

DECEMBER 31, 2012

Spike Owen & Harold Reynolds

As the title of our blog suggests, our blog is about one thing: our family's baseball adventures. I don't write about trades or trade rumors, MVP debates, player values, or Hall of Fame elections. I have strong feelings about all of those things. But I'm not a sportswriter. It's not my job to tell people what I think they should think about the current happenings in our great sport. There are hordes of paid sportswriters for that. I'm here to document my family's personal baseball history, and that's about it.

This makes the offseason pretty quiet around here.

But there is baseball and baseball stuff going on in the Cook household year round. I recently wrote about Tim's first winter clinic for his little league. There will be another clinic in a couple weeks, and we're eagerly looking forward to it.

In my downtime, I'm still working away updating our [Baseball Logs](http://cookandsonbats.mlblogs.com/2012/02/08/tims-baseball-log/) (<http://cookandsonbats.mlblogs.com/2012/02/08/tims-baseball-log/>) (which I get behind on during the season) and our online [Baseball Museum](http://www.cookandsonbats.com/museum/) (<http://www.cookandsonbats.com/museum/>), and planning our 2013 season (fyi, be on the lookout for three generations of Cook boys in the Lone Star state in 2013). But lately, there are two additional baseball items taking up some of my time and, since they fall in line with the concept of documenting our personal baseball history, I thought I'd do a short update about them.

They're not so much "items" as they are people — two of my favorite former-Mariners: [Spike Owen](http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/o/owensp01.shtml) (<http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/o/owensp01.shtml>) & [Harold Reynolds](http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/r/reynoha01.shtml) (<http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/r/reynoha01.shtml>):

(<https://mlblogscookandsonbats.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/spike-harold.jpg>)

Spike Owen was my original all-time favorite baseball player. I have two distinct "where was I when" memories about Spike. I was standing right here...

(<https://mlblogscookandsonbats.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/sherwood.jpg>)





...at my elementary school (there used to be a baseball field there) when my assistant baseball coach explained that Spike Owen played short stop for the Mariners (fyi, I played short stop for the Sherwood Eagles!) and he wore number 7 (fyi, I also wore number 7!). From that very moment, Spike was instantly my favorite player. Several years later (1986), I was in the basement of my family home (sitting on a cabinet/desk thingy to be exact), when my buddy, Dan Mosely, called to tell me the unthinkable: Spike Owen was traded to the Boston Red Sox! By this time, I was already a huge Mariners fan, but had never paid any attention to the postseason. As a result of Spike's traded to the Red Sox, I watched the World Series for the first time ever and REALLLLLY wanted Boston to win.

After 1986 (with no internet), it became pretty hard to follow Spike Owen, particularly during his years in Montreal. Basically, all I could do was read box scores in the [newspaper \(http://www.heraldnet.com/\)](http://www.heraldnet.com/)(people used to do that in the 1980s).

While Spike became my absentee-favorite ballplayer, over the next several years, I never officially announced a new favorite Mariner. In retrospect, it was clearly Harold Reynolds. That is, it was Harold Reynolds until 1989, when Ken Griffey, Jr. showed up on the scene. Since 1989, Griff has held the title of my all-time favorite player and, unless Tim and/or Kellen make the pros, I assume he always will be my favorite baseball player.

So, why am I spending time thinking about Spike and Harold all of these years later? Let's start with Spike.

I have been a member of the [Society for American Baseball Research \(http://www.sabr.org\)](http://www.sabr.org) (SABR) for a number of years now (4 or 5 years, I guess). But I've never been an active participant in SABR. However, recently I have been chatting with another local SABR member who is active in the [SABR BioProject \(http://www.sabr.org/bioproject\)](http://www.sabr.org/bioproject). Through the BioProject, SABR is trying to have its

members write 1,500+ word biographies of EVERY MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYER EVER!!! (plus, managers, umpires, owners, etc., etc.) They have a loooooooooooooooooong way to go to reach that goal. So, I decided to get involved.

When I first considered getting involved, I quickly realized that the only way it would interest me is if I could have my participation in the BioProject compliment my efforts to document our family's personal baseball history. My first assignment of choice became clear: I would volunteer to write the BioProject biography of the man who played a foundational role in my life-long love of baseball and the Mariners, Spike Owen.

Shortly after putting in the request, I was officially assigned the Spike Owen biography by the BioProject Committee. Lately, I have been researching Spike's career (and life) via the internet and I have learned a whole lot of stuff I never knew about Spike. I thought I would share a few interesting things I have uncovered. My favorite old article I have found (from shortly before Spike's call up to the Mariners) highlights the relationship between Spike and his minor league roommate and double play partner, Harold Reynolds:

<https://mlblogscookandsonbats.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/owen-reynolds-combination-clicks.jpg>

Two other interesting notes, (i) Spike was the short stop for the Expos during Dennis "El Presidente" Martinez's perfect game in 1991 and (ii) Spike was the Captain of the 1982 Texas Longhorns baseball team where his teammates included his future 1986 Red Sox teammates, [Roger Clemens \(http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/c/clemero02.shtml\)](http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/c/clemero02.shtml) and [Calvin Schiraldi \(http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/s/schirca01.shtml\)](http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/s/schirca01.shtml).

