

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.

Tim's MLB Debut (9/12/06)

Welcome to my first "turn-back-the-clock" game entry. When I took Tim to his first game back in 2006, I didn't even know MLBlogs existed. Tim and I went to about 20 games or so between 2006-2008 and I plan to tell those stories this off-season. This is the first.

When I found out toward the end of the 2005 baseball season that our first (and so far only) child due to be born in early 2006 was going to be a boy, I got really excited about the idea of having a little baseball partner. I was looking forward to playing catch in the yard and teaching my son how to hit. And I was really excited to have a little partner with whom to go to MLB games and, hopefully, to love the Mariners as much as I do.

Tim was born in January 2006. I decided I wanted his first game to be a Mariners home game and I wanted it to be late in the season so he would be at least six months old...so he could at least somewhat "experience" the experience, not just "be there." I picked Tuesday, September 12, 2006 as the big day. The opponent would be the Blue Jays.

Now, I'm a guy who likes to make an event out of things. I'm not against creating my own holidays. And I didn't want this day to be just any other day...because it wasn't. September 12th would be Tim's FIRST BASEBALL GAME and, better yet, his FIRST MARINERS GAME! This was big. So I fully intended to do it right. And with help from some important people, most notably my awesome parents, it was done right!

I started out by simply emailing the closest people in my life sort of a "save the date" and open invitation. I definitely wanted my parents and my best friend (and co-best Mariners fan) Paul to be there. I was hoping also that Colleen's folks (from Virginia) and her sister's family (including my nephew, Gill, who (much to my dismay) I have still failed to get to a MLB game!) to join us.

Following my email, my mom had an amazing idea. I have two cousins who both live in Western Washington and both have daughters 2 months older than Tim. Plus, my parents have season tickets with their best friends, Lynn and Steve, and they have a grandson who is also two months older than Tim. So my parents offered to get a suite so all four kids plus TWENTY-FIVE friends and family members could join together for this (personally) historic event.

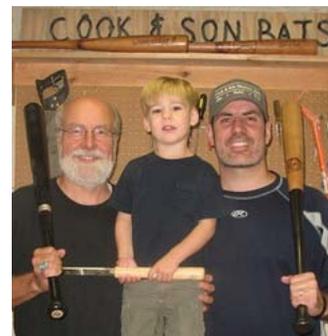
YES!!!!

Big, huge, enormous thanks to my folks!

So, we weren't messing around. This was going to be seriously awesome.

I decided I couldn't go in there empty-handed. In a possibly unprecedented move, I made a set of three custom baseball cards to commemorate Tim's first game, complete with fake 1-game 2006 seasons stats (fyi, Tim had some great stats). Here is what they looked like:

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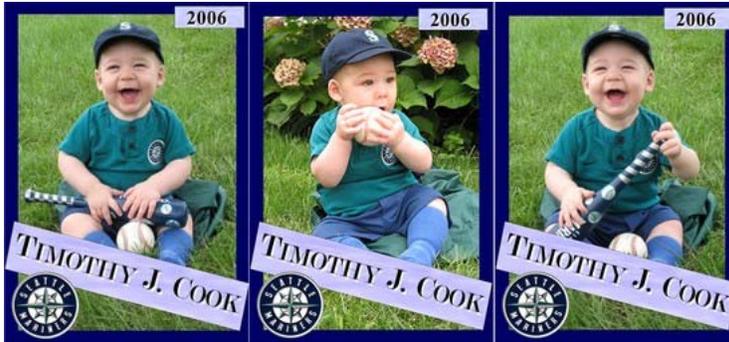
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They were the size of regular baseball cards and I gave one to each person who attended the game with us -- except the grandparents got a full set of three cards.

Before we knew it, it was September and our trip to Seattle was upon us. The big day started with a run around Green Lake with my father-in-law, Kevin, and then some painting in my folks' garage...



...more on the painting later.

It was a 7:05 start and the weather was gloriously sunny. Beautiful. Our suite was down the 1B line just foul of rightfield. In the picture below to the left, the red arrow is pointing to our suite...



...and the picture to the right shows our view of home plate from the suite.

