

= Toyota Center =

Toyota Center is an indoor arena located in downtown Houston , Texas . It is named after the Japanese automobile manufacturer Toyota . The arena is home to the Houston Rockets of the National Basketball Association , the principal users of the building , and the former home of the Houston Aeros of the American Hockey League .

Rockets owner Leslie Alexander first began to request a new arena in 1995 , and attempted to release the Rockets from their lease at The Summit , which ran until 2003 . However , he was denied by arena owner Chuck Watson , then @-@ owner of the Aeros , who also wanted control of a new arena . The two sides agreed to equal control over an arena in a deal signed in 1997 , but the proposal was rejected by city voters in a 1999 referendum . It was not until the city and the Rockets signed an amended agreement in 2001 , excluding the Aeros , that the proposal was accepted .

Construction began in July 2001 , and the new arena was officially opened in October 2003 . The total costs were \$ 235 million , with the city of Houston paying the majority , and the Rockets paying for enhancements . Toyota paid US \$ 100 million for the naming rights .

= = History = =

In May 1995 , several Texas sports teams , including the Houston Rockets , proposed legislation that would dedicate state tax revenue to build new arenas . Although the bill was failed in the Texas House of Representatives , Rockets owner Leslie Alexander announced he would continue to study the possibility of constructing a new arena in downtown Houston , saying the 20 @-@ year @-@ old Summit arena was too outdated to be profitable . Although the Summit 's management said they could renovate the building for a small part of the cost of a new arena , the Rockets began talks with the city of Houston on a possible location for an arena , They also negotiated with Houston Aeros and Summit owner , Chuck Watson , to release them from their contract with the Summit , which ran until 2003 .

As the negotiations continued into 1996 , a panel appointed by Houston mayor Bob Lanier reported that building a new arena was " essential to keep pro sports in Houston " . After Watson rejected a contract buyout proposal of \$ 30 million , the Rockets filed a legal challenge against their lease , stating the " need to be able to buy out " of the lease . However , the city of Houston filed a counterclaim to force the Rockets to stay at the Summit , saying that if the Rockets did not honor their contract , then they might " have no incentive to honor any new agreement with the city of Houston to play in a new downtown sports arena " . The validity of the lease was eventually upheld , and in April 1997 , Lanier announced that the Rockets and Watson would have to agree to share control of the new arena equally , or lose access to it altogether . After both parties agreed to the terms , a bill that authorized increased taxes to pay for a new arena was signed into law in July , by then @-@ Governor George W. Bush .

However , after the National Hockey League decided not to consider Houston as a location for an expansion team because of the indecision over the new arena , Lanier said that he would not have a referendum in November . The Rockets began an appeal in January 1998 against the court order to stay at the Summit , but then dropped it in May , because they felt that a new arena would be ready by the time they finished their lease . In January 1999 , recently elected mayor Lee Brown guaranteed a referendum on the issue before the end of the year . After several months negotiating with the Harris County @-@ Houston Sports Authority , the Rockets finalized a deal to pay half of the constructions costs , and a referendum was set for November 2 . The deal was approved by Brown and the Houston City Council , but Watson started an opposition group against the referendum , saying the arena was " not in Houston 's interest " . On November 3 , the results of the referendum were announced , and the arena proposal was rejected by 54 % of voters . Alexander said " we never thought we would lose " and that they were " devastated by the loss " .

After the vote , NBA commissioner David Stern said " if there 's not a new building ... I think it 's certain that the team will be relocated . " The Houston Sports Authority had not planned to meet with the Rockets until after the 1999 ? 2000 NBA season ended , but after the Rockets began to talk to

other cities about relocation , they resumed talks in February 2000 . Although the Rockets continued to negotiate with Louisville , Kentucky , a funding plan for the arena in Houston was released in June . A final agreement was proposed on July 6 , and both the Rockets and mayor Brown agreed to the terms . After the city council approved the deal , the proposal was placed on the November referendum ballot . Leading up to the vote , the Rockets stressed that there would be " no new taxes of any kind " , although opponents said the new arena would raise energy consumption , and also contended that the public would pay for too much of the costs of the arena . Contributions for the campaign for the arena included donations of US \$ 400 @, @ 000 from Reliant Energy , and a total of \$ 590 @, @ 000 in loans and contributions from Enron and Ken Lay , who the Rockets said was a " tireless " force in the campaign . On November 8 , the arena was approved by 66 % of voters .

