

Cook & Son Bats' Blog

Todd, Tim and Kellan Cook love Baseball, the Seattle Mariners and trekking around the country to visit stadiums and watch games. These are their stories.

Ultimate Goal: Accomplished (8-23-09)

Only once before have I broken the normal protocol and started an entry at the middle of a game, rather than at the beginning. It was for our third game at Fenway back in July, and the purpose was to explain Ken Griffey Jr.'s fourth inning single off of the Green Monster. At the time, it was the first and only hit Tim had ever seen Griffey collect. It was a truly special moment. You can read all about it here.

Once again, I am happy to brake with tradition. Once again, I will start my story with zero outs in the top of the fourth inning. Once again, the story will involve my favorite player of all time, Mr. Ken Griffey, Jr.

Guess what, when we arrived at The Jake and checked the Mariners line-up, Griff was in there - scheduled to hit clean-up and DH. That's a good start.

Before the season started, I sat down at my computer, pulled up a bunch of MLB schedules and drafted the official "Todd & Tim Cook 2009 Baseball Agenda." I then emailed the Agenda to a select group of "Important People" (family, friends, etc.) and invited people to join us on our ride through the 2009 season. Along with the agenda, I included the following note detailing the goals I had in mind when drafting the agenda:

Important People,

Below, please find the official Todd & Tim Cook 2009 Baseball Agenda. The basic goals of the Agenda include:*

- 1) See Griff hit a Homerun as a Mariner (**most important goal**);
- 2) Complete Tim's "Seen all MLB Teams" Goal (left to see: A's, Rangers, Royals, Tigers, Red Sox, Rays, Dodgers, Padres, Astros, and Braves);
- 3) Continue new Baseball Roadtrip tradition;
- 4) Visit 10+ stadiums, including HHH Metrodome (final season), Nationals Park (2d season), Yankee Stadium (first season) and Citi Field (first season);
- 5) Continue 9/12 Baseball Anniversary tradition;
- 6) Get Gill to his first MLB and Mariners Game;
- 7) Get Poppy out to the ball field at least twice; and
- 8) Have fun and make memories.

At the beginning of the day, with 26 games under our collective belt on the season, Tim and I had covered most of the goals: "All 30 Teams" - check; Baseball Roadtrip - check; 10+ stadiums (including HHH Metrodome, Nationals Park, New Yankee Stadium and Citi Field) - check; Continue 9/12 Baseball Anniversary tradition - check (we'll be at Yankee Stadium on 9/12/09 for the third anniversary of Tim's first game); and Have Fun and Make Memories - check.

Due to a chain of events including a miscommunication, a late invite to the Outer Banks and a Citizens Bank Park sell out, goals 6-7 had to be re-scheduled a couple times and, ultimately, suspended until next season.

But goal number one was left incomplete. In what might have otherwise gone down as a perfect season of baseball fandom, the most important task was left undone. The mere possibility of it was the entire reason for this trip. To see my boyhood (and, heck, my adulthood) baseball hero blast a homerun and share the moment with my son was all I wanted out of this season.

Enter, Fausto Carmona and the top of the fourth inning. Tim and I were out on the bridge that connects The Jake to a parking lot behind the LF bleachers. He'd been a little grumpy because he hadn't had a nap, plus I think he was a little bit hungry. Colleen went down to Heritage Park and was in line to buy some pizza. I was holding Tim in my arms and this

ABOUT COOKANDSONBATS



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VISITING TEAM			
NO.	PLAYER NAME	POS.	
1	51 Ichiro	RF	
2	30 Brayan	SS	
3	4 Lopez	2B	
4	24 Griffey	DH	
5	71 Guherrez	CF	
6	7 Hanonah	2B	
7	9 Wilson	SS	
8	12 Langerhans	LF	
9	32 Johnson	C	
	34 Hernandez	RHP	

was our view:



Carmona started Griff off Ball 1, Ball 2. Then he reached back and hurled a 93-mph 4-seam fast ball that caught [wwwwwwaaaaayyyyyyyyyy](#) too much of the plate...

