



Rays, Phillies Set the Stage for Clearwater's 'World Series Rematch'

Bright House Field to Host American, National League Champs in Spring Training Highlight

St. Pete/Clearwater, FL (February 24, 2009) – Call it the February Classic. Call it the October-do-over. Call it whatever you want, but this Saturday, February 28, the St. Pete/Clearwater area will be the center of the baseball universe for the much-anticipated rematch of Major League Baseball's two reigning champs.

The World Series Champion Philadelphia Phillies will play host to last year's American League Champion Tampa Bay Rays in a game that will have visitors and locals packing the stands of Clearwater's Bright House Field.



Emotions will be running high for both teams, with the Phillies basking in the glow of their first World Championship since 1980 and the Rays returning to action after their historic "worst-to-first" 2008 season.

On the heels of both team's recent successes and with both clubs carrying a large local following, tickets for the game, which is scheduled to start at 1:05, have already sold out.

"This is what Spring Training is all about," said Kevin Smith, director of the St. Pete/Clearwater Sports Commission. "To have baseball of this caliber being played in such an intimate setting, and to have great weather all but guaranteed is exactly why Major League Baseball has called the St. Pete/Clearwater area its Spring Training home for more than 80 years."

And for fans unable to make it to the Rays-Phillies redo next Saturday, there's good news: the Rays will return to the area to play American League East rival, the Toronto Blue Jays, at nearby Dunedin Stadium, on March 13 and March 20.

In fact, with the Phillies in Clearwater, the Blue Jays in Dunedin, the New York Yankees in Tampa and the Pittsburgh Pirates in Bradenton, local baseball fans won't have to travel far to get their first glimpse at the boys of summer in the greater Tampa Bay Area.

Both the Phillies and Blue Jays will welcome perennial fan favorites---the Yankees, Boston Red Sox and Atlanta Braves---to Pinellas County as part of their regular Grapefruit League schedule.

Area fans will get a special treat as both teams will also host exhibition games versus the World Baseball Classic's Team USA and Team Canada as they prepare for the second edition of the international baseball tournament. The World Baseball Classic rosters are loaded with MLB All-Stars, including Team USA's Derek Jeter (Yankees) and Chipper Jones (Braves). Former American League Most Valuable Player Justin Morneau (Minnesota Twins) highlights a Canadian roster that also includes Jason Bay (Red Sox).

Tickets for the games at Bright House Field and Dunedin Stadium against both Team USA and Team Canada are still available for purchase.

Offering full sun in its grass berm area beyond the outfield fence and ice cold beverages in its Tiki Pavillion beyond the left field wall, Bright House Field has been a hit with fans since its 2004 inaugural season. In addition to being the spring home of the Phillies, Bright House Field also hosts home games of the organization's Florida State League team, the Clearwater Threshers. Clearwater has served as the spring home of the Phillies since 1948.

Once ranked by *Sports Illustrated* as one of the top 5 places to watch a Spring Training game, Dunedin Stadium also plays host to the Dunedin Blue Jays of the Florida State League, the Dunedin High School baseball team and various community activities throughout the year. The Blue Jays have opened camp in Dunedin each year since the team's inception in 1977.

Tickets are available for all of the area teams at their respective Web sites, RaysBaseball.com, Phillies.com and BlueJays.com. Ticket prices vary by venue and opponent.

Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater is the official destination marketing organization for Pinellas County, Florida.

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