



HOOKED ON THE OUTDOORS

By
Mike Johnson

OK...did you blink and miss Winter like me...and with 80+ degree days in March is there the possibility we will fast forward past Spring too and jump right into Summer? Sure it's getting warmer...but the two true signs that real outdoor activity weather is here is when the Mrs. tells me to but the box of winter gloves and hats away and you awake in the morning to see your car covered in yellow pollen. Since both of these events have transpired, it's now time to focus on getting out and getting active...and our slice of Carolina offers so many options it's hard to know where to begin. This month, we are going to head to the diamond (ladies don't get too excited just yet).

Being a self- confessed "baseball junkie" all my life, I have found myself either playing or watching baseball games all my life. When we moved to the area a few years ago I was wondering where I was going to get my "baseball fix". A company softball team fulfilled the urge to play ball, but in terms of watching a ball game, the answer/solution could not have worked out better. Turns out that we have a baseball team in town, the Dash...and the team and venue provide simply outstanding fun for the whole family.

The Dash is a minor league baseball team affiliated with the Chicago White Sox. The minor leagues are used as training grounds for future major leaguers, so some of the players you can watch here in town may end up being future stars in the big league as they call it. While they count balls and strikes and wins and losses in minor league baseball just like in the big league....the "fan fun factor" is first and foremost at Dash games. Between each inning there is usually some sort of silly on-field contest that involves the fans, whether it is a trivia contest or a hoola hoop swinging contest...its fun for not only the contestants but also the rest of the fans in attendance. Fans can also take a leisurely stroll around the beautiful brick ballpark and encounter everything from free face painting for the kids, to a wide selection of foods and drink that are sure to satisfy the most robust of hunger and thirst. Nothing quite beats the sights, sounds, and smells of a ballpark while a game is being played. Of course there are souvenirs to be bought, and if you are lucky enough you just might catch a foul ball and have a great keepsake and memory from your day at the ballpark. If you haven't been to a Dash game yet you need to check it out, and if you have been, it's time to figure out what games you planning on catching this season.

The season for the Dash begins in April and runs through September. Tickets are reasonably priced and can be bought on the dash web site: <http://www.milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t580>. The Stadium for the Dash is located right off Business 40 in downtown Winston-Salem...as they say you can't miss it. So next time you are looking to get out, enjoy the weather, and have some fun....and just maybe find that (baseball) diamond in the rough...."Dash" to downtown and catch a ball game.

Until next time "play ball" as they say and of course I couldn't let you go without wishing you all "tight lines" !!!