

= Stadium of Light =

The Stadium of Light is an all-seater football stadium in Sunderland, England and home to Sunderland A.F.C. With space for 49,000 spectators, the Stadium of Light has the sixth-largest capacity of any English football stadium and the fifth-largest Premier League stadium. The stadium primarily hosts Sunderland A.F.C. home matches. According to Sir Bob Murray then chairman of Sunderland F.C. the name Stadium of Light " was chosen for two main reasons ; namely as an ever-lasting tribute to the region's mine workers and proud industrial heritage and in the expectation that the stadium would be a guiding light in the future . The name is very much a symbolic link to the thousands of miners and Sunderland supporters that emerged from the darkness and into the light every day when they returned to the surface after working in the mine . " A Davy lamp monument stands at the entrance to reflect the coal mining industry that brought prosperity to the town .

As well as hosting Sunderland games , the stadium has hosted three matches for the England national football team , as well as one England under-20 football team match . With an original capacity of 42,000 , it was expanded in 2002 to seat 49,000 , and its simple design is expected to allow for redevelopments up to an eventual capacity of 66,000 . The attendance record at the Stadium of Light is 48,353 set on 13 April 2002 , when Sunderland played Liverpool with the visitors running out 1-0 winners . Along with hosting football matches , the stadium has played host to performers such as Beyoncé , Rihanna , Oasis , Take That , Kings of Leon and Coldplay . The ground also holds conference and banqueting suites , the Black Cats Bar , and a club shop selling Sunderland merchandise .

= = Planning and construction = =

Following the release of the Taylor Report in January 1990 , Sunderland was obliged to make plans to turn their Roker Park home into an all-seater stadium . Roker Park was a ground that mainly consisted of standing terraces , and if converted into all-seater it would have held far fewer spectators than before . Enclosed by residential streets on all sides , expansion was practically impossible . So , by 1991 , Sunderland chairman Bob Murray began investigating the possibility of relocation to a new stadium .

The front-runner that emerged was a proposed stadium located on an area of land adjacent to the Nissan car plant . The 49,000 all-seater ground was labelled " the Wembley of the North " ? a capacity that not even Manchester United's Old Trafford exceeded until 1996 . The plans did not come to fruition . Shortly after the plans were announced in 1992 , Nissan launched an official objection , ultimately forcing Sunderland to abandon the idea . In 1995 , Sunderland put forward a plan to build a stadium on the former site of Wearmouth Colliery , which had closed in December 1993 . The area , on the north bank of the River Wear in the Sheepfolds district of Sunderland , was only a few hundred yards from Roker Park , and close to the centre of the city .

In 1993 , Sunderland's planned new stadium was on the shortlist for Euro 96 venues , as England had been named as hosts of the competition in May 1992 . However , it soon became clear that a new stadium in Sunderland would not be ready in time for the tournament .

On 13 November 1995 , the Sunderland chairman Bob Murray announced that the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation had approved plans for Sunderland to build a 34,000 all-seater stadium on the site .

Ballast Wiltshier plc , a contracting company that had built the Amsterdam Arena , was contracted to build the stadium at an initial cost of £ 15 million . In June 1996 , as the planned capacity rose to more than 40,000 , construction work began . The capacity was revised again in early 1997 , and the stadium was completed on time , with a capacity of 42,000 . The stadium's design allows possible expansion of a further tier ; completed expansion of the whole upper tier would produce a capacity of 63,000 , although it is known that the stadium can expand to a maximum capacity of 84,000 , this would never be exercised as the demand for space is at a minimum . During construction , the stadium had not adopted an official name , and had been

known colloquially as the " Wearside Stadium " and " New Roker Park " . The name was eventually revealed as the Stadium of Light , a reference to a miner 's lamp (the stadium is built on the site of the old Wearmouth Colliery , and many Sunderland fans have worked in the region 's mines) . To emphasise the fact , a Davy lamp is located in front of the stadium 's ticket office , adjacent to the stadium . The stadium was opened on 30 July 1997 by Prince Andrew , Duke of York , with bands such as U2 , Status Quo , Upside Down and Kavana playing . To celebrate the opening of the stadium , Sunderland played a friendly against Ajax , which was drawn 0 ? 0 .

The North Stand was extended in 2000 to bring the capacity to 49 @, @ 000 , costing the club a further £ 7 million , making the final cost of the stadium £ 23 million . On 18 July 2006 , a statue of 1973 FA Cup Final winning manager Bob Stokoe was unveiled . At the end of season Football League awards , the Stadium of Light was named the Best Away Ground , with other contenders including Crewe Alexandra 's Alexandra Stadium and Plymouth Argyle 's Home Park . Sunderland celebrated the tenth anniversary of the stadium with a pre @-@ season friendly against Juventus on 6 August 2007 ; the game was drawn 1 ? 1 .

In November 2011 , the club announced that the away supporters ' section would be moved from the South Stand to the North Stand Upper from the beginning of the 2012 ? 13 season . As a result , minor modifications to the ground will be necessary .

In December 2014 construction work began on a new 141 room Hilton Garden Inn hotel outside of the ground . It is due to open in spring 2016 .

A proposed 6 @, @ 000 capacity fanzone outside the South East Corner of the stadium is currently in the planning stage .

= = Structure and facilities = =

The stadium is in the shape of a square bowl , and is separated into the West Stand , North Stand , East Stand (formerly the Vaux Stand , the Carling Stand , and Fosters Stand respectively) , and the South Stand (also known as the Metro FM Stand) . The West Stand includes the Premier Concourse which is the name of the upper tier , and a number of executive boxes . The North Stand also includes an upper tier , called the Strongbow Upper , which contained the exterior seating for the Black Cats Bar . When the away fans were relocated , the Black Cats Bar seating was relocated at the rear of the lower tier .

