

= Three Rivers Stadium =

Three Rivers Stadium was a multi @-@ purpose stadium located in Pittsburgh , Pennsylvania from 1970 to 2000 . It was home to the Pittsburgh Pirates of Major League Baseball (MLB) and the Pittsburgh Steelers of the National Football League (NFL) .

Built as a replacement for Forbes Field , which opened in 1909 , the US \$ 55 million (\$ 354 @.@ 9 million today) multi @-@ purpose facility was designed to maximize efficiency . Ground was broken in April 1968 and an oft behind @-@ schedule construction plan lasted for 29 months . The stadium opened on July 16 , 1970 when the Pirates played their first game . In the 1971 World Series , Three Rivers Stadium hosted the first World Series game played at night . The following year the stadium was the site of the Immaculate Reception . The final game in the stadium was won by the Steelers on December 16 , 2000 . Three Rivers Stadium also hosted the Pittsburgh Maulers of the United States Football League and the University of Pittsburgh Panthers football team for a single season each .

After its closing , Three Rivers Stadium was imploded in 2001 , and the Pirates and Steelers each moved into newly built stadiums : PNC Park and Heinz Field , respectively .

= = History = =

= = = Planning and construction = = =

A proposal for a new sports stadium in Pittsburgh was first made in 1948 ; however , plans did not attract much attention until the late 1950s . The Pittsburgh Pirates played their home games at Forbes Field , which opened in 1909 , and was the second oldest venue in the National League (Philadelphia 's Connie Mack Stadium was oldest , having opened only two months earlier than Forbes) . The Pittsburgh Steelers , who had moved from Forbes Field to Pitt Stadium in 1964 , were large supporters of the project . For their part , according to longtime Pirates announcer Bob Prince , the Pirates wanted a bigger place to play in order to draw more revenue .

In 1958 , the Pirates sold Forbes to the University of Pittsburgh for \$ 2 million (\$ 16 @.@ 4 million today) . The university wanted the land for expanded graduate facilities . As part of the deal , the university leased Forbes back to the Pirates until a replacement could be built . An early design of the stadium included plans to situate the stadium atop a bridge across the Monongahela River . It was to call for a 70 @,@ 000 seat stadium with hotels , marina and even 100 lane bowling alley . Plans of the " Stadium over the Monongahela " were eventually not pursued . A design was presented in 1958 which featured an open center field design ? through which fans could view Pittsburgh 's " Golden Triangle " . A site on the city 's Northside was approved on August 10 , 1958 , due to land availability and parking space , the latter of which had been a problem at Forbes Field . The same site had hosted Exposition Park , which the Pirates had left in 1909 . The stadium was located in a hard @-@ to @-@ access portion of downtown , making it hard in later years to get in before games and leave after games . Political debate continued over the North Side Sports Stadium and the project was often behind schedule and over @-@ budget . Arguments were made by commissioner (and former Allegheny County Medical Examiner) Dr. William McClland that the Pirates and Steelers should fund a higher percentage of the \$ 33 million project (\$ 240 @.@ 7 million today) . Due to lack of support , however , the arguments faded .

Ground for Three Rivers Stadium was broken on April 25 , 1968 . Due to the Steelers ' suggestions , the stadium 's design was changed to enclose center field . Construction continued , though it became plagued with problems such as thieves stealing materials from the building site . In November 1969 , Arthur Gratz asked the city for an additional \$ 3 million (\$ 19 @.@ 4 million today) , which was granted . In January 1970 , the opening target date of the stadium was set for May 29 ; however , because of a failure to install the lights on schedule , opening day was pushed back to July 16 . The stadium was named in February 1969 for to its location at the confluence of the Allegheny River and Monongahela River , which forms the Ohio River . It would sometimes be called

The House That Clemente Built after Pirates ' right @-@ fielder Roberto Clemente .

