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BaseballParks.com's 2026 Ballpark of the Year Award goes to Ontario's ONT Field

The home of the Ontario Tower Buzzers, ONT Field in Ontario, California, is the BaseballParks.com/USA TODAY Ballpark of the Year, it was announced Wednesday.

This award has been presented since 2000, when San Francisco's Oracle Park (called Pac Bell Park at the time) won the initial award. The annual honor goes to the best new pro ballpark.

The announcement of this year's award was made in the September 2nd edition of *USA TODAY Sports Weekly*. Joe Mock, founder and webmaster of the 29-year-old BaseballParks.com site and sports-facilities beat writer for *USA TODAY* publications, penned the announcement article.

Diamond Baseball Holdings (DBH), which owns 49 baseball teams, showed creativity and flexibility to be able to provide an affiliated Minor League team for Ontario's new stadium this season. DBH moved its Modesto team to San Bernardino, shifted the San Bernardino franchise and Los Angeles Angels affiliation to Rancho Cucamonga, then transferred the former Rancho team – with its coveted Dodgers affiliation – to Ontario. The proximity of these cities made the franchise moves possible only because a single owner, DBH, controlled all three teams.

"ONT Field is exactly what we believe a Minor League ballpark should be: an incredible place for fans, a best-in-class environment for player development and a true community gathering place," said DBH Executive Chairman Pat Battle and CEO Peter Freund, in a joint statement, after learning of the award. "The team in Ontario has brought the aviation theme and the Tower Buzzers brand to life in a way that feels completely authentic to the region, and the result is something really special. To see BaseballParks.com and USA TODAY recognize ONT Field as the Ballpark of the Year is a tremendous honor, but more importantly, it validates what the Ontario community, our team and our partners set out to build from the beginning."

ONT Field is part of the sprawling Ontario Sports Empire being built by the city of Ontario. Using funds generated by sales taxes authorized by Measure Q, passed by city voters in 2022, the baseball stadium cost \$135 million. The city is justifiably proud of its first-class facility. "We are very grateful for the honor of Ballpark of the Year. ONT Field is such a source of pride for the community and City Council that receiving this award is a recognition shared by all of Ontario," said Scott Ochoa, the City Manager. "The ballpark was truly a labor of love and it is a living legacy and testament to our residents and businesses as well as the power of baseball to bring communities together."

The accolades for ONT Field caught the attention of Major League Baseball headquarters. "The 2026 season saw the opening of five incredible new ballparks across Minor League Baseball and all were worthy of this honor," said MLB's Executive Vice President, Baseball Operations, Morgan Sword. "ONT Field is a beautiful facility and we couldn't be happier for the Tower Buzzers, their ownership team at Diamond Baseball Holdings and the City of Ontario, as they receive this tremendous honor."

Global sports-architecture titan Populous designed the ballpark. “ONT Field’s recognition as Ballpark of the Year is a reflection of the vision that drove the design from day one,” said Jason Michael Ford, Principal at Populous. “This honor reflects the creativity, collaboration and dedication that went into every aspect of the ballpark, and we are proud to see that work recognized with this award.”

Plaques representing the award will be presented by Mock to DBH, the City of Ontario and Populous at the Tower Buzzers’ Sunday afternoon home game on April 25, 2027.

Mock emphasized that the annual award isn’t a popularity contest. “This is a merit-based competition, not one where teams encourage their fans to vote in some kind of online poll. Our advisory panel assesses the design of the parks, as well as the amenities for fans and players. When you add these to the exceptional execution of ONT Field’s airport theme, this is a transcendent park, one that will impact ballpark design for years to come.”

The panel had a challenging task picking a winner this year. Four of the five new parks cost over \$100 million to build, “and I would say three of them would’ve won this award in any other year,” noted Mock. Indeed, the voting by the panel was close, with ONT Field just edging out Erlanger Park in Chattanooga (Chattanooga Lookouts of the Southern League) and Hops Ballpark in Hillsboro, Oregon (Hillsboro Hops of the Northwest League). The other new parks this year are in Richmond, Virginia and Wilson, North Carolina.

As in the past, the selection was made by a committee organized by BaseballParks.com. Joining Mock on the panel were Doug Greenwald, baseball broadcaster for the past 30 years, and author Graham Knight, who operates the popular Baseball Pilgrimages website.

Greenwald, the radio voice of the Birmingham Barons, has broadcast numerous games at Chattanooga’s impressive new park this season. “Fans can enjoy a 360-degree concourse that displays the pictorial history of the Lookouts, while enjoying all of the modern conveniences and a food hall,” he observed. “And for the very first time in Lookouts history, they play in a ballpark where fans can actually see the mountain the team is named for.”

The list of past winners of the new-ballpark award reads like a Who’s Who of standout baseball facilities, including Pittsburgh’s PNC Park in 2001, San Diego’s Petco Park in 2004, spring-training facility Salt River Fields in 2011, Las Vegas Ballpark in 2019, MLB’s Field of Dreams Ballpark in Dyersville, Iowa in 2021, and Knoxville’s Covenant Health Park in 2025.

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Mock’s in-depth review of ONT Field entitled “Musical chairs bring new park in for a landing” can be found here: <https://baseballparks.com/indepth/ont-field/>

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

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