



America's 100 most important sports venues



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11. Fenway Park

Location: Boston. Opened: 1912.
Capacity: 39,928.

Because it's the oldest ballpark in the major leagues and still among the best. Because it's where Babe Ruth pitched, Ted Williams hit, Carlton Fisk danced and Big Papi went yard. Because its Green Monster is the most famous wall outside of China. Because it is such a part of baseball and America that we all have heard the voice that commanded Ray Kinsella to visit it in "Field of Dreams." Because while the Yankees are tearing down their historic stadium, the Red Sox not only opted to keep theirs, they've improved it year by year. Because you can see the influence of its quirky architecture -- its angles, its walls -- in modern ballparks that were built 90 years later. Because it is baseball's official cathedral.

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Jim McIsaac/Getty Images

Built in 1912, Fenway Park and its odd angles remains baseball's cathedral.

12. Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, Los Angeles

Location: Los Angeles. Opened: 1923. Capacity: 93,607.

Because a stadium that calls itself a Coliseum better host events worthy of the title -- and it has. Because it has hosted a World Series and the first Super Bowl and two Olympics (top that, Minute Maid Park). Because it has been home to seven Heisman Trophy winners and 11 national champions. Because it has been the site of so many Hollywood endings that everyone from John Wayne (at USC) to Warren Beatty ("Heaven Can Wait") played football here, while Flash Gordon (1932 Olympic gold medalist Buster Crabbe) marched here.

13. Wrigley Field

Location: Chicago. Opened: 1914. Capacity: 41,118.

Because Wrigley is baseball's own little Way-Back Machine, a way to step into the past and remember what the game used to be like in our parents' time and our grandparents' time (not counting the beer prices). Because an afternoon in the bleachers is as quintessentially an American experience as a trip to the Grand Canyon or Disneyland. Because it is so stubbornly resists modern convention that there weren't lights until 1988 and there still isn't a replay board. Because if you don't like Wrigley, you might as well renounce your citizenship now.

14. Churchill Downs

Location: Louisville, Ky. Opened: 1875. Capacity: 165,000 (including infield and paddock).

Because it is so ingrained in American history that it was opened by Meriwether Lewis Clark Jr. just seven decades after his grandfather and namesake's famed expedition.

15. The U.S. Olympic training center

Location: Colorado Springs, Colo. Opened: 1978. Capacity: Not applicable.

Because this former Air Force base and NORAD headquarters is now where Olympic athletes train in six gymnasiums, a 45,000-square foot aquatic center, a velodrome, a shooting facility, a research center with a hyperbaric chamber that can simulate training conditions from sea level to 8,000 feet and, for the best ones, a Hall of Fame to honor their performances.

16. Caesars Palace

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moment in American sports than dotting the "i" in script Ohio at the Horseshoe, where six Heisman Trophy winners, plus track legend Jesse Owens, have run. (And because if we placed it any further lower than Michigan, there would be hell to pay.)



Brian Bahr/Getty Images

There are few experiences in sport like dotting the "i" in front of more than 100,000 fans.

29. Shea Stadium

Location: Queens. Opened: 1964.
Capacity: 57,333.

Because while it might have always played in Yankee Stadium's shadow, this stadium is where Broadway Joe, Tom Terrific and the Fab Four all played (as well as the Yankees in 1974-75). Because, with its dual baseball-football configurations, it helped usher in the multipurpose stadiums of the late '60s and early '70s.

30. The Metrodome

Location: Minneapolis. Opened: 1982. Capacity: 64,111.

Because as unloved and unappreciated as it is, the Metrodome is the only stadium to ever host a Super Bowl *and* a World Series *and* a Final Four. And because no one was complaining about the roof when Jack Morris took the mound for the 10th inning of Game 7 in 1991.

31. Rucker Park

Location: Harlem. Opened: 1956. Capacity: Not applicable.

Because not only is this the site of the best and most competitive pickup basketball in the world, it's the former site of the Polo Grounds.

32. Allen Fieldhouse

Location: Lawrence, Kan. Opened: 1955. Capacity: 16,300.

Because it is home to so storied a college basketball program (Wilt Chamberlain and Dean Smith both played at KU) that the only coach to have a losing record for Kansas is the very man who invented the game, James Naismith.

33. Autzen Stadium

Location: Eugene, Ore. Opened: 1967. Capacity: 59,000-plus.

Because this relatively intimate stadium not only is a great place to watch a game, its many perks (plasma screen TVs and internet ports at each locker) has helped raise the bar throughout college football.

34. The Palestra

Location: Philadelphia. Opened: 1927.
Capacity: 8,722.

Because it was one of the first arenas built without "obstructed-view" pillars and posts (what a concept) and has hosted more NCAA basketball games than anywhere else.

[+] [Enlarge](#)



AP Photo/Matt Rourke

The Palestra represents the heart and soul of college basketball.

35. Durham Athletic Park (the original)

Location: Durham, N.C. Opened: 1939. Capacity: 5,000.

Because this was the location for the best sports movie ever filmed, "Bull Durham," which in turn helped lead to the minor league baseball boom.

36. Pro Football Hall of Fame

Location: Canton, Ohio. Opened: 1963. Capacity: Not applicable.

Because it has everything you feel should be here but is not so overwhelming that you feel as if you can never see it all.

37. Saratoga Race Track

Location: Saratoga, NY. Opened: 1863. Capacity: 40,000.

Because the oldest organized sporting venue in the United States opened when technically, we weren't the United States but were two years into the Civil War. And not much has changed here since.

38. The Spectrum

Location: Philadelphia. Opened: 1967. Capacity: 18,136.

Because it's been the site for six Stanley Cup finals, four NBA Finals, two Final Fours, the Christian Laettner shot in the 1992 NCAA East Regional and, unfortunately, [the Wing Bowl](#). And had only "Rocky" actually been filmed here (see No. 73), it would rank even higher.