

“A FAN’S GUIDE TO THE ULTIMATE SPRING TRAINING EXPERIENCE”

By Major League Baseball writer Joe Connor

A FREE SAMPLE OF HIS E-GUIDE – READ BELOW TO CHECK IT OUT!

Then, if satisfied, buy the full guide at www.modernerabaseball.com!

START HERE!

This free sample of “A Fan’s Guide To The Ultimate Spring Training Experience: Fully Updated!” will show you how easy this “e-guide” is to use – as well as provide a basic layout on how it helps plan any Spring Training trip! A quick question: “Can you see the ‘Bookmarks’ alongside the left-hand part of the screen here?” If yes, skip the next paragraph. If no, read on.

Before you do anything you will want to “activate” these Bookmarks. This is easy. If you have Acrobat Reader 4.0, either tap the F6 button on your keyboard, or click the Show/Hide Navigation Pane icon above that is four icons from the left. If you have Acrobat Reader 5.0, just click “Bookmarks” to your left. Do you see the Bookmarks, now? If yes, you’re all set. If not, e-mail joe@modernerabaseball.com with the Subject Line of “Help: Bookmarks” and he will send you the sample to your e-mail address.

The Bookmarks were designed so you don’t have to scroll past endless pages. You can click and hop around quickly and easily, but before you do so, take a quick moment to read how this guide is formatted – and how helpful it really is!

In the Bookmarks you’ll notice “Top 10 myths,” “10 Key Tips” and “20 FAQ’s,” followed by “Planes, Trains, Buses,” “Rental Cars” and “Lodging.” These first three sections provide helpful general Spring Training information of a wide variety of planning topics. The latter three sections help you plan your trip.

Following these sections, you’ll notice in the Bookmarks, “Florida Central & East.” This is the start of the “team profiles.” The sample club we have chosen is the Expos. You didn’t really think we’d pick a (your) favorite team, did you? Each team profile is formatted the same, so acquaint yourself with the set up so you can plan your trip quickly and easily. Also, to plan your trip you will likely use both the team profiles as well as applicable sections noted above.

So here’s how it works: The 30 Major League teams are broken down into four geographic sections – Phoenix; Tucson; Florida Central & East; and Florida West. Each of these four headers has general information on the respective geographic area. Below each respective header are those teams holding Spring Training in that geographic area. Each team’s information is formatted like so:

Flying To And Getting Around Spring Training City: Provides Web links of departing and destination airport(s), as well airlines with non-stop flights. Also includes Web links to local public transportation.

Other Teams Nearby: Provides a listing of other Spring Training teams within 60 miles, including a map Web link.

Ballpark History/Facts: Provides a brief history of the Spring Training facility.

Getting To The Ballpark: Provides physical street address of the ballpark as well as directions, including a map Web link. Also provides details on free street parking available, as well as information on practice facilities.

Seating/Tickets at The Ballpark: Provides an overview on seating and ticketing options at the ballpark, including a Web link to a seating map, schedules, prices and online purchasing. Offers advice on best/worst places to sit, as well as whether you should purchase tickets in advance or on game day.

Getting Autographs at The Ballpark: Provides details on where to secure autographs for the home and visiting team.

Ballpark Pluses: My commentary on what you'll probably like about the ballpark and why.

Ballpark Minuses: My commentary on what you probably won't like about the ballpark and why.

Ballpark Eye Opener: At least one "eye opening" aspect of the ballpark to look out for, or to make note of.

Ballpark Footnote: At least one final comment or fact of interest related to the ballpark.

Discovering Ballpark City: Provides at least one Web link to that city's or area's convention and visitor's bureau, with a wealth of information on hotels, restaurants, attractions and more. Please note you will want to visit multiple team profiles, even if you do not intend to see another city's ballpark, because it has related information in the respective geographic area mentioned above.

Daily Sports Media: Provides information and Web links on daily newspapers and radio stations with sports coverage.

College Baseball/Other Sports: Provides information on an assortment of local sports and recreation activities, with multiple Web links. These include local college baseball programs; other spectator sports; local golf courses; local horse and dog tracks; local casinos; and other forms of sports and recreation. Please note in some Florida team profiles this information may not be as full and complete, however other profiles, in nearby cities, will have this information.

Main Attractions: Provides Web links of multiple attractions in the local area, including such areas as local parks, museums and more.

Hidden Gem: An attraction, based on my own personal experience, that I enjoyed visiting and believe is a “hidden gem” of that particular city or area.

Off The Beaten Path: An attraction, based on my own personal experience, that is a “off the beaten path” place – outside the city, or even area – that’s fun.

In the Help/Conclusion section, you'll find my e-mail address. Feel free to e-mail me any questions you may have before you buy. Now, go ahead and use those Bookmarks and check this baby out! It’s both simple and useful!

TOP 10 MYTHS OF SPRING TRAINING

This section in the guide dispels “10 myths of Spring Training,” while at the same time providing helpful information to help you properly plan your adventure – everything from the ballgame itself to maximizing your time outside the ballpark.

10 KEY TIPS

This section delivers 10 important tips to maximize your Spring Training adventure – everything from how to maximize your trip day-by-day to what to expect when you're there and what to pack, plus much more!

