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BB&T Ballpark named Ballpark of the Year

It took awhile to arrive, but now that Winston-Salem's BB&T Ballpark is open, the praise is pouring in.

The first-year home of the Winston-Salem Dash of the Carolina League was named **Ballpark of the Year** by BASEBALLPARKS.COM. Site webmaster Joe Mock made the announcement today.

The honor is presented to the new baseball stadium with the best combination of superior design, attractive site selection and fan amenities. The award will be presented in a ceremony prior to the Dash's first playoff game on Wednesday, September 8th.

BASEBALLPARKS.COM began honoring new parks with this award in 2000. By winning the 11th annual award, BB&T Ballpark joins some select company. Past winners include AT&T Park in San Francisco, Pittsburgh's PNC Park, Petco Park in San Diego and last year's winner, Huntington Park, home of the Columbus (Ohio) Clippers.

The facilities in the running for the honor this year include all new parks in pro baseball, and those that were essentially rebuilt. That means that BB&T Ballpark was competing against the new Major League park of the Minnesota Twins, as well the completely renovated park in Harrisburg, PA (Class AA), the new park in Tulsa, OK (Class AA) and the new facility in Eugene, OR (short-season A).

"This year's crop of new parks was simply outstanding," Mock noted. "Each of the five had its own unique and attractive elements. As I visited and reviewed each of them, I was very impressed with how they all were excellent 'fits' for their communities. Target Field in Minneapolis, which cost over half a billion dollars for the site and construction, is certainly a spectacular facility, but in the end, the design and classic beauty of BB&T Ballpark is what carried the day."

The front office of the Dash was certainly pleased to learn that their new home is the recipient of this year's plaque. "We are honored to receive this prestigious award, especially in the face of some challenging competition," said Geoff Lassiter, president of the Dash. "We would like to thank the fans here in Winston-Salem for helping make the inaugural season at BB&T Ballpark a tremendous success. Without them and the hard work of the people who designed and built this beautiful facility, winning this award would not have been possible."

Indeed, the design and construction was a collaborative effort – one that had a local flavor. Samet Corporation of Greensboro was the Construction Manager and Winston-Salem's CJMW Architecture was the Architect of Record. CJMW Architecture collaborated with 360 Architecture, nationally known designers of sports venues based out of Kansas City, Missouri, to create the award-winning ballpark.

"We are tremendously excited about this award," said Scott Lahr, AIA, Principal at CJMW Architecture. "This is our hometown stadium and we felt privileged to be a part of the project from the beginning. We worked with a talented team that made designing the ballpark a great experience from start to finish. It has been amazing to see how the ballpark has changed the face of the city and brought new excitement and energy to Winston-Salem."

"We couldn't be happier about this," added Brad Schrock, AIA, Design Principal at 360 and recipients of the 2009 award for Huntington Park. "It's humbling to be a part of two consecutive Ballpark of the Year honors and gratifying to know that our work has been beneficial for those two teams and their communities."

Mock's review of BB&T Ballpark, entitled "Definitely Worth the Wait," was recently posted on BASEBALLPARKS.COM. It chronicled the adversity that swirled around the new-ballpark project last year when delays and funding shortfalls caused the opening of the facility to be delayed an entire year, to April 2010.

"Last year, I kept reading comments from local residents who were very unhappy over the delay," Mock said. "Many communicated their displeasure by saying they would never set foot in the new park when it opened. Well, I'm glad most of them changed their minds because their city is now the home of one of the finest facilities in Minor League baseball."

The fact that the ballpark project survived last year's challenges to become an award-winner this year wasn't lost on Carolina League president John Hopkins. "I'm so happy for Billy Prim (Majority Owner of the Dash) and the rest of the ownership group," Hopkins said. "They really went the extra mile to design and build such a great ballpark. It's very nice to see them get recognition for it."

Mock's in-depth review of BB&T Ballpark can be found at <http://www.baseballparks.com/WinstonSalem-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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