



Tradition Field (EST. 1988) Capacity: 7,000



Constructed between 1986 and 1988, Tradition Field is the spring training home of the New York Mets, as well as the home to the St. Lucie Mets (A) of the Florida State League and the Gulf Coast Mets rookie league team. Before that, the Mets called Al Lang Field in St. Petersburg, FL their home from 1962-1987.

The Mets broke ground for their new \$11 million spring training complex on December 19, 1986 originally named Port St. Lucie Sports Complex. The main attraction, Thomas J. White Stadium, officially opened on March 5, 1988 for an exhibition game between the Los Angeles Dodgers and New York Mets, to a sell-out crowd of 6,649. While the Mets lost to the Dodgers 5-2 in 10 innings, the stadium made more news than its first game outcome. Foul balls twice cracked the plexiglass in the lower boxes behind home plate and then, with the score tied 2-2 in the 9th inning, the sprinklers turned on. Their spray caused a brief delay, and the Dodgers would burst for three runs an inning later off Todd Welborn to take a lead they would not relinquish.

Thomas J. White, the person for whom the stadium was originally named, was a real estate developer from St. Louis, Missouri who worked with sportswriter Jack Champion on the successful campaign to bring the Mets to Port St. Lucie. He was the master developer who gave birth to the 4,614-acre St. Lucie West community.

In 2004, the Mets partnered with Tradition Florida to rename the stadium Tradition Field. Along with the name change, the ballpark underwent the biggest "improvement program" since its original construction. The \$10 million that was spent modified, enhanced, and expanded the stadium. Unfortunately after the 2004 spring schedule the park need \$4 million worth of repairs after it sustained damage from hurricanes Frances and Jeanne.

On March 23, 2010, during a Mets spring training game against the Atlanta Braves, it was announced that effective immediately the stadium would be renamed Digital Domain Park, as a result of a multi-year partnership between the Mets and Digital Domain.

The Stadium featured several new amenities in 2012. The rightfield bleacher was replaced with 500 field-level seats, highlighted by an outdoor bar and grill similar to the third base-side Tiki Bar. The rightfield section was also connected to the outfield grass

berm area for easy access throughout the facility. The scoreboard was upgraded to include a larger screen and no replays highlights in HD.

Beyond the stadium gates stands an eight-foot tall sculpture that features a piece of steel that was originally part of the World Trade Center. The sculpture also displays the date 9-11-01 on the piece of steel which rests between two twin towers.

Just before the start of spring training on February 7, 2013 the Mets once again struck a deal with Tradition Florida to bring back the name Tradition Field.

The main stadium has a seating capacity of 7,000 and is available for baseball tournaments, concerts, festivals and much more.

Tradition Field Interesting Facts:

- Three granite markers in the memorial area near the main entrance are dedicated in memory of these former Mets' employees who had a big impact in establishing the team's presence in Port St. Lucie: Joe McShane, the New York Mets Project Coordinator for the building of Thomas J. White Stadium; Andy Kaplan, the first General Manager in St. Lucie Mets history; George McClelland, the St. Lucie Mets Director of Public Relations from 1988-2000.
- The *New York Post* and *Daily News* are sold at newspaper vending boxes outside of the stadium.
- During the summer prior to the construction of the St. Lucie Bat House, which was dedicated on March 23, 1998, clean-up crews had to pressure wash the stadium twice a day to get rid of all the guano (doo-doo) the bats were depositing in it.
- First Pitch: Rick Aguilera (NYM) March 5, 1988.
- First Batter: Steve Sax (LAD) March 5, 1988.
- First Hit: Single by Steve Sax (LAD) March 5, 1988.
- First Home Run: John Gibbons (NYM) March 10, 1988.
- Winning Pitcher: Brian Holton (LAD) March 5, 1988.
- Losing Pitcher: Todd Welborn (NYM) March 5, 1988.
- First Save: Mike Hartley (LAD) March 5, 1988.

