

MLB COLUMN

# Baseball is doomed on Florida's Gulf Coast

By PAUL NEWBERRY  
AP Sports Columnist

Baseball is doomed on Florida's Gulf Coast. Sure, they'll still have spring training, not to mention sparkling beaches and early bird specials.

But the Tampa Bay Rays will become the Montreal Expos (Version 2.0) in the not-too-distance future.

Or, if that doesn't pan out, there are potential backup plans in Portland, Charlotte and Nashville — maybe even Las Vegas, the once-scorned city of sin that every league now wants to be in.

The Rays formally became lame ducks with word that Major League Baseball is allowing the team to explore the possibility of playing part of its schedule in Montreal, a jarring but not really surprising development that is almost certainly the precursor to this long-troubled franchise finding a permanent home far away from Tampa Bay.

There is much work to be done, for sure.

A pesky lease at the Tropicana Field that runs through 2027. The lack of a new stadium in Montreal. Not to mention the more immediate issues that are sure to crop up from a team playing "home" games in two cities that are roughly 1,300 miles apart.

But, rest assured, there won't be a team in Tampa Bay a decade from now — and, in all likelihood, the end will come several seasons earlier.

There was a giddy reaction north of the border, where the original Expos resided from 1969-2004 before moving to Wash-



AP Photo/Paul Chiasson, File

**Starved for fans despite success on the field, the Tampa Bay Rays have been given the go-ahead by MLB to look into playing a split season in Montreal. An idea under consideration is for the Rays to play early in the season in Tampa Bay and later in Montreal at Olympic Stadium (above).**

ington and becoming the Nationals. Montreal still has a devoted base of baseball fans and deserved a better fate the first time around. Another version of the Expos would have a strong shot at long-term success under the right circumstances — most notably, deep-pocketed ownership and a new ballpark.

Both requirements are moving toward reality.

Stephen Bronfman, son of the Expos' original owner, Charles Bronfman, is spearheading the drive to bring baseball back to Montreal. He appears to be far enough along in his efforts that MLB agreed to the extraordinary step of exploring a two-city solution for the Rays' financial woes.

"I think we're close," Bronfman told reporters in March before the Toronto Blue Jays played an exhibition game at Montreal's Olympic Stadium, which has become a well-attended tradition in recent years. "There's a feeling in the air."

Bronfman has moved to acquire a prime parcel of land that would be the centerpiece of a new stadium in Montreal. While he's continually preached patience, no doubt mindful of how the Expos failed in their numerous attempts to replace the Big Owe, it's clear that a path is being cleared for baseball's return.

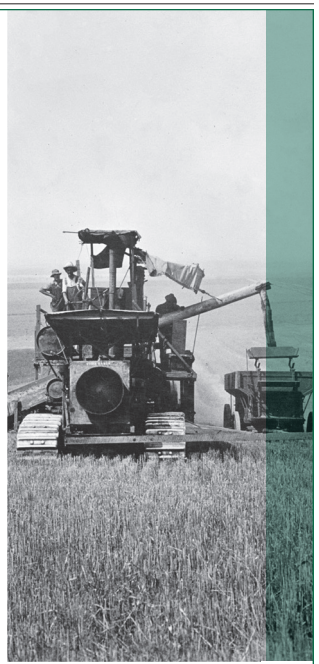
The Expos, let's not forget, drew over 1 million fans their first six years even while playing at tiny Jarry Park. After moving to Olympic Stadium in 1977, they drew more than 2 million fans four times and were one of the more popular teams in the National League through much of the 1980s.

"It was a destination spot," said Steve Rogers, a five-time All-Star pitcher for the Expos. "I have no doubt that the city of Montreal would go over the top now to embrace a major league team."

The Expos' fortunes turned after Bronfman sold the team in 1990.

We're all part of Umatilla County history.

# SHARE YOUR PHOTOS



The East Oregonian is proud to announce its partnership with Athena Public Library, City of Echo, Milton-Freewater Area Historical Society, Pendleton Round-up, Tamástslikt Cultural Institute, Umatilla County Historical Society and our readers on a new pictorial history book, "Umatilla County Memories: The Early Years."

**YOU'RE INVITED**

We are excited to invite you, our readers, to participate in this unique project. Please bring your photos to one of our scanning sessions listed here — and be sure to check our submission guidelines. Photos will be scanned on-site and given right back to you. In order to keep things speedy, please fill out our simple photo submission form prior to the session. Forms can be downloaded at [Umatilla.PictorialBook.com](http://Umatilla.PictorialBook.com). Please plan to fill out one form for each photo you'd like to submit.

Download submission forms and pre-order at

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**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

- General interest photos, such as: commerce, industry, transportation, rural life, public service, etc.
- Photos taken between the 1800s and 1939.
- Photos only — preferably original (no newspaper clippings or photocopies).
- Photos taken in Umatilla County.
- Limit 10 photos per family. No appointment necessary.
- If you're a private collector, call 360-723-5800 to set up an appointment.

## PENDLETON

# 4TH OF JULY Parade

HOSTED BY THE PENDLETON VFW "LET' ER BUCK" POST 922

## 10 AM THURSDAY, JULY 4, 2019

★ THEME: "Only in America" ★

STAGING AND LINE-UP:

Horse Staging Area: Western Auto/Baxter Parking Lot  
Line-Up Area: SW Dorion Street

ROUTE:

From City of Pendleton building on SW Dorion to Main Street to SW Court to the Convention Center

WHO MAY ENTER:

Any Individual, Organization or Business - ALL ARE WELCOME

JUDGING:

All Entries will receive a participation ribbon. Trophies will be awarded in the following 14 Categories:  
MOTORIZED - Best Club/MOTORIZED - Judges' Choice  
BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL • FIRST RESPONDERS & ARMED FORCES  
PEOPLE WITH PETS • BAND / DRUM & BUGLE • YOUTH DANCE & DRILL GROUPS • FLOATS • CIVIC GROUPS & SERVICE CLUBS  
YOUTH GROUPS • EQUESTRIAN (2 riders or less)  
EQUESTRIAN GROUPS • EQUESTRIAN GROUPS - Royalty  
HORSE & BUGGY/WAGON

In Addition, the VFW will award the "Patriot Trophy" to the entrant with the most overall votes (Winner of Patriot Trophy not eligible for additional trophies)

ENTRY FORMS:

May be picked up at the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce, Dean's Athletic, DG Gifts, Elite Guns & Tactical and the Pendleton Downtown Association  
You may also mail requests to VFW Post 922 • PO Box 787 • Pendleton, OR 97801 or email requests to: [fbradbury@yahoo.com](mailto:fbradbury@yahoo.com)

Questions? Call Fred Bradbury at 541-377-7474



**SCANNING SESSIONS**

- Saturday, June 22** 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
Tribal images only  
Tamástslikt Cultural Institute  
47106 Wildhorse Boulevard, Pendleton
- Sunday, June 23** 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.  
Echo Bank Building and Historical Museum  
230 W. Main Street, Echo
- Monday, June 24** 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.  
Athena Public Library  
418 E. Main Street, Athena
- Wednesday, June 26** 10 a.m. - noon  
Umatilla County Historical Society  
Heritage Station Museum  
108 SW Frazer, Pendleton
- Thursday, June 27** 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.  
Milton-Freewater Area Historical Society and Frazier Farmstead Museum  
1403 Chestnut Street, Milton-Freewater