



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH

PALACES OF THE FANS

The Newsletter of the SABR Ballparks Committee

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: Ballpark Committee members are welcome to provide comments on what you have seen and want to see in the newsletter. Please forward on to Richard articles or links to articles on ballparks for inclusion in future newsletters as well as short research articles. Longer research articles can be accommodated via links on the SABR web site. The next issue is scheduled to come out in June of 2022.

FUTURE SABR BALLPARKS COMMITTEE PROJECTS: If you have ideas for group research or projects, please send them to the co-chairmen, Ron Selter (rselter@att.net) and Kevin Johnson (kjokbaseball@yahoo.com). Members are always encouraged to do a ballpark 'bio' for the SABR BioProject. Some other ideas would be a committee produced ballparks book of some kind, a joint research effort with other committees (Pictorial Committee for example), etc.

SMOKIE LINKS – OLD BALLPARKS -- HAMTRAMCK STADIUM IN DETROIT, MI:

The Wayne County (Michigan) Commission approved an \$850,000 grant proposal from Executive Warren C. Evans to fund the renovation of Historic Hamtramck Stadium, once the home of the Negro National League's Detroit Stars. The renovation will include installing a new roof above the grandstand, restoring the seating and the brick exterior, and installing accessible seating. At least 17 members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame played at Hamtramck Stadium, including Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, and Turkey Stearnes.

<https://sabr.org/latest/historic-hamtramck-stadium-in-detroit-approved-for-850000-grant-to-restore-negro-leagues-ballpark/>

SMOKIE LINKS – NEW BALLPARKS – FIELD OF DREAMS IN DYERSVILLE, IA:

The MLB Field of Dreams in Dyersville, Iowa hosted a regular season game on August 12, 2021 which was contested between the Chicago White Sox (designated as the home team) and the New York Yankees. It was the first MLB game played in the state of Iowa.



The scoreboard at the Field of Dreams displays the final score between the Yankees and White Sox. (Charles Wenzelberg/*New York Post*)

SMOKIE LINKS – A’S CONTINUE TO EXPLORE POSSIBLE MOVE TO VEGAS:

The Oakland A’s are continuing to explore the option of moving to Las Vegas, pursuing “parallel paths” by planning new ballparks in Oakland and Las Vegas. A non-binding vote of support for a new ballpark district from the Alameda County Board of Supervisors has kept remaining in Oakland a possibility. Possible sites for a location in Las Vegas are being explored.

https://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/32057975/athletics-continue-ballpark-plans-oakland-las-vegas

<https://www.ktvu.com/news/as-chances-of-staying-in-oakland-improves-following-alameda-board-of-supervisors-vote>

<https://www.reviewjournal.com/sports/athletics/as-reportedly-eyeing-tropicana-site-for-possible-strip-ballpark-2488711/>

SMOKIE LINKS – ANAHEIM SALE OF ANGEL STADIUM TO TEAM STALLED

A plan for the City of Anaheim to sell Angel Stadium to the Angels baseball team was declared illegal by California’s state housing agency, breaking an affordable housing law. Two years after celebrating an agreement in which a neighborhood would sprout on the long-dormant parking lots surrounding Angel Stadium and the Angels would remain in Anaheim through at least 2050, the city is now faced with the prospect that the deal might disappear, the parking lots could remain empty, and the team could leave town in eight years. Officials will look to restructure the deal in a way that satisfies all parties.

<https://www.latimes.com/sports/angels/story/2021-12-08/angel-stadium-sale-declared-illegal-state-housing-agency-arte-moreno>

<https://www.ocregister.com/2021/12/08/state-to-anaheim-angel-stadium-sale-violates-affordable-housing-law/>

<https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/docs/oraanaheim-nov-120821.pdf>

SMOKIE LINKS – BLUE JAYS OPT FOR ROGERS CENTRE UPGRADE

Plans to demolish the Rogers Centre and replace it with a new ballpark for the Toronto Blue Jays have been shelved, as Rogers has reportedly opted for a quarter-billion-dollar renovation that would modernize the 32-year-old stadium — now the seventh-oldest in Major League Baseball. Upgrades would reportedly make the stadium more baseball-specific, its original multipurpose scope no longer required since the Toronto Argonauts left for BMO field in 2015.

https://www.blogto.com/sports_play/2021/12/toronto-blue-jays-rogers-centre-upgrade/

