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Hit 1, purl 2: It's Stitch N' Pitch

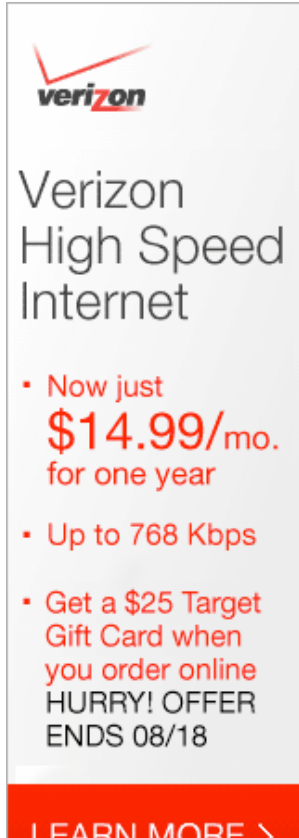
Attention to game wavers, but event brings 600 to see Brewers, Mets

By **VIKKI ORTIZ**
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Posted: July 31, 2007

It was the top of the sixth Tuesday night at Miller Park, and the Mets were leading 2-1 with two on and two out, when Pat Sommers, 75, of Mequon anxiously asked the question felt by many people in her section.

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"Will you look at my knitting pattern?"

Unlike the rest of the fans who packed the sold-out game, Sommers, who sat in Section 206, couldn't have cared less about Tom Glavine, the New York Mets pitcher trying to become the 23rd member of the 300-victory club.

Unless, perhaps, Glavine needed a green baby bonnet.

"I don't care for ball; I've got better things to do with my time," said Sommers, giving the Brewers a special kind of victory by being there with her yarn and knitting needles.

Sommers was among the nearly 600 people lured to the game for the first Stitch N' Pitch event at Miller Park, where fans bought tickets to sit in a section reserved for knitting, crocheting and cross-stitching.

The event raised the eyebrows of at least a few hard-core Brewers fans who came to Miller Park for double plays and ended up seeing double stitching.

"That is just whacked," complained Kevin Flack, 20, of Mukwonago, who was wearing a J.J. Hardy T-shirt. "I don't invite people to games if they're not going to watch."

Brewers officials, on the other hand, were pleased with how many people accepted their

Stitch N Pitch



Photo/
[Kristyna Wentz-Graff](#)

Taking her eyes off her project, Ann Krieg of Appleton (left) cheers while Dorene Henrikson (from second from left) of Appleton and Marge Martin and Jeni Martin, both of Racine, work on their crafts Tuesday during Stitch N' Pitch Night at Miller Park. The event is part of an initiative to bring new fans to the ballpark.



Photo/
[Kristyna Wentz-Graff](#)

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Stitch N' Pitch invitation, which helped push the Brewers to their 20th sellout of the season.

Milwaukee was one of nearly 600 people in the Stitch N' Pitch section at Miller Park.

Planning for the event began in May, after officials heard about similar events succeeding at 23 other major league team ballparks, said Tyler Barnes, vice president of communications for the Brewers. The event is one of several ways the Brewers are trying to attract more women to games.

This year, the team also introduced more women's clothing in its shops, and later this week, the team is hosting Baseball Basics for Women, a two-day program to give women a crash course in America's favorite pastime.

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For the Stitch N' Pitch event, organizers reached out to five local yarn and knitting shops, allowing them to sell loge outfield tickets for \$22 each, which came with a bag full of needlework goodies.

"We were really floored at the immediate success of the program," Barnes said.

"This is the opportunity to take a very, very casual fan and turn them into something more than that."

Who cares who's on first?

Casual fans such as Lynda Mitz, 56, of Bayside who came with a group of 30 did not pay attention for most of the game.

"I don't even know what inning we're in," Mitz said, looking up momentarily from a project she and other people in her group were working on - an afghan to donate to Meta House, a substance abuse treatment center for women.

"We can't watch the game because we have to watch our knitting," she explained.

Rhonda Schumacher, 54, of Mukwonago and her mother, Nancy Lambert, were not so good at answering baseball trivia.

Who is Tom Glavine?

"No idea," Schumacher said.

What place are the Brewers in?

"My grandson knows," Lambert offered.

But both were happy to be at the park working on fuzzy scarves.

"It's just fun to do." Schumacher said. "These are two things that were probably never put together before."

"Guys aren't watching all the time, either," Lambert added.

America's two pastimes

Of course not all Stitch N' Pitch participants were baseball ignorant. Lillian Mazur, a 90-year-old fan from Glendale, was well aware of the Brewers' standing. She came to the park hoping to teach others about her other hobby.

"It'll make other people want to knit," Mazur said. "I love it."

It may, however, take an entirely different initiative for that, said Dan Madigan, a 33-year-old Brewers fan from Chicago. Though Madigan did see the merit in attracting new fans through Stitch N' Pitch, the event didn't tempt him to invest in his own needles.

"Absolutely not," Madigan said. "I probably shouldn't say that because they're right in front of me,

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but no thanks. I think it's boring."

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