= = = Construction = = =

According to the agreement signed , the city of Houston bought the land for the arena and an adjoining parking garage , which was near the George R. Brown Convention Center , and paid for it by selling bonds and borrowing \$ 30 million . Morris Architects , designed the 750 @, @ 000 @-@ square @-@ foot (70 @, @ 000 m²) building , and Hunt Construction was contracted to build the arena . A building formerly owned by Houston Lighting and Power Company was demolished to make way for the arena , and two streets were closed for the duration of the construction . A groundbreaking ceremony was held on July 31 , 2001 , and construction continued for 26 months .

At the request of Alexander , the arena was built 32 feet (9 @. @ 8 m) below street level , so fans would not have to walk up stairs to reach their seats . To sink the arena , \$ 12 million was spent to excavate 31 @, @ 500 cubic yards of dirt over four months , which was the largest excavation in Houston history . Concrete was poured for the foundation throughout the summer of 2002 , and structural work began in October . The roof was set on in December , as work continued inside , with a peak workforce of 650 . In September 2003 , a ribbon @-@ cutting ceremony was held to mark the official opening of the arena . The total cost of construction was \$ 235 million , with the city paying \$ 182 million , and the Rockets adding \$ 43 million for additions and enhancements .

= = Arena Interior = =

The arena can seat 18 @, @ 055 for basketball , 17 @, @ 800 for ice hockey , and 19 @, @ 300 for concerts . The price for courtside seats to a Rockets game in the new arena were raised by as much as 50 % compared to prices in the team 's old home , while upper @-@ deck seat prices were lowered .

It has 103 luxury suites and 2 @, @ 900 club seats (Sections 105 @-@ 109 , Rockets Club West ; Sections 118 @-@ 122 , Rockets Club East) . The Rockets East & West Clubs feature upscale concessions , extra wide seats , full private bar featuring premium wine and beverage selections and concierge service . The adjacent 2 @, @ 500 @-@ space Toyota Tundra garage is connected to the arena by a private skybridge that can be accessed by Suite , Court @-@ side and Club Seat holders .

Additionally , the floor level features three separate private club lounges for access from court @-@ side seat holders and floor seat concert goers . Lexus Lounge and Woodforest Club are on the west side of the floor level and the Platinum Lounge is located on the east side of the floor level . All feature upscale amenities including multiple flat screen televisions , private bar , restrooms , and plush seating . The Lexus Lounge has its own pool tables and all three court @-@ side lounges feature numerous private court @-@ side suites .

Toyota Center also features the Red & White Wine Bistro , located on the lower suites level on the south side of the arena . The restaurant features a huge dining room , private bar , two twin 1 @, @ 500 bottle wine towers and views of the arena floor .

Levy Restaurants manages concession services at the arena , and offers fast food on the main concourses , while also catering a VIP restaurant for Suite and Club Seat holders . Alexander personally chose colors for the restaurant to help customers feel " warm and comfortable " , and

Rockets president George Postolos said that the Rockets looked "for a relationship with the people that attend events in our venue". Originally, a 40 feet (12 m) by 32 feet (9.8 m) centerhung video system from Daktronics, which has four main replay screens and eight other full @-@ color displays, hung from the ceiling of the arena, and had the highest @-@ resolution display of any North American sports facility. In 2012, the Toyota Center installed a larger, 4 panel scoreboard, similar to the one installed at AT & T Stadium, measuring 58 feet (18 m) by 25 feet (7.6 m) on the sidelines, and 25 feet (7.6 m) by 25 feet (7.6 m) on the ends, making it the largest such video board in an indoor arena. This larger scoreboard was installed by Panasonic and made its debut during the Houston Rockets 2012 @-@ 13 season opener. The arena has two additional displays located at each end of the court, and a "state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art" audio system.

Another amenity new to the Toyota Center in the 2012 ? 2013 season is Wi @-@ Fi. Designed by SignalShare and implemented by OfficeConnect.net, the Wi @-@ Fi network is deployed throughout the arena and allows high @-@ speed internet access during events. Its implementation was timed to be ready for the NBA All Stars Game.

== Sponsorship ==

In July 2003, the arena was named the Toyota Center, after Toyota agreed to pay \$ 100 million for naming rights, the fourth @-@ largest deal for a sports arena in the United States at the time. The logo of the company was placed on the roof of the building, as well in other prominent places inside the arena, and the company was given "a dominant presence" in commercials shown during broadcasts of games played in the arena.

