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Mets host knitters

Rename it Cro-Shea Stadium?

BY JUDITH H. BERNSTEIN

June 6, 2007

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So it's a windup and a pitch - but are we talking about that guy on the mound with the hardball, or the folks in the stands unsnarling their yarn and embroidery thread and sharing their passion for handcrafting? And is that a designated hitter or a designated knitter?

Actually, it's both. In Flushing on Aug. 8, the Mets battle the Braves and host their first Stitch N' Pitch, aiming to draw fans of both baseball and needle crafts.



The first-ever Stitch N' Pitch, reportedly the brainchild of a Seattle Mariners marketing exec, was played at Safeco Field in July 2005. It drew 1,600 fans right off the bat. The National Needlearts Association, a business trade group, got involved last year, luring knitters, crocheters, needlepointers and embroiderers to a dozen Major League ballparks.

This year, says association spokeswoman Libby Butler-Gluck in an e-mail, the idea spread to 23 big-league teams. Nimble-fingered fans will pay \$15 a ticket at Shea and get to meet and socialize with fellow crafters, as the whole group sits together

in the ballpark. The Mets' plans are still being set, but, at other Stitch N' Pitch games, the association sets up tables and provides lessons so anyone can learn to knit, crochet or do needlepoint. Sometimes the ceremonial first pitch is thrown using a ball of yarn, and giveaways are part of the fun, with attendees getting a Stitch N' Pitch tote bag "stuffed" with goodies, Butler-Gluck says.

Tickets for the Mets' Stitch N' Pitch are available at stitchnpitch.com and at two Manhattan shops, Seaport Yarns (seaportyarn.com) and String (stringyarns.com), but the organizers hope more businesses join in. Check the Stitch N' Pitch Web site for updates.

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