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New York Mets and the History of Shea Stadium

By Aurel Radulescu

In the 1950s, New York lost both the Giants and the Dodgers and rumors stated that the teams left, in part, due to the fact that they wanted a new stadium. This left New York with only one remaining baseball team. By 1960, National League owners were ready to award new baseball franchise teams to New York with one of the requirements being the construction of a new stadium.

True to their word, on October 28, 1961, the city of New York began construction on a new facility that would accommodate future Major League Baseball games. Originally called Flushing Meadow Park, the facility was later named Shea Stadium and is now home to the New York Mets. Its name change was inspired by William A. Shea, an attorney who was instrumental in the efforts to bring National League baseball back to New York. When construction was complete, the stadium had cost \$25 million and was ready to open its doors on April 17, 1964. In front of a crowd of more than 48,000 spectators, the New York Mets suffered a 4–3 defeat at the hands of the Pirates.

Through the years, few cosmetic changes have occurred at Shea Stadium. New seats were installed simply because the aging ones needed replacing but, otherwise, the facility is much the same as it appeared on opening day more than four decades ago. Technological advancements made it possible for modern scoreboards and luxury suites, along with the New York Mets Magic Top Hat attraction, which is designed to honor homerun hits by one of the New York Mets players. In celebration of each homerun, spectators will see a large red apple rise from the hat.

The New York Mets and Shea Stadium have witnessed a number of great moments over the years, including the stadium's first homerun, which was belted by Willie Stargell in 1964. That same year, Jim Bunning pitched the only perfect game to ever be thrown in Shea Stadium's history. Additionally, fans watched in 1984 as Dwight Gooden set a Major League rookie record with 276 strikeouts. Another memorable moment, which occurred in 1996, was observed as Todd Hundley defeated Roy Campanella's 43 year Major League record, which honored the most homeruns by a catcher in a single season.

To this day, discussions often resurface about renovating the home of the New York Mets. Although rich in history and in charm, thoughts of replacing Shea Stadium to build a new home for the New York

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Mets have been expressed. At this point, nothing has been decided and fans will continue to enjoy the facility that they have come to know for more than 40 years.

Collectors who wish to request an autograph from any one of the players on the New York Mets roster should send their letter and a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) to:

Player's Name
c/o New York Mets
Shea Stadium
123-01 Roosevelt Avenue
Flushing, NY 11368

Fans requesting an autograph should limit their request to two items per letter. Popular items to have signed include photos, index or trading cards, baseballs, etc. Patience is key when requesting

autographs through the mail, but the best time to reach an athlete is often during the off-season.

Read the latest

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Pedro, Beltran, and the Mets as seen by one true Yankee Fan:

By Aron Wallad / Cheryl Wallad

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It's the middle of the NFL playoffs, and what has grabbed the interest of many sports fans has been the off-season maneuvering and acquisitions of the Mets and Yankees. In the past, the sports media has hyped baseball trades, the big money contracts, and the long time rivalries which make the off-season so interesting, but never as intensely as this year in NY. First, Pedro Martinez, then, Carlos Beltran going to the Mets has splashed the team front and center in our sports world consciousness. For the first time, in a long time, the Mets have captured the imagination of their fans with the possibilities of a dynamic exciting season.

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Anyone who knows me knows I love the Yankees. And yes, I admit scoffing at the Mets in recent seasons. Some may wonder how a Yankee fan feels about the increasing powerful competition across town.

Like many true Yankees fans, I NEVER wanted to see Pedro Martinez in pinstripes. (Hey, I also was never a Roger Clemmens aficionado).

I have witnessed many sworn enemies extend the olive branch during my lifetime. I've seen Berlin Wall come down, Communism fail, and normal trade with China. I've accepted that Darth Vader was once a good guy, and Tom Cruise can play a bad guy, But all that doesn't mean I could want Pedro Martinez playing for my team. So thanks Mr. Steinbrenner, for not making that deal. However, I do know Pedro is a terrific pitcher, so why not have him winning for a NY team, in another league....that's perfect!

Carlos Beltran is another matter. Yeah, it would be great to see him in a Yankee line-up. I could see him patrolling the Stadium outfield. Like a spoiled child who has been given exorbitant gifts throughout her lifetime, I expected George to make a last minute move and deliver yet another treasure. Instead, he offered up a different prize: Randy Johnson. I admit that I secretly hoped for both players and was slightly disappointed. In spite of this, I'm very happy he went to the Mets.

Why? Because the ultimate thrill for a NY sports fan (no matter if you love baseball or not) is to have another Subway Series. It's our Mecca, our Earthly Paradise, and Nirvana all rolled into one. It eclipses The Superbowl, has us more excited than the NBA playoffs, US Open and Master combined. NASCAR is nothing when we're talking Subway Series.

So if getting Beltran, pitching Pedro, and grabbing some headlines in the process are the beginnings of making that dream come true, then bring it on. Yankee fans are ready.

Submitted by Cheryl Wallad

Aron Wallad has been a baseball lover for over 40 years. Writing about his favorite subject, baseball, has been a blessing. You will enjoy the heartwarming stories, the unusual statistics and inspiring quotes. But mostly you will love the heartwarming stories that hit a home run to your heart. Join his ezine <http://www.baseballprideandjoy.com/index.php?tag=goart>



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