

Toronto Mets? state-of-the-art baseball facility nears completion in east Aurora



These are exciting times for Rich Leitch and Ryan McBride of the Toronto Mets Baseball Club.

Leitch and McBride ? veteran coaches, administrators, and lead instructors for the Mets since 2010?were pleased to observe the final stages of roof construction last week to close in their new training facility on Desjardins Way in Aurora.

The 29,000-square-foot, baseball-only performance centre is scheduled to open in early September.

Leitch, who coached NCAA baseball for ten years before returning to Canada to start the Mets program, explained the reasons for his organization's excitement.

?This is our third facility, but it's our first build-up. It's an untouched canvas. For us, design is key. We'll have a facility that will be ten bullpens wide for the 70 pitchers in our program. That's twice as much space than we currently have in Richmond Hill. Since we work out by position, the field space will allow us to work with our pitchers on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. We can change the look of the facility for our catchers and outfielders on Tuesdays and Thursdays where they will be able to throw 180 feet and catch fly balls year-round with the 40-foot-high ceiling. Our infielders will be able to run full and proper infield drills on Thursday and Saturdays using the width of the facility.?

McBride, who played NCAA College baseball with Leitch, is looking forward to ?the opportunities it will provide for our players and coaches. This will be one of the best facilities in the country. Guys are going to get better in here.?

Under the skillful tutelage of McBride and Leitch, the Mets have, indeed, been getting better for years.

The ball club competes in the upper echelon of the 13-team Canadian Premier Baseball League and has been a perennial powerhouse ? along with the Ontario Blue Jays and the Great Lakes Canadians ? since the CPBL commenced operations in 2015. The baseball lifers also have an enviable record of producing Major League players and top-notch NCAA prospects over the last fifteen years in one of the most successful youth programs in the country.

The Mets, who will play their home games at St. Andrew's College in Aurora, needed a new facility to support their growing program which includes 95 Junior Mets (ages 8-13) and 160 CPBL players who compete in the 13U-18U divisions from April to

August.

Leitch discussed the rapid growth of the program: "We've grown from 32 players in 2010 to over 250 in 2025. It's a great group of kids and their attitude is great, too. One of my favorite times of year is when our pros and college players come back home to the facility to work out and talk to our current players. This facility will be a great place for those interactions."

Some of those notable returnees would include third baseman Tyler Black who broke into the big leagues with the Milwaukee Brewers in 2024 and Liam Hicks who is currently a catcher for the Miami Marlins. In addition to major leaguers like Black and Hicks, the Mets have four highly-touted minor league prospects in the MLB pipeline: Jonah Tong (AA-Mets/Binghamton Rumble Ponies), Mitch Bratt (AA-Rangers/Frisco RoughRiders and Team Canada); Denzel Clarke (AAA--Athletics/Las Vegas Aviators), and Ryan Leitch (Kansas City Monarchs of the American Association of Professional Baseball and Team Canada).

Coach Leitch delineated the advantages of having players of this caliber returning to the facility in Aurora: "All are A-1 first-class kids. They work with our players and set a great example. They've accomplished what our players want to do."

A significant contributor to the young Mets' future accomplishments is builder and developer Jordan Kolm.

The 20-year construction veteran whose company HunZach Group is erecting the Mets' new home in east Aurora admired the forty-foot ceiling that will allow the ball club to carry out a full range of drills.

"I love this. I'm a custom home builder, but I bought this piece of property for the Mets. I'm a builder at heart and I love the process of seeing things come from the ground up. It's not just a warehouse; it's going to be a community hub and great for baseball families. We'll have 21,000 square feet on the main floor and an additional 7,500 square feet on the second floor mezzanine for offices, meeting rooms, a parents' lounge, a weight room, and batting cages."

Kolm maintained that the Mets' year-round home will be "completed by early-September after the completion of the CPBL season. The facility will be crazy-efficient, including an insulated floor with radiated heat, a steeped roof with R30 insulation, and numerous construction upgrades."

The excitement during our site visit was palpable as Kolm, Leitch, and McBride strode through the gravel floor and gazed upward as the roof panels were being installed.

McBride spoke for the trio, reinforcing his prior remarks: "A lot of players will get better in here."

The Mets' indoor "Field of Dreams" at 24 Desjardins Way will assuredly make its hundreds of players better for decades to come.

By Jim Stewart