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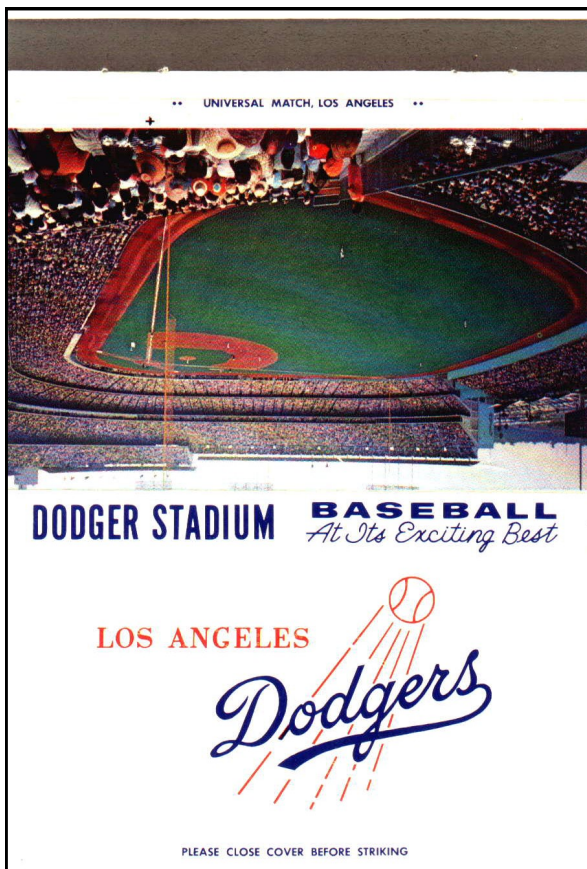
# Dodger Stadium

by Mike Prero

It began with Dodger President Walter O'Malley's vision nearly five decades ago and remains one of the crown jewels in professional sports and a landmark to West Coast expansion in Major League Baseball. Since 1962, the beauty of Dodger Stadium has awed spectators with a breath-taking view of downtown Los Angeles to the south; green, tree-lined Elysian hills to the north and east; and the San Gabriel Mountains beyond.

The 56,000-seat Dodger Stadium has parking for 16,000 automobiles on 21 terraced lots adjacent to the same elevations as the six different seating levels. More than 3,400 trees cover the 300 acres of beautiful landscape, which is maintained by a full-time staff of gardeners. The Dodgers employ a full-time grounds crew and maintenance staff that keeps all aspects of the stadium in immaculate condition throughout the season making Dodger Stadium one of the best maintained facilities in the country.

In January 1999, the Dodgers announced a program of



investment and limited renovation of Dodger Stadium to help make it more economically competitive with other ballparks across the nation. By the start of the 2000 season, the Dodgers added new field level seats down the foul lines beyond the dugouts and a new expanded dugout section with an adjacent club area. In addition, suites were added on the Club Level to provide amenities that are now available at every other Major League ballpark. In 2003, a new scoreboard, DodgerVision video board, and cutting edge control room were added to enhance the overall fan experience.

The Dodgers installed a brand new state-of-the-art grass field after the conclusion of the 1995 season for the first time since the stadium opened in 1962. Prescription Athletic Turf (PAT), created and installed by the Cincinnati-based Motz Group, used the latest agronomic and engineering technology to manage field moisture through controlled drainage and irrigation. The 100,000 square feet of bermuda grass is grown on pure sand, beneath which a vacuum chamber is laid over a water-tight plastic barrier that forcibly extracts water during heavy rains. New moisture gauges monitor the field's water level in coordination with a microprocessor that controls drainage functions. A computer controller has the ability to reverse the scenario and subirrigate when the sand's moisture reading drops below the optimal level.

Clearly, the changes have paid off, as the Dodger Stadium field was named the best in baseball by Sports Illustrated in 2003 in a poll of Major League players. Of the responses, 23.2 percent of players rated Dodger Stadium as the best-quality playing field, more than twice as many as any other stadium.

At the gates, more than 115 million fans have watched Dodger games at Dodger Stadium over 42 years, an average of more than 2.7 million fans per season. Dodger fans have witnessed 3,257 regular-season games at Dodger Stadium, including a 1,899-1,439 (.569) record posted by the Dodgers. In 1978, Dodger Stadium became the first ballpark to host more than three million fans in a season when the Dodgers drew 3,347,845 in attendance. Following another three-million attendance mark in 1980, the Dodgers set the all-time Major League season attendance record in 1982, drawing 3,608,881 fans. Toronto, Colorado and Atlanta have since topped that mark, but the Dodgers can also boast seasons of more than three million in attendance from 1983-86, 1990-91, 1993 and 1996-2003. Eight of the top 25 NL single-season attendance marks have been recorded at Dodger Stadium.

During the 20th century, the only privately-financed ballparks in Major League Baseball were Yankee Stadium (built in 1923) and Dodger Stadium. Walter O'Malley and architect Emil Praeger set the stage for baseball's most popular and beautiful showplace when they began designing the Dodgers' new home after moving to Los Angeles in 1958. The stadium opened its doors on April 10, 1962 and the Dodgers won their first game at their new home the next day on April 11 when they defeated the Cincinnati Reds, 6-2. The Dodgers drew 2,755,184 fans at Dodger Stadium during its inaugural season.

Since then, Dodger Stadium has hosted eight World Series and the Dodgers have won four World Championships (1963, 1965, 1981 and 1988), eight NL pennants (1963, 1965, 1966, 1974, 1977, 1978, 1981, 1988), eight NL Western Division crowns (1974, 1977, 1978, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1988, 1995) and one NL Wild Card berth (1996). The stadium hosted the Major League Baseball All-Star Game in 1980 and the Olympic Games' baseball competition in 1984. The eight-team competition during the 1984 Olympic Games marked baseball's greatest involvement in the Olympic Games to that point. [<http://losangeles.dodgers.mlb.com>]

I've only got two covers from Dodger Stadium, a 20-strike and the 40-strike pictured on page 1. There must be more [*the inevitable optimism of the collector!*].