20 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This section provides 20 Frequently Asked Questions to help you maximize your Spring Training trip, such as “What’s the best way to experience workouts, including getting autographs?” and “How can I find out, well in advance, if my favorite player is in the starting lineup for a particular game?”

PLANES, TRAINS, BUSES

This section provides information and tips on transportation options and alternatives for Spring Training, including how to secure good deals and more.

RENTAL CARS

This section provides options and suggestions on securing a good deal on renting a car for your Spring Training trip.

LODGING

This section provides a plethora of lodging options for any budget – from Hostels to renting a condo or home or just securing a cheap hotel.

FLORIDA CENTRAL & EAST

This section of the full guide has an overview of how to get around the Florida Central & East areas of the state. Within this section are profiles of the team's encompassing this geographic area. For the purposes of this sample, we have chosen the Expos to give you an idea of how each profile is formatted. Please note that this Spring Training site has not been confirmed as of November 13, 2002 but it appears the Expos may very well end up here. Since I update the guides regularly, you would be provided with an update if this were to change.

MONTREAL EXPOS (Viera/Melbourne, Florida)
Space Coast Stadium, Spring Training home beginning 2003

Flying To And Getting Around Viera/Melbourne (Space Coast): The main airport is Melbourne International (www.mlbair.com), but for Expos fans a better option would be Orlando (www.orlandoairports.net/goaa/main.htm) from Montreal (www.admtl.com), especially for cheaper rates and fewer connections. Orlando would be the way to go if you'll be renting a car anyway as it's only a little over an hour away. For public transportation information, check Space Coast Area Transit, or SCAT, (<https://www.ridescat.com>).

Other Teams Nearby: The Dodgers (Vero Beach) are the closest, 42 miles south. The Astros and Braves (Kissimmee) are 52 miles east while the Mets (Port Saint Lucie) are 65 miles south (www.mapquest.com).

Space Coast Stadium History/Facts: Completed following the Marlins inaugural Spring Training (the Marlins played games in 1993 at Cocoa Expo in nearby Cocoa, former Spring Training home of the Astros). Space Coast is named in honor of NASA's achievements, with The Kennedy Space Center located in Cape Canaveral that is just south of the ballpark. Space Coast Stadium has housed the Brevard County Manatees (www.bcmanatees.com), recently the Expos Florida State League affiliate (Class A), during the summer.

Getting To Space Coast Stadium: The ballpark is located at 5800 Stadium Parkway, Viera. I-95 North to Wickham Road (exit 73), left on Wickham, right on Lake Andrew Drive, left on St. Johns, right on Stadium Parkway; I-95 South to Fiske Blvd. (exit 74), left on Fiske, follow Fiske/Stadium Parkway. From mid-to late February practices are held at the Carl Barger Complex (next to Space Coast Stadium) but technically just across the city limits at 5600 Stadium Parkway, Melbourne (www.mapquest.com).

A word of warning on the parking if you're driving, especially for a night game: It can be an exercise in futility, as cars must drive along a long and narrow one-lane road to enter the facility. True story: At one night game I attended,

cars were still backed up along the road after three innings. Translation: arrive early. Very early. There is no free street parking and lot parking is about \$5.

Seating/Tickets at Space Coast Stadium: The ballpark has a capacity of 8,100, with 7,200 fixed seats and the room for less than 1,000 on the lawn, from beyond the third base bag and continuing behind the left field fence. There are five seating options: "Batters Box" seats, as well as box, reserved, bleachers and the lawn.

Shoot for the Batters box seats just behind home plate if they're available, or opt for a box or reserved seat as close to home plate as possible. Whatever you do: Avoid the aluminum bleachers down the lines that have just lousy views. Tickets by Phone: (321) 633-9200. Tickets Online: www.montrealexpos.com or www.mlb.com (Ballpark seating map, schedule and ticket prices on both sites). For information unrelated to purchasing tickets, call 321-633-9200.

Getting Autographs at Space Coast Stadium: Expos – first base side near the dugouts. Visitors – third base side. Also, if you arrive early, look for players coming over from the Carl Barger Complex into the ballpark.

Space Coast Stadium Pluses: 1) Reflection of the community – A large digital clock sits atop the ramp to the ballpark, counting down the minutes and seconds until game time like similar clocks existing at the nearby Kennedy Space Center. Other affiliations to the Space Coast include the "Loading Dock" where you can buy your beer and peanuts. 2) All the seats are colored Marlin teal and are angled toward the field. 3) You'll admire the old school, manually operated scoreboard.

Space Coast Stadium Minuses: 1) As previously noted above, the parking can be absolutely horrendous – the worst of all Spring Training facilities. To park, you will have to enter the complex and follow the signs to park on the lawn – a process that takes forever because the road leading into the complex is one-lane only. If you don't plan ahead, you might miss a third of the game sitting in your car waiting to park.

2) Although the ballpark is right off I-95, it is also technically in the middle of nowhere with cows more visible beyond the outfield fences than automobiles or humans. 3) For those who must know: the manually operated scoreboard only reveals the box score, not who is batting.

