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First-Place Mariners Win Fifth-Straight Series in Front of Home Fans

Abdullah El-Sherbeeney, Staff Reporter

The Arizona Diamondbacks and the Mariners went toe-to-toe last weekend, April 26-28 at T-Mobile Park. Fans came from all over Seattle to watch star center fielder Julio Rodríguez and the red-hot Mariners, who lead the American League West division, play the defending National League champions.

Ryan White, a Seattle local, is a frequent visitor of the ballpark.

"I grew up here in Seattle, so it brings me back that feeling of nostalgia back when I was a teenager, 1990s. We didn't used to have a T-Mobile Park in the 90s. We used to have an indoor stadium called the Kingdome, brings me back. But T-Mobile is such a better space," White said.

Miles Metcalf, a third-year real estate major at the University of Washington, expressed how he loves to come to the game with his friends, saying that he saw the cheap tickets online and decided to bring his friends to watch his favorite player, Julio Rodríguez.

"J. Rod, baby, got to love the center fielder," Metcalf expressed when asked why he came to the April 28 game.

The Mariners had a great start to their first game of the season with the D-backs, winning 6-1. The game shifted after D-backs pitcher Zac Gallen had to leave due to a hamstring injury and Mariners.

In the second game, the Mariners continued their winning streak, triumphing with a score of 3-1. Mariners pitcher George Kirby showcased his prowess by striking out a career-high 12 batters in seven scoreless innings. The Mariners' first baseman Ty France sealed the victory with a powerful two-run homer.

Kirby's career night was only one example of Seattle's deep pitching staff, which has been collectively rendering opposing bats quite useless in 2024. The team's combined earned run average (ERA) of 3.03 is second only to the Boston Red Sox and the M's are third in the league in strikeouts as the season kicks into full gear. Pitcher Luis Castillo has been Seattle's iron man thus far, with 49 strikeouts in seven starts and 41 innings pitched—all top five in the league this season. Pitchers Bryce Miller and Logan Gilbert are both having career seasons thus far both with ERAs of just over 2.00 through their first six starts.

However, the last game in the three-game series did not end in a Mariners win—Seattle lost 3-2. D-back pitcher Brandon Pfaadt had



Sean Alexander

a career-high 11 strikeouts, while D-backs second baseman Ketel Marte broke a 2-2 tie with an RBI double in the eighth inning to win it.

In his major league debut, Mariners shortstop Leo Rivas tripled in the third inning and scored on a single from a Rodríguez single. Despite a promising start in the third inning, when the Mariners loaded the bases with no outs, their momentum was halted. Pfaadt managed to retire France with a flyout, followed by Mariners catcher Mitch Garver hitting into a double play, effectively squandering the scoring opportunity. The Mariners failed to generate any further baserunners for the remainder of the game.

Some fans had high expectations, such as Metcalf, who wanted to “believe” in the team and hoped for the Mariners to keep up.

Others, still jaded from the Mariners’ struggles throughout the 2000s and 2010s, where they failed to make the playoffs in all years except 2000 and 2001, expected this outcome—like Chris Keating, a digital marketer and Seattle local.

“I’d like them to (win), but I was born and raised in Seattle. So that’s not exactly an expectation... it might be a nice surprise if they did,” Keating said.

Despite the loss that afternoon, the Mariners bounced back. They won their following series against the powerhouse Atlanta Braves in what has become a five-series win streak.

“It’s rare that you get a really interesting game but you know, it’s always nice to see when people are hitting the ball,” White said.

Some fans just love coming to the game simply for the park’s aesthetic. The park attracts many different faces, from young to old, who can appreciate the game equally.