



NEWS RELEASE

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Knoxville Smokies baseball team takes aim at full season in 2025

A spring 2025 date to start baseball in Knoxville in a new multi-purpose stadium is now likely because of global supply chain issues and a volatile construction market. The original date had been spring 2024.

The City of Knoxville, Knox County and Boyd Sports have agreed that the new date is the most feasible, and the timing already had been discussed earlier in a Sports Authority Board meeting. The city and county are funding the new public stadium as part of a larger private development of residential, retail and entertainment projects by GEM Community Development Group in the area adjacent to the Old City.

While the stadium may be completed earlier and available for other events such as concerts, Boyd Sports said it is not feasible to move the Smokies, the AA team of the Chicago Cubs, from Kodak, Tennessee, to Knoxville in mid-season in 2024. Baseball is expected to return to Knoxville in full for the 2025 season.

“This publicly owned stadium will be a game-changer for East Knoxville in terms of creating opportunity and jobs, stimulating private investment and entrepreneurship, and – in the long term – helping families to build wealth,” Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon said. “As a venue for baseball, soccer, festivals and concerts, the stadium also will be a unique amenity that greatly enhances the quality of life in East Knoxville.

“It’s imperative that this project be done right. If that means opening the stadium a little later, it’s worth a small wait to ensure we end up with what we need and want.”

Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs said, “With all the problems everyone is currently experiencing with supply chain and labor issues, this news is disappointing but not unexpected. I think the responsible thing to do is pause and come up with a good plan that addresses these new challenges.”

Randy Boyd, the founder of Boyd Sports, which operates the Smokies, said, “We remain 100 percent committed to completing the stadium and moving the Smokies to Knoxville, and we appreciate the continued support of the city and county as we develop the new schedule together and continue the momentum on the project.”

Work is scheduled to begin on the stadium property within the next 60 days with the movement of water and sewer infrastructure off the site in preparation for the project.

Overall work is moving forward on stadium plans, along with controlling cost estimates in a rapidly changing market in construction and other market segments that includes demand for new construction and supply chain disruptions that can cause shortages or delays. Other construction projects in the Knoxville area and across the country are facing the same supply chain and cost issues as well.

“We are continuing to work diligently on finalizing plans to provide Knoxville and Knox County a top-quality project that fits within the budget,” said Boyd, who noted the new Knoxville stadium is not a cookie-cutter type project.

“We designed this project with our community and the neighborhood in mind, and that’s why we are concentrating on retaining the elements that deliver the best fan and visitor experience possible at the most favorable cost. We intend to be good stewards of the funds for the stadium and build a structure that Knoxville and Knox County deserve.”