

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

May 3, 2007

ARIZONA LIVING online print edition



D-Backs' Stitch N' Pitch event hooks knitting fans

Scott Craven

The Arizona Republic

May. 3, 2007 12:00 AM

No offense to baseball, but the sport comes with its share of dead spots: The change of sides after each half inning; the seventh-inning stretch; the way the pitcher looks in for the sign, still looking, still looking, then the batter calls a timeout.

You get the idea.

So does Frances Clark. She has attended thousands of games because her husband happens to work for a spectator sport. But even Clark can't spectate for hours at a time without doing something.

That is why Clark took up crocheting and will be among several Arizona Diamondbacks wives at Sunday's Stitch N' Pitch, where those who love needlework are invited to share tips and tricks while watching the team play the New York Mets.

The first Stitch N' Pitch was a success, attracting more than 1,100 participants, making it the second-largest Stitch event in the major leagues, said Diamondbacks public relations director Catherine Herman. With about 1,500 people expected this year, the event likely will be woven into the schedule for years to come, she said.

"We were surprised how popular it was last year. But seeing how much people enjoyed it, we expect it to grow," Herman said.

Clark will be there, crocheting a blanket and pausing, should husband and first baseman Tony Clark come to bat. Baseball, she said, lends itself to crafting. Unlike the non-stop action of basketball, baseball allows one to look for other things to do.

She learned to crochet in 1994 when Tony played for the Trenton, N.J., Thunder in Class AA. "It was fun watching, but . . . I had to do something to keep busy."

She learned to crochet, using the simple stitch to weave blankets and throws. There was a time she could complete a baby blanket every two weeks as she watched Tony play for the Detroit Tigers (and subsequently the Boston Red Sox, New York Mets, New York Yankees and, in 2005, the Diamondbacks).

Now with three children ages 5-12, she doesn't have as much time to crochet. She still attends nearly every home game and accompanies her husband on several road trips, but bedtimes for the kids mean an early exit.

Besides, between keeping an eye on baseball and another on her kids, little time is left for the knitting arts.

"I'm way behind in my blankets. Maybe on Sunday I'll learn a stitch or two and be hooked all over again."

Reach the reporter at scott

.craven@arizonarepublic.com

or (602) 444-8773.