



BASEBALLPARKS.COM™

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Salt River Fields named Ballpark of the Year

Baseballparks.com has been presenting its Ballpark of the Year Award since 2000, but never had a spring-training park won the honor.

Until now.

Salt River Fields At Talking Stick, the first-year spring-training home of the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Colorado Rockies, was named **Ballpark of the Year** for 2011 by Baseballparks.com. Site webmaster Joe Mock made the announcement today.

The honor is presented annually to the new baseball stadium with the best combination of superior design, attractive site selection and fan amenities. The award will be presented to the Rockies in a pre-game ceremony at Coors Field in Denver on September 18th. A similar ceremony will also be held in March when the Rockies and Diamondbacks face each other in spring training.

The facilities in the running for the honor this year include all new parks in pro baseball, and those that were essentially rebuilt. "The competition for this year's award was intense," Mock said. "Quite a bit of money was spent building the parks that opened this year. In particular, Werner Park near Omaha is an incredibly impressive addition to the Minor League scene. And you can't leave out Tacoma's Cheney Stadium which underwent a spectacular renovation. As I visited each of the eligible facilities, I was struck by how all of them are real showplaces for their communities."

Nowhere was this truer than on the sovereign land of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRP-MIC), where the Salt River Fields spring-training complex was constructed. Completely funded by the SRP-MIC, the sprawling complex was designed by HKS Architects and constructed by M.A. Mortenson Company.

"We were blessed to have a wonderful spirit of collaboration between the Colorado Rockies, the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community," said Byron Chambers, Director of Sports Design at HKS. "Our goal was to design a facility that created an immersive baseball experience while reflecting the culture and heritage of all three. HKS is humbled by this award and is thankful to have had the opportunity to be part of Salt River Fields."

HKS also designed Baseballparks.com's 2007 Ballpark of the Year, Dickey-Stephens Park in Arkansas, and was heavily involved in the creation of the 2003 winner, Dr Pepper Ballpark in Frisco, Texas.

"It makes a lot of sense for Salt River Fields to win this award," observed Graham Knight, who operates the popular Baseball Pilgrimages website (<http://www.baseballpilgrimages.com>). "When you have an entry that is truly first in its class, it deserves to be honored, and this is without a doubt the best spring-training facility ever built."

Mock's in-depth review of Salt River Fields was posted on Baseballparks.com soon after the complex opened this spring. "By far, it's the longest review I've written about a spring-training facility, but its special features were almost endless," Mock pointed out. "Perhaps most impressive was the way HKS created completely different training environments for the D-backs and the Rockies, because the needs of each organization were different."

This is the 12th year that Baseballparks.com has honored a new park with this award. Salt River Fields now joins some select company, as past winners include AT&T Park in San Francisco, Pittsburgh's PNC Park, Huntington Park in Columbus, Ohio and last year's winner, BB&T Ballpark, home of the Winston-Salem (North Carolina) Dash. The complete list can be found here: <http://www.baseballparks.com/BallparkOfYrLaunch.asp>

Mock's review of Salt River Fields At Talking Stick can be found here: <http://www.baseballparks.com/SaltRiver-1.asp>

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For more information on this award or on BASEBALLPARKS.COM, contact Joe Mock at 512-826-0853.

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