Fausto Carmona - #55 RHP
3-0, 5.92 ERA

Ken Griffey - #24 DH
220 AVG
1-for-4

Top of the 4th

	Pitcher	Batter
1.	F. Carmona	K. Griffey
	SPD	BRK
1	93	7"
	11"	4-Seam Fastball
		RESULT
2	86	10"
	8"	Changeup
		RESULT
3	93	7"
	11"	4-Seam Fastball
		In play, run(s)

Ken Griffey homers (13) on a fly ball to center field. None out.

...and this happened (pics courtesy of MLB.com screen shots)...





Right off the bat, it looked like a home run. However, Grady Sizemore was going back on it like he thought he might have a play on it. Worse yet, the roof of the batter's eye bar was in my way. I could tell it would land out of view on the other side of the roof. So, I ran toward RF down the bridge until the roof was no longer in play. I saw Sizemore run out of room and the ball bounced sideways off something in the CF seats, took one big hop and was gloved by a lucky fan. Here was the estimated flight path of the ball (as estimated unscientifically by me):



...the guy circled on the right is the lucky guy who took home No. 624 on Griff's career.

Due to the odd angle looking down from the bridge, I couldn't tell for sure if it was a home run until the second it bounced in the seats. But the second it bounced, I jumped in the air with Tim still in arms and gave a little shout: "YESSSSS!!!"

I immediately began fidgeting with my pocket to try to get my camera out, but I had a wardrobe malfunction and couldn't get it out of my pocket until right before Griff crossed the plate. This is the only shot I got of our magical moment in Cleveland:



When we arrived home late that night, I watched the video highlight of Griffey's home run on MLB.com, and I was excited to see that (although you cannot make us out) you can see me and Tim (the blue (my jersey) and white (the front of my hat) blob) moving across the bridge during the highlight of Griff's bomb. Here is a screen shot that shows Griff's HR ball in the air and Tim and me on the bridge:



And there you have it: our number one goal of the season completed! Never did I imagine 20 years ago, as an eighth grader going to games with my folks and marvelling at Griffey hitting homeruns in the Kingdome, that some day I would be in Cleveland, Ohio and witness the Greatest Mariner of All-Time hit a home run for the M's while spending an afternoon at the ball park with my son. It was truly incredible.

And, as my mom said to my dad while watching the game on TV some 2,500+ miles away, "that home run just made Todd's whole trip." It did. In fact, it made my whole season.

Now...I hope to get a chance to do it again!!

Okay, now that we have the most important part of the game covered, why don't we go back and start from the beginning. It was kids' day at the park. Outside the LF entrance, they had all sorts of games and events for kids. Like these little peddle cars that Tim drove around a little coned track:



After Tim drove this car, Colleen and Tim played around some more while I went into the Jake and watched the last few minutes of Mariners BP. I hadn't gotten much in terms of stadium pictures the day before, so I needed to tour around a bit.

I headed to home plate where I got this panoramic view:



I headed down to the front row and tried to walk down the 1B line in that big red front aisle, but I got booted out. Apparently, that aisle is only for really special people. Since it was such an important aisle, I took a picture of it...



...the guy standing at the end of the red aisle is the guy who booted me out of the aisle.

Two seconds later, Colleen called me and I headed back over to LF and met up with her and Tim.

We had excellent seats in the second deck just above the Mariners bullpen. So we headed

over there to check things out.

Colleen sat in our seats while Tim and I hung out in the front row where this was our view...



...as we watched Felix Hernandez warm up:



After playing catch in the OF, Felix went into the bullpen and pitched off of the mound to M's back-up catcher Rob Johnson. (I'll still call Kenji Johjima our starter). It was pretty funny watching Felix warm up. We actually couldn't see Felix because the mounds are under the second deck. So we could just see the ball fly into view and into Johnson's glove.

