

# The Best on the Field: North America's Halls of Fame

Sports museums in North America are attracting visitors by featuring high-tech exhibits that are interactive apart from making available standard memorabilia. Here are some of North America's top sports Halls of Fame:

## **Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York**

The National Baseball Hall of Fame is located in the picturesque Cooperstown village in New York. The museum's modern building displays artifacts covering baseball's 150 years of history as well as cultural significance. The user-friendly museum also has several interactive exhibits and a clubhouse where kids can experience different games. The tour starts with a short film on baseball's history and a walkthrough of timeline exhibits from 1860.

The collection of exhibits is carefully curated and includes 500,000 photographs and 12,000 videos that track the evolution of baseball in terms of uniforms and equipment. The exhibits, especially those on history of Latin Americans and women in the game, are very appealing to diverse audience. The gallery that provides an experience on the integration of African-Americans into baseball from the 19th century onwards is really a moving tribute to talent, courage and perseverance.

For the memorabilia collectors, as many as 130,000 baseball cards to old tickets to stadium giveaways from the past century are available. In addition, there are individual lockers that have been set up for the 30 Major League Baseball teams and a hall that displays plaques of athletes who have been instrumental in contributing greatly on and off the field.



## **Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts**

The state-of-the-art Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame engages basketball lovers of all ages. The game was invented in 1891 by Dr. James Naismith in Springfield. The architecture of the building features a basketball-shaped exterior in metallic silver color. Within the museum, the exhibits are displayed in three floors. Winding circular ramps take visitors to each floor. These ramps provide a view of the basketball court in the ground floor.

There are as many as 300 three-dimensional plaques on display in honor of the sportsmen and they adorn the high walls. Historical artifacts, consisting of a retrospective of uniforms and equipment, are displayed in boxes covered with glass. The museum recognizes many contributors from college as well

as WNBA stars to Phil Knight, Nike founder.

As far as kids are concerned, they can enjoy several interactive opportunities such as jumping tests, skill challenges, and recording their own play-by-play video of game highlights. In addition, there are shooting contests, clinics and full-court games. The baskets accommodate players of all size.



### **Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, Canada**

Brooke Lefferts was inspired by the popularity of the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. This museum traces back the sport's history to the 1940s in Kingston, considered to be the birthplace of hockey. The artifacts and memorabilia from the first hall that was opened in 1961 are now kept in downtown Toronto. This is a popular tourist destination because of its central location and the extensive display of interactive exhibits as well as international appeal.

At the entrance of the museum, as many as 30 goalie masks as well as 1,300 hockey pucks are displayed. These exhibits are collected from different arenas as well as tournaments that took place around the world. The exhibit Montreal Canadiens Dressing Room replicates the personal space of the renowned hockey team at the Montreal Forum. Fans can try on not only uniforms, but also equipment. Kids as well as true hockey lovers will enjoy the interactive games available on the simulated rink in the 2400 sq. ft. facility. Virtual experience available in the museum include taking slap shots along with real pucks, sticking against a life-sized and computer-generated goalie and suiting up and defending the net against stars such as Mark Messier and Wayne Gretzky on video images. They fire sponge pucks at speeds of 70 mph. Visitors can also take a close look at the famous Stanley Cup.



### **Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio**

This museum traces the sport's history since its beginning in 1920. The Pro Football Hall of Fame features a gallery displaying the bronze busts of the inductees. Biographical information, photos and videos of them are also available. Exhibits in the museum also track the changes in jerseys from the cotton long-sleeved sweaters to the synthetic ones of today and that of helmets and gear over the years.

Some of the exhibits are dedicated to recognizing achievements including history-making performances and famous games. Whereas one gallery presents recaps of all the Super Bowl played, a theater plays highlights continuously from NFL Films. Adults can enjoy the historical information available in the museum and kids can make merry with the interactive exhibits such as trivia contests, NFL video games and call the play challenges. The Fawcett Stadium, home to Pro Hall of Fame Field, is located just across the street.

Football Hall of Fame is located in Canton because it was here that the first professional football organization was established. It is currently being renovated.

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