

is crucial, baseball purists might object to supporting AAA players who could potentially field a better team than the Giants when they get called up.

“I was born and raised in Sacramento, and, by proximity, I grew up a San Francisco Giants fan,” Gaskins said. “Obviously, now I root for the Diamondbacks, because that’s who I work for and that’s who I’m affiliated with.

That being said ... [fans] fall in love with a certain player. If you sit on the first base side, you got to watch Christian Walker [play] 70 times a year and win the MVP award, then you’re going to root for him when he goes to the Arizona Diamondbacks. And you might be a Giants fan, but you also love the Reno Aces and your local team.”

Gaskins also mentioned Braden Shipley, who played for

UNR before being drafted by the Diamondbacks in 2015 as an example of how loyalty in baseball can be multi-faceted.

Carrie Chamberlain, who has been an Aces season ticket holder since 2015, is not a Giants fan (although her workplace is full of them, she said) but faces a similar predicament in supporting the Aces. However, she reconciles her support with a strict hierarchy that puts the love of the game before even her own team, the Atlanta Braves.

“I’m a baseball fan first,” Chamberlain said. “When the Braves play the Diamondbacks, I struggle that whole series. I root for the Braves to win, but for the individual Diamondback players to have good games—the ones that I know from here.”

As a baseball fan, Chamberlain said she values having the Aces in her backyard even though her allegiances vary between the minor and major league. However, as she points out, the Aces also present any fan with the opportunity to root for the minor league affiliate of their chosen team, if they so choose, when they come to town.

“I have friends that are Brewers fans and they come to the games

when we played the Brewers Triple-A affiliate, I can’t remember who they are right now because I think they just moved,” Chamberlain said. “They follow baseball, so they support baseball.”

BASKETBALL

Discourse about basketball in Reno has, for the last year at least, been dominated by the UNR men’s basketball team, which spent most of the regular season undefeated—briefly securing a spot as the sixth best team in the country—before losing 70-61 against Florida in the National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament. With few of the Wolfpack’s starters returning next season, the conversation around the sport may return to the lull Reno has experienced since the Bighorns relocated to Stockton, California last year.

Founded in 2008, the Reno Bighorns were the G-League affiliate of the Sacramento Kings—the geographically closest team to the city. After changing ownership three times since the team’s inception, it was finally bought out by its parent team in 2016. Current Wolf Pack Coach Eric Musselman also had a turn at the helm of the Bighorns,

and during the 2010-2011 season, he led them to a record breaking 34-16 wins and losses.

Even during its best seasons, though, the Bighorns often struggled to draw large attendance. While Reno’s standing as a college town might better position it’s citizens to follow the NCAA, the Bighorns might have had their parent team to share part of the blame in not drumming up the crowds. A Feb. 2018 article from the Sacramento Bee summarized the team’s reputation with the headline “The Sacramento Kings have been the most consistent—and worst—NBA franchise this decade.”

Anecdotally, Reno’s basketball allegiance is a mixed bag. With Bay Area transplants rightly proud of the Golden State Warriors securing the national championship in 2015, 2017 and 2018, and with Northern Nevada not far enough east to escape the Lakers’ all-encompassing shadow, native Nevadans have little reason to back the Kings (other than perhaps spite for the cities with which the aforementioned teams are affiliated). When it comes to which brand of Californian basketball Reno prefers—it’s a toss-up. □



Carrie Chamberlain has been an Aces season ticket-holder since 2015.

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