When we arrived at the stadium, I already had Tim's first game ticket encased in an inch-thick screw down jumbo baseball card holder -- where it will be locked down for all time. The guy at the Suites entrance thought it was pretty unusual, but his scanner had no problem scanning

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[Tim's Complete Game Log](#)
[Kellan's Complete Game Log](#)
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[Cook & Son's Stadium Panoramas:](#)
[Links to All Stadiums We've Visited](#)

3. COOK & SON'S MLBLOGS READING LIST:

The Baseball Collector:
 Zack Hample's blog. Lots of great pictures and stories.
The Happy Youngster:
 Nick Yohanek's blog. He's probably catching a home run right now.
TxBaseballFan:

the ticket through the glass.

Plus, it gave me the opportunity to explain to the ticket guy that four little kids would be celebrating their first game ever in suite number 5, which resulted in unexpected but much welcome extra-special treatment.

Shortly after arriving, we met up with my cousin, Janet, her husband, Destry (who runs ridiculously fast (i.e., sub-2.5 hour) marathons, and their daughter and Tim's co-guest of honor, Julie. Here we are hanging out in the three rows of seats in our suite:



...note the Ted Williams jersey on the wall behind us. Each of the suites at Safeco Field is named after a Hall of Famer. My guess is that the best suite will some day be called the "Ken Griffey, Jr. Suite."

After watching lots of Mariners games on TV with me throughout the season, Tim was excited to finally be making his MLB debut...



...Julie was just taking it all in -- while wearing her sweet Mariners cheerleader outfit!

We got a "BP Group" picture of the folks who were there early:

Brian Powell blogs about the Rangers and games with his daughter.

Blogging Bout Baseball:

Matt Jackson blogs about his SoCal baseball adventures.

Rockpike Ranter:

D is a big Rockies fan and takes lots of great action photos.

Homer, Blue Jays and MLB:

D'oh! Jeremy Homer keeps us entertained as he navigates life as a Blue Jays fan post Roy Halladay.

The Pittsburgh Peas:

17 season of Pirates futility can't keep Matt Peaslee down. His Pirates blog is good stuff always has a winning record.

Hail To Ichiro:

Straight from Osaka, Japan, Nao gives us short informative tibits about our Seattle Mariners.

Baseball Experiences:

One of Tim's favorite MLB bloggers and Citi Field compadres, check out Joe's "Baseball Experiences."

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Tim's other favorite MLB blogger, check out Alex as he blogs about "Everything Baseball."

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Left to Right: (Totally cut off is my uncle Ray, Julie's grandpa), my dad Jim, Colleen, Me and Tim, Destry, Janet and Julie, and my aunt Carol (Julie's grandma).

After the group shot, it was time to hit field level. This is literally the second picture ever taken of Tim in the field level of a MLB ballpark and the first with MLB ball players shown in the background...



...any guesses who wore number "47" for the Blue Jays in 2006? Well, wouldn't you know, it is none other than current Mariners bullpen catcher and Chief-Cook-and-Son-Baseball-Giver, Jason Phillips. If the first picture had to feature non-Mariners, I think its pretty darn cool that it was Phillips.

Once we were down on the field level, we took a peak back up at our

Mariners

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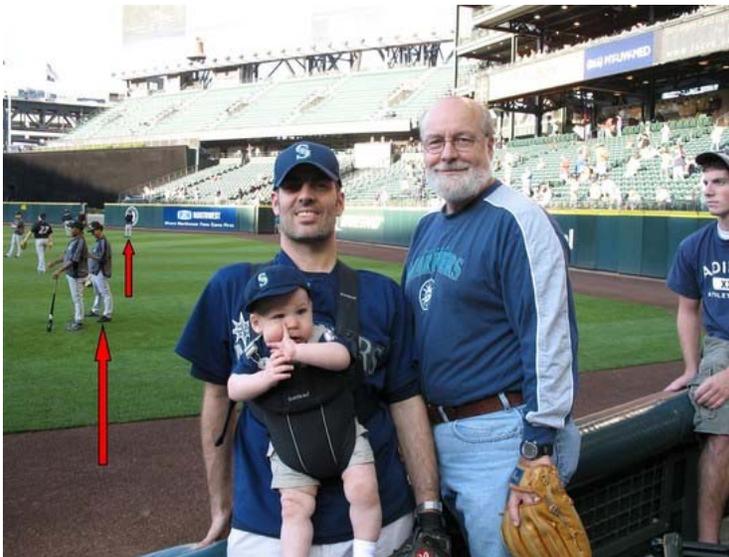
suite, where Uncle Raaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaayyyyyyy, was doing his best Tricky Dick Nixon above my painting project:



Yes, the "First Gamers Club!" I spent a lot of time debating if the sign should say this or "The September Call-Ups" I think both are great. But in the end this seemed better for the paper I used for the sign, plus it is more easily understood by non-baseball people. FYI, they showed our sign on the jumbo screen during the game!