All of a sudden Tim started yelling down to Johnson: "Hey, sneakers! Hey, sneakers! Can you throw me a ball sneakers! Hey, sneakers! Hey, sneakers! Hey, sneakers!"

I asked Tim why he was calling Johnson sneakers and explained his name was Rob Johnson. Tim responded, "That's sneakers. Sneakers is my friend."

I asked him why he called him sneakers. "He's wearing sneakers." Of course!

A few minutes later, the Mariners relievers marched out to take their spot in the bullpen:



Above to the right is the aftermath of a hilarious scene that I missed photographing. (I was wearing a new pair of shorts and I could never seem to get my camera out of the cargo pockets in time!). Mariners closer David Aardsma is standing at the bottom. Two seconds before this shot, he just finished going down that line of relievers having each of them smell the inside of his hat. Each reliever buried his face in Aardsma's cap and then they would chat about how it smelled. It was pretty hilarious -- much more hilarious than this picture of the aftermath of smellfest.

Soon, the game started. Just then, Tim spotted the kids' funland that was situated directly behind our section (section 316). Here is a photo:



As MLB stadium play areas go, this one is pretty weak. If you have young kids, you'll notice that everything in here is something you probably have in your playroom or back yard, or maybe your friends' have it in their playroom or back yard. Nothing special here. Step 2, the manufacturer of all this stuff, is headquartered just outside of Cleveland. I guess that is why they have an all-Step 2 play area. Whether it was comparatively weak or not, Tim still loved it in there. He never wanted to leave he was having so much fun. Therefore, Colleen hung out with him and I watched the Mariners bat from the standing room counter behind our section. It looked like this:



...and then I went on a little stadium tour. I started by climbing to the top of the upper deck in RCF:



Next, I headed across the rows to the RF foul corner:



Here are a couple more pics showing the empty upper deck concourse in RF and an incredibly steep look down to the RF foul pole:



The view from the top behind home plate:



Then, an Indian hit a liner to CF and Franklin Gutierrez came running in to make the play...



And, I got some shots of the bullpens:



This is interesting. Exactly like the bullpens at Nationals Park, the bullpen in the RF corner (to the right) is field turf, but the bullpen in CF (to the left) is real grass. Odd, huh? In D.C., I thought it was because there was an entrance from the employee-only (worker) level concourse where they could bring tractors, etc., through the bullpen to the field. I figured they put in turf so the heavy equipment passing through the bullpen wouldn't get damaged. But I didn't notice a similar tractor entrance in Cleveland. I'm not sure why one bullpen is grass and the other is turf.

Here is a view into the Mariners dugout -- where Griffey (pre-home run) can be seen chatting up some of his teammates):



He came to the plate while I was passing by, so I took this picture of Tim's friend "sneakers":



After sneakers, I took a couple shots of Ichiro that I combined to make this:



That swing resulted in a single up the middle for Ichi's 184th hit of the season.

I headed up to the upper corner in LF where I got this view:



After the tour, I met up with Colleen and Tim. Tim still didn't want to leave the play area. But we got him out of there in time to witness Griff's bomb, as described above.

So, remember I mentioned Colleen was in line for pizza when Griff hit his home run? Well, she wasn't able to get any. She is a vegetarian and when she got to the front of the line, they had just given away the last slice of cheese pizza. All that was left was pepperoni. So she came back and met up with us again.

After a little bit, we went back and I stood in the incredibly short but frustratingly slow pizza line. While in line, I took this picture of King Felix:



There were literally only 2 people in front of me in line for pizza. But before I made my way to the front of the line, Felix retired the side, the teams switched positions, and Griff came to bat. I was forced to abandon my spot in line to go watch Griff's at bat, and take this picture:



Unfortunately, the home run was Griff's only hit on the day, so this at bat didn't end well.

