

Cologne Sports -- Homebase For Popular Teams

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Cologne has much to offer the sports enthusiast. The popular sports of soccer (known as football to the rest of the world), hockey and basketball have a team based here. Even non-professional athletes can enjoy their time by taking part in the annual marathon, or sitting on the sidelines cheering on the runners.

Football / Soccer

The football or soccer team 1. FC Köln is Cologne's home team. It was officially formed in 1948 when two smaller teams merged together. You can catch a game at the official stadium, RheinEnergie Stadion (Grandstand East, Aachener Straße 999, 50933 Köln) or better known to locals by its pre-advertising moniker, *Müngersdorfer Stadion*. It fits about 50,000 fans and was one of twelve sites of the 2006 FIFA World Cup.

Hockey

Hockey is also quite popular in this sporty city. The Kölner Haie (Cologne Sharks) are the town's hockey club with their signature red and white uniforms. The Sharks have generally use the Lanxess Arena (aka Kölnarena, Willy-Brandt-Platz 3, 50679 Köln) for their home games. It seats 18,500. You can be almost guaranteed of a full house here when the Sharks play against their arch-rivals, the Düsseldorf Metro Stars.

Basketball

Less popular than the ubiquitous football and fashionable hockey, Cologne is nevertheless home to the basketball team Köln 99ers. Their games are hosted by the GEW Energy Dome (on Widdersdorfer Straße) and sometimes the Lanxess Arena. Formed in 1999, the team almost went under in 2008 after their club announced that they were insolvent. Happily, the team is back and playing against local rivals, Bayer Giants Leverkusen and Telekom Baskets Bonn.

Marathon

Never mind if you aren't a professional footballer, basketball or hockey player. The city of Cologne is renowned for its Annual Marathon, which has taken place each autumn since 1997. It's equal fun for participant and spectator. A delicious catered platter and authentic Cologne beer is on hand for everyone attending. The race begins and finishes at Mindener Straße.