Space Coast Stadium Eye Opener: The left field fence is smaller in height than the right field fence – a welcome variety from the mostly similar height dimensions of virtually all Spring Training ballparks.

Space Coast Stadium Footnote: If he's causing trouble, you might run into the minor league Manatee mascot moving around a lot faster than the real life water version. Also, the chances are quite slim, but if there's a shuttle launch on game night, your seat is a sweet spot.

Discovering the Space Coast: For a good general overview of the area – from hotels and what's happening to attractions, restaurants and more – visit www.space-coast.com.

Daily Sports Media: *Florida Today* (www.flatoday.com) is the main daily newspaper covering the Space Coast. For sports radio, dial up WIXC 1060-AM (www.wixc1060.com) or you might also be able to pick up the reception of 740, "The Team," out of Orlando, WQTM-AM (www.740theteam.com).

College Baseball/Other Sports: Outside of Florida Institute of Technology (www.fit.edu) in Melbourne, there are no spectator sports in Brevard County and along the Space Coast, but an hour east is Orlando, home of the NBA Magic (www.orlandomagic.com), plenty of dog racing and other fun at Orlando Greyhound (www.orlandogreyhoundracing.com) and even Orlando Jai-Alai (www.orlandojaijai.com). Also, if you are a NASCAR fan, then you must make the pilgrimage to Daytona (www.daytonausa.com), north of the Space Coast.

If you'd rather hit the links, there is no shortage of golf courses along the Space Coast. Visit www.golfspacecoast.com/ to review a few, or check out the local rag's site www.floridatoday.com/community/resources/recreation/golf.htm for an even more comprehensive overview of your options.

If you like to gamble, Sterling (www.sterlingcasinolines.com) and/or Sun Cruz (www.suncruzcasinocom/canaverl.htm) to find your fix on the water.

Main Attractions: The Space Coast gets its name from the Kennedy Space Center (www.ksc.nasa.gov) that offers tours daily. If you've never been, it is well worth going. The Space Coast is also known for its mostly unspoiled beaches, inlets and parks (www.brevardparks.com), including Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (www.nbbd.com/godo/minwr) and Sebastian Inlet State Park (www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district3/sebastianinlet/index.asp).

If action is your attraction however, then the one exception to the above "peaceful day-at-the-beach-by-myself rule" may be Cocoa Beach, former Spring Training home of the Astros and temporary tenant of the Marlins during their inaugural season at Cocoa Expo (www.cocoaexpo.com). Like the rest of the beaches, it's about 20-25 minutes east of the ballpark (www.mapquest.com).

Back in my crash pads days in Florida, weekends sometimes included, among other places, Coconuts (www.coconutsonthebeach.com) – and no, this is not grandma's favorite establishment by any means. In addition to being home to

the original Ron Jon (www.ronjons.com) Surf Shop that's open 24/7, there's a pier, boardwalk and surf museum in Cocoa Beach, which is bikini contest central and a hangout for the younger crowds (but not just the young, kiddo).

Purple Porpoise (www.purpleporpoise.com) in Indian Harbour Beach is another fun Space Coast watering hole. Speaking of water, the surf's up along the Space Coast, though it's amateur compared to California and Hawaii. You can rent at Ron Jon's or another place, or just check out 1st peak at Sebastian Inlet or 2nd light at Patrick Air Force Base for the cool dudes wiping out.

For those less inclined to get all wet or don the wetsuit (the water can be a tad nippy in March), the Brevard County Zoo (www.brevardzoo.org) is one of the few attractions actually somewhat close to the ballpark. Angel fans will appreciate the "jumping monkey" that occasionally appears on the zoo's site.

Hidden Gem: A great morning or late afternoon can be had at Port Canaveral (www.portcanaveral.org) where just seeing some of the vessels can be enough of an attraction. Ports End Park is good viewing and fishing spot, occasionally for those fatty manatees, too. Plus, if you like to roll the dice, Port Canaveral is your night playground too, baby. Visit Sterling (www.sterlingcasinolines.com) and/or Sun Cruz (www.suncruzcasino.com/canaveral.htm) to lose it all.

Off The Beaten Path: Consider heading due east of the ballpark – out to sea. On a deep sea fishing excursion. You probably won't land a Marlin, but you might just grab a hold of some other critters while you're cruising the Atlantic. The Coastal Angler Magazine (www.camirl.com/) site has a bunch of good links to plan your adventure. If interested, also check out www.snarlinmarlin.com.

HELP/CONCLUSION

I hope you enjoyed this sample of “A Fan’s Guide To The Ultimate Spring Training Experience.” When you buy one of Joe’s guide’s, you become a lifetime member – that means you get free updates of that guide every year! It’s 1 for the price of a lifetime!

Additionally, when you buy, you can receive free e-mail advice from Joe on planning your trip, should you wish to exercise this option. What’s more, you can take advantage of a “fax on demand” service that will provide (up to 10 pages) of Spring Training e-guide information – right to your fax within 24 hours of your request. Of course, all of Joe’s e-guides are totally customizable – you can also print only the pages you might need right from your own PC or MAC. You can even download the e-guide to a handheld device!

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