SMOKIE LINKS – METS TO CREATE TECH ADVANCED CITI FIELD

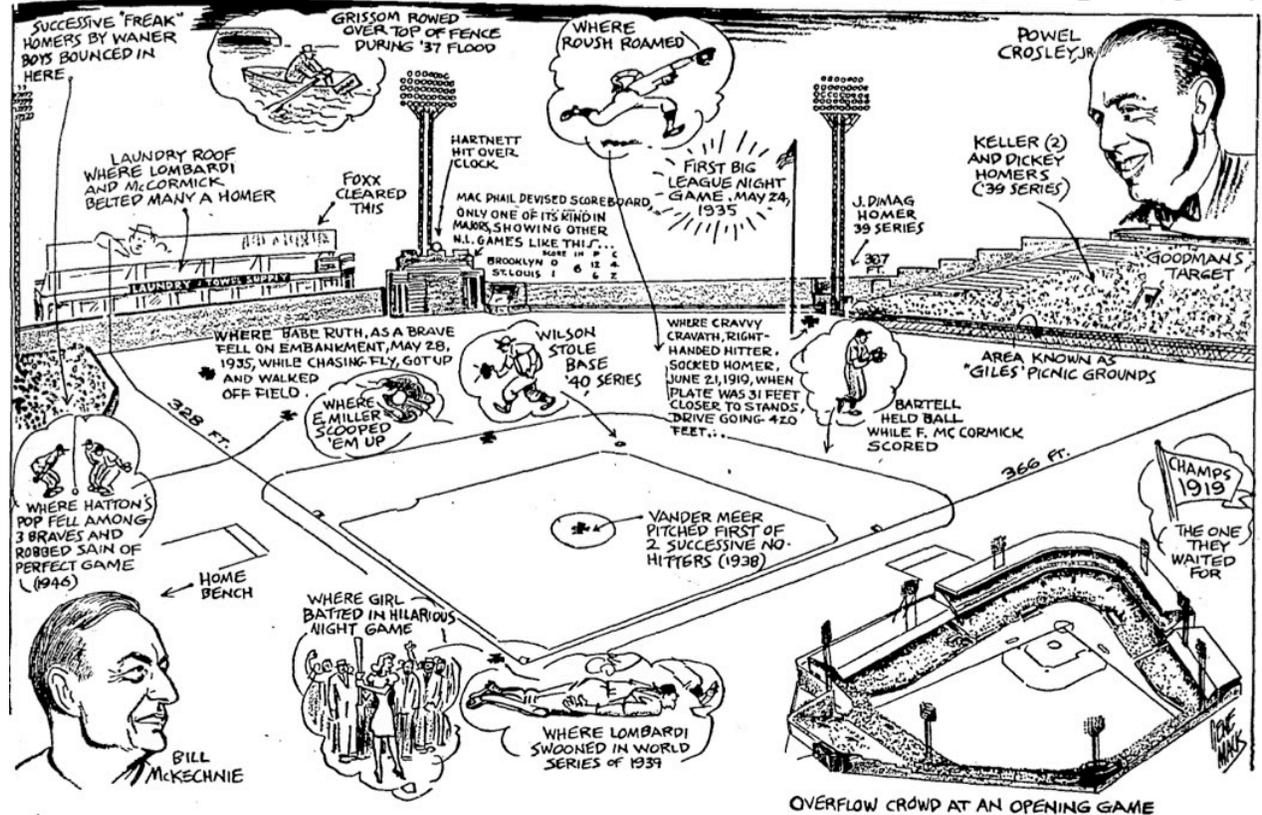
The New York Mets announced Samsung Electronics America as the ballpark’s official display and technology solutions partner, signing a multi-year deal to deliver a complete transformation of the famous ballpark’s screens to create an interactive fan experience like never before. The ballpark upgrade – one of the largest single projects in all professional sports – is slated to take place over the span of two years and will make Citi Field the most technologically advanced ballpark in the major leagues.

https://news.samsung.com/us/citi-field-new-york-mets-taps-samsung-electronics-america-most-technologically-advanced-stadium-major-leagues/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=seasoc&utm_campaign=general

VIDEO – BALLPARKS OF PHILDELPHIA: A recently released YouTube video goes through the history of Philadelphia Ballparks. The production quality varies at times and a couple of errors could be found in the narrative (like a reference to a Charles *Cominsky*), but overall, it’s an enjoyable view: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRyr-ji2qDk>

GENE MACK SKETCHES: In 1946, *Boston Globe* cartoonist Gene Mack conducted a tour of the major league ballparks and created a series of sketches which highlighted each park’s history and unusual features. These were later reprinted in *The Sporting News*. Here is the sketch he did of Crosley Field in Cincinnati:

Crosley Field ∴ First Lighted Big League Park ∴ Always Packed Opening Day



YANKEE STADIUM BOUNCE HOME RUNS: Ron Selter contributed the following detailed analysis of bounce home runs hit at Yankee Stadium in the 1920's.

Bounce Home Runs & MLB Ballparks Yankee Stadium (Updated December 2021)

Bounce home runs at Yankee Stadium had a varied history. A total of 40 were hit at the ballpark in the eight seasons (1923-30) before bounce home runs were eliminated by the rule book change effective with the 1931 season.