= = = Opening Day = = =

In their first game after the All @-@ Star Break in 1970 , the Pirates opened the stadium against Cincinnati on Thursday , July 16 . The team donned new uniform designs for the first time that day , a similar plan was for new " mini @-@ skirts " for female ushers however the ushers union declined the uniform change for female workers . A parade was held before opening ceremonies . The expansive parking lot , both Pirates and Steelers team offices , the Allegheny Club (VIP Club) and the press boxes and facilities were not opened until weeks later due to extended labor union work stoppages . Instead of allowing cars to park , the team instructed fans to park downtown and walk to the stadium over bridges or take shuttle buses . The opening of Three Rivers marked the first time the Pirates allowed beer to be sold in the stands during a game since the early 1960s .

= = = Design and alterations = = =

Three Rivers Stadium was similar in design to other stadiums built in the 1960s and 1970s , such as Riverfront Stadium , the Houston Astrodome , and Busch Memorial Stadium , which were designed as multi @-@ purpose facilities to maximize efficiency . Due to their similar design these stadiums were nicknamed " cookie @-@ cutter " or " concrete doughnuts " ballparks . The sight lines were more favorable to football ; almost 70 % of the seats in the baseball configuration were in fair territory . It originally seated 50 @, @ 611 for baseball , but several expansions over the years brought it to 58 @, @ 729 . In 1993 , the Pirates placed tarps on most of the upper deck to create a better baseball atmosphere , reducing capacity to 47 @, @ 687 .

Three Rivers was the first multi @-@ purpose stadium and the first in either the NFL or MLB to feature Tartan Turf , which was installed from opening day . It was replaced by a number of other surfaces including AstroTurf . It had a dirt skin infield on the basepaths for baseball through 1972 , until converted to " sliding pits " at the bases for 1973 . Renovations for the start of the 1983 baseball season included the initial placement of AstroTurf , the center field Stewart @-@ Warner scoreboard being removed and replaced with new seating ? while a new Diamond Vision scoreboard with a White Way messageboard was installed at the top of the center field upper deck ? and the outfield fence being painted blue . The field originally used " Gamesaver vacuum vehicles " to dry the surface , though they were replaced by an underground drainage system .

In 1975 , the baseball field 's outfield fences were moved ten feet (3 m) closer to home plate , in an attempt to boost home run numbers . The bullpens were moved to multiple locations throughout the stadium 's history ; however , their first position was also their final one ? beyond the right @-@ field fence . A Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette story in 1970 stated that the new stadium boasted 1 @, @ 632 floodlight bulbs .

Due to Three Rivers Stadium 's multi @-@ purpose design , bands including Led Zeppelin , Pink Floyd , The Rolling Stones , and The Who hosted concerts at the venue . On August 11 , 1985 , Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band hosted the largest concert in Pittsburgh history , when they performed for 65 @, @ 935 on @-@ lookers . And in 1992 , the Pittsburgh Penguins celebrated their second Stanley Cup victory at the Stadium . The stadium hosted various Jehovah 's Witnesses conventions , including international conventions in 1973 and 1978 , and a centennial conference in 1984 . A Billy Graham Crusade took place at Three Rivers in June , 1993 . The venue also served as the premiere of the 1994 Disney film Angels in the Outfield which , despite being based around the then @-@ Disney owned California Angels , paid homage to the original 1951 film , which featured the Pirates in " heavenly " need .

Three Rivers Stadium had a beverage contract with Coca @-@ Cola throughout its history . It was during the Steelers ' stay in Three Rivers that the now famous " Mean Joe " Greene Coke commercial aired , leading to a longstanding relationship between the two . When Heinz Field opened , Coca @-@ Cola also assumed the beverage contract for that stadium (the Pirates signed a deal with Pepsi for PNC Park before signing with Coke again in 2014) , and also became the

primary sponsor for the Steelers ' own hall of fame , the Coca @-@ Cola Great Hall . After the initial 10 @-@ year contract expired , Heinz Field contracted with Pepsi for exclusive pouring rights , breaking a 50 @-@ year tradition with the Steelers .