== Seating Capacity ==

The seating capacity for basketball games has been as follows:

17 @, @ 982 (2003 ? 2007)

18 @, @ 043 (2007 ? 2012)

18 @, @ 023 (2012 ? 2014)

18 @, @ 055 (2014 ? present)

== Events ==

The arena's first event was a Fleetwood Mac concert on October 6, 2003, and the first Rockets game at the Toyota Center was against the Denver Nuggets on October 30.

In its first year, the total attendance for events at the arena exceeded 1 @. @ 5 million. The arena was also the winner of the Allen Award for Civic Enhancement by Central Houston, the "Rookie of the Year" award by the Harlem Globetrotters, and a finalist for Pollstar Magazine's "Best New Concert Venue" award. The current attendance for a concert held at the arena was set on November 20, 2008, when Metallica played to a sold out crowd during the Death Magnetic tour. The record for a basketball game is 18 @, @ 583, set on March 26, 2010, when the Los Angeles Lakers defeated the Rockets 109 ? 101.

The R & B girl group Destiny's Child performed at the Toyota Center on August 20, 2005, with the Destiny Fulfilled ... and Lovin' It Tour. Beyoncé, as a solo artist, performed at the arena many times: on July 14, 2007, with The Beyoncé Experience Tour; on July 4, 2009, with the I Am ... World Tour; on July 15, 2013, and once more on December 10, 2013, with The Mrs. Carter Show World Tour. Beyoncé was born in Houston, on September 4, 1981.

American singer / songwriter, Pink performed at the arena for the first time on the 24th of September, 2009 on her Funhouse Tour. She performed at the arena again on the 21st of February on her The Truth About Love Tour.

Lady Gaga also performed at the arena for the first time on her The Monster Ball Tour. She also performed at the Toyota Center for The Born This Way Ball Tour and performed for her world tour,

ArtRave : The Artpop Ball on July 16 , 2014 .

Miley Cyrus performed in the arena during her 2014 Bangerz Tour after previously performing in the arena during her 2007 ? 2008 Best of Both Worlds Tour on November 11 , 2007 . Cyrus has performed 2 total sold @-@ out nights in the arena since 2007 .

In 2007 , 2011 , 2013 , and 2015 , it played host to a UFC event .

The arena hosted the 9th Annual Latin Grammy Awards on November 13 , 2008 . It also held the 2009 WWE Hall of Fame induction ceremony , the night before WrestleMania XXV took place at NRG Stadium and , also held WWE No Mercy 2005 , WWE Vengeance 2007 and WWE TLC : Tables , Ladders & Chairs two times , in 2010 and 2013 . On September 20 , 2015 , the arena hosted WWE Night of Champions .

On August 21 , 2010 , it played host to Strikeforce : Houston .

Many concerts have also taken place in the Toyota Center , like Prince , Duran Duran on their Astronaut tour , Janet Jackson , Madonna on her MDNA Tour , Red Hot Chili Peppers , Gloria Estefan , Muse , Rihanna , Miley Cyrus , Bruno Mars , Christina Aguilera , P ! nk , Andrea Bocelli , Roger Waters , High School Musical The Concert , Aerosmith , Guns N ' Roses , Coldplay , RBD , Laura Pausini , Alanis Morissette , Matchbox Twenty , Fiona Apple , Nickelback , Depeche Mode , Bon Jovi , Enrique Iglesias , Katy Perry , Drake , Shakira , Britney Spears , Kanye West and Jay @-@ Z with their successful Watch The Throne Tour , Justin Bieber , Taylor Swift , The Rolling Stones , One Direction , Carrie Underwood on her Storyteller Tour , and Rammstein .

On February 19 , 2016 , it played host to Bellator MMA event Bellator 149 : Shamrock vs. Gracie III . The event featured a double main event featuring heavyweights Kimbo Slice vs. Dada 5000 , and light heavyweights Ken Shamrock vs. Royce Gracie . Bellator 149 had a live attendance record of 13 @, @ 209 ; and a near \$ 1.2M gate at the Toyota Center . Thus making Bellator 149 the largest attended show in Bellator MMA history .

Passion Conferences has been held in the Toyota Center in 2014 , 2015 , and will be held there in 2016 as well . The conference draws around 20 @, @ 000 people with multiple other gatherings held in Atlanta .