

Will Giants veterans play Celebrity Golf one day?



Tim Lincecum
pitches
Thursday,
while Rich
Aurilia plays
first for the
Giants.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

By Kathryn Reed

SAN FRANCISCO – Nostalgia filled AT&T ballpark Thursday afternoon as the San Francisco Giants wrapped up their last home game with a 7-3 win over the Diamondbacks.

The Rockies won too – they’ll be headed to the playoffs, while the Giants have spring training to look forward to when the season ends Sunday.

Yesterday it was Rich Aurilia who received the most applause – not for what he did this particular day, but for his career as a Giant. This is likely the 38-year-old’s last season.

He is the only player on the team who was on the 2002 World

Series squad. (Ironically, catcher Bengie Molina was on the winning Anaheim Angels at the time.)

Aurilia has always been one of my favorite Giants. He started in 1995 at shortstop. He left after the 2003 season, returning in 2007. His second stint saw him more in a backup role and often at first base.

It's hard to watch players age, lose a step, swing a bat a little slower. Through it all Aurilia showed class. He's one of those players you'd want your son or daughter to emulate " someone who demonstrates sportsmanship, someone never associated with steroids despite playing on the same team as the king of the steroid scandal.

I've been part of a season ticket group since the giants moved to their current ballpark in 2000. I was there for one of the World Series games seven years ago. I never get tired of going to this ballpark, watching the orange and black.

I remember one of Randy Johnson's first games in the National League. It looked like the pitcher had never swung a bat before. I was glad he was on the opposing team.

He didn't have to swing yesterday. All the 300-game winner had to do was get three outs in the top of the ninth. No problem. Not bad for a 46-year-old who just came off the disabled list. As a Giant this season, I was rooting for him as he hurled pitches against his former teammates.

This might be his last season, too.

Fans appropriately gave standing ovations to these two veterans, while at the same time giving just credit to winning pitcher Tim Lincecum whose stats are worthy of another Cy Young.

Perhaps as the veterans leave the sport of baseball, they'll take up golf and one-day play the American Century Celebrity

Golf Tournament at Edgewood Tahoe in Stateline.