

= Prenton Park =

Prenton Park is an association football stadium in Birkenhead , England . It is the home ground of the non @-@ league Tranmere Rovers F.C. and Liverpool F.C. Reserves . The club moved to the current Prenton Park in 1912 . The ground has had several rebuilds , with the most recent occurring in 1995 in response to the requirement of the Taylor Report to become all @-@ seater . Today 's stadium holds 16 @,@ 567 in four stands : the Kop , the Johnny King Stand , the Main Stand and the Cowshed (for away supporters) .

Attendances at the ground have fluctuated over its hundred @-@ year history . Its largest @-@ ever crowd was 24 @,@ 424 for a 1972 FA Cup match between Tranmere and Stoke City . In 2010 , an average of 5 @,@ 000 fans attended each home game .

= = History = =

Tranmere Rovers F.C. were formed in 1884 ; they played their first matches at Steeles Field in Birkenhead but , in 1887 , they bought a new site from Tranmere Rugby Club . The ground was variously referred to as the " Borough Road Enclosure " , " Ravenshaw 's Field " and " South Road " . The name " Prenton Park " was adopted in 1895 as a result of a suggestion in the letters page of the Football Echo . Not strictly within Prenton , it is likely that the name was chosen as the area was regarded as more upmarket than nearby Tranmere .

Because the land was required for housing and a school , Tranmere were forced to move and the name went with them . The present Prenton Park was opened by the Mayor of Birkenhead , Councillor George Proudman , on 9 March 1912 . Their first match was played against Lancaster Town in the Lancashire Combination . There were stands (also known as bleachers) on both sides of the pitch , a paddock and three open terraces , the general format which remained until 1994 .

Floodlights were installed in the ground in September 1958 . The supporters ' association raised the £ 15 @,@ 000 cost of the new lights . When manager Dave Russell joined the club in 1961 , one of his many influential changes was to take advantage of the lights , playing regular home games on Friday nights rather than the usual Saturday afternoon . This allowed supporters to watch Tranmere on Fridays and First Division sides Everton or Liverpool on Saturdays . The idea was successful and continued until the 1990s .

Over the years , various upgrades and repairs have been made to the stadium . By 1968 , the old wooden Main Stand was in poor condition and in need of replacement . At a cost of £ 80 @,@ 000 , today 's Main Stand was erected and opened by Minister for Sport and former referee Denis Howell . In 1979 , the terracing on the Cowshed and Paddock was concreted . The Tranmere suite was added to the Main Stand in 1988 , with further bars and executive suites added soon after .

Many improvements to the ground were driven by changes in legislation . In 1985 , the Safety of Sports Grounds Act led to a reduction in capacity from 18 @,@ 000 to 8 @,@ 000 . The Kop End was closed , and the Main Stand capacity was reduced by 3 @,@ 000 , because there were insufficient access points . £ 50 @,@ 000 was spent on safety work to maintain a capacity of 8 @,@ 000 , and the club were unable to afford any further refurbishment . But the biggest change of all took place during 1994 and 1995 . The Taylor Report suggested that all stadia in the top two divisions of English football should no longer permit standing . The club 's response was to redevelop three sides of the ground with entirely new all @-@ seater stands created ? the Borough Road Stand , the Cowshed and the new Kop . Capacity in the ground thus increased from 14 @,@ 200 to the 16 @,@ 567 of today . On 11 March 1995 , the new ground was officially opened at a cost of £ 3 @.@ 1 million .

In 2009 , Liverpool F.C. Reserves moved from the Racecourse Ground to Prenton Park . This ground continued to be their home for the 2011 ? 12 season .

= = Stands = =

=== Main Stand ===

The Main Stand is the oldest in Prenton Park , having been opened in December 1968 . It is also the largest , with a capacity of 5 @, @ 957 . A two tier stand , it is generally divided into three main sections . The lower tier consists of the Bebington End paddock (capacity 1 @, @ 150) and the Town End paddock (capacity 1 @, @ 209) , either side of the halfway line . The upper tier is simply referred to as the Main Stand (capacity 3 @, @ 598) .

The Main Stand houses the VIP area , directors box and various suites . The Tranmere suite was added to the Main Stand in 1988 , with the Dixie Dean suite , Bunny Bell bar and Dave Russell restaurant added soon after . The 40 @-@ year @-@ old structure is becoming increasingly expensive to repair .

=== Kop ===

The Bebington Kop , simply referred to as the Kop , is a large single @-@ tier , all @-@ seater stand with a capacity of 5 @, @ 696 . Completed in 1995 , it replaced the earlier open terrace (also called the Kop) which had stood behind the goal at the Bebington End . The Bebington Kop is also the biggest Kop stand in Non league football . Originally the Kop housed both home and away fans , split down the middle , and occasionally was handed entirely to the away fans . However , following the 2000 League Cup semi @-@ final against Bolton , when the Kop was given entirely to the home fans , a campaign was begun to claim the Kop as a home end . From the 2000 @-@ 01 season this became the case , with away fans housed in the Cowshed .

