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## Fans Wax Ecstatic Over New Stadium

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Daryl Thornton called it one of the finest stadiums ever built.

**BOWIE KURN** called it one of the great sports monuments of the world.

Carl Gilbert called it a much better place to sell beer than Crosley Field.

It doesn't have base paths or a Mountain Dew sign to aim at in left centerfield. It doesn't have a set of snorting bulls on the scoreboard, and Tuesday night it didn't even have hot dogs.

But it did have 51,000 fans, and they had all come together to see their Cincinnati Reds break in their green-carpeted, multi-decked round-house called Riverfront Stadium.

Daryl Thornton is the Cincinnati 13-year-old who has discovered the only apparent way to get autographs here.

He suggests laying for the ball players in the parking lot before and after the game.

Bowie Kurn is the commissioner of baseball. And Carl Gilbert is one of the 31 bartenders in Riverfront Stadium.

The three seemed to share one thing in common with most of the other people at Riverfront Stadium Tuesday night. They talked about this gigantic new ballfield as if they were on retainers from the Reds public relations department.

**THEY USED WORDS** like "beautiful" and "magnificent" and "great" in talking about a ballpark on an evening when it would have been a lot easier to talk about the weather. It was one of those nights when the fans did more fanning than the people on the field.

"It looks all right," said Frank Lang, who figures he watched the Reds in their former headquarters for almost 50 years.

"I heard a guy outside say it isn't as nice as Busch Stadium," said Art Brooks, a 40-year fan himself. "Well, hell, they haven't finished it yet, I turned around and told him he was full of bull."

"I think it's a great achievement for the City of Cincinnati," said Kevin Church.

You wouldn't normally expect to hear something like that coming from a 13-year-old.

A few people said it did look a little strange without base paths.

Young Thornton said he hoped Pete Rose wouldn't hurt himself sliding.

**AND JOHN** Fernbacher said he wished they had waited until the All-Star game to move in, because it would have been prettier. He ought to know. He's one of the hard hats who helped put in the 51,000 seats.

Mrs. George Hollister and Mrs. Standish Meacham had two of the best seats in the house—boxes right behind home plate.

"We're thrilled," said Mrs. Hollister. "My impression is one of extreme neatness and great contours."

**ACROSS THE** stadium, a couple of light years away, Mrs. Joseph Piening leaned back in the very last row on the very highest deck in the very deepest of centerfield, and allowed that it did seem at first that you are falling forward, but that eventually you got used to it.

"I would guess this is one of the louisiest seats here," said her husband, "and it's better than a lot of seats in Crosley Field."

The fans had their informal say as they began filing into Riverfront more than two hours before the game, many still hungry.

It was billed as the Night of the

Great Traffic Jam, but his congestion on Cincinnati streets failed to materialize. Instead it formed on the sidewalks and restaurants in downtown Cincinnati and lower downtown Covington.

Crowds were standing three-deep at some bars, and restaurants and sandwich shops were turning hungry fans away simply because there was no more room. The crush began about 4:45 and lasted past 7 p. m.

"It's really a bad situation with the restaurants," said Jerry Moore, who runs a news stand at Fourth and Vine Streets. "People ask where's a good place to eat, and even the bad places are filled."

**THERE WERE NO** traffic tieups before the game. Capt. Ed Diekmann of the Traffic Bureau, in charge of the 75 policemen on foot directing traffic and the miscellaneous squad cars and motorcycle officers, attributed the smooth flow to the fans' arriving early and parking downtown instead of at the stadium, where there were hundreds of vacant parking spaces.

The only jams were pedestrian, on the ramps leading to the stadium and city sidewalks. Crowds were 40-deep at some intersections.

They carried cameras and radios, and a lucky few had sack lunches. The suspension bridge carried a steady stream of pedestrians from Kentucky, but few cars.

Many crowded into the Stadium Club, between Third and Fourth Streets on Walnut, for one last drink under a sign that said "Hit This Sign with Home Run and Win 56 Gallons of Whiskey."

Inside the stadium there were such historic signs as "Hi, Reds" and "Hello, Pe Wee" to mark the occasion. And there was an official, legitimate, 14-carat pregame ceremony.

**The Roger Bacon High School Band** got it started at 7:38 p. m. by popping out to shallow center and assuming the shape of a crown.

Chester Lathrop of the Findlay Market Association presented a nylon American flag to Reds General Manager Bob Howsam. Actually, the flag was already hanging limply in centerfield. It appeared to be sweating.

Howsam simply thanked the association warmly, thus becoming one of the few ceremony stars to stay within his 30-second limit.

**FRANCIS DALE**, president of the Reds, asked everybody to sing the Star Spangled Banner enthusiastically when it came up on the program, and to give Pete Rose a big hand when he came to bat in the bottom of the first. The fans did both.

Mayor Eugene P. Ruehlmann called it "one of the most thrilling moments in Cincinnati's history" and John E. Held, president of the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners, invited everybody back this fall for the World Series.

**"IT IS FITTING** that the city that had the first successful professional baseball team would start off baseball's second century with this beautiful new stadium," said National League President Chub Feeney.

Then came the Star Spangled Banner, just like Dale wanted it. And all the civilians marched off the field.

Then, with the important matters out of the way, some guys in red and white and some more in gray wandered out and got a game of baseball started.

And Cincinnati's glad tidings were over for the evening.