= = = Demolition = = =

In September 1991 , planning began to build a new baseball park for the Pittsburgh Pirates . As talks continued , a proposal to re @-@ model Three Rivers Stadium into a full @-@ time football stadium was made . However , Steelers ownership did not support the idea , stating that a new venue would be needed for the franchise to remain competitive . On July 9 , 1998 , the Allegheny Regional Asset District board approved an \$ 809 million plan which would fund the Pirates ' PNC Park and the Steelers ' Heinz Field . Ground was broken for the new stadiums in 1999 . On October 1 , 2000 , the Pirates were defeated 10 ? 9 by the Chicago Cubs in their final game at Three Rivers Stadium . After the game , former Pirate Willie Stargell threw out the ceremonial last pitch . Two months later on December 16 , 2000 , the Steelers concluded play at Three Rivers Stadium , with a 24 @-@ 3 victory over the Washington Redskins .

Three Rivers Stadium was imploded on February 11 , 2001 at 8 : 03 a.m. on a chilly 21 ° F (? 6 ° C) day . Over 20 @,@ 000 people viewed the implosion from Point State Park . Another 3 @,@ 000 @-@ 4 @,@ 000 viewing from atop Mount Washington and an uncounted number of people viewed the demolition from various high points across the city . Mark Loizeaux of Controlled Demolition , Inc. pushed the button that set off the 19 @-@ second implosion , while Elizabeth and Joseph King pushed the " ceremonial old fashioned dynamite plunger " . The demolition cost \$ 5 @.@ 1 million and used 4 @,@ 800 pounds of explosive . With the newly constructed Heinz Field only 80 feet away , effects from the blast were a concern . Doug Loizeaux , vice president of Controlled Demolition , Inc. , was happy to report that there was no debris within 40 feet of Heinz Field .

At the time of the demolition , Three Rivers stadium still had \$ 27 @.@ 93 million in debt (\$ 37 @.@ 3 million today) , some of it from the original construction but the rest from renovations in the mid @-@ 1980s , bringing more criticism to the public funding of sports stadiums . The debt was finally retired by 2010 .

Like most stadiums demolished during this time whose replacements were located nearby (including the Civic Arena over a decade later) , the site of Three Rivers Stadium mostly became a parking lot . Much like the Pittsburgh Penguins would do with the site of Civic Arena , the Steelers retained development rights to the site of Three Rivers , and would later build Stage AE on portions of the site , as well as an office building that hosts the studios for Root Sports Pittsburgh , the headquarters of StarKist Tuna , and the regional headquarters of Del Monte Foods . On December 23 , 2012 , on the 40th anniversary of the Immaculate Reception , the Steelers unveiled a monument at the exact spot where Franco Harris made the reception in the parking lot . In 2015 , the Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette moved into a new office building also built on a portion on the site after 53 years in the former Pittsburgh Press building and more than two centuries in Downtown .

In 2011 , the Pittsburgh Tribune Review reported that the Three Rivers Stadium website was still active , 11 years after the facility 's demolition . In 2015 , the newspaper revisited the issue and reported again that the website remained active , 14 years after demolition .

= = Seating capacity = =

= = = Baseball = = =

50 @,@ 500 (1970)

50 @,@ 235 (1971 ? 1978)

50 @,@ 364 (1979)

50 @,@ 230 (1980)

54 @,@ 598 (1981 ? 1982)

54 @, @ 490 (1983)
58 @, @ 365 (1984)
58 @, @ 429 (1985)
58 @, @ 437 (1986 ? 1987)
58 @, @ 727 (1988 ? 1989)
58 @, @ 729 (1990 ? 1992)
47 @, @ 952 (1993 ? 2000)

= = = Football = = =

50 @, @ 350 (1970 ? 1979)
54 @, @ 000 (1980 ? 1982)
59 @, @ 000 (1983 ? 1990)
59 @, @ 600 (1991 ? 2000)

= = Stadium usage = =

= = = Panthers = = =

The Pitt Panthers played at Three Rivers Stadium on multiple occasions . The Panthers played a full home schedule here during the 2000 season . The Panthers went 7 @-@ 3 in the stadium . They played here in the following games :