Spike's relationship with Harold Reynolds extended beyond the minors. Spike was called up to the Mariners before Harold. Spike played about 60 games for the Mariners in 1983 before Harold was called up and played his first game on [September 2, 1983 \(http://www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/SEA/SEA198309020.shtml\)](http://www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/SEA/SEA198309020.shtml). Interestingly, Harold made his Major League debut as a pinch runner for Ken Phelps following an at-bat when Phelps pinch hit for Spike. [Three days later \(http://www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/KCA/KCA198309050.shtml\)](http://www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/KCA/KCA198309050.shtml), Harold started his first game for the Mariners. Spike hit lead off with Harold in the nine-hole, meaning that Spike was on deck when Harold had his first career at-bat in the Major Leagues. Twelve years later, Harold played his [final game in the Major Leagues \(http://www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/CAL/CAL199408070.shtml\)](http://www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/CAL/CAL199408070.shtml) as the starting second basemen for the California Angels. His teammate and starting third basemen for the Angels that day: Spike Owen.

DESERET NEWS

Wednesday, June 15, 1983 8 B

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Sports

Owen-Reynolds combination clicks

By Kurt Kragthorpe
Deseret News sports writer

Gull duo just a step away from major leagues

His former University of Texas teammates were playing in the College World Series and Spike Owen was talking up the 'Horns and taking all bets, so Harold Reynolds seized the chance to zing his roommate. "Oh, they're going to win all right," Reynolds chirped good-naturedly. "And then they're going to say the reason was that Spike Owen left before his senior year."

Whether they're consoling or humbling, they get along. Two 22-year-old infielders with the same mischievous grins, right-handers who learned to hit from both sides, Christians, bachelors, the younger brothers of pro players.

A white kid from a little town in Texas and a black from a college town in Oregon, they got together last June in someplace called Lynn, Mass. Assigned by the Seattle Mariners to team up in Double-A baseball at shortstop and second base, they became close friends — overlooking the fact that their names were completely different.

Spike and Harold.

"I knew who Spike Owen was, and I was excited to meet him because I knew he was an aggressive player," recalled Harold Craig Reynolds. "And off the field, his personality was great. We just hit it off really well."

As roommates and double-play mates, Reynolds and Owen have moved up to Salt Lake City, about this close to Seattle and the Mariners. The rave reviews of April have died down, but no less an authority than The Sporting News still has them ticketed for the big leagues before long, proving you can get there from, well, Corvallis and Cleburne.

Reynolds was 3 years old when his parents were divorced, leaving a mother and grandmother to raise three girls, four boys and baby Harold in a modest house a block from the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis. They made it.

"Everybody turned out real well," says Reynolds. "I've gone to college the least of anybody, and I've been two years. We've been blessed."

The boys were turned loose to spend all day all summer playing sports, like Whiffle Ball in which Harold got his switch-hitting start by pretending to be one major-league team and hitting right or lefthanded, depending on who was



Harold Reynolds, inset left, and Spike Owen, have not only combined as good friends and roommates, but also as a finely tuned shortstop and second base combination.

up. He became an all-state infielder, wide receiver and defensive back at Corvallis High and was drafted after graduation in 1979 by the San Diego Padres. He went to college — San Diego State and Canada (Calif.) JC — instead of following brothers Larry and Donnie into pro ball right away, but two years later, he accepted a Mariners offer

and started the minor-league road in Class-A Wausau, Wis.

He's moved up a level each season and is hitting a solid .273 while playing second base in Salt Lake, settling down after a great start and a long mid-spring slump. "I didn't anticipate the ups and downs, obviously, but I enjoy it," said Reynolds, still having fun

playing games. "I just had a blast as a kid. It was just like being raised with four dads over me. They took care of me."

Being known as the "little brother" meant a little longer look from the high school baseball coach, who put Harold on the varsity as a freshman. The pro scouts started coming around the next season.

Meanwhile, in Cleburne, Texas (population 19,000), David Owen's little brother was playing three sports and getting attention from the U. of Texas baseball program, 150 miles away in Austin.

Of course, "Spike Owen" isn't his real name. It's actually Spike Dee Owen. "My mother's name was Marge Spikes. If people know that, it's easy to see where I got it," Owen reasons.

