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Huntington Park Named Ballpark of the Year By Ballpark Digest

Classic design, community involvement makes new home of the Columbus Clippers stand out in a year full of great new ballparks

In a year that saw many noteworthy ballpark openings within the baseball world, it would take something truly special to stand out from the crowd. That something special happened in Columbus, where Huntington Park opened as the home of the International League's Columbus Clippers. Combining solid community support with a classic design where every little detail was carefully considered and implemented, Huntington Park became one of the leading ballparks in baseball the day it opened – and that's why it was named Best New Ballpark of the 2009 Season by the editors of Ballpark Digest.

“We instantly recognized what a great facility the Clippers have,” said Kevin Reichard, publisher of **ballparkdigest.com**, the Internet's leading resource on the culture and business of baseball. “It's an extremely fan-friendly facility that provides fans with a first-class experience, whether they're sitting in the loge seats behind home plate or in the upper-deck balcony in right field. Every detail associated with the ballpark was exquisitely realized.”

Here's what Reichard wrote on his first visit to Huntington Park at the second game ever at the new facility:

There are a lot of cool things at Huntington Park, which comes as close to perfection as we've seen in any ballpark. With an embedded sense of place, a firm grasp on the grand history of baseball and a commitment to the latest in fan comforts, Huntington Park represents the very finest in ballpark design and operations. While there are some new ballparks that come very close – as you'll see when we write about Parkview Field tomorrow – there are none better.

The original Ballpark Digest story on Huntington Park can be found at http://www.ballparkdigest.com/visits/index.html?article_id=1422.

The new ballpark, designed by 360 Architecture (Kansas City) and funded by Franklin County, helped the bottom line of the Clippers: the team was the best draw in all of Minor League Baseball, attracting 666,797 fans (for an average of 9,525 per game) in the 2009 season.

“This past season was a rough one for many baseball teams,” Reichard said. “Most would have been happy attracting the same number of fans as they did in previous years. A new ballpark certainly helps bring in new fans, and we’re guessing the place will have them coming back for more year after year.”

“We are honored and humbled to receive this award from Ballpark Digest celebrating the arrival of Huntington Park as their 2009 Ballpark of the Year,” said Columbus Clippers President & GM Ken Schnacke. “This project was a labor of love for all involved, and our highest ambitions have been achieved with all the recognition that Huntington Park has received throughout the season.”

ABOUT HUNTINGTON PARK

The creation of Huntington Park is the culmination of a vision that began almost ten years ago. It ran through many different versions and visions before it became a reality. Located in the fabulous Arena District and adjacent to the city’s beautiful Nationwide Arena, home to the Columbus Blue Jackets of the NHL, it stands as a compliment to all that came before it in this area. The idea behind Huntington Park was for it to be an eclectic mix of the “best” of all ballparks, with tributes to Wrigley Field, Fenway Park, Camden Yards and others creatively designed into the ballpark. The overall concept was to build a family, fan-friendly outdoor park where baseball is played, a casual yet intimate place for families and friends to gather and spend a beautiful summer evening. Built on time and under budget, it is a tribute to the fact that ballparks can still be different and creative with a touch of history and purpose.

ABOUT THE BALLPARK DIGEST AWARDS

Each year Ballpark Digest honors noteworthy accomplishments in the baseball world, whether it be Major League Baseball, Minor League Baseball, Independent Baseball, summer-collegiate baseball or college baseball. Readers are asked to submit nominations for awards in specific categories; Ballpark Digest editors then go through the submissions (numbering some 400 pages of documentation this year). The awards cover both individual accomplishments as well as team accomplishments. This is the third season for the Ballpark Digest Awards. A complete listing of Ballpark Digest Awards can be found at <http://www.ballparkdigest.com/bpdawards>.

ABOUT BALLPARK DIGEST

The leading Web site covering the culture and business of baseball since its inception in 2002, Ballpark Digest (<http://www.ballparkdigest.com>) averages 4,000 readers daily. In 2008 *The New York Times* called it an “indispensable” guide to baseball and ballparks;

it's been used as a source by publications and Web sites ranging from *The Wall Street Journal* to *Epicurious.com*.

ABOUT AUGUST PUBLICATIONS

August Publications is a publisher of books and Web site headquartered in Minneapolis-St. Paul. Its leading book titles include *The Complete Guide to Spring Training, 3rd Edition* and *Goodfellows: The Champions of St. Ambrose*. Besides Ballpark Digest, August Publications' leading Web sites include SpringTrainingOnline.com, ArenaDigest.com and YellowstoneInsider.com.

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