By the way, Laura is my cousin's Daniel's daughter and Kasey is Lynn and Steve's grandson. They weren't there for BP, but you'll see them soon.

After that picture above behind the 1B dugout, we spotted my dad down the 1B line. He was seeing if he could catch a ball. So, we went down and joined him. Immediately upon meeting up with my dad (and about 1 minute after the picture behind the dugout), Colleen took this picture of three generations of Cook boys enjoying an evening at the ballpark:



And, immediately after Colleen took that picture, the BP batter hit a ball to that guy pictured above with the big red arrow pointing at him.

Until recently, I had no clue who he was. But as he fielded the ball, I yelled, "ITS MY SON'S FIRST GAME CAN WE GET THAT BALL!?!?!?"

Without pause, he immediately turned around, walked over to us, and set Tim's first MLB ball ever into my glove!



I didn't get my first baseball at a game until I was probably 12 or 13. So I was SUPER-EXCITED to have a ball from Tim's first game ever.

After we got that ball and posed for a bunch of pictures with it, I decided we'd accomplished all we needed to during BP. It was time to walk Tim around his new baseball home. Time to get acquainted with Safeco Field.

We started by heading up to the field level concourse and walking out to centerfield.

Now, about this time, you might be wondering why there were two guys with red arrows pointing at them in at picture above. Well, when we reached CF, I heard someone yelling from the field. Still standing in the concourse, I looked down and I saw that guy in the picture above with the smaller red arrow pointing at him. He had a baseball in his hand, and he fired it up to us (still in the OF concourse) for Tim's second ball of his life! WOW!!!

A few minutes later, we met up with Janet and Julie in LF foul territory and we gave Tim's second baseball to Julie so she too would have a keepsake from her first MLB game:



What can I say. The game hadn't even started yet. And we were already have a great time:



After our brief tour around the field, we headed back up to the suite where we found that more of our suite-mates had arrived.

Colleen's mom and sister (and her family) couldn't make the trip, but Colleen's dad, Kevin, and his uncle Bob and aunt Ann did. Here I am hanging out with Kevin and Bob before the game:



Kevin is a Yankees fan (he has an excuse, he grew up in Jersey City) and Bob is a Red Sox fan, but they like each other nonetheless.

The game had not started yet so Tim grabbed a bite to eat -- the old standard (bottle of milk) and a new treat (his first dog at the ballpark, he finished about 2-3 bites of the dog):



Soon all of the First Gamers Club kids had arrived and they were up for some playtime in the suite:



In the picture above to the left, that is Laura, Julie, Tim and Kasey (left-to-right, obviously). To the right, Tim and Kasey had a push-ups contest. I think Tim did about 200.

And then the big moment arrived, and my dad was thoughtful enough to capture history for us -- Tim's first MLB pitch ever:



Gil Meche to Frank Catalanotto -- STRIKE 1! Things would only get better from there.

Tim and Kasey spent some time enjoying the game from the front row of the suite:



We took about a billion pictures of everyone:



Top left, Tim and my dad. Top right, Lynn, Tim and me.

Bottom left, my sister-in-law (brother's wife, not Colleen's sister), Alison with Tim and my dad. Bottom right, my mom, Tim and me.

Remember how I said I originally did not know who gave us Tim's first baseball? Well, I figured it out earlier this season (2009). First, I noticed he was a left hander from the picture of him walking back out to his spot in the OF in the picture above. So I [looked up](#) every lefty who played for the Blue Jays that season. I then took the 3-4 possible mystery men and put them into Google Images. I wasn't positive, but my front runner was a September call-up named Davis Romero (who has never made it back to the bigs and is still playing Triple-A ball for the Blue Jays).

Then one day I was combing through old game pictures and I found the following picture from Tim's first game:



Its an odd picture, don't you think? But odd'ness aside, do you notice anything?

