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D.C. Sports Bog

By Dan Steinberg



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>> From May 10

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A Near No-Knitter

I spent the first inning of Monday's near no-hitter wandering through the 500 section and hanging out with the arts-and-crafts set, who had descended with their yarn and their needles and their crochet hooks for Stitch N' Pitch night. I wasn't sure whether this would be interesting or not. The first Stitch N' Pitcher I interviewed was named Kathryn Donaldson. She was knitting a child's red-white-and-green sweater, with yarn she had gotten while bargain shopping on eBay. She hadn't been to a baseball game since her 38-year-old son Tony, who was sitting to her right, was a toddler. And she identified herself as a "yarnaholic."

"What's a yarhanolic," I asked, stupidly.

"Well, you know there are alcoholics and there's Narcotics Anonymous?" she said. "I should start the local chapter of Yarnaholics Anonymous."

"Ha ha, how much do you knit," I asked, stupidly.

"Oh no it's not the knitting," she said. "It's the collecting of the yarn. I have a storage locker full. I have more yarn than I can knit in the rest of my natural life. And probably my son's as well."

"Why?" I asked. Actually, the real quote was more like "wh, wh, why?"

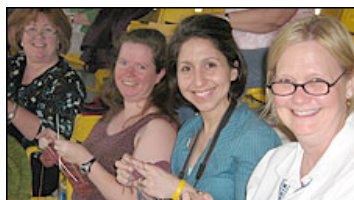
"I don't know, it feels good," she said. "Yarn's really nice to fondle. And it comes in pretty colors, and the colors make me feel good, and the texture makes me feel good. It's a very kinesthetic hobby."

By this point, the game had started, and the seats were filling up. Lots of the fans, at least in section 515, were staring into their laps. "Women with needles, it's pretty scary," noted Lynn Zwerling.

For the most part, it was eerily silent up there. When something good would happen for the Nats, the Stitch N' Pitchers would yell, but they wouldn't clap, for obvious reasons. One woman, Ruth Brannigan of Alexandria, waved



Yarnaholic Kathryn Donaldson, with her son, Tony Ellis. (By SportsBog)



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the green jacket she was knitting in the air after positive developments. If you're wondering how she could do that without unraveling her work, you're an idiot, since she was obviously using circular needles, stupid. Anyhow, "if it does [unravel], so what," she said. "I get unraveled sometimes."



Everywhere you turned this is what you saw. I'm telling you, it was weird. (By SportsBog)

Not everyone, of course, was knitting. Fancy Largey, who said she "can't live without crochet," was crafting a little case for her binoculars. I figured the binoculars were for baseball watching, but it turns out this was Fancy's first baseball game in more than 30 years.

"These are my bird-watching binoculars," she said, which I really ought to have guessed. "I'm an avid bird watcher, too."

Near the top row were the representatives of Columbia Knitters Unite, a meet-up group that was unveiling a massive "Knitters Unite" banner during the first inning. If you scanned the overwhelmingly female crowd, you saw red socks, and bright baby blankets, and fuzzy multi-colored scarves coming to life, in front of your eyes. To be sure, there were scattered men, such as Benjamin Forbes from Fredericksburg, who had agreed to come to the game with his wife, who usually doesn't want to go to the ball park but suggested they go on this day for a special treat.

"I thought, 'Oh maybe Frank Black is playing for this one section, acoustic or something,'" Forbes said quietly. "But no, it was knitting."



Columbia Knitters Unite, featuring Leigh Spearman, Ivy Miles-Slater and Odessa Banks-Griffith. (By SportsBog)

I even saw at least one man with knitting tools in hand. But mostly, the needle artists up in the 500 level on this particular night were women, and they loved what they were doing.

"It's cheaper than therapy," explained Donna LaBranche of Reston, who was cross-stitching a Norwegian ornament that she planned to use on her Christmas tree. "It takes your blood pressure down."

"She just got me into it, and she's right about the blood pressure thing; it really calms you down," agreed daughter Rachel, who was cross-stitching a tree that spelled out the word "Dream."

In between Rachel and Donna was the family dad, David LeBranche, who, stick in the mud that he is, was just sitting there watching the ball game. He said he doesn't cross-stitch. I asked how he controls his blood pressure.

"I smoke cigars," he said.

By Dan Steinberg | May 15, 2007; 2:33 PM ET | Category: [Nats](#)
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Comments

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I saw a knitted at the DCU v Chivas USA game.

Posted by: Bob | May 15, 2007 03:13 PM

When will the Orioles be hosting Snitch N Stitch night?

Posted by: sjf | May 15, 2007 03:32 PM

That headline is so Steinz-ian.

Posted by: Jamie Mottram | May 15, 2007 03:49 PM

I enjoyed the game so much that I had to put my crochet project away in the 8th inning. Stitch and Pitch has turned me into an instant baseball fan!

Posted by: Fancy Largey | May 15, 2007 04:33 PM

The Orioles aren't having a Stitch N Pitch night. At least it's not on the Stitch N Pitch website.

Posted by: Odenton, MD | May 15, 2007 04:52 PM

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