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Birmingham's Regions Field named Baseballparks.com's Ballpark of the Year

Interest has been incredibly high in the ballpark that opened in Birmingham, Alabama in April. Locals have been keenly interested in all aspects of the new park, so much so that the server that hosts Baseballparks.com crashed when so many Alabamans flocked to read the site's in-depth ballpark review the day it was posted.

Now they can focus their excitement on a new story: the Birmingham Barons' **Regions Field is Baseballparks.com's Ballpark of the Year for 2013.**

Joe Mock, president of Grand Slam Enterprises which owns and operates the website, made the announcement today. This marks the 14th straight year that Baseballparks.com has presented such an award.

The honor is given annually to the new baseball stadium with the best combination of superior design, attractive site selection and fan amenities. The plaque representing the award will be presented by Mock at a Birmingham Barons home game in April of next season.

The Barons' front office was thrilled with the news. "The 2013 season and the opening of Regions Field has been an incredible moment for the Barons organization and the Birmingham community," the Logan family, owners of the Barons, said in a statement. "To receive this national recognition is quite an honor. There are so many people and organizations that have contributed to the development, design and construction of this ballpark, and this award along with the local support and reaction definitively proves that Regions Field is a one-of-a-kind ballpark that offers something for everybody."

"We are so excited (over) the success of Regions Field," said Birmingham's mayor, William Bell. "To see the diverse crowds, the excitement and the good old-fashioned fun at the stadium has really generated a sense of community. We look forward to many years of success for this field."

Regions Field is the second straight Southern League park to win this honor, as Pensacola Bayfront Stadium earned the award in 2012. This fact isn't lost on league president Lori Webb. "I'm looking forward to attending another plaque presentation ceremony," she exclaimed when told of the news.

"It was exciting to learn that Regions Field was chosen by Baseballparks.com as the 2013 Ballpark of the Year," Webb added. "Regions Field is a beautiful, tremendously functional park and one that our league, the Barons and the entire Birmingham community can be very proud of. They have definitely raised the bar, once again, in the Southern League and throughout Minor League Baseball."

Chiefly responsible for the ballpark's design was HKS Architects. "HKS couldn't be more excited by the news," said Andy Henning, Associate Principal at the firm. "Our experience working with the Birmingham Barons and City of Birmingham was incredibly rewarding because it was based on a

shared passion for creating a ballpark *of* Birmingham. We are so pleased with the results and thrilled to see how well the facility has been received by fans of the Barons and those throughout the Birmingham area and beyond.”

HKS is no stranger to this award, as their ballparks have won three times in the last seven years. The others are Dickey-Stephens Park in North Little Rock, Arkansas in 2007 and Salt River Fields at Talking Stick in Arizona in 2011. “HKS believes (the) Ballpark of the Year is the award that says we’ve succeeded in designing a park that pushes the boundaries and creates a unique and immersive patron experience that doesn’t exist at other facilities,” Henning added. “We are also enormously proud to have contributed a facility that fits seamlessly into the context of the great city that Birmingham is.”

Regions Financial purchased the naming rights for the facility, so they were pleased to see the ballpark’s achievement. “Regions is proud to have been a part of the team that brought Regions Field downtown,” according to Bill Horton, North Central Alabama Area President for the financial-services firm. “Its development and the growth we’re seeing around it has been great for this community. We applaud the citizens and fans of the Barons for coming out and making this great venue a success.”

The other finalists for the award were PNC Field, home of the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders of the International League and Hillsboro Ballpark in the Portland suburbs. The Hillsboro Hops of the Northwest League play there.

“The architects of the parks that were the finalists all did outstanding work,” Mock said. “In the end, Regions Field was the one that was ground-breaking. Its views of the skyline and Red Mountain, incredible banquet hall and steel-mill exterior are just a few of its outstanding features. Truly, Minor League parks of the future will be measured against the new facility in Birmingham.”

And what about the server crashing? “The day we released our online review of Regions Field, the visitorship spiked,” explained Mock. “It marked the most visitors Baseballparks.com has ever seen in a single day, and it brought the server that hosts our site to its knees. Our hosting company wasn’t too pleased with us, but it certainly demonstrates what a hit this ballpark has been in the Birmingham area.”

The complete list of Ballpark of the Year winners can be found here:
<http://www.baseballparks.com/BallparkOfYrLaunch.asp>

Mock’s review of Birmingham’s ballpark entitled “Magic in the Magic City” can be found here:
<http://www.baseballparks.com/Birmingham-1.asp>

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*For more information on this award or on BASEBALLPARKS.COM, contact Joe Mock at
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