At the top right, there is a TV screen mounted on the ceiling of our suite where (if you click to enlarge the picture) you can see that Davis Romero is warming up in the Blue Jays' bullpen. More importantly, its not too difficult to tell that Davis Romero, indeed, is the mystery man who gave us Tim's first ever MLB ball.

So, at long last, "THANK YOU, DAVIS ROMERO!"

Anyway, we kept snapping away at the pictures, here are Tim and Colleen in the suite:



Remember how I mentioned we got special treatment after I told the ticket taker about the First Gamers Club? Here is part of it -- free Mariners lunch boxes!



That's a great lunch box. Although he didn't give it a lot of thought at the time, Tim loves it now.

Here is a shot of my mom with two of her sisters Margaret (left) and Carol and, of course, Julie too:

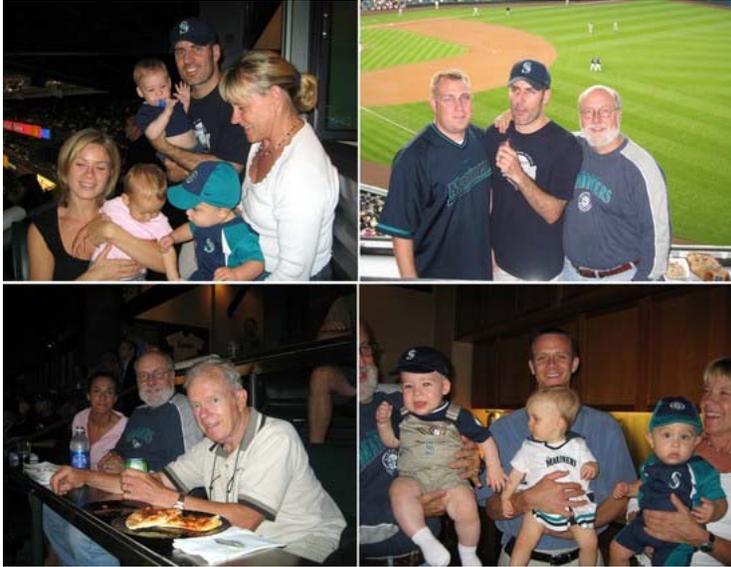


Although he's a Yankees fan, "Poppy" got into Tim's big first game too...



...as did Bob and Ann (pictured to the right).

And as the Mariners led the Blue Jays, we just kept snapping away at the photos and having a grand old time in suite number 5:



Top left, me and Tim with Lynn and Kasey and Laura and her mom, Noelle (my cousin Daniel's wife). Top right, me with my dad and brother, Jason.

Bottom left, Alison, my dad and Steve. Bottom right, half of my dad with Tim, Destry, Julie, Kasey and Lynn.

But then, the tiredness kicked in. Tim had a tiredness-inducing double whammy going here. First, it was late at night for the boy (9'ish o'clock). Second, we were on the West coast just two days removed from our home in Pennsylvania and he was still on east coast time -- so it was really three hours later for Tim.

So, Tim spent some time chilling out under a blanket strapped to either me or Colleen in a baby bjorn:



Soon, it was time for more special treatment -- the Mariner Moose showed up to greet us in the suite:



...as you can see, Uncle Ray really enjoyed the Moose's visit.

In between photo sessions, we actually watched the game:



...and look who was with us, my best buddy Paul!



It was great to have "Pauliewog" there for Tim's first game because I'm gonna rely on Paul a lot in life to re-enforce for Tim the finer points of Mariners-fandom and provide him a shining example of a positive Mariners attitude.

And before we knew it, the Mariners WON! The first in-person Mariners win of Tim's life -- I couldn't have scripted it better:



After the game, Tim and I got one more picture with the field in the background before heading out:



I think [this game](#) was the start of something beautiful. Welcome to a new era, the Tim-and-Todd-traveling-baseball-fans era.

By the way, Ichiro went 1-5, Raul Ibanez (1st inning) and Adrian Belte hit homeruns, and Gil Meche got the win. You couldn't have scripted a better first game experience.

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1 Comments

Great entry! It's cool that you had the photo documentation to go back & do that, wish I did. Love the sign, and the outfit, and the luchbox. One question though: Who's that guy lugging Tim around? Just kidding, great stuff! Can't wait for your next one!
Brian

<http://txbaseballfan.mlblogs.com>

By Txbaseballfan on October 28, 2009 3:15 PM

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