

Aces deliver quality baseball in intimate setting



The Aces are in their fifth year playing in Reno.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

RENO – It felt a bit like being back at spring training – a warm night that never required long sleeves, grass beyond the outfield fence to sit in, beer prices that don't break the bank and an intimate ballpark.

Now in their fifth season, the Reno Aces are developing players for the Arizona Diamondbacks.

But this year more parallels can be drawn between the Aces and San Francisco Giants than the Aces and Diamondbacks.



Aces outfielder Brad Snyder signs autographs.

The Aces and Giants both have impressive ballparks. (Walk around each one to take it all in.) Both have interesting food. (The veggie burger in Reno is homemade and yummy, while the mac 'n cheese bites need some work.) Both won their respective championships in 2012. Both are in last place in their divisions this year. (And that probably won't change.)

Oh, and both can be a ton of fun to watch. The fact that the Aces won 14-3 on Tuesday helped with the fun factor.

But there are major differences as well. Prices are much less expensive at this triple-A ballpark. There is grass seating in Reno. Reno seats 9,100 and San Francisco more than 40,000. The announcer in SF is superb; the one in Reno needs to be replaced. The parks define jumbotron much differently.

While the team from Nashville was winning through the first three innings, the Aces took a commanding 8-3 lead after the sixth. But based on the fans, it would have been hard to know the Aces were winning. Or maybe they were Nashville fans.

(The announcer said there were more than 4,000 in attendance, but that was more likely the number of tickets sold because there were a ton of empty seats.)

It's the announcer's job to play fun music and get the crowd into the game if the players aren't doing it. It didn't work.

Still, if baseball is the main reason to be at the ballpark, then an Aces game is the place to be. There are future Major League players on the field and some who want a return trip to the Bigs. Eugenio Velez who used to race around the bases as a Giant was playing the other night – and still running fast – but for the Nashville Sound now.



Grass seating beyond the outfield.

The Aces' season ends Sept. 2. There are six home games left, including tonight. And as the days tick away, more transactions are likely to occur. On Wednesday, pitcher Blayne Weller was transferred to Hillsboro, outfielder Tony Campana was recalled by Arizona, outfielder Ryan Stovall was transferred from Visalia and pitcher Tyler Skaggs was optioned to Reno.