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Queen substituted for Arsenal's Emirates Stadium opening

Prince Philip comes off the bench

by Chris Hall published on 27 October 2006

The official opening of Arsenal's £390 million Emirates Stadium took place on Thursday. The Queen had been expected to make an appearance to honour the official opening of the ground in Ashburton Grove but had to cancel the engagement with only 3-hours notice.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip - most famous for his gaffes - took her place on the pitch at the 60,000-seater stadium. The Queen has been suffering with a bad back for some weeks it is reported, and she only cancels engagements with great reluctance.

Prince Philip unveiled the plaque - declaring that the stadium had been opened by Her Royal Highness - and is reported to have joked that he is the second most experienced plaque unveiler in the country.

The following statement was issue by the Press Secretary to the Queen:

"Her Majesty The Queen has reluctantly agreed to cancel a visit to Arsenal Football Stadium today due to a strained muscle in her back.

Doctors have advised Her Majesty to reduce her workload today and will review her progress on a daily basis.

The strained muscle was sustained at the end of the Balmoral period, and has not improved during a busy 2 weeks of engagements."