

# BURGER SANDWICHED IN DONUT IS HIT AT BALLPARK

DAVE HOEKSTRA, Staff Reporter, Chicago Sun-Times

June 21, 2006 - SAUGET, Ill. - As most Chicagoans know, baseball can break your heart. But the game is tame when compared to the burn of "Baseball's Best Burger," served this summer at home games of the Gateway Grizzlies in Sauget, about five miles from St. Louis.

The Black Angus burger is topped with sharp Cheddar cheese and two slices of bacon. The burger is then placed in between each side of a Krispy Kreme glazed doughnut. The burger weighs in at about 1,000 calories and 45 grams of fat.

Earlier this month I drove to GCS Ballpark in Sauget to watch the Grizzlies host the Florence Freedom in an independent Frontier League game. In respect to what this burger does to your cholesterol, the Grizzlies should have been playing the Florence Nightingales. The burger was part of my 51st birthday celebration.

I hope I make it to 52.

Outside of having the ability to kill you, the only other bad thing about "Baseball's Best Burger" is that it is hard to hold. The \$4.50 burger is served in a Krispy Kreme paper hat. The glazed doughnut is sticky and the burger tends to slip out of your hands like Wrigley Field dreams. But there is a fine balance between the sweetness of the doughnut and the moist meat. The flavor breathes without vegetable and condiments.

The burger is the idea of Grizzlies general manager Tony Funderburg. During a conversation in his office, he pulled out a copy of a story he read last year in Maxim magazine. The story championed "The Luther Burger" at Mulligan's in Decatur, Ga. Supposedly the late R&B singer Luther Vandross helped create the doughnut burger when the restaurant's chef ran out of hamburger buns. Look what happened to Vandross.

"When we do something, we just don't throw it together," said Funderburg, who sampled 10 beastly burgers in "test runs" between last November and February. "We probably tried 100 different kinds of cheeses and a couple types of bacon. The people who make our burgers [Holten meat] are actually here in the [Sauget] business park. They supply burgers for most ballparks and racetracks. We went through their entire line."

'It is messy, but it works'

Funderburg, 31, eyed my burger from a safe distance. "That one is called an old-fashioned," he said. "It's a hand-pattied Black Angus burger." He looked at my sticky fingers and asked someone to fetch napkins. "It is messy, but it works," he said. I then wondered about the proper beverage to wash down "Baseball's Best Burger."

"Always a Budweiser," Funderburg replied. I chose a bottle of water.

Funderburg added, "Krispy Kreme loved the idea. They supply about 300 hats and about 400 doughnuts a game. Mulligan's loved the idea. All they asked was that we send them a jersey they could hang in their bar."

On a good day, the Grizzlies sell between 200 and 250 "Baseball's Best Burgers," according to Funderburg. "It's not a ton," he admitted. "We've found that people split them with their family and everyone takes a bite."

It is cost-effective. Kids get dinner and dessert in one bite.

Peter H. Seidenberg is the Grizzlies' team doctor. He has yet to sample "Baseball's Best Burger."

"This is not for the faint of heart," he said in a separate interview. "As a treat now and then, maybe it's OK if you don't have known cholesterol problems. If you have known cholesterol problems, this thing is not going to help."

