

The MLB will debut a new 'virtual ballpark' this weekend

Major League Baseball (MLB) has a new coming to the web, opening to the public this Saturday for a . The MLB says it will have a social component, letting fans interact with one another, and will include minigames and avatars that can be customized with MLB team jerseys.

As for what this will actually look like when it launches, it's... exactly what you'd expect. It's a big virtual baseball park with stands full of people. The ballpark contains a giant screen where games and other content will be livestreamed. There aren't any seats for the avatars, but I'm happy to report they appear to have legs to stand on. There's also a large outdoor area with a city backdrop, though none of the images show anyone wandering around out there.

The experience was created by Improbable, a UK-based virtual reality company started in 2012 that most recently shuttered its subsidiary Improbable US Defense & National Security, which had been working on a "military metaverse" to focus on commercial endeavors like this one. Improbable says it will be an "ultimate lag-free experience."

At the moment, this appears to be a web-based experience only, so getting it to work with an actual VR headset will take some tinkering. The metaverse has struggled to get going as companies beyond Meta are trying to figure out... exactly what it is and how to take advantage of it. So far, there isn't really a one-size-fits-all definition, leaving us with awkward, sad experiments that are disconnected from a broader

virtual world, ultimately making proposals like the MLB's feel like a 90s-era internet promise that may or may not be any good.

<https://www.theverge.com/2023/7/5/23784237/mlb-major-league-baseball-metaverse-virtual-reality-celebrity-all-star-game>