

Aces captivate fans in inaugural season

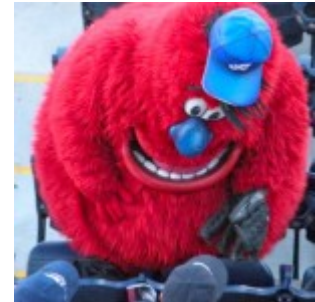
By Kathryn Reed



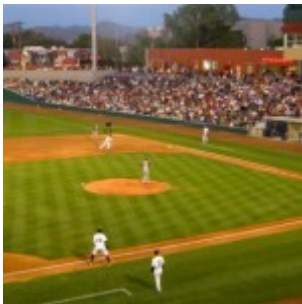
Reno Aces are a Triple A affiliate of the Arizona Diamondbacks.



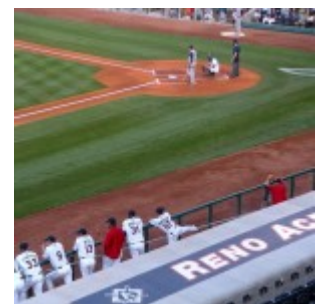
The Aces stadium is the place to be in Reno.



Archie is the Aces' unique mascot.



Bases loaded!



RENO – If it weren't for the long-sleeve shirt, I would have sworn I was in Arizona.

Something about minor league baseball and spring training makes going to the ballpark an entirely different experience than the Bigs.

It's not just the caliber of play.

Walking around the Reno Aces stadium for the first time I keep having *deja vu* like it was March in the desert, the atmosphere relaxed, the crowd more jovial, grass in the outfield filled with fans. Here I was on a warm summer night with just a few weeks to go in the Pacific Coast League. (Season ended the first week of September. The 2010 season starts in April.)

The Aces – in their inaugural season in Reno as a Triple A affiliate of the Arizona Diamondbacks – are a fun team to watch. Of course a couple two-run homers and a 17-6 win helped create a festive mood.

Like most new ballparks these days, a few structural nuances make it unique. Picnic tables in the left field area are reserved this particular night for the Carson Tahoe Healthcare Employee Association. It's a good vantage point to catch the action.

More tables are by the grass area in right field.

Railroad tracks parallel part of the outfield fence.

In the largest sky box on the left field side, employees of AAA Nevada are flitting in and out of the enclosure. Theirs are cushy seats (literally) on the outside where most of the gang is gathered.

Standard hard plastic is reserved for those seated below.

Still, walking around the stadium (three laps equal one mile according to the St. Mary's medical sign) I couldn't find a bad view.

Friday nights end with fireworks – as though there hadn't been enough with all the runs scored on this particular night.