

## **“Meijer Sports Complex” is Official Name of Championship-Caliber Complex in 10-Year Rights Deal**

*GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., May 4, 2021* – The [West Michigan Sports Commission \(WMSC\)](#) and [Meijer](#) have partnered for more than 10 years to promote youth and amateur sports through the Meijer State Games of Michigan and other WMSC initiatives. Today, they announced a new 10-year partnership further uniting the two West Michigan organizations, with Meijer as the new naming rights partner of the WMSC’s flagship baseball/softball complex in Rockford – now officially called the [Meijer Sports Complex](#).

“Meijer has been a loyal partner of the WMSC for more than a decade, and this naming rights partnership extends and deepens that relationship as our organizations continue to support youth and amateur sports and the community as a whole through visitor spending,” said Mike Guswiler, president of the West Michigan Sports Commission. “This new partnership also ensures that we can look to the future of the sports complex and expand upon the successful work we have started with additional uses of the remaining acreage. I can’t think of a more fitting partner when it comes to giving to Michigan – and especially West Michigan – than Meijer. We look forward to a long and productive partnership.”

Guswiler, along with Meijer President & CEO Rick Keyes, Rockford Mayor Ed Ross, West Michigan Miracle League President Tony Comden and Aquinas College Men’s Head Baseball Coach Chris LaMange spoke to a group of invited guests today at a naming rights dedication event under the grandstand of Championship Field at the newly named Meijer Sports Complex, where the new complex logo was revealed and a ribbon was cut to commemorate the new partnership.

“Meijer has always supported youth and amateur sports and the related health and economic benefits that come from these activities,” Meijer President & CEO Rick Keyes said. “This partnership with the West Michigan Sports Commission represents our commitment to enriching lives in the communities we serve. The complex is already a staple in the lives of many West Michigan families, and we look forward to seeing it continue to bring joy and spirited competition to the community for years to come.”

Keyes went on to share that Meijer was passionate about supporting the complex not just because of its overarching impact in the community, but because of the inclusivity of the facility. The Meijer Sports Complex houses one of only nine Miracle League fields in the state, allowing West Michigan children with disabilities to play baseball as part of the Miracle League in a space designed just for their needs.

“At Meijer, one of our core values is treating people with dignity and respect, which in this case means ensuring that every child has the opportunity to play baseball in a safe and fun environment,” Keyes said. “We have a long history of supporting organizations serving people with disabilities, including the Miracle League, so that aspect of this complex makes this contribution even more meaningful to us.”

Rockford Mayor Ed Ross expressed what it means to have the sports complex in Rockford’s backyard and how the partnership is beneficial for the region. And representatives from the West Michigan Miracle League and Aquinas Men’s Baseball explained why the Meijer Sports Complex has been a good partner for their teams. The Nate Hurwitz Miracle League Field was the first field to open at the complex in 2013, and Aquinas College Men’s Baseball has utilized the complex as its home field since the 2020 baseball season.

### **Complex an Economic Catalyst and Sports Destination for West Michigan**

The idea for the Meijer Sports Complex was first conceived in 2007 when the West Michigan Sports Commission was formed, supporting its mission of promoting the region as a premier venue for hosting youth and amateur sports to enhance West Michigan’s economy and quality of life. Part of that mission includes assuring that the community has tournament-quality venues.

“With \$45.1 billion spent annually on sports tourism in the United States and baseball ranked among the top four travel sports, it made sense to build a premier baseball/softball complex that would bring dollars to our region from travel teams looking for venues in the Midwest,” Guswiler said. “And we built something unlike any complex in West Michigan.”

Since opening its doors, the Meijer Sports Complex has attracted more than 96 events and 170,105 visitors with an economic impact for Kent County in excess of \$28 million, including cumulative hotel room night stays of

more than 30,000. Even in 2020 with the pandemic and resulting event restrictions plus the recession, baseball/softball tournaments could continue, generating \$2.4 million in direct visitor spending from hosting 15 tournaments, 462 teams, more than 6,000 athletes, 11,000 spectators and 2,433 hotel room nights.

From a development standpoint, the sports complex has attracted other sports facilities on adjacent property over the years to make the region a true youth and amateur sports destination, including the [West Michigan Archery Center](#), [Rock City BMX](#), two multi-use soccer fields, a sledding hill, and the multi-use Merrell Trail – all part of [Plainfield Township Premier Park](#). The complex has 10 remaining acres that can be developed.

Ground was broken on the complex in October 2012, with architect firm Progressive AE and construction management firm Owen-Ames-Kimball Company completing the project in August 2014, with the first full season in 2015. The \$7.5 million project cost was raised through an “Everyone Wins” campaign chaired by Arend Lubbers and Dan DeVos, as well as honorary chairs, Richard DeVos and Peter Secchia, with fundraising supported exclusively through philanthropic donations. Art Van Furniture served as the naming rights partner for the first five years of the complex.

### **2021 Calendar Full with Tournaments**

The 2021 baseball/softball season already is off to a strong start at the Meijer Sports Complex, with almost every playable weekend booked with tournaments, including 14 tournaments by Game Day USA and four by USA Softball, highlighted by the USA Softball Men's Open East Fast Pitch National Championship Aug. 27-29 and USA Softball Men's Slow Pitch Class D National Championship Sept. 3-5.

### **About the West Michigan Sports Commission**

*The non-profit [West Michigan Sports Commission](#) (WMSC) identifies, secures and hosts youth and amateur sporting events to positively impact the economy and quality of life in the region. Since its inception in 2007, the WMSC has booked 882 events attracting more than 1.4 million athletes and visitors, generating over \$410 million in direct visitor spending. Visit [westmisports.com](#), [Facebook.com/WestMichiganSportsCommission](#) and [@westmisports](#) on Twitter and Instagram.*

### **About Meijer**

*Meijer is a Grand Rapids-based retailer that operates 256 supercenters and grocery stores throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin. A privately-owned and family-operated company since 1934, Meijer pioneered the "one-stop shopping" concept and has evolved through the years to include expanded fresh produce and meat departments, as well as pharmacies, comprehensive apparel departments, pet departments, garden centers, toys and electronics. For additional information on Meijer, please visit [meijer.com](#). Follow Meijer on Twitter [@twitter.com/Meijer](#) and [@twitter.com/MeijerPR](#) or become a fan at [facebook.com/meijer](#).*

### **About the Meijer Sports Complex**

*A flagship project of the West Michigan Sports Commission, the Meijer Sports Complex is a championship-caliber baseball/softball complex near Rockford featuring eight baseball and softball fields, including the 385-foot fenced Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation Championship Field with covered grandstands to seat 1,000 spectators; Nate Hurwitz Miracle League Field for children with disabilities; warm-up areas, restrooms, concessions and maintenance building; and parking for more than 400 vehicles. Visit [meijersportscomplex.com](#).*

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