Written by Devon Teeple
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For the first time in collegiate baseball history, the elite of Florida collegiate baseball will be in the same place at the same time.

On March 2, 2010, George M. Steinbrenner Field will host the inaugural Florida Four .

University of South Florida (USF), will square-off against the 13th ranked Hurricanes of Miami (UM). The second match-up, is to say the least, a college fans dream with the 9th ranked Florida Gators (UF) confronting their in-state rival Florida St. Seminoles (FSU), who are, according to the Preseason USA TODAY/ESPN Top 25 Coaches' Poll, fifth in the nation.

Executive Director of the Tampa Bay Sports Commission Rob Higgins, expressed his thoughts about bringing this event to Tampa.

“We've been working with the Yankees for a few years now to bring another premier event to our community,” said Higgins. “We hope it serves as launching pad to Omaha for the four programs. This is a story that will start in March and we hope continues on to June. ”

College baseball at any rank or division level, does take a backseat to football and basketball; sports that do bring in enormous amounts of revenue for their respective schools. However, college baseball gives its viewers and fans something of an arcade feel. The “Ping” of aluminum, a sound that most purists would like to eliminate, does in fact bring an added level of excitement to the playing field.

A weak pop-up to third becomes a duck snort to left, and routine fly balls to right become historic game-ending homeruns, in the bottom of ninth, elevating the ordinary into a 1997 ESPY “Showstopper of the Year
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Opportunity is in fact knocking. These four participating schools, along with the city of Tampa can build an early season showcase into a tradition, reminiscent of The Great Alaska Shootout , held in Anchorage Alaska.

It’s going to be a great night for college baseball in Tampa. It should be a College World Series atmosphere with four great teams,” said USF Head Baseball Coach Lelo Prado. “I hope it's the beginning of a long tradition for college baseball here in the Tampa Bay Area.”

In any event, this will elevate the interest for each school involved, while continuing to expand the role of the New York Yankees and their contributions to the city of Tampa and the State of Florida.

The fans are in for a real treat, as the Road To Omaha just got a little more interesting.

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