

= 2008 NHL Winter Classic =

The 2008 NHL Winter Classic (known via corporate sponsorship as the AMP Energy NHL Winter Classic) an outdoor regular season National Hockey League (NHL) game played on January 1 , 2008 , at Ralph Wilson Stadium in Orchard Park , New York . The Pittsburgh Penguins defeated the Buffalo Sabres , 2 ? 1 , in a shootout , on a goal by captain Sidney Crosby . It was the first outdoor regular @-@ season professional ice hockey game to be played in the United States , and was sponsored by AMP Energy . It was the successor to the 2003 Heritage Classic , the NHL 's first regular @-@ season outdoor game , played in Edmonton , Alberta , Canada . The game was televised in the United States on NBC and in Canada on CBC and RDS . Due to the snowy conditions , the game was at the time colloquially referred to as the " Ice Bowl " by residents of the area and Sabres fans .

The game , which was played at a temporary ice rink built on the football field , set an NHL attendance record of 71 @,@ 217 . The Sabres held a Winter Classic " house party " at HSBC Arena during the game where another 11 @,@ 000 fans saw the game shown live on the arena 's video scoreboard with synched @-@ up audio from the team 's radio coverage . The Buffalo Sabres Alumni Hockey Team played a pre @-@ game at the HSBC Arena as part of the house party festivities . Buffalo Sabres anthem singer Doug Allen sang the Canadian national anthem , as is customary at Sabres home games . Irish tenor Ronan Tynan performed " God Bless America " before the game at the stadium .

The success of the event has led to subsequent outdoor hockey games being scheduled and helped establish the Winter Classic as an annual NHL tradition .

= = Preparations = =

Construction of the outdoor rink began on December 24 , the day after the Buffalo Bills played their last home game of the 2007 NFL season . It was built between the 16 @-@ yard lines of the football field , under the supervision of NHL facilities operations manager Dan Craig . Initially , six inches (150 mm) of the nine @-@ inch (230 mm) crown of the football field had to be leveled using styrofoam insulation . On top of the newly created flat surface , three inches (75 mm) of plywood with plastic covering were laid as a base for the necessary piping . At the same time the boards were being put in place , an inch of sand was spread amongst the piping and was then wet by a combination of hoses and timely rain so it could freeze into a rink overnight and be painted four days before the game . Another ¾ of an inch of ice was added to complete the playing surface .

After this experience , Commissioner Gary Bettman stated that the League would like more time to prepare the site for the next outdoor game . He also wanted to ensure that not too many outdoor games are held so the event can remain special .

= = Attendance = =

71 @,@ 217 people attended the game , setting an NHL attendance record . The former NHL record of 57 @,@ 167 was set at the Heritage Classic between the Montreal Canadiens and Edmonton Oilers in Edmonton , Alberta , on November 22 , 2003 . Georges Laraque and Ty Conklin are the only two players who have played in both the Heritage Classic and Winter Classic games . They both played for the Oilers and Penguins , respectively , for each game .

While it was the record for a professional game , it fell short of the then all @-@ time number of 74 @,@ 554 , which was set in " The Cold War " between the University of Michigan and Michigan State University on October 6 , 2001 . Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller and Penguins forward Adam Hall both played for Michigan State in that game .

Approximately 41 @,@ 000 tickets to the game were made available to the general public , selling out within 30 minutes of being made available on September 18 , 2007 . In the face of controversy about the quickness of ticket sales , an official spokesperson for the Sabres called it " a testament to how popular the Sabres are and how many people want to be part of the event . " However , many

Penguins fans were left out by not having the opportunity to purchase the tickets after they were made available to the city hosting the event , and they were frustrated by the lack of exclusivity for Penguins season @-@ ticket holders .

Terrence Pegula , who would go on to purchase the Sabres three years later , was among those in attendance . Also in attendance was game show host Pat Sajak , who spoke positively of his experience (although admitting that Ralph Wilson Stadium 's size was somewhat of a distraction from the game itself) .

= = Television and radio coverage = =

The game was televised in the United States on NBC and in Canada on CBC and RDS . Westwood One broadcast the game on radio , and XM Satellite Radio aired the game , as well . Some NBC affiliates in the United States decided instead to play the game on secondary channels often used for weather service . Therefore , in some markets , fans with satellite service with DirecTV or DISH Network were unable to watch the game . Despite this , and competing with broadcasts of college football bowl games (this was particularly noted in the Detroit , Michigan market , usually a strong market for hockey ratings , where the Wolverines were playing in the Capital One Bowl) , the game garnered a 2 @.@ 6 rating and 5 share , the highest rating for a regular season NHL game since 1996 , and the highest share since Wayne Gretzky 's final game in 1999 , in a near tie with second @-@ place CBS 's 2 @.@ 7 rating for Gator Bowl coverage . The production earned a 38 @.@ 1 rating in Buffalo and 17 @.@ 7 rating in Pittsburgh , to lead all markets .

