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RUNS 'N' ROWS

Some good yarns at the Jays game

Many baseball teams offer knitters discounted tickets for an event called Stitch 'n' Pitch

Aug 04, 2008 04:30 AM

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DAPHNE GORDON
LIVING REPORTER

Knit one, purl two, strike three.

It might seem a bit out of left field at first, but it turns out knitting and baseball go together almost as well as peanuts and Cracker Jack.

"People who do fibre arts like to socialize and get together," says Haley Waxberg, owner of local yarn store Knit-O-Matic and one of the organizers of Stitch n' Pitch, a crafty event at tomorrow's

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Toronto Blue Jays game. .

"It's really nice to hang out with your friends and drink beer with a straw," says Waxberg, explaining that at the ball game, beer is served in plastic soda cups, and drinking it with a straw leaves both hands free for casting on.

Stitch n' Pitch was founded in 2005 by knitters in Seattle who were invited to help fill seats at a Mariners' game. More than 1,000 showed up, and baseball organizers and knitting advocates alike realized the potential for a double play.

The National NeedleArts Association, an international trade organization, approached baseball teams in more than 30 cities and, now, more than 26 teams take part by offering knitters discounted tickets for one game each season.

Last year was the first Stitch n' Pitch in Toronto, and more than 700 knitters showed up, needles in hand, to cheer and chat.

"I think I brought socks," recalls Waxberg. "They showed us on the big screen and the Blue Jays mascot came to our section. We had a presentation before the game and gave him a scarf. It was huge and bright blue."

This year, Toronto organizers are expecting as many as 1,000 knitters to turn up for the game, thanks to discounted tickets (\$20 at local yarn stores and online at toronto.bluejays.mlb.com), goodie bags full of yarn and knitting accessories and the appearance of a knitting celebrity on the mound.

Amy Singer, a Toronto-based author known in North American knitting circles for her online magazine knitty.com, will be throwing the first pitch at tomorrow's game against the Oakland A's.

Singer, who is based in Toronto, admits on her blog she's not much of a pitcher.

"I don't just throw like the stereotypical girl. I throw like a 4-year-old girl!" she writes, noting that she's in training – using a pink baseball, by the way.

Stitch n' Pitch is a summertime twist on a trend that's been growing for years – stitch 'n' bitch. Not surprisingly, those crafty gatherings in homes and yarn stores tend to attract women. But the baseball element makes knitting guy-friendly, says Libby Gluck, publicist for The National NeedleArts Association.

"Typically, the needle arts attract women. But we're trying to get men – younger men – involved," says Gluck, noting that the ratio of macho knitters at the ball games is high. About 40 per cent are men.

"The guys go crazy," Gluck laughs. "They say, 'This is the best thing ever!'"

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Bravo!

I'm not a knitter - best I ever managed was "corking" - however, this is a nice story for a change! (heck - reminds me of when the Argo's finally smartened up and created a "family" section where we could take our kids without fear of yobs and boors ruining the experience for our kids ...) Well done, knitters!

Posted by MacGregrrrr at 8:18 AM Monday, August 04 2008

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