



## **Rana Florida**

*CEO, Creative Class Group*

### **Creative Spaces: Stadiums that Could Teach the Super Bowl a Few Tricks**

Most people will be tuning into Super Bowl on February 5 to watch the game (or maybe to scrutinize the ads or enjoy the halftime show). I will be checking out the stadium.

Having lived in the Midwest, the East Coast, the north, and the south, I am always on the lookout for the cities that have the best cultural amenities and walkability. Admittedly, I am not a huge sports fan outside of tennis, but I do enjoy going to games when the stadiums are embedded in the urban fabric and there are lots of options for other things to do within walking distance.

When I was growing up, we used to go to Detroit Pistons games but we had to drive miles on the highway to get to the Palace of Auburn Hills, which was surrounded by a vast parking lot. When I moved to Washington D.C., I thought it was so much fun to see the Wizards play at the Verizon Center because Penn Quarter was so lively, filled with restaurants, bars, cafes, and shops. There weren't miles of parking spots to cross before finally getting somewhere -- in fact we didn't have to park at all. The metro stop was directly beneath the arena, allowing fans from all over the region to have quick and hassle-free access to the games and performances.

Location is not the only important consideration for a stadium -- design, art, and architecture matter too. How well does the building fit into its neighborhood? How do its design elements reflect the city? A stadium doesn't have to be a faceless behemoth.

In honour of Super Bowl XLVI, I've asked the urbanist [Donald Carter](#), the director of the Remaking Cities Institute (RCI) at Carnegie Mellon University and my colleague [Steven Pedigo](#), director of communications and research at the Creative Class Group, to help me select stadiums from around the world -- places that celebrate and highlight creativity and add real curb appeal to their neighbourhoods.

# Olympic Stadium ("Spyros Louis") - Athens, Greece



Located in the upscale suburb of Maroussi, the stadium complex was redesigned and expanded for the Summer Games in 2004. It may be having some problems now, but it's best known for its massive arches and the blue steel and glass roof that covers the stands. The whole complex is filled with monuments, gardens, and futuristic features.

Designed by Calatrava

Photo credit: Flickr user Viggo

## AT&T Park - San Francisco, CA



Opened in 2000, the 41,000-seat home of the San Francisco Giants is spectacularly sited on San Francisco Bay, offering fans views of the city skyline, the Bay, and the Golden Gate Bridge. Non-ticket holders can catch glimpses of the game from a waterfront promenade.

Designed by Populous

Photo credit: Flickr user RodBegbie

## The Float@Marina Bay – Singapore



The world's largest floating stage is approximately 394 feet by 272 feet; it can hold more than 1,000 tons (equivalent to 9,000 people) and its grandstand (built on dry land) holds 30,000 more. Conceived as a temporary facility while the Singapore Sports Hub is under construction, it has become a destination in its own right. Marina Bay is a mixed-use development on landfill that extends Singapore's Central Business District; it includes housing, offices, shops, hotels, recreation facilities and green spaces.

Photo credit: Flickr user Alexandre-s

## MetLife Stadium - East Rutherford, NJ



Opened in 2010, Met Life Stadium is the home of the New York Giants and the New York Jets. With 82,566 seats, it is both the largest and the most expensive NFL stadium ever built (its cost was \$1.6 billion). Like the Allianz Arena, it changes colours depending on which team is on the field, utilizing movable aluminum louvers on the exterior and special lights inside.

Designed by EwingCole, Skanska AB, 360 Architecture

Photo credit: Flickr user Cisco Pics

## Beijing National Stadium - Beijing, China



Built for the 2008 Olympics and popularly known as "the Birds Nest," the stadium's design was inspired by Chinese ceramics (the well-known Chinese artist Ai Weiwei consulted with the Swiss architects). Since the Olympics, the stadium, which seats 80,000, has been the venue for soccer games, operas and automobile races. Its complex includes a shopping mall and a hotel; it is becoming as important a tourist destination as the Forbidden City and the Great Wall.

Designed by Herzog & de Meuron

Photo credit: Flickr user DPerstin



## Fenway Park - Boston, MA



First opened in 1912, the Boston Red Sox's Fenway Park is the oldest Major League Baseball stadium in continuous use. It blends so well into its surrounding Fenway and Kenmore Square neighbourhoods that the pitcher Roger Clemens mistook it for a warehouse when he first saw it. Though famously cramped, creaky and quirky (it seats just under 40,000), it is one of the most beloved sports venues in the world.

Photo credit: Flickr user Andy2982

# Wembley Stadium - London, England



Completed in 2007, with 90,000 seats and room for 15,000 in standing room, the new Wembley is the largest roofed stadium in the world. A signature feature is the 440-foot-tall arch that soars above it -- the longest single-span roof structure in the world. Major efforts are under way to revitalize the surrounding neighbourhood; a Wembley masterplan envisions a mixed use development that will include "a bustling new retail street, a landmark Civic Centre and a new public square to create a vibrant and active new town centre identity."