1975 : # 10 Penn State 7 vs # 17 Pitt Panthers 6
1976 : Penn State 7 vs # 1 Pitt Panthers 24
1982 : # 5 North Carolina 6 vs # 1 Pitt Panthers 7
1998 : West Virginia 52 vs Pitt Panthers 14
2000 : Kent State 7 vs Pitt Panthers 30
2000 : Penn State 0 vs Pitt Panthers 12
2000 : Rutgers 17 vs Pitt Panthers 29
2000 : Boston College 26 vs Pitt Panthers 42
2000 : North Carolina 20 vs Pitt Panthers 17
2000 : West Virginia 28 vs Pitt Panthers 38

= = = Pirates = = =

Three Rivers Stadium opened on July 16 , 1970 , but the Pirates lost 3 ? 2 to the Cincinnati Reds in front of 48 @, @ 846 spectators . The first pitch was thrown by Dock Ellis ? a strike ? to Ty Cline . The first hit in the stadium was by Pittsburgh 's Richie Hebner , in the bottom of the first inning . The Pirates lifted their local blackout policy so that local fans could see the inaugural game . The Pirates ' lowest season of attendance was 1985 , at an average of 9 @, @ 085 . The average attendance would peak in 1991 , when the Pirates averaged 25 @, @ 498 per game . Game one of the 1970 NLCS , at Three Rivers Stadium , was the first postseason baseball game to be played on an artificial surface . The following season , the Pirates advanced to the World Series against the Baltimore Orioles . Three Rivers Stadium hosted game four , in which the Pirates defeated the Orioles in the first night game in the history of the World Series . Pittsburgh hosted its third All @-@ Star Game in 1974 . The National League won the game 7 ? 2 and the Pirates ' Ken Brett was the winning pitcher . In 1979 , the Pirates again won a World Championship , yet again defeating the Baltimore Orioles in a seven @-@ game World Series . Games 3 , 4 and 5 of the Series were played at Three Rivers . 15 years later , the midsummer classic returned in 1994 . With 59 @, @ 568 in attendance , the largest crowd to ever attend a baseball game at the stadium , the National League won 8 @-@ 7 in the 10th inning . On July 6 , 1980 , the Pirates beat the Chicago Cubs 5 @-@ 4 in 20 innings ? the most innings ever played at the stadium . The longest game at the

stadium was played on August 6 , 1989 , when Jeff King hit a walk @-@ off home run 5 hours and 42 minutes into the 18 @-@ inning contest , as the Pirates once again beat the Cubs 5 @-@ 4 . On September 30 , 1972 , Pirates ' right @-@ fielder Roberto Clemente got his 3,000th hit at Three Rivers Stadium , three months before his death .

Bobby Bonilla hit one of the only 13 home runs ever hit into the upper deck of Three Rivers Stadium , and one of the six to the right @-@ field side . Willie Stargell is the all @-@ time leader in upper deck shots at the stadium , hitting four of the remaining five right @-@ field blasts ; Mark Whiten hit the other . The left @-@ field upper deck had been reached by Jeff Bagwell twice , and Bob Robertson , Greg Luzinski , Howard Johnson , Glenallen Hill and Devon White (his home run struck the facade) once each .

= = = Steelers = = =

The Pittsburgh Steelers played their first game in Three Rivers Stadium on September 20 , 1970 ? a 19 ? 7 loss to the Houston Oilers . Throughout their 31 seasons in Three Rivers Stadium , the Steelers posted a record of 182 ? 72 , including a 13 @-@ 5 playoff record , and defeated every visiting franchise at least once from the stadium 's opening to close , enjoying perfect records there against seven teams . The Steelers sold out every home game from 1972 through the closing of the stadium , a streak which continues through 2008 . The largest attendance for a football game was on January 15 , 1995 , when 61 @,@ 545 spectators witnessed the Steelers lose to the San Diego Chargers . On December 23 , 1972 , Three Rivers Stadium was site to the Immaculate Reception , which became regarded as one of the greatest plays in NFL history . Three Rivers Stadium hosted seven AFC Championship Games from 1972 to 1998 ; the Steelers won four . In the 1995 AFC Championship game , the Steelers ' Randy Fuller deflected a Hail Mary pass intended for Indianapolis Colts receiver Aaron Bailey as time expired , to send the franchise to their 5th Super Bowl . A Steelers symbol recognized worldwide , The Terrible Towel debuted on December 27 , 1975 at Three Rivers Stadium . The Steelers would move to Heinz Field after it was closed .

