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Blaze Announce Partnership with Seattle Mariners

Mariners Advanced-A prospects will play in Bakersfield beginning in 2015

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. – The Bakersfield Blaze and Seattle Mariners are proud to announce a player development partnership that will make the Blaze the California League, High-A affiliate of the Mariners beginning in 2015. The affiliation will last at least through the 2016 season.

"Bakersfield has an incredibly rich baseball history," said Mariners Director of Player Development Chris Gwynn. "Pedro Martinez played here. Mike Piazza played here. The city of Bakersfield and Sam Lynn Ballpark have produced top baseball talent for almost eight decades."

"The Mariners are extremely excited about this new partnership. Bakersfield gives us a great opportunity to evaluate our players, and help get our young athletes ready for the next level. We believe this transition should create more confidence among our players and the results will follow."

"We are beyond thrilled to partner with the Seattle Mariners," noted Blaze General Manager Elizabeth Martin. "The Mariners consistently produce winning minor league clubs, which our fans will enjoy on a nightly basis. I knew, in my gut, that the Mariners would be the right fit, and the pieces fell into place in just a matter of days."

The Mariners' Minor League system is regarded by most publications as one of the best in baseball, posting the 5th-best combined win percentage of any organization over the past four years.

This will be the Mariners' second stint as a Major League affiliate in Bakersfield, previously partnering in 1982-3. During the Mariners' first trip to Bakersfield, the club helped install the scoreboard that still operates in rightfield.

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

The Mariners had been affiliated with the High Desert Mavericks for the past eight seasons. "We had a very rewarding run in Adelanto," added Gwynn. "We wish the High Desert club nothing but the best in the future, but this opportunity was one we simply had to explore, and we can't wait to begin what we hope is a long partnership with Bakersfield."

The Blaze were affiliated with the Cincinnati Reds for the past four seasons. "The Blaze and Reds had a very good relationship here in Bakersfield. There are absolutely no hard feelings on either side. This week produced a series of moves that made a lot of sense for Bakersfield, Cincinnati and Seattle, so I think everyone comes out happy."

The Blaze' first game as a Mariners affiliate will be April 9, 2015 right here at sunny Sam Lynn Ballpark against the Dodgers affiliate, the Rancho Cucamonga Quakes.

Blaze 2015 season tickets are on sale now! Call the front office to get your plan and become part of the Blaze (and Mariners) faithful!

Continue to follow the Blaze via the team homepage (BakersfieldBlaze.com), or on Facebook (Facebook.com/BakersfieldBlaze), Twitter ([@BakoBlaze](https://twitter.com/BakoBlaze)) and Instagram ([@BakoBlaze](https://www.instagram.com/BakoBlaze)) to stay up to date on everything Blaze.