=== Johnny King Stand ===

Built in 1995 and formerly known as the Borough Road Stand , it was renamed in 2002 to recognise former Rovers manager John King . The stand runs along the Borough Road side of the pitch , and is a low @-@ rise seated stand with a capacity of 2 @, @ 414 .

=== Cowshed ===

The Cowshed houses away fans at Prenton Park , and has a capacity of 2 @, @ 500 . It has a slanted seating arrangement , caused by the main road running behind it . It historically housed the more vocal home fans , but was switched to away supporters around the start of the 21st century . Since the change , a bar and TV screens have been added to the stand .

=== Attendances ===

Prenton Park has seen the number of supporters rise and fall considerably over its hundred @-@ year history . Around 8 @, @ 000 visitors watched the first game at the stadium on 11 March 1912 , as Tranmere beat Lancaster Town 8 ? 0 . Early attendances varied from 5 @, @ 000 to 8 @, @ 000 , though , on Boxing Day 1921 , 11 @, @ 137 supporters came to see Tranmere take on Bolton Wanderers Reserves . Tranmere entered The Football League the next season , and 7 @, @ 011 watched their first game against Crewe Alexandra F.C .. There was an average of 6 @, @ 000 in attendance at home games , before the Football League was suspended as a result of the Second World War .

After the war , the number of supporters rose , and by the early 1960s this number had increased to highs of 12 @, @ 000 . Attendances began to fall towards the end of the 1960s ; this trend continued through the 1970s , though the decade did give Tranmere its largest @-@ ever crowd : 24 @, @ 424 on 5 February 1972 , for a fourth @-@ round FA Cup match against Stoke City . With today 's capacity of under 17 @, @ 000 , it is unlikely that this record attendance will ever be broken .

The 1980s saw the number of supporters falling to some of the ground 's lowest levels . The lowest ever attendance at Prenton Park was on 20 February 1984 , when only 937 supporters watched a 2

? 0 victory over Halifax Town . However , the decade also saw a high number of supporters in the ground for other reasons . In the Hillsborough disaster , 96 Liverpool F.C. fans lost their lives and , on 15 April 1989 , 12 @, @ 000 people attended a memorial service at Prenton Park .

Tranmere 's success in the 1990s led to improved attendances , rising to around 9 @, @ 000 per game . By 2010 , this had fallen to around 5 @, @ 000 per game ; however , 12 @, @ 249 supporters took advantage of an offer of free admission to watch a replayed match against Notts County F.C. , on 19 April 2011 . In the season 2011 ? 2012 , there were two £ 5 administration offers available ; one of them was on a Bank Holiday and the other was for a celebration of 100 years of Prenton Park 1912 ? 2012 with an attendance of 6 @, @ 824 , with many events on before and after the game and at half time .

= = Record games = =

= = = Tranmere v Oldham , 1935 = = =

On Boxing Day 1935 , Tranmere faced Oldham Athletic at Prenton Park in the Third Division North . Oldham had beaten Tranmere 4 ? 1 the previous day , but Tranmere won 13 ? 4 in the return fixture , including nine goals by Bunny Bell . At the time Bell 's feat was an individual record , but it stood for only four months before Joe Payne netted ten for Luton Town , on his debut against Bristol Rovers . However , the aggregate of 17 goals in one game remains a league record .

= = = Women 's FA Cup finals = = =

The only major finals to take place at Prenton Park were the Women 's FA Cup in 1991 and 1992 . The 1991 final was contested by Millwall Lionesses and Doncaster Belles . Millwall won the game 1 ? 0 in front of a crowd of 4 @, @ 000 . The game was broadcast live on Channel 4 . In 1992 , Doncaster Belles returned to beat Red Star Southampton 4 ? 0 .

= = = Shelbourne v Rangers , 1998 = = =

The only UEFA European Fixture to take place at Prenton Park was a UEFA Cup first qualifying round tie between Irish team Shelbourne and Scottish team Rangers , on 22 July 1998 . Due to fears of sectarian violence , and after discussions between the two clubs and UEFA , Prenton Park was chosen as the venue for the first leg , with Shelbourne as the home team . The match finished 3 ? 5 in favour of Rangers after Shelbourne (at the time an amateur side) had earlier taken a 3 ? 0 lead . As a result of this game , Rangers were fined 25 @, @ 000 Swiss Francs and warned by UEFA for their fans ' behaviour at the game .