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Saturday, July 28, 2007

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## Tiger Stadium milestones

Gregg Krupa / The Detroit News

### April 28, 1896

Bennett Park opens at Michigan and Trumbull in Detroit as owner George Arthur Van Der Beck moves the team to the site of a former hay market. The park is named for the Tigers catcher Charlie Bennett, a popular player in the city's National League teams of the 1880s.

### April 20, 1912

Frank Navin, a one-time bookkeeper for the Tigers, opens Navin Field, a 23,000-capacity park he built for \$300,000.

### 1922-23

A second deck is constructed on the ballpark, raising the capacity to 30,000.

### June 8, 1926

Babe Ruth hits a home run over the single-deck grandstand in right field. Many experts still believe it is the longest home run in the history of Major League Baseball.

### April 19, 1927

First radio broadcast from Navin Field.

### Oct. 7, 1935

Despite losing slugger Hank Greenberg to a broken wrist, the Tigers win their first World Series, with "Goose" Goslin driving in player-manager Mickey Cochrane in the bottom of the ninth inning.

### April 22, 1938

After a three-year expansion, with a capacity of nearly 56,000, the ballpark reopens as Briggs Stadium. Walter O. Briggs Sr., an automotive industrialist, had purchased the team after Navin's death.


### Sept. 9, 1938

The Detroit Lions play their first game at Briggs Stadium. For a few years, the National

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Tigers' Hank Greenberg rounds third base after hitting his 43rd home run of the season on Sept. 26, 1946. [See full image](#)

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Football League franchise bounces between its original home at the University of Detroit Stadium (now demolished) and Briggs Stadium, before it becomes its sole home until 1974.

**May 2, 1939**

Lou Gehrig's streak of 2,130 games ends at Briggs Stadium.

**Aug. 3, 1941**

The Homestead Grays and Baltimore Elite Giants of the Negro Leagues play a doubleheader. Harry Salsinger, the legendary sports editor of The Detroit News, approaches the difficult racial climate by observing that the players were on par with the whites who played exclusively in the major leagues.

**Oct. 5, 1945**

Tigers beat the Chicago Cubs in the seventh game to win the World Series.

**Oct. 17, 1958**

Ozzie Virgil, the Tigers' first black player, makes his Briggs Stadium debut and goes 5-for-5.

**Jan. 1, 1961**

Briggs Stadium is renamed Tiger Stadium.

**July 13, 1977**

Detroit Mayor Coleman Young announces the sale of the stadium by the Tigers to the city for \$1 so federal financing can be obtained for the first significant renovation in 39 years.

**Oct. 14, 1984**

The Tigers defeat the San Diego Padres to win the World Series.

**June 28, 1990**

The legendary South African leader Nelson Mandela addresses a crowd of 49,000 in the first political rally at the old ballpark in almost 20 years.

**June 10, 1991**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation places Tiger Stadium on its annual list of most-important, endangered historic places -- the only sports facility to receive the designation.

**Sept. 27, 1999**

After some-7,800 home games, the Tigers play their last at the stadium.

*Gregg Krupa*

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Tiger Stadium, shown in Oct. 6, 1940, has been a place of unity for Detroiters, a place where they could put aside their differences and share a game of baseball. [See full image](#)



South African leader Nelson Mandela addresses 49,000 at the ballpark on June 28, 1990. [See full image](#)

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The Detroit Lions also called the stadium home from 1938 through 1974. [See full image](#)

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