

# Back On The Mound

On Sunday, the Seattle Mariners defeated the Oakland Athletics 8-7 in 15 innings. While neither team is high on my radar to follow, the Mariners possess one player with very close ties. [Denny Stark](#) pitched to four batters in the game. This came after an absence of 1747 days (last appearing on the mound in 2004) and two Tommy John replacement surgeries on his right elbow.

How well I remember back in the day (he was a year behind me in school) when Denny was on the mound or on the hardwood either scoring 1000 points in basketball or pitching on the mound at EHS. Totally amazing and he was definitely one who started out as soon as he was big enough to throw a ball to his father. I know for a fact that his parents encouraged his talent and gift. His father, "Connie" (and mother, Roz), coaching, developing him, but never being the stereotypically domineering parent.

Sometimes, coming from a small town and knowing everyone and what they are doing is a good thing. In little league, I remember having Connie as a coach who never demanded anything less than what you were capable of giving. So often we hear of coaches or parents who push as hard as they can in order to realize their own dreams through their players or children, but it was absolutely untrue in this case: THIS IS DENNY'S DREAM and it has been realized once again... if only for four batters. Hopefully, this is only the beginning. Perseverance does have its rewards. I remember going to a Ft. Wayne Wizards game one summer when Denny was scheduled to pitch for the opposing team. However, we were unable to see him pitch as he was called up to the next level.

UPDATE: According to a more local [newspaper](#), Denny will be used in a middle relief capacity.

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# Are You Ready For Some Football Or Was It Softball?

Tonight, I watched my nine-year old niece at her softball game. The weather made me recall many mid-October Friday nights in the stands of a high school football game; it was that cold. This was one of the few I will be able to make this summer with musical rehearsals soon to be taking most of my evenings. Apart from the 50 degree weather, it was actually fun watching the game. Elizabeth went 3 for 3 at the plate. Her first hit went between the third baseman and short stop... a line shot. Her second time at bat, she hit another line drive that unfortunately went foul. Then, she eventually hit the ball that landed in front of the plate, leaving Elizabeth stunned for a second until everyone told her to go.

She also did well in the field at short stop. "Well" is a relative term as these were a group of 8-10 year old girls who are still pitched to by their respective coaches. I don't remember being pitched to by a coach. I remember going from hitting off a tee to having my peers pitch before I was 8. Elizabeth made a few nice stops in the field and tagged a runner attempting to advance to third base.

Also nice to see at this developmental stage of the young ones play is the parents in the stands. Shouting words of encouragement instead of shouts of disgust at bad calls, bad plays, etc. Those will start in a short time. But for now, there were no runs kept track of and maybe a few more strikes per batter as they are still learning the basics, so **EVERYONE WINS!!!** Although when the 90 minute limit was up, more than one mother was happy that the game was over and able to get out of the cold.