Designed by Norman Foster and Populous

Photo credit: Flickr user Martin Pettitt



## Oriole Park at Camden Yards - Baltimore, MD



The first of the "retro" Major League ballparks and the jewel of Baltimore's revitalized Inner Harbor area, Camden Yards, the home of the Baltimore Orioles, opened in 1992 with a capacity of just under 50,000. A pedestrian mall on Eutaw Street, between the stadium and the neighbouring B&O warehouse, is lined with shops and restaurants.

Designed by Populous

Photo credit: Flickr user Shoshanah

# Kaohsiung National Stadium (Formerly the World Games Stadium) - Kaohsiung, Taiwan



With 55,000 seats, the Kaohsiung National Stadium is the largest arena in Taiwan. Semi-spiral shaped, like a dragon, it is also one of the most striking-looking stadiums in the world. Solar panels on the stadium's exterior power its lights.

Designed by Toyo Ito

Photo credit: Flickr user 台達電子文教基金會

## Soccer City - Johannesburg, South Africa



With a peak capacity of 95,000, Soccer City, the largest stadium in Africa, originally opened in 1989. It was thoroughly revamped and redesigned for the 2010 World Cup. It is also known as The Calabash, because its exterior resembles a gourd-shaped pot. The ring of lights around the bottom are meant to represent a cooking fire and gaps in the concrete allow light to shine out from the stadium's interior, evoking a starry sky.

Designed by Boogertman Urban Edge and Partners in partnership with Populous

Photo credit: Flickr user Photonube



## Coors Field - Denver, CO



The Colorado Rockies' 50,490 seat stadium opened in 1995. To help the ballpark blend into the LoDo neighbourhood, the field is 21 feet below street level and the stadium's exterior is brick. One of its signature features is the clock at the corner of 20th and Blake Street. Among its many amenities are a Coors microbrewery and restaurant.

Designed by Populous

Photo credit: Flickr user Mi55 AnthrOpy

# Richmond Olympic Oval - Vancouver, British Columbia



Built as the venue for 2010 Winter Olympics speed skating events, the roof of this 8,000-seat stadium is designed to look like a heron's wing -- a tribute to the indigenous Salish First Nation. The Oval has many "green" features, for example, the wood on its roof was harvested from trees that were killed by Mountain Pine Beetles. Post-Olympics, the Oval was converted to a multi-use facility for ice, track and paddling sports and is the centerpiece of a waterfront neighbourhood development, which features a mix of residential and commercial buildings.

Architect: Cannon Design

Photo credit: Flickr user Lightfight8r



## Verizon Center - Washington, DC



Home of the Washington Wizards (NBA), the Washington Capitals (NHL), Georgetown University Men's basketball team and the Washington Mystics of the WNBA, the Verizon Center seats 20,278 for basketball and 18,398 for hockey. Though there were fears that it might displace Chinese merchants (the stadium is located in the heart of DC's Chinatown), it has in fact helped to revive the neighbourhood. Game and Peking Duck, what could be better?

Designed by Ellerbe Becket Architects & Engineers

Photo credit: Flickr user Kyle Walton

## Camp Nou - Barcelona, Spain



Built in 1957 and popularly known as Camp Nou, or "New Ground," the home of FC Barcelona is the largest stadium in Europe (its official capacity is 99,354, but it held as many as 121,749 spectators during the 1982 World Cup). The complex includes a chapel, a sports medicine centre, a museum, a nursery and several television studios. A Norman Foster-designed enlargement of the stadium was approved in 2007, but it has been put on hold because of the world-wide financial crisis.

Designed by Francesc Mitjans, Josep Soteras and Lorenzo García-Barbón

Photo credit: Flickr user Kjbstar

## Allianz Arena - Munich, Germany



Completed in 2005, the 66,000 seat home of FC Bayern Munich and TSV 1860 München is notable for changing colour depending upon which team is playing there. Photographers enjoy taking pictures of the futuristic stadium with the medieval Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche in the foreground.

Designed by Herzog & de Meuron and Arupsport

Photo credit: Flickr user Frenzypic

## PNC Park - Pittsburgh, PA



Opened in 2001, the riverfront home of the Pittsburgh Pirates is as small as Fenway Park (it seats 38,500) and fits as seamlessly into its amenity-filled neighbourhood. Kayaks and bicycles can be rented in the nearby park and on game days, the Roberto Clemente Bridge is closed to vehicular traffic so fans can walk to the game from downtown. Many arrive by water taxi!

Designed by Populus

Photo credit: Flickr user Jacobp12345