chicago Blackhawks would host the Pittsburgh Penguins at Soldier Field in Chicago on March 1, 2014, as part of a new series of outdoor games called the NHL Stadium Series.^[15] By the end of May 2013, the NHL had scheduled a record six outdoor NHL games for the 2013–14 season: one Winter Classic, one Heritage Classic, and four Stadium Series games.

In scheduling outdoor games in the New York metropolitan area that feature the New York Rangers (first occurring during two of the four 2014 Stadium Series games, and subsequently the 2018 Winter Classic), the team has always been designated as the "away" team. This is to maintain the property tax-exempt status of the Rangers' home arena, Madison Square Garden (MSG). The tax exemption stipulates that it only applies if the Rangers do not "cease playing" home games at MSG, generally interpreted as playing any "home" game outside of MSG.^{[16][17]} By designating the Rangers as the "away" team and Buffalo as the "home" team in the 2018 Winter Classic at Citi Field in New York City, it would save MSG from paying more than \$40 million in property taxes.^[18]

In 2016, the Penguins and the Philadelphia Flyers worked out an agreement to play a home-and-home series of outdoors games.^[19] The two archrivals played the 2017 Stadium Series game at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh, and will follow with the 2019 Stadium Series game at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia. The two teams had also discussed playing a neutral site game at Beaver Stadium at State College, Pennsylvania, but this did not materialize, due mainly to concerns about Beaver Stadium's plumbing being unable to withstand an event in winter.^{[20][19]} On March 6, 2016, the NHL officially announced that the Jets will host the Oilers in the 2016 Heritage Classic during the 2016–17 NHL season, held in October.^[21]

To celebrate the NHL's 100th year in 2017, the league is having two special outdoor games. The first, branded as the Centennial Classic, between the Detroit Red Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs, was held on January 1 (during the 2016–17 NHL season) to kick off the year.^[22] The second, branded as the NHL 100 Classic, was held on December 16 (during the 2017–18 season) between the Montreal Canadiens and the Ottawa Senators.^[23]

Hosting statistics

As of the conclusion of the end of the 2017-18 season:

- 23 of the NHL's 31 teams will have participated in an outdoor regular-season game. The eight that have not are Arizona, Carolina, Columbus, Dallas, Florida, Nashville, Tampa Bay and Vegas.
- 12 teams will have played more than one game.
- Chicago will have made the most appearances (5).
- 19 metropolitan areas (out of 28 represented among the league's 31 teams) will have hosted the 25 outdoor regulation games. In addition to the eight metropolitan areas represented by teams that have not played in any outdoor games, Montreal has played in outdoor games but has yet to host any themselves (although New Jersey has also not yet hosted a home game in its home state, its home city of Newark is still part of the New York metropolitan area.)
- New York City will have hosted three times. Chicago, Massachusetts, Maryland–DC, and Pittsburgh will have each hosted twice.
- Yankee Stadium and Heinz Field will have each hosted two games.
- No non-NHL (neutral site) market has yet hosted a regular season outdoor game. Notre Dame, Indiana will be the first non-NHL market to host an outdoor game when it hosts the 2019 Winter Classic.

Cancelled games

The Dallas Stars had originally been scheduled to play a stadium game at Houston's Reliant Stadium during their 2011 pre-season, but this game was ultimately cancelled.^{[24][25][26]}

The 2013 NHL Winter Classic was originally scheduled to be contested at Michigan Stadium between the Detroit Red Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs. Due to the 2012–13 NHL lockout resulting in an abbreviated 2012–13 season, this Winter Classic matchup at Michigan Stadium was postponed and held during the following season instead.^{[27][28][29][30][31]}

The Winnipeg Jets announced in 2013 that they had reached an agreement with the NHL to host a fourth Heritage Classic at Investors Group Field, the home of the CFL's Winnipeg Blue Bombers, which they hoped to hold during the team's fifth anniversary in 2015–16.^[32] However, a disagreement occurred between the NHL and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers over the game's exact date: the league wanted it held in December 2015 while the football team became concerned that this date was too close to the 103rd Grey Cup being held at the stadium on November 29.^[33] In January 2015, the Jets announced that they could not reach an agreement to finalize a date for the Heritage Classic during the 2015–16 season and that they were now looking for a new date during the 2016–2017 season.^[34] On March 6, 2016, the NHL officially announced that the Jets will host the Oilers in the 2016 Heritage Classic during the 2016–17 NHL season, held in October.^[21]

