

## Marlins' park nears installation of first seat Team wants to involve ticket holder in milestone for new home January 28, 2011

*This is part of an MLB.com/Marlins.com exclusive series with team president David Samson chronicling the progress and developments of the new retractable-roof stadium that is scheduled to open in 2012.*

MIAMI -- At completion, the Marlins' state-of-the-art ballpark will seat 37,000. In three weeks, seat No. 1 will be installed in the retractable-roof building set to open in 2012.

It will be yet another important milestone for the franchise's new home.

"We're not sure in which location the seat will be in, but ideally we'll have the person whose season ticket that is help install that seat," Marlins president David Samson said. "They'd be the first person to actually sit in that seat."

The organization is looking to make the installation a memorable event, not only for the building, but for the fan who will have the distinction of being the first to sit in the ballpark. If that particular seat is not yet sold, the team plans to make a marketing push to encourage a fan to purchase the first seat.

"We've got to see where they will first be installing," Samson said. "If it is at a place where no seat has currently been sold, we'll start marketing it and telling people who come to the sales headquarters that that seat is available."

About 15 months away from Opening Day 2012, the Marlins remain encouraged by the high number of premium seats already being sold at the new ballpark.

"As far as sales are concerned, our remarkable pace continues," Samson said. "In terms of premium seating, the lack of availability is striking. We already have more premium seats, full-season tickets for '12 than we have total season tickets this year. That's exciting. People are very excited about the move, and they continue to come to the sales headquarters. Once they see the stadium, they are buying tickets, knowing they are going quickly."

For the 2011 season, the organization's last at Sun Life Stadium, individual-game tickets will go on sale at FanFest on Feb. 19. That day, tickets also will be available on [www.marlins.com](http://www.marlins.com). All stages of construction for the new ballpark can be viewed via the New Ballpark [webcam](#) on [www.marlins.com](http://www.marlins.com).

Along with enjoying air conditioning and a retractable roof, the new building also will feature comfortable seating. The widths of the seats will vary depending on section.

The Diamond Club, for instance, has the most exclusive premium seats in the ballpark. The seat widths there will range from 21-23 inches. And on the Vista level, seats are between 19 and 20 inches. The most narrow seats are located in perhaps the most interesting place to watch the game -- the Home Run Porch. Located above right field, the porch has seats that are 18 inches wide. The area is on top of the action and offers fans an ideal way to catch home run balls.

"The thinnest seats in the ballpark are the coolest seats in the ballpark," Samson said. "They are in the Home Run Porch. It's all part of the experience. Those are smaller seats, but those are right on top of the field. It's turning out to be an amazing place to watch the game."

A sample of every style of seat in the new ballpark is at the Marlins' New Ballpark sales headquarters, which is located across the street from the stadium in the Little Havana section of Miami.

To ensure that there will be no obstructed views in the building, team officials will sit in every single seat at the ballpark.



In some early testing, it was detected that a railing blocked the view of home plate in the Vista Level. To accommodate, the builders switched to a thinner -- but still sturdy -- cable railing.

"We're sticking to our promise that we will sit in every seat and make sure there are no obstructed views," Samson said.

In terms of construction, workers currently are elevated 200 feet as they put in the centerpiece -- or highest point -- of the roof. Also, 85 percent of the walls inside the building are currently up. The new ballpark also promises to provide easy handicap access. Handicap areas, ramps and sections remain under construction.

"We are speaking with different groups regarding our accessibility issues," Samson said. "There has not been another team that has been working so willingly with these organizations to ensure that all accessibility issues are handled properly. We're proud of that. We've been so communicative with different groups about accessibility."