

THE BEER MASTER

'Mark the Beer Guy' reigns supreme as the PHX area's king of beers



QUICK SHOTS

Day job: Window washer. Has had business for 10 years.

Other hobby: Skateboarder

Favorite team: Chicago Cubs

His first beer: Budweiser

How he spent St. Patrick's Day: Getting thrown out of a bar while celebrating his six-month anniversary with his new wife.



Mark's patented behind-the-back beer pour.

Usually fans will wait impatiently in their seat for the beer vendor to come around again. But when Mark Carlson is working, people know to get up and find the 6' 8"-beer guy who passes out refreshments, food and a baseball card with his personal stats.

He's Mark the Beer Guy and chances are he's having as much fun at the game as you are.

"One of my favorite things is the bait and switch trick," Carlson said. "I'll yell out something I don't have and no one cares. I'll say I have cold beer, peanuts and chicken wings."

Sometimes Carlson has fun with what he is selling. His new "act" is taking a huge magnifying glass and holding it in front of a beer, allowing him to yell "I've got really big beer! Cold big beer!"

After a couple of minutes, he does the same with a bag of peanuts, which is obviously followed with a loud "I've got big nuts!"

Carlson, 41, is originally from Minnesota (he can bring out the accent if he wants) where his first vendor job was the Twins home opener when he was 15. He got the job through his older brother and they both skipped school to do it.

At the time, it was just to make some cash. Now it's a part of who Carlson is. Though he's worked on and off as a vendor since he was in high school, the personality of "the beer guy" didn't emerge until college.

"I was trying to figure out ways to make people have more fun," Carlson said. "I think people want to buy from a guy who's having fun. And there are plenty of guys (vendors) out there who aren't having a good time."

Aside from his engaging personality, Carlson delivers the beer in style by either pouring three at once or pouring a couple behind his back. And now some people don't even want beer from him at all. They want his baseball card.

Since 2001, Carlson has handed out a baseball card featuring his "stats," such as his height, weight and career highlights that include two Superbowls and a World Series.

"Other vendors can't figure it out since they're working just as hard, but people are coming up to me," Carlson said. "I've exploited myself for the last six years."

Check out Mark at www.markthebeerguy.com

- Eddie Shoebang

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

April 22, 1980 - Mark works his first event. Minnesota Twins win their home opener 8-1 against the California Angels at Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington, Minnesota

July 7, 1980 - Mark works first event at Met Sports Center in Bloomington, Minnesota. Larry Holmes retains his WBC Heavyweight title by knocking out Scott LeDoux in the seventh round.

August 9, 1980 - Vikings beat San Diego Chargers 27-17 in preseason opener at Met Stadium. Vikes beat Atlanta 24-23 on September 7th in regular season opener on way to NFC Central Division title.

May 1981 - Minnesota North Stars face the New York Islanders in the Stanley Cup Finals to conclude Mark's rookie season at the Met Sports Center. The Islanders win the series four games to one.

October 1987 World Series - first ever World Series games held indoors. Minnesota Twins win their first ever World Series championship. Twins defeat the St. Louis Cardinals in seven games.

1994-Present - Cactus League Spring Training games. Works at HoHoKam Park in Mesa (home of the Chicago Cubs) since 1996. Also has worked at Scottsdale Stadium (home of the San Francisco Giants) since 2002 and Phoenix Municipal Stadium (home of the Oakland A's) since 1997.

April 1996 - Oakland A's play their first six home games of season in Las Vegas. The first major league games played in a minor league park since September 3, 1957. The

January 1997 - Green Bay Packers beat the New England Patriots 35-21 in Super Bowl XXXI at the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans.

September 21, 1997 - Green Bay Packers beat the Minnesota Vikings 38-32 at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

1998-2000 - NASCAR at Phoenix International Raceway Rusty Wallace wins the first ever rain shortened race at the track in 1998; Jeff Gordon wins the first ever NASCAR Busch series race at Phoenix International Raceway in 1999; Jeff Burton wins Checker Auto Parts 500 NASCAR Winston Cup series race at PIR in 2000. February 3, 2002 - New England Patriots upset the St. Louis Rams 20-17 in Super Bowl XXXVI at the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans.

April 2, 2002 - Arizona Diamondbacks home opener against the San Diego Padres at Bank One Ballpark in Phoenix. The Diamondbacks receive their World Series rings.

May 2003 - NHL Western Conference Finals between the Minnesota Wild and Anaheim Mighty Ducks at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, Minnesota.

February 8, 2004 - The 54th NHL All-Star Game at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.