List of NHL outdoor games

Bolded teams denote winners

Date	Event	Site	Away team	Home team	Score	Attendance
<u>February 2, 1954</u>	exhibition game	<u>Marquette Branch Prison, Marquette, Michigan</u>	<u>Detroit Red Wings</u>	Marquette Prison Pirates ^[35]	—	0
<u>April 9, 1956</u>		<u>Conception Bay Sports Arena, Bay Roberts, Newfoundland</u>	<u>Boston Bruins</u>	Bay Roberts, Brigus, Shearstown, Coley's Point (1 period each) ^[36]	—	—
<u>September 27, 1991</u>		<u>Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada</u>	<u>New York Rangers</u>	<u>Los Angeles Kings</u>	5–2	13,007
<u>November 22, 2003</u>	Heritage Classic	<u>Commonwealth Stadium, Edmonton, Alberta</u>	<u>Montreal Canadiens</u>	<u>Edmonton Oilers</u>	4–3	57,167
<u>January 1, 2008</u>	Winter Classic	<u>Ralph Wilson Stadium, Orchard Park, New York</u>	<u>Pittsburgh Penguins</u>	<u>Buffalo Sabres</u>	2–1 (SO)	71,217
<u>January 1, 2009</u>		<u>Wrigley Field, Chicago, Illinois</u>	<u>Detroit Red Wings</u>	<u>Chicago Blackhawks</u>	6–4	40,818
<u>January 1, 2010</u>		<u>Fenway Park, Boston, Massachusetts</u>	<u>Philadelphia Flyers</u>	<u>Boston Bruins</u>	2–1 (OT)	38,112
<u>January 1, 2011</u>		<u>Heinz Field, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</u>	<u>Washington Capitals</u>	<u>Pittsburgh Penguins</u>	3–1	68,111
<u>February 20, 2011</u>	Heritage Classic	<u>McMahon Stadium, Calgary, Alberta</u>	<u>Montreal Canadiens</u>	<u>Calgary Flames</u>	4–0	41,022
<u>January 2, 2012</u>	Winter Classic	<u>Citizens Bank Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</u>	<u>New York Rangers</u>	<u>Philadelphia Flyers</u>	3–2	46,967
<u>January 1, 2014</u>		<u>Michigan Stadium, Ann Arbor, Michigan</u>	<u>Toronto Maple Leafs</u>	<u>Detroit Red Wings</u>	3–2 (SO)	105,491
<u>January 25, 2014</u> ^[37]	Stadium Series	<u>Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles, California</u>	<u>Anaheim Ducks</u>	<u>Los Angeles Kings</u>	3–0	54,099

Date	Event	Site	Away team	Home team	Score	Attendance
<u>January 26, 2014</u> ^[38]		<u>Yankee Stadium, New York, New York</u>	<u>New York Rangers</u>	<u>New Jersey Devils</u>	7–3	50,105
<u>January 29, 2014</u> ^[38]				<u>New York Islanders</u>	2–1	50,027
<u>March 1, 2014</u> ^[39]		<u>Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois</u>	<u>Pittsburgh Penguins</u>	<u>Chicago Blackhawks</u>	5–1	62,921 ^[40]
<u>March 2, 2014</u> ^[39]	Heritage Classic	<u>BC Place, Vancouver, British Columbia</u>	<u>Ottawa Senators</u>	<u>Vancouver Canucks</u>	4–2	54,194
<u>January 1, 2015</u> ^[39]	Winter Classic	<u>Nationals Park, Washington, D.C.</u>	<u>Chicago Blackhawks</u>	<u>Washington Capitals</u>	3–2	42,832
<u>February 21, 2015</u>	Stadium Series	<u>Levi's Stadium, Santa Clara, California</u>	<u>Los Angeles Kings</u>	<u>San Jose Sharks</u>	2–1	70,205
<u>January 1, 2016</u>	Winter Classic	<u>Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts</u>	<u>Montreal Canadiens</u>	<u>Boston Bruins</u>	5–1	67,246
<u>February 21, 2016</u>	Stadium Series	<u>TCF Bank Stadium, Minneapolis, Minnesota</u>	<u>Chicago Blackhawks</u>	<u>Minnesota Wild</u>	6–1	50,426
<u>February 27, 2016</u>		<u>Coors Field, Denver, Colorado</u>	<u>Detroit Red Wings</u>	<u>Colorado Avalanche</u>	5–3	50,095
<u>October 23, 2016</u>	Heritage Classic	<u>Investors Group Field, Winnipeg, Manitoba</u>	<u>Edmonton Oilers</u>	<u>Winnipeg Jets</u>	3–0	33,240
<u>January 1, 2017</u>	Centennial Classic	<u>BMO Field, Toronto, Ontario</u>	<u>Detroit Red Wings</u>	<u>Toronto Maple Leafs</u>	5–4 (OT)	40,818 ^[41]
<u>January 2, 2017</u>	Winter Classic	<u>Busch Stadium, St. Louis, Missouri</u>	<u>Chicago Blackhawks</u>	<u>St. Louis Blues</u>	4–1	46,556
<u>February 25, 2017</u>	Stadium Series	<u>Heinz Field, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</u>	<u>Philadelphia Flyers</u>	<u>Pittsburgh Penguins</u>	4–2	67,318
<u>December 16, 2017</u>	NHL 100 Classic	<u>TD Place Stadium,</u>	<u>Montreal Canadiens</u>	<u>Ottawa Senators</u>	0–3	33,959