Not long after a tough loss to Wichita State in the College World Series last summer, Owen was on his way to Lynn as the Mariners' No. 1 choice and the sixth player taken in the June draft. He hit .266 and teamed with Reynolds, who was immediately designated as his road roommate, to lead the Sailors to the Eastern League second-half pennant.

They both were invited to Seattle's big-league camp in spring training, before being assigned to the Gulls. After a slow start that was vastly different from Reynolds', Owen has bounced back and is batting .279.

"I've been fortunate that I've fit in well in this organization," he said. "I don't feel intimidated being in Triple-A this early, or what some people think is early." Brother David (three years older) is playing shortstop for the Cubs' Triple-A Iowa club, so the Owens of Cleburne could have two major-league shortstops sometime soon.

"I don't recall them ever missing a Little League game we played in," noted Spike. "And Dad was always out in the backyard throwing balls to me and Dave, whatever season it was."

Now, it's manager Bobby Floyd who sends the brother-like team of Owen and Reynolds out to play, where they work together like they both grew up in Corvallis or Cleburne. One April night, Reynolds scurried to his right and backhanded a grounder, but was off balance and couldn't turn to throw to first. He flipped the ball to Owen, who made the relay for an out. It almost worked again last week.

"We've never practiced that," says Reynolds. "We've talked about it, though, and we know each other's moves."

Eventually, they'll take their act to the Seattle Kingdom, where neither second baseman Julio Cruz nor shortstop Todd Cruz has a long-term contract. And why not replace the Cruz "non-brothers" with the Owen-Reynolds "brothers"?

Let's talk some Harold Reynolds.





(<https://mlblogscookandsonbats.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/harold-card.jpg>)

Harold played almost his entire career for the Mariners. He was awesome. People in Seattle loved him (at least that was my perception at the time, I certainly loved the guy). He collected over 1,000 career hits for the Mariners, he was a 2-time All-Star and 3-time Gold Glove winner for the M's. Plus, he won the [1991 Roberto Clemente Award](#) (<http://community.seattletimes.nwsources.com/archive/?date=19910708&slug=1293335>) for his charitable efforts.

It has never made sense to me that Harold has never been inducted into the Mariners Hall of Fame. He is an *obvious* choice to me.

So, last year, I created a Twitter account called [@HR4MarinersHOF](#) (<https://twitter.com/HR4MarinersHOF>) with the intent of posting pro-Harold tidbits as a sort of grassroots campaign to get Harold enshrined in the Mariners Hall of Fame. Unfortunately, almost immediately after I created the account and started posting a few Harold factoids, the Mariners announced that Randy Johnson and Dan Wilson (both great choices, as well) would be enshrined as new Mariners Hall of Famers during the summer of 2012. So, I decided to put [@HR4MarinersHOF](#) (<https://twitter.com/HR4MarinersHOF>) on hold until the 2013 Major League campaign.

Now is the time. If you're a Mariners fan and appreciate what Harold did for the Mariners, please give [@HR4MarinersHOF](#) (<https://twitter.com/HR4MarinersHOF>) a follow, a tweet, a retweet, or whatever you want to do to voice your feelings about Harold Reynolds and the Mariners Hall of Fame.

Happy New Year and we'll see you in 2013!

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4 comments

DECEMBER 31, 2012 - 9:11 AM

[Mateo Fischer](http://mateofischer.mlblogs.com)

I remember that effort last year. Well, even though I don't know anything about Harold the baseball player, if you need help in drumming up support, I can help out with stuff.

-Mateo

<http://mateofischer.mlblogs.com>

DECEMBER 31, 2012 - 6:16 PM

[9inningknowitall](http://9inningknowitall.com/)

I can't believe Harold isn't in the M's Hall of Fame. The guy was a great Mariner and even now is a great representative for the team on TV.

DECEMBER 31, 2012 - 10:49 PM

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MATEO-

Thanks!

JOSH (9INNINGKNOWITALL)-

You're right on with your last comment. I was going to add that to the entry. Through the MLB Network, Harold is the Mariners No. 1 Ambassador to the rest of the baseball consuming public. I love his recurring pro-Mariners comments.

MAY 19, 2013 - 7:13 AM

Dorothy Lee

I enjoyed reading your blog. I too love baseball and go to almost every Round Rock Express game where Spike Owen is the third base coach. He is my favorite coach, very friendly to everyone in the stands. He along with Bobby Jones and the other coaches have made the RR Express a team worthy of their fans. Thanks for the info on Spike, it's always nice to read about another one of his fans.

[Liberty Baseball's Winter Clinic \(https://mlblogscookandsonbats.wordpress.com/2012/12/16/liberty-baseballs-winter-clinic/\)](https://mlblogscookandsonbats.wordpress.com/2012/12/16/liberty-baseballs-winter-clinic/)

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