= = = Concerts = = =

August 24 , 1970 : Al Hirt and the Three Rivers New Orleans Music Festival

November 13 , 1971 : Three Dog Night

March 27 , 1972 : Black Sabbath

July 11 , 1972 : Alice Cooper (with Humble Pie and Two Steves . Uriah Heep and John Kay were originally scheduled to be part of the show . Concert was originally scheduled to take place on June 23 , 1972 but was rescheduled due to flooding .)

July 30 , 1972 : Three Dog Night (2nd tour)

July 13 , 1973 : Pittsburgh Jazz Festival (featuring Stevie Wonder , Ray Charles , B.B. King , and Charles Mingus)

July 14 , 1973 : Pittsburgh Jazz Festival (featuring Aretha Franklin , The Staple Singers , Walt Harper , Roland Kirk , David Newman , and Herbie Mann)

July 24 , 1973 : Led Zeppelin (Footage from this show was used in the 1976 film The Song Remains the Same) . Little Feat was the opening act .

August 24 , 1973 : The Allman Brothers Band

July 5 , 1974 : Eric Clapton (with The Band and Todd Rundgren)

July 15 , 1974 : Jackson 5

August 31 , 1974 : Doobie Brothers (with Chicago and The Ozark Mountain Daredevils . Lynyrd Skynyrd was originally scheduled to perform but cancelled .)

June 20 , 1975 : Pink Floyd

July 19 , 1975 : World Series of Rock (featuring Bachman ? Turner Overdrive , Johnny Winter , Dave Mason , Foghat , Styx , and Kansas)

June 12 , 1976 : ZZ Top and Aerosmith

July 24 , 1976 : The Eagles , Fleetwood Mac , and Boz Scaggs

August 14 , 1976 : The Beach Boys , Peter Frampton , and Gary Wright
August 26 , 1978 : The Beach Boys , The Steve Miller Band , Jan and Dean , and Sweet Breeze
July 30 , 1983 : Simon and Garfunkel
May 27 , 1985 : " Explosion of Sound " with The Marshall Tucker Band and The Outlaws
August 11 , 1985 : Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band
May 24 , 1987 : Genesis
October 13 , 1987 : U2
May 30 , 1988 : Pink Floyd
June 15 , 1988 : Monsters of Rock Tour featuring Metallica , Dokken , Scorpions , Van Halen , and Kingdom Come .
July 16 , 1989 : The Who
September 6 , 1989 : The Rolling Stones
July 8 , 1990 : Grateful Dead
May 26 , 1992 : Genesis
July 26 , 1992 : Metallica and Guns N ' Roses on the Guns N ' Roses / Metallica Stadium Tour with Faith No More as their opening act .
August 25 , 1992 : U2
May 31 , 1994 : Pink Floyd
August 2 , 1994 : Elton John and Billy Joel
September 29 , 1994 : The Rolling Stones
June 30 , 1995 : Grateful Dead played their last Pittsburgh show .
August 15 , 1995 : The Beach Boys
May 22 , 1997 : U2
June 9 , 1999 : The George Strait Chevy Truck Music Festival featuring The Dixie Chicks , Tim McGraw , Billy Joel , Kenny Chesney , Jo Dee Messina , Mark Wills , and Asleep At The Wheel
July 3 , 2000 : Dave Matthews Band
July 16 , 2000 : ' N Sync ? Last concert ever at Three Rivers Stadium