Westwood One carried a nationwide radio broadcast of the game , as did each team 's local announcing team for local networks (Rick Jeanneret and Harry Neale for Buffalo , Mike Lange and Phil Bourque for Pittsburgh) .

NBC had an airplane flying overhead to provide bird 's @-@ eye views of the rink , including a live webstream from its camera throughout the game . The announcers stood in a constructed perch on the penalty box side of the rink , in front of the stadium stands . Mike Emrick , Eddie Olczyk and Darren Pang comprised the TV broadcast team for NBC , while Jim Hughson , Craig Simpson and Greg Millen called the game on CBC .

= = Pregame = =

Doug Allen sang the Canadian national anthem (O Canada) and Irish tenor Ronan Tynan performed " God Bless America " before the game . The U.S. national anthem (" The Star @-@ Spangled Banner ") was not performed .

= = Rule changes = =

The NHL also announced that several rule changes were in effect for this game , to nullify advantages to either team due to the weather conditions . The teams switched ends halfway through the third period . Play was interrupted exactly at the 10 : 00 minute mark , similar to the end of a period with a horn sounding , a Zamboni resurfacing the ice , and a faceoff following at center ice . The overtime period was similarly divided into two 2 : 30 segments . In the shootout , each goaltender was permitted to choose which goal to defend , and they each chose the same goal , towards the west side of the stadium .

= = Game summary = =

The teams wore vintage jerseys for the event , with the Penguins wearing powder blue jerseys for the first time since 1973 . The Sabres wore their old white jerseys , which they wore from 1978 to 1996 . The game was part of the regular 2007 ? 08 NHL season schedule , replacing a game that would have been held at HSBC Arena , the Sabres ' regular home . In addition , the goaltenders also dressed in vintage style , with Ty Conklin and Ryan Miller both wearing retro @-@ painted

masks . Ryan Miller also wore a hockey sock on top of his mask , which he changed during each intermission so he could auction all three of them off for charity along with his mask . Penguins backup Dany Sabourin wore a set of vintage @-@ styled pads but did not play .

Weather for the game was appropriate to the winter setting it was intended to evoke , with game @-@ time temperatures around the freezing mark and snow falling for much of the time , especially during the third period . The weather conditions made play somewhat more difficult for players but were well received by fans .

The Penguins registered 25 shots on goal , and the Sabres had 37 , dominating the second and overtime periods , leading those 14 ? 2 and 7 ? 0 , respectively . Each goalie allowed one goal in playing time not including the shootout , giving Conklin 36 saves for the Penguins , and Miller 24 for the Sabres .

== Scoring summary ==

Number in parenthesis represents the player 's total in goals or assists to that point of the season

== Penalty summary ==

== Three star selections ==

== Team rosters ==

^ Jocelyn Thibault dressed for the Buffalo Sabres as the back @-@ up goalie and did not enter the game . ^ Dany Sabourin dressed for the Pittsburgh Penguins as the back @-@ up goalie and did not enter the game .

== Scratches ==

Pittsburgh Penguins : # 10 Gary Roberts (injured)

Buffalo Sabres : # 4 Nolan Pratt (healthy) , # 21 Drew Stafford (concussion)

== Officials ==

Referees ? Marc Joannette , Don VanMassenhoven

Linesmen ? Brad Kovachik , Tim Nowak

== Future games ==

Due to the success of the Winter Classic and its predecessor , outdoor games have been held during subsequent seasons , and the Winter Classic has become an annual NHL tradition . The next Winter Classic was held on January 1 , 2009 , at Wrigley Field in Chicago , matching the Detroit Red Wings against the Chicago Blackhawks . Winter Classics have been held in every year since , except for 2013 , which was interrupted by the 2012 ? 2013 NHL lockout . Two Heritage Classics , one in 2011 and 2014 , have been held since . The league expanded its offerings of outdoor games with the introduction of the NHL Stadium Series in 2014 . Since the inaugural Winter Classic , the NHL has held 12 additional outdoor games .