

Transplanted Twins fans back 'home' team

The Minnesota Twins arrived at the Breckenridge Inn in Frontenac Monday afternoon to the cheers of their devoted St. Louis fans - all seven of them.

"Minnesotans aren't known for displaying their emotions in public too often," said Keith Lewis, a law student at Washington University. "They're a pretty reserved bunch."

But Lewis, who organized the rally for transplanted Twins fans, wasn't worried that the low turnout would detract from the event.

"It'll probably be a small, but quaint, reception," he said.

The Twins fans at the rally - otherwise respected members of the St. Louis community - were college students and business people determined to show their support for the "home" team.

"We're fortunate that not a lot of St. Louis people came down to boo them," quipped Keith Dudding, who lives in St. Louis, but was at the rally in honor of his brother in Minnesota.

But the other fans dismissed the idea of hostile rivalries.

"This is a classy series," said David Lundgren, another law student at Washington University.

Their friends, neighbors and co-workers aren't harassing the fans for their allegiance to Minnesota, they said.

"I'm giving them a harder time," said Damaris Fredell, who planned to decorate her office at McDonnell Douglas with Twins paraphernalia. "I'm getting a care package tomorrow with a Homer Hanky and buttons."

The members of the Committee to Welcome the Twins to St. Louis were a rather likeable crew, despite their Twins sweat shirts, buttons and placards.

Most said they had mixed emotions about the series.

"I'm not exactly rooting for the Twins, but I'm not rooting against them," Dudding said.

"Only a Minnesotan would say he loses either way," Lundgren said.

Dudding knows how difficult rooting for the other team can be; his grandfather was a Cardinals fan in hostile territory up north, he said. But his vacillation makes sense.

"Good baseball fans have a favorite team in both leagues," he said. "I have no problem with my dual allegiance except when the two teams square off. I felt safe."

The group felt a camaraderie seemingly unexplainable to native St. Louisans.

"Gee, nice people who speak with normal accents," said Pam McDougall as she joined the Twins fans, who were cutting off their consonants and clipping their vowels.

McDougall sported a baseball cap featuring the Twins' logo in the front and the Cardinals' in the back.

The group didn't pose a threat to the image of the Breckenridge, said Patricia Bergauer, general manager of the hotel.

"We are a hotel selected when teams want to keep it low-key," she said. "We'd like to keep it that way so they can get some rest and play ball."

The hotel management plans to show the Twins how classy and hospitable St. Louis is, Bergauer said.

And the welcoming committee planned to show the players they're loved by fans here, too.

"It takes a lot to get Minnesotans excited," Lewis said. "But I figure we had to do this. Look what they did in Minnesota."

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