After Tim got some pizza in him (yes, I eventually did make it through the pizza line), Tim forgot about the play area and we relocated to the LF bleachers so he wouldn't see the playarea again.

Here is Tim out in the bleachers:



Here was our view from the bleachers:



Tim and I had fun eating sunflower seeds out in the bleachers, and Tim had a blast spitting seeds:



Unfortunately, it wasn't the Mariners day. We wouldn't push any more runs across the plate after Griff's home run. Meanwhile, Felix had an off-day. The Mariners lost 6-1.

It was Kids Run The Bases day, but we had a six hour drive following the game, and Tim really needed a nap in the car so we headed out.

Despite two terrible losses, it was great to see our Mariners once again this season, and it was OUTSTANDING to see Griff hit his 624th home run of his career.

Season Fan Stats:

27 Games (plus one 5+ hour rain out with no game)

1 Ken Griffey, Jr. Homerun (Career Homerun No. 624, August 23, 2009 in Cleveland)

12 Stadiums (Safeco Field, Camden Yards, Citizens Bank Park, Citi Field, Nationals Park, Yankee Stadium, Fenway Park, Wrigley Field, HHH Metrodome, Miller Park, U.S. Cellular, and "Jacobs" Field)

24 Teams (Mariners, A's, Rangers, Rays, Orioles, Tigers, Twins, Indians, Red Sox, Yankees, Royals, White Sox, Phillies, Mets, Nationals, Cubs, Braves, Padres, Dodgers, Cardinals, Marlins, Pirates, Astros, and Brewers -- and sort of the Giants)

22 Ice Cream Helmets (Mariners (4), Phillies (5), Mets, Nationals (3), Red Sox (3), Yankees, Twins, Cubs, Brewers, White Sox, and Indians (and 1 Brewers Cheese Fries Helmet))

25 Baseballs (14 Mariners, 2 Rangers, 1 Phillies, 1 Red Sox, 1 Umpire, 1 Nationals, 1 Pirates, 1 Twins, 1 Astros, 1 Royals, 1 Indians)

MLB Closed Out (NL Closed out on 8/16/09, AL Closed out on 8/17/09)

4 Autographs (King Felix Hernandez, Jason Phillips, Ronny Cedeno, Ryan Perry)

4 Player/G.M. Photographs (King Felix Hernandez, Jason Phillips, Jack Zduriencik, Ryan Perry)

10 Mascot Pictures (Mariners Moose, Orioles Bird, Slider (Indians), 3 Presidents (Nats), Screech (Nats), 4 Running Sausages (Brewers) -- **Honorable Mention:** The Green Monster statue bench)

Posted on August 30, 2009 at 4:27 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#)

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4 Comments

Don't tell me you went to a ballgame with your boy & didn't get an ice cream helmet! Please tell me you just forgot to mention it in your entry. Please! You're gonna shatter my whole universe! Anyways, nice job with goal #1! How awesome that must have been! My #1 goal would have to be to see a game with my dad. He lives in Arizona, so it's kind of hard to make that happen. Nice pics too by the way, more great family memories!

Brian

<http://txbaseballfan.mlblogs.com>

By Txbaseballfan on September 1, 2009 8:57 AM

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I'll give you the same comment that you gave me -- I think your readers should know that Tim got some ink (internet ink). Some great props for him achieving the 30 MLB teams plateau. It's at mygameballs.com, I'll let you provide the link Mr. Proud Father! Congrats Tim, enjoy your time in the spotlight!

Brian

By Txbaseballfan on September 4, 2009 9:03 AM

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BRIAN-

Thanks, man! I actually hadn't even seen the article yet! Its pretty awesome!

By cookandsonbats on September 4, 2009 10:15 AM

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T & T-

Congrats on personally witnessing one of the greatest players of all-time go yard. Wow.

"Happy"

By happyyoungster on October 8, 2009 11:05 AM

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