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Posted: Sunday October 31, 2010 8:08 PM

Fans delight in Cowboys, Rangers doubleheader

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ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) - With a beer in one hand and a fajita in the other, Baron Atkins enthusiastically explained how he and three pals pulled off the doubleheader of attending a World Series game and an NFL game on the same day.

"It was a pipe dream," he said.

Atkins is among four guys who own season tickets together for the Cowboys, so he already knew he would be spending his Halloween afternoon watching Dallas play the Jacksonville Jaguars.

Then, two weeks ago, one of the other guys snagged four tickets behind home plate for Game 4 of the Series, which also was Oct. 31. The rub, of course, was that the Rangers had to make it.

They did, and the foursome headed out for a sports dude's dream day - and a wife's nightmare.

"Three of us left nine kids at home with our wives trick-or-treating," said Peter Naus, also part of Atkins' group.

Luckily, the ladies were understanding.

"They were behind us all the way, knowing this probably will never happen again," Naus said.

It has happened before, though. And, in every instance, the stadiums were walking distance.

In 1985, it even happened twice in Kansas City. Games 2 and 7 of the Series between the Royals and St. Louis Cardinals were on the same days as Kansas City Chiefs home games.

Last year, it was even a New York-Philadelphia doubleheader. The Eagles and Giants played, followed by the Phillies and Yankees.

Atkins, Naus and their pals Joseph Whelan and Jeff Chandler arrived at Cowboys Stadium at 7:45 a.m. and began tailgating under a tent, grilling food and sipping beverages. With the Cowboys well on their way to a 35-17 loss, the group headed back to their tent during the third quarter, swapping blue Cowboys gear for red Rangers gear.

CLEAN-SHAVEN CLIFF: Texas ace Cliff Lee is suddenly sporting a clean-shaven look heading into his start in Game 5 of the World Series on Monday night. The beard he had in Game 1 against the San Francisco Giants, his first-ever postseason loss, is gone.

Lee insists the grooming has nothing to do with what happened last Wednesday.

"I don't like shaving, so I usually let it go a little bit before I shave it," Lee said Sunday. "But that's really all that is. It's not a superstition."

In the series opener at San Francisco, Lee allowed eight hits and seven runs over 4 2-3 innings. Lee had been 7-0 with a 1.26 ERA in his previous eight postseason starts, when he had never pitched fewer than seven innings and had never given up more runs or hits.

"I wouldn't say surprised," Lee said. "You never know what's going to happen when you go out there."

Now in his last start of the season, and possibly his last start for the Rangers, free agent-to-be Lee gets another chance against the Giants.

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"In the regular season usually when you have a bad outing, your next outing is going to be against someone else," he said. "This time I get a chance to redeem myself against the team that actually put it to me pretty good. I'm looking forward to it."

LINCECUM'S NEW ROUTINE: Giants ace Tim Lincecum continues to feel strong this late in the season thanks in part to his new routine between starts.

The two-time reigning NL Cy Young Award winner tried just about everything during a career-worst five-start losing streak in August, and he has stuck with what worked to get him back on track. The hard-throwing righty tossed 212 1-3 innings in the regular season on the way to 16 wins and has gone 29 more innings this postseason heading into his start in Game 5 of the World Series on Monday night against Texas. It will be the second matchup of Lincecum and Rangers ace Cliff Lee.

He credits his work between starts to avoiding fatigue at this stage so late in the year - the deepest Lincecum has ever pitched as a postseason first-timer. These days, he spends more time on maintaining his leg strength and on core work.

"It's been one that's stuck and worked for me," Lincecum said. "Just being that it's new, it's not as tedious and it's exciting. Obviously the nature of the games that we're playing help that. That stuff kind of helped me just ease my mechanics, and it becomes more second nature for me."

LOOKS LIKE WASH: Dressed like Ron Washington, 7-year-old Liam Roybal stood next to the Rangers manager, smiled and flashed the Texas claw - a sign of success for the 2010 AL champions.

The second-grader came to Game 4 of the World Series on Sunday night - Halloween - decked out as Washington. Then he got to meet with the skipper in the Rangers dugout before the game.

The club invited Roybal and his family to the game for the youngster to call out "Play Ball!" and meet Washington. The kid became an Internet sensation after pictures were posted of him going to career day at his elementary school in nearby Keller dressed up as the Texas manager.

"It's good," the shy boy said while sitting with Washington and posing for pictures.

Roybal already wears glasses, but shaved his head and added a stick-on mustache along with a red Rangers T-shirt with his baseball pants. He flashed the claw and antlers gestures that have become synonymous with good plays for Texas.

"It's a little weird that all the people in the world to wanna be like, he wants to be like the manager of the Texas Rangers," Washington said.

Roybal said he plays first base, second base and outfield for his team called the Dirtbags.

"Just like this club," Washington said with a smile.

DETOUR: Peter Magowan, the Giants former controlling owner, attended the Dallas Cowboys' game against Jacksonville on Sunday before heading across the parking lot to Game 4.

Magowan said he originally was supposed to be on a safari in South Africa this weekend, but that because the Giants were in the World Series, he stayed behind while his wife went.

"I was there the last time we won - in 1954, Game 2, at the Polo Grounds," he said.

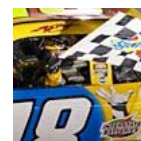
HAMMERIN' LIKE HANK: Toronto's Jose Bautista and Cincinnati's Joey Votto received the Hank Aaron Award in pregame ceremony that featured the award's namesake.

The award honors the most outstanding offensive player in each league. Voting was done by fans and, for the first time, Aaron's fellow Hall of Famers. The award began in 1999, the 25th anniversary of Aaron beating Babe Ruth's record of 714 homers.

"I was voted into the All-Star Game by the fans, and this is another fan award, so that means a tremendous amount to me," Votto said.

Said Bautista: "It's a great honor to sit here and to be put among the list of recipients of this award."

AP Baseball Writer Janie McCauley, AP Sports Writer Stephen Hawkins, freelancers Charles Durrenberger and David Jimenez contributed.



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