Date	Event	Site	Away team	Home team	Score	Attendance
		<u>Ottawa, Ontario</u>				
<u>January 1, 2018</u>	Winter Classic	<u>Citi Field, New York, New York</u>	<u>New York Rangers</u>	<u>Buffalo Sabres</u>	3–2 (OT)	41,821
<u>March 3, 2018</u>	Stadium Series	<u>Navy–Marine Corps Memorial Stadium, Annapolis, Maryland</u>	<u>Toronto Maple Leafs</u>	<u>Washington Capitals</u>	2–5	29,516
<u>January 1, 2019</u>	Winter Classic	<u>Notre Dame Stadium, Notre Dame, Indiana</u>	<u>Boston Bruins</u>	<u>Chicago Blackhawks</u>		
<u>February 23, 2019</u>	Stadium Series	<u>Lincoln Financial Field, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</u>	<u>Pittsburgh Penguins</u>	<u>Philadelphia Flyers</u>		

Outdoor games by team

Team	Number of appearances	'Home' appearances	'Visitor' appearances	Appearances	Wins	Losses
<u>Anaheim Ducks</u>	1	0	1	<u>2014</u>	1	0
<u>Boston Bruins</u>	3	2	1	<u>2010, 2016, 2019</u>	1	1
<u>Buffalo Sabres</u>	2	2	0	<u>2008, 2018</u>	0	2
<u>Calgary Flames</u>	1	1	0	<u>2011</u>	1	0
<u>Chicago Blackhawks</u>	6	3	3	<u>2009, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019</u>	1	4
<u>Colorado Avalanche</u>	1	1	0	<u>2016</u>	0	1
<u>Detroit Red Wings</u>	4	1	3	<u>2009, 2014, 2016, 2017</u>	2	2
<u>Edmonton Oilers</u>	2	1	1	<u>2003, 2016</u>	1	1
<u>Los Angeles Kings</u>	2	1	1	<u>2014, 2015</u>	1	1
<u>Minnesota Wild</u>	1	1	0	<u>2016</u>	1	0
<u>Montreal Canadiens</u>	4	0	4	<u>2003, 2011, 2016, 2017</u>	2	2

Team	Number of appearances	'Home' appearances	'Visitor' appearances	Appearances	Wins	Losses
<u>New Jersey Devils</u>	1	1	0	<u>2014</u>	0	1
<u>New York Islanders</u>	1	1	0	<u>2014</u>	0	1
<u>New York Rangers</u>	4	N/A*	4	<u>2012</u> , <u>2014</u> (2 games), <u>2018</u>	4	0
<u>Ottawa Senators</u>	2	1	1	<u>2014</u> , <u>2017</u>	2	0
<u>Philadelphia Flyers</u>	4	2	2	<u>2010</u> , <u>2012</u> , <u>2017</u> , <u>2019</u>	0	3
<u>Pittsburgh Penguins</u>	5	2	3	<u>2008</u> , <u>2011</u> , <u>2014</u> , <u>2017</u> , <u>2019</u>	2	2
<u>San Jose Sharks</u>	1	1	0	<u>2015</u>	0	1
<u>St. Louis Blues</u>	1	1	0	<u>2017</u>	1	0
<u>Toronto Maple Leafs</u>	3	1	2	<u>2014</u> , <u>2017</u> , <u>2018</u>	2	1
<u>Vancouver Canucks</u>	1	1	0	<u>2014</u>	0	1
<u>Washington Capitals</u>	3	2	1	<u>2011</u> , <u>2015</u> , <u>2018</u>	3	0
<u>Winnipeg Jets</u>	1	1	0	<u>2016</u>	0	1

Note: This table excludes exhibition games with non-NHL opponents (such as those in 1954 and 1956) and pre-season games (such as the one in 1991).

(*) The Rangers have officially been designated as the away team for the three games held in New York City to comply with a property tax exemption for Madison Square Garden that requires the Rangers to play all of their home games at the arena.

Italics indicate a future outdoor game.

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