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The Fischer Family: A New Field of Dreams



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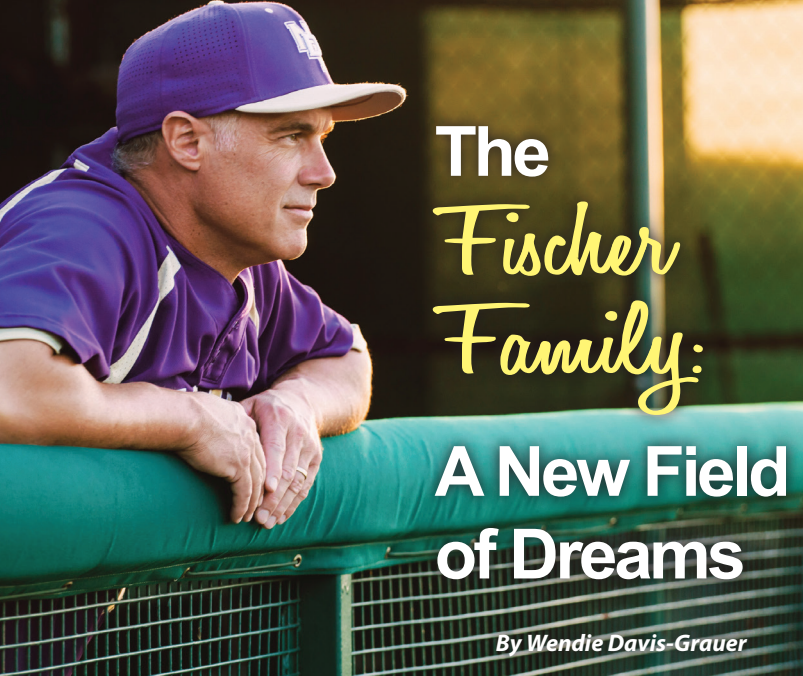
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Cover Photo by Michelle Herrick



The Fischer Family: A New Field of Dreams

By Wendie Davis-Grauer



Brian Fischer, an all-American boy, grew up in Seattle where his childhood was filled with a love of baseball. His wife, Natalie, however, was born in Uganda to an East Indian father and polyglot German mother, during the regime of Idi Amin. Because of the country's corruption and mass genocide, Natalie's family fled and eventually came to the U.S. to begin anew. Her father had played in Wimbledon during the 60s, and instilled in his daughter a love of tennis. Both drawn to sports, Brian and Natalie attended college on athletic scholarships – she played tennis at Western Washington University, pursuing sports broadcasting while Brian played baseball and studied criminal law and psychology at Central Washington University. Complete opposites, this unlikely duo's chance meeting in 2000 eventually led to love.

Natalie is a free-spirit; with a committed work ethic developed at a young age. She's lived and traveled the globe, with roles in the NBA, cosmetology, Southwest Airlines, and Sr. management positions in the real estate arena. Although Brian spent fifteen years as a superintendent for a prestigious home

builder, his love for baseball never ceased. He's coached for the past two decades, most recently at the high school level. Natalie dotes, "Brian is very modest, but he was one of the best prospects/catchers in the state of Washington during his day. As a coach he's won four state championships in two states – there aren't many coaches who've accomplished this." Brian smiles at his wife's admiration and adds, "Baseball is my passion, so I pursued it. I coached at Newport High in Bellevue, Washington, and for the past four years, I've been at Notre Dame Prep in Scottsdale as a Health/P.E. teacher and baseball coach. I love my job."

The athletic apple doesn't fall too far from the Fischer family tree. Though having undergone major heart surgery as an infant, Brady, 12, is now a tenacious, Clark Kent lookalike with black rimmed glasses, a handsome spinoff of his parents. Brady enjoys golf with his grandpa, is an active sixth grader at Wildfire, playing football and baseball simultaneously. "I play wide receiver for the Falcons flag football team and play Little League, as both a catcher and pitcher for the Oakland A's. My favorite thing is to play

catcher like my Dad." In June, Brady's baseball team, along with others in his league, are heading to the 12U National Tournament in Cooperstown, New York. "This gives kids a chance to learn sportsmanship and sharpen their skills as players," Brian adds proudly.

The twinkle in Brian's eye wasn't always there. After leaving an established life for unknown Arizona adventures in 2008 to pursue a warmer climate, the Fischers began questioning their move to the desert. "Everyone thought I was crazy to uproot my family," shares Natalie. "Somewhere in my gut, I knew something better awaited. Eventually, Brian landed his role at Notre Dame Prep and everything looked bright." In 2013, tragedy hit – Brian's older brother, Brad, was killed in a senseless shooting in Seattle a week before playoffs. "It was a heartbreaking time," Natalie shares. Trying to maintain normalcy while Brian attended the funeral, Natalie went to one of Brady's Little League games. "I remember, it was a Saturday and 105°. All of a sudden, I see a group of teenage boys arriving – Brian's varsity baseball team, the Saints, had come to cheer on Brady. I started bawling;



“Baseball is a lot like life. It’s a day-to-day existence, full of ups and downs. You make the most of your opportunities in baseball as you do in life. – Ernie Harwell”

I couldn’t believe my eyes. For teenage boys to do something on their own accord like that was amazing,” Brian adds, “Hearing this story is what really turned things around for me – made my family feel connected to the community.” The Saints went on to win the Division II Championship against Sunnyslope that year, 2-1.

“When I began coaching, my first years were focused on winning. Everyone loves to win, but when my son had open heart surgery, something changed – it went from being about winning to educating parents and students on the fact that life is more than just a game.” Respect, commitment, teamwork, perseverance, and a good attitude are just some

of the qualities Brian tries to impart. Because the Fischers are parents and have endured their fair share of hardship, everyone finds Coach Fischer a more relatable guy. “I surround myself with good people, coaches, and community. It takes more than good players to win. When we’re successful, it’s because everyone buys into it. I keep with that motto, do the right things, and somehow it pays off.”

Natalie believes synergy is the secret sauce for the Saints. “Something Brian does inspires a cohesiveness that begins on the baseball field and spreads throughout the community.” The League has introduced a mentorship program so its older players can mentor the younger kids. “They will hang in the

dugout and root for each other,” Brian describes. “I teach the younger kids to be good sports and have fun. It’s a good feeling,” Brady adds.

Creative and funny like his mom, stable and even-keeled like his dad, Brady’s laughter is infectious as we chat. “I’ve learned a lot along the way,” Brian mentions, “players make you better. It’s not about me; it’s about the kids. When they have a say, they work harder. Validating their input is key.” During the off season, the Fischers, along with their Shorkie, Blaze, enjoy new adventures and outdoor activities that keep them moving.

Harwell’s parallel between

baseball and life are a truism for the Fischers, making them more resilient. “Whatever situations are thrown our way, we keep persevering,” Brian remarks. “I’m like a walking cliché,” Natalie laughs. “When people tell me something isn’t possible, I’m motivated to make it happen. There is a reason for everything. You can have the best plan, and life is going to do what it does and you have to adjust and make the most of it. We feel very lucky to have the support of our family and community who rally around us.” The biggest takeaway? When life throws you a curveball, don’t be afraid to keep swinging.



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