



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

JOHN A. DELANEY
MAYOR

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December 11, 2001
News Release

Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney marked the start of construction on the new baseball park today by officially laying home plate, a tradition in new ballpark construction. The \$25 million ballpark is funded by The Better Jacksonville Plan. It will be built northeast of the intersection of A. Philip Randolph Blvd. and East Adams Street in the Sports Complex. The new facility is expected to be dedicated in the spring of 2003.

“Our new ballpark will be a state-of-the-art facility where families can go for some good, old-fashioned fun,” said Mayor Delaney. “There’s nothing like taking the kids downtown to watch America’s favorite pastime.”

The new ballpark will seat 8,500, expandable to 10,000. The Mayor said he would set aside \$4 million from The Better Jacksonville contingency fund and reserve it for the additional 1,500 to 2,000 seats. Delaney said he would look to the City Council and The Better Jacksonville Citizens Oversight Committee for guidance on this issue.

Mayor Delaney said the red brick exterior will compliment the architectural aspects of the East Jacksonville neighborhood, matching both the historical St. Andrews Church and the new Sports and Entertainment Arena, also under construction in the Sports Complex. The new ballpark will be Triple-A eligible. Amenities for both fans and players will also improve dramatically. The new ballpark will feature 140 dugout seats, 1,300 club seats, 12 suites, four party decks and berm seating in left field. Spacious concourses will allow fans to enjoy river breezes during warm summers. The facility will have better concession areas, improved sound systems and a new scoreboard. Players will have better locker rooms, as well as training rooms and batting tunnels that were not available at Wolfson Park.

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The new ballpark is designed to accommodate concerts, college tournaments and other grass-friendly events. The facility can also accommodate SEC or ACC tournaments.

The new ballpark will replace Wolfson Park, home of the Jacksonville Suns, which was built in 1955. Wolfson is the oldest stadium in baseball's Double-A Southern League by nearly 30 years. It will be demolished after the 2002 baseball season. The City plans to offer the old seats, lights and the scoreboard to other public entities in Duval County.

The Program Manager for the new ballpark is Gilbane/Scheer/Renaissance, a joint venture between a national construction management firm, a regional sports marketing firm and a local, minority design-build firm. The Architect/Engineer is HOK Sport, an international sports designer who has partnered with Bessent, Hammack & Ruckman (BH&R), a Jacksonville civil engineering firm. The Construction Manager is Barton Malow, a firm with 28 years of sports facility experience. Both HOK and Barton Malow designed and built Camden Yards in Baltimore.

For more information, call Sharon Ashton at 630-7377.