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TD Ameritrade titles new home of College WS

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Online broker TD Ameritrade has signed a deal that will put its name on the new 24,000-seat stadium in Omaha, Neb., that will house the College World Series. Sources put the 20-year deal at about \$750,000 a year, with annual escalators, for the \$128 million downtown ballpark set to open in 2011.

What will be known as TD Ameritrade Park is being financed by the city, with some private funding. The venue hopes to attract as many as 70 events a year, with roughly half of them being the NCAA Division I baseball championship. The event will move from Rosenblatt Stadium to the new field in two years. The plan to build the stadium convinced the NCAA to keep the College World Series in Omaha, where it has been played since 1950.

The TD Ameritrade deal includes signs, suite and club seats, additional tickets and hospitality, and the use of the facility for corporate events. At one point there was some thought the deal would be packaged with an NCAA corporate partner package, but TD balked at the accompanying \$10 million annual rights fee. Media on ESPN's College World Series telecasts is not included.

The TD Ameritrade deal is significant since it represents a naming-rights deal at a time when the market has soured, and one being done by a financial services company, most of which are under pressure to shed any marketing expenditures, especially sports marketing.

With its headquarters in Omaha and thousands of local employees, the deal was largely done to demonstrate hometown support.

"The College World Series is big already and has great potential to grow," said Bill Gerber, TD Ameritrade executive vice president and CFO. "Hopefully those collegiate ties link us to customers, and as they graduate and start making money, they have to invest. I would still tell you this isn't about generating a lot of new accounts, as much as it is recognition of our headquarters community, and because it is the right thing to do as a local corporate citizen."



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The plan to build the stadium, set to open in 2011, kept the College World Series in Omaha.

Rob Yowell's Gemini Sports negotiated the deal and will plan activation with agency of record status for TD Ameritrade. "Ideally, the College World Series will turn into a larger and longer event, a celebration of baseball and America, and TD will be a big part of that," Yowell said.

Rob Prazmark at 21 Marketing, Greenwich, Conn., said his company's research shows that more than 80 percent of naming-rights deals are done by companies headquartered in the same municipality as the venue. "The genesis of these relationships are almost always local," said Prazmark, whose firm is representing LandShark Stadium in Miami for naming rights after the current deal expires in January.

The TD Ameritrade ad campaign with actor Sam Waterston is a fixture on NFL and college sports telecasts, but this is the company's first sizable sports sponsorship. TD Banknorth, which once owned TD Waterhouse, has naming rights to the home of the NHL Boston Bruins and NBA Boston Celtics as TD Banknorth Garden, although that name is changing to TD Garden next month in deference to a merger and subsequent renaming of the bank.

TD Waterhouse itself held naming rights to the home of the Orlando Magic, paying \$1.6 million a year for the TD Waterhouse Centre 1999-2006. During the original Internet bubble, rival online brokerage house E-Trade was a heavy spender on sports, including a three-year run as sponsor of the Super Bowl halftime show broadcast from 2000 through the 2002 NFL championship.

Research director David Broughton contributed to this report.

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