

# The Columbus Dispatch

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## Huntington better than Yankee Stadium? Apparently so

By *Jim Massie*

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

BaseballParks.com cast the latest vote that dream matched reality in Huntington Park.

The Web site announced yesterday that it had chosen the home of the Clippers as its Ballpark of the Year over 11 other new or renovated facilities.

Size and expense apparently didn't matter because the list included two new major-league ballparks—Yankee Stadium and Citi Field in New York—and the renovated Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City.

The news surprised Clippers president and general manager Ken Schnacke, to say the least.

“Shocked and astounded would be two better words,” he said, “especially when you’ve got major-league ballparks that cost over \$1 billion and a spring-training complex like the one that Cleveland built in Goodyear, Ariz., opening.

“This just shows you that it’s not how much money you spend. It is how you spend the money that you have available to you.”



*Huntington Park during the Clippers 2009 home opener.*

Joe Mock, webmaster of BaseballParks.com, visited and reviewed Huntington Park in April. He also toured the other facilities. Mock was not surprised that a minor-league ballpark won the award.

“I go to every new park that opens,” he said. “I assess it on itself alone. One thing that was evident to me the first time I laid eyes on Huntington Park was that it had innovative designs that I had never seen before.”

He cited the seating behind home plate, the open concession stands, the Hall of Fame Bar in left field and the standing-room levels in right field as among his favorite elements. He also loves the way the ballpark fits into the thriving Arena District neighborhood.

“They wanted it to look old, but it’s brand new,” Mock said. “The stuff in it is really good, too. Site-wise, this park is perfect.

“Of the 12 new parks this year, only one other came close. The Mets’ new park (Citi) is really gorgeous. But it shares one side with a dozen chop shops.”

Schnacke credits 360 Architecture, Turner Construction and Nationwide Realty Investors for working seamlessly with the franchise and Franklin County in the ballpark’s planning and construction.

“It was the complete cooperation of this team and our entire community that made our vision a reality,” he said.

The award is given annually to the new stadium with the best combination of superior design, attractive site selection and fan amenities. Previous winners have been AT&T Park in San Francisco, PNC Park in Pittsburgh and Petco Park in San Diego.