The pitch is several metres below the level of the ground outside the stadium . The pitch uses a lighting system from Stadium Grow Lighting to ensure the grass can grow at any time of year . The device controls various aspects of the pitch , including exposure to light , temperature , water , and air , to make the grass able to grow in any conditions . Away fans were seated in the west half of the South Stand when the ground opened in 1997 , but in 2012 , Ellis Short decided to move away fans to the Upper Tier of the North Stand The East Stand has the Sunderland emblem on the seats , while the North Stand has the slogan " Ha 'way The Lads " . The stadium also has a Davy lamp monument , and a statue of Bob Stokoe . The perimeter walls of the stadium incorporate a " Wall of Fame " feature , where names can be engraved into the bricks of the walls . The interior of the stadium holds a banqueting suite , which can seat from 460 to 600 people . The stadium also contains several conferencing suites , that can be hired for events .

= = International matches = =

As well as holding Sunderland games , the stadium has also hosted England matches . The stadium was one of several venues used as temporary home grounds for the England team while the redevelopment of Wembley Stadium took place . It hosted its first England game in 1999 , when they played Belgium in a friendly match , which England won 2 ? 1 . It played host to its first competitive England match on 2 April 2003 , when they played Turkey in a Euro 2004 qualifying match , which England won 2 ? 0 . The Stadium of Light also held an England under 20 match against Italy on 27 November 2002 , Italy beat England 5 ? 3 . On 10 June 2003 it hosted England ? s under @-@ 21 ? s 2004 UEFA European Under @-@ 21 Championship qualification Group 7

match against Slovakia ? s under @-@ 21 ? s . The hosts beat the visitors 2 ? 0 through Peter Dole?aj ? s fortieth minute own goal and Phil Jagielka ? s eighty third minute goal with 11 @,@ 223 in attendance .

On 4 March 2016 it was announced that the Stadium of Light would host England for a friendly against Australia on 27 May 2016 as part of their preparations for Euro 2016 . The match finished in a 2 @-@ 1 victory for the hosts , with goals from Marcus Rashford (on his international debut) , Wayne Rooney and an own goal from Eric Dier .

= = = Matches = = =

= = Other uses = =

= = = Concerts = = =

In October 2008 it was announced that the stadium would hold a concert on 10 June 2009 , featuring Oasis , with Kasabian , The Enemy and Reverend and the Makers as support acts , with the stadium housing roughly 60 @,@ 000 fans . On 5 and 6 June 2009 Take That started their nationwide ' Circus ' tour at the Stadium of Light . Pink performed a sell out show at the stadium on 11 June 2010 , with support from VV Brown , Butch Walker and City & Colour .

Take That returned to the stadium along with Robbie Williams on 27 May 2011 , supported by Pet Shop Boys . On this occasion Take That began their Progress Live tour in Sunderland , making the Stadium of Light the first venue to hear Take That perform as a five since 1995 . Originally only two dates were announced , however due to huge demand from fans two further dates were added at the Stadium of Light . Kings of Leon played at the stadium on 17 June 2011 as part of their nationwide tour across Britain . During the summer of 2012 , Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band , Coldplay and the Red Hot Chili Peppers performed at the stadium . On 30 October 2012 , it was announced that Bon Jovi would play at the stadium during the summer of 2013 .

On 20 June 2013 Rihanna performed a sold out show at the stadium as part of the European leg of her Diamonds World Tour . Rihanna was scheduled to return to the stadium during her Anti World Tour , but the concert was cancelled .

On 28 June 2016 Beyoncé performed to a sold out show at the stadium as part of her The Formation World Tour .

= = = Sunderland University = = =

The Stadium of Light currently hosts the annual graduation ceremony for the students of the University of Sunderland . The stadium won the RSVP magazine 's Most creative use of a sporting venue award in 2007 for its usage as the university 's graduation site .

= = Records = =

The highest recorded league attendance at the Stadium of Light is 48 @,@ 353 set on 13 April 2002 for the Sunderland vs Liverpool game . The Stadium Attendance for non @-@ football games is around 60 @,@ 000 when Take That performed at Sunderland in 2009 . The lowest league attendance at the stadium was 22 @,@ 167 against Wigan Athletic on 2 December 2003 . The lowest ever attendance at the Stadium of Light was 11 @,@ 450 against Chester City in the League Cup 1st Round on 24 August 2004 . Sunderland won the match 3 ? 0 . Sunderland 's largest margin of victory at the stadium was a 7 ? 0 win over Oxford United during the 1998 ? 99 promotion season .

The highest seasonal average at the stadium since it was opened was 46 @,@ 790 in the 2000 ? 01 season while Sunderland were playing in the Premier League . The lowest average attendance

at the Stadium of Light was 27 @, @ 119 in the 2003 ? 04 season in Division One . The highest total seasonal attendance was recorded during the 1998 ? 99 season when the aggregate was 890 @, @ 660 in a season where Sunderland were First Division champions , and League Cup semi @-@ finalists . The lowest seasonal aggregate at the Stadium of Light was 623 @, @ 741 in the 2003 ? 04 season , the same season that the club were FA Cup and play off semi @-@ finalists .

= = Transport = =

Sunderland station , which is connected to London King 's Cross by services run by the Open Access operator Grand Central Railway , is located nearby to the stadium . The St Peter 's and Stadium of Light Metro stations were built as part of the Sunderland extension , both are quite near the stadium , though ironically St. Peter 's is a closer station to the ground than the Stadium of Light station . The Metro was extended into Sunderland in 2002 . A park and ride system is available on match days to allow spectators to park away from the stadium , and a new footbridge proposal has been put forward to link the stadium to the south bank of the river as part of the stadium park regeneration project .