Bounce home runs by year for 1923-30 at Yankee Stadium:

Year	Fair Area*	Foul Area	Total
1923	13	3	16
1924	1	0	1
1925	7	0	7
1926	4	0	4
1927	5	0	5
1928	2	0	2
1929	5	0	5
1930	0	0	0
Sum	37	3	40

* Left and right field bleachers and the lower deck of the grandstand in 1928-30

The peak year for bounce home runs was 1923 with 16 while exactly zero bounce home runs were hit in 1930. Why the wide variance in the number of bounce home runs each season at Yankee Stadium? For the 1930 season, the answer is simple. It appears that all of the AL ballparks, but not the NL parks, made bounce HRs illegal. The reason for the variations in the number of bounce HRs was due to a number of factors-the MLB rule book, the changing configuration of Yankee Stadium, and the park's ground rules.

Ground Rules

Ground rules are rules that pertain only to an individual ballpark. Thus, the popular current expression "a ground rule double" is a misnomer-it should be called "a rule book double". Before the 1926 change to the official rules, bounce home runs were limited only by the ground rules of each major league ballpark. Starting with the 1926 season per the MLB rule book, bounce HRs were required to be 250 feet or greater. There were likely two Yankee Stadium ground rules changes that affected bounce home runs. A known ground rule change occurred in June 1923. This rule change made any fair batted ball that bounced into the stands in foul territory a two-base hit. Before this change in the in the ground rule, in the 1923 season there were three bounce HRs into the foul area stands-down both the LF and RF lines. In the 1923 season there were four bounce HRs into the RF stands. Recently discovered information by SABR member Cliff Blau, found an instance of a bounce hit by Roger Peckinpaugh into the RF stands that was ruled a double and not a HR. This event occurred in the first game of the July 4, 1923 double header.

It appears that in 1923, bounce hits into the RF stands over the short portion (3.8 feet high) of the RF fence (located to the right side of the home bullpen) were ground rule doubles. Bounce hits into the RF stands over the 7.8 feet high portion of the RF fence (located to the left of the home bullpen) were bounce HRs. In the 1923 season, there were 16 bounce HRs of which three in the first half of the season were bounce HRs into foul area stands. In the 1924 season there was only one bounce HR. This drop of 94% in bounce HRs between the 1923 and the 1924 season is hard to explain, unless there was a change in the park's ground rules regarding bounce home runs at the Stadium. It appears that there was a changed ground rule, starting with the 1924 season, that eliminated bounce HRs into any portion of the RF stands. This changed ground rule would explain why, after the 1923 season, there was never again (1924-30 seasons) any bounce HRs into the RF stands. As there were no bounce HRs into the RF stands in any of the following seasons (1924-30).

There were between one and six bounce HRs each season at Yankee Stadium in 1924-29. In the 1929 season, there were six bounce HRs in the AL -- five at Yankee Stadium and one at Washington's Griffith Stadium. In the 1930 season, there were no bounce HRs at any AL ballpark. The likely explanation is that all eight of the AL ballparks changed their respective ground rules. Thus in 1930 at Yankee Stadium, by a change in the ballpark specific ground rules, bounce home runs were simply prohibited. This ground rule change would explain why there were no bounce home runs in 1930 at Yankee Stadium.

Ballpark Configurations and Bounce Home Runs

After the inaugural 1923 season at Yankee Stadium, the ballpark's configuration was revised by moving home plate 13 feet towards the outfield fences. Home plate and the respective foul lines were moved about 10 feet toward LF and five to six feet towards RF. The principal purpose of this move was to eliminate the "Bloody Angle" that had existed in RF at about 255 feet from home plate. This change increased both the LF dimension to 281 and RF to 295. In addition, a wire screen (about 8-10 feet high) was erected atop the front railing of the RF foul line box seats for about the last 40 feet before the RF foul pole. The purpose of this odd-looking screen was to reduce the number of bounce hits that went out-of-play. Before the 1928 season, the triple deck grandstand at Yankee Stadium was extended into fair LF and the LF bleachers reduced in size. This change increased the LF dimension from 281 to 301. There was no significant impact on the number of bounce home runs except that all of the bounce HRs in the 1928 and 1929 seasons were hit into the lower deck of the LF grandstand.

In the first eight seasons of Yankee Stadium's existence there were 40 bounce home runs (4.5% of total home runs). By comparison, there were 361 bounce HRs hit (3.2% of the total) in the major leagues for the eleven seasons 1920-30. In these eleven seasons, the only other MLB ballparks with more bounce home runs were Brooklyn's Ebbets Field (94), and Philadelphia's NL ballpark Baker Bowl (85).
