

# New York Tails

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## Baseball and Hot Dogs At Shea's Dog Day In The Park by JoAnna Lou

Baseball and hot dogs took on an entirely different meaning at Shea Stadium in Flushing, Queens last August, and almost certainly will again in the 2006 season.

On August 20th, 2005, The New York Mets hosted the city's first ever "Snausages Dog Day in the Park." Although four other Major League Baseball teams in the country have hosted similar events, this was the first time dogs were welcome in a New York stadium. The response was overwhelming, as over 700 humans and 400 dogs watched the Mets win against the Washington Nationals that magic evening.

Last year's "Dog Day in the Park" event began with a pre-game parade around the baseball field, led by Mr. Met, the Mets mascot, and Snocrates the Snausages dog. The canine participants were treated like VIPs -- Very Important Puppies -- as players stopped to pet the passing dogs and photographers snapped away. The dogs proudly trotted around the field as if they knew that they were walking on a field many two-legged Mets fans only dreamed of touching.

Once the game started, the dogs and their owners watched the action from the Picnic Area bleachers. Canine fans enjoyed doggie goodie bags, ate Snausages from the Snausages Snack Bar, and cooled off in baby pools filled with water. Workers from waste removal companies walked around with pooper scoopers and poop bags cleaning up any accidents. All fans -- both two and four-legged -- were well behaved, watching the game and making new friends.

Eric Schwam drove from New Jersey to watch the game with his American Bulldog, Wilson. Having been a Mets fan for 28 years, he was ecstatic when he heard about the opportunity. "It's absolutely great for the family, kids, and dogs. Hands down, best promotion ever." Dog loving baseball fans have former Mets pitcher, Kris Benson, and his wife, Anna, to thank for the successful event. Both animal lovers, and the owners of ten dogs, the couple has always supported local humane societies. When Kris was traded to the New York Mets in 2004, Anna spoke with Mets Vice President of Media Relations, Jay Horwitz, about a possible dog event. Loving the idea, the Mets decided to hold the promotion to benefit the New York based North Shore Animal League (NSAL), the Nation's largest no-kill animal adoption organization.

The event was a barking success for the NSAL as they received

donations from the New York Mets, Snausages, and from fans through donation boxes located outside of the stadium. One-hundred percent of the dog ticket sales went to the NSAL as well. In addition, several homeless animals found homes through mobile adoption vans present that night.

North Shore Animal League Events Director, Jill Wendrow, says the event was successful for more than just raising money. "Working with the New York Mets for the Dog Day in the Park was a wonderful opportunity for the League to reach out overall to tens of thousands of people through pre-game coverage and the fans attending the game, bringing awareness to the importance of adopting a shelter pet."

Although Kris Benson will be pitching for the Baltimore Orioles in 2006, the Mets still plan on supporting the cause he and his wife brought with them. At press time the Mets had not finalized any promotion plans for the 2006 season, but it is believed that they will repeat the Dog Day in the Park event this year.

Alas, Yankee Fans, there will be no Dog Day in The Bronx this year, but Mets fans are already looking forward to bringing their dogs to the game this year.

"Last year, over 400 Mets fans brought their dogs to Shea for the first-time event. It really was a wild and fun event for everyone -- including the dogs. This year promises to be even better. However, I hope the beer vendors at Shea request proper I.D. from the dogs that were in line for beer," says Ron Dresner, master of the [www.newyorkmets.org](http://www.newyorkmets.org), "The Very Unofficial New York Mets Fansite."

Check the Mets web site at [www.mets.com](http://www.mets.com) or call their ticket window at (718) 507-TIXX for more information on this year's Dog Day At Shea.

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