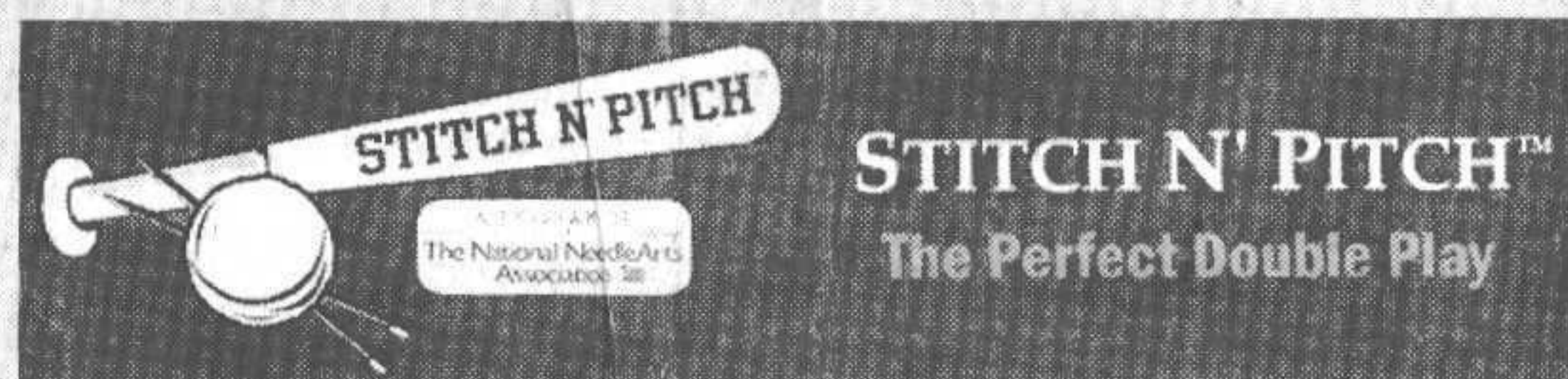


Buy me some peanuts, Cracker Jack and some wool

On Thursday at the Metrodome, there will, as always, be stitching on the baseball when the Twins face Cleveland. In a rather unique twist, however, there will also be stitching in a special section of the upper deck.

That's because Thursday is Stitch N' Pitch night, when fans of baseball and knitting will come together to simultaneously watch a ballgame and work on scarves, afghans or whatever needlework project strikes their fancy.

Sounds a little farfetched, you say? The Seattle Mariners were skeptical, too, when they hosted a Stitch N' Pitch night last season. They expected



maybe 200 fans to participate; instead, there were 1,600.

"It was a very 'where did this come from?' kind of thing," said Libby Butler-Gluck, a representative with the National NeedleArts Association. "But it's not just grandmas knitting anymore. Young, hip people are knitting, and it's not just women. With baseball, what we're really do-

ing is bringing together two American traditions."

The success in Seattle led the association to formalize a program and approach every major league team. The result is that Stitch N' Pitch nights are scheduled in 12 major league parks this season, with the game at the Dome being the first. Tickets are available at

www.stitchnpitch.com, and the first 500 fans buying a ticket through the promotion receive a tote bag filled with some knitting basics.

With more success this season, Butler-Gluck is hoping there will be events in all 30 stadiums next year. Some teams have already contacted her about adding a date later this season. It's a win-win situation, she said: Teams fill seats that would otherwise go unused, and the needle arts receive visibility.

"You're sitting for a long time while you're knitting," Butler-Gluck said. "What better place than at a baseball game?"

MICHAEL RAND