

# **Charlotte Sports Park wins USA Today 10Best spring training stadium**

By Hector Flores

Charlotte Sports Park has won the 2024 USA Today 10Best Readers' Choice travel award contest for Best Spring Training Facility, beating out nine other stadiums in Florida and Arizona, including Steinbrenner Field in Tampa. The sports park also won the award the last time we were nominated in 2014.

Thanks to our fans for voting us No. 1. I'm so proud of everyone who worked so hard to get the stadium back in shape after Hurricane Ian wreaked havoc in September 2022. It's been great to have the Rays back in town for spring training.

Between March 2023 and January 2024, our repair contractor, Wharton-Smith, performed more than \$17.5 million worth of repairs, all of it covered by insurance. There was substantial damage to the practice field turf, batters eyes and backstops. The Major League clubhouse, Building A, Building B and the press tower all suffered water intrusion. The interior of each building was mitigated and rebuilt, along with complete roof replacements. The main stadium and baseball field suffered a total loss to the sports lighting and roof structure covering the stadium seats. The roof was rebuilt and all new LED stadium lights and light poles were installed.

## **Board workshops**

On Tuesday, the County Commission held two public workshops. In the morning, staff updated the board on topics such as the Medical Examiner's Office operations, infrastructure management and maintenance related to roads and drainage, the Manchester Waterway and the Burnt Store Area Plan.

In the afternoon, the board performed its annual review of the county's reserve and debt policies. We also presented our long-range fiscal planning and revenue updates with scenario models looking out to the next five years and even to fiscal year 33. Staff also provided an update on the framework of the upcoming FY24/25 budget as we do some fine-tuning over the next few months ahead of the September budget public hearings.

With the board's input and support, the overall conservative approach to our financial planning have served us well in the past through varied economic conditions.

If you didn't get a chance to see the workshops, they are available online on our CC-TV meeting archive. Visit [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/CCTV](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/CCTV) and click Video On-Demand Archives.

## **Water plant tour**

The Charlotte County Utilities Department is offering a tour of the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority's water treatment facility to give citizens a behind-the-scenes look at the process involved in providing water to the community. The tour begins at 10 a.m., March 27. The plant is located at 8998 SW County Road 769 in DeSoto County.

To reserve a spot, email [CCUPR@CharlotteCountyFL.gov](mailto:CCUPR@CharlotteCountyFL.gov) or call 941-764-4304.

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