

Q & A: Larry Fitzgerald on the Double Play Celebrity Softball Game

Written by Melissa Larsen



The 7th Annual Larry Fitzgerald Double Play Celebrity Softball Game comes to [Salt River Fields](#) on Saturday, April 22, at 6 p.m. Arizona Cardinals wide receiver, founder of the [First Down Fund](#) and all-around beloved local, Larry Fitzgerald, discusses his passion for children's programs and what first-time game-goers can expect.



For readers who haven't attended the Larry Fitzgerald Double Play Celebrity Softball Game before, what can they expect?

They can expect star-studded athletes and entertainers having a great time raising money for a charity that they believe will make a positive impact on people's lives. If you are in the stands, there will be local mascots and activities for children to participate in. Celebrities will sign autographs. We try to cater to the audience, so they have a good time.

As the game returns for the seventh time, is there anything you have come to look forward to each year?

Each year brings new excitement for me. I really enjoy this event. It is something that I take a lot of pride in, bringing it to my community. I love the excitement and energy. I love the competition. When you have a lot of athletes and entertainers who are used to winning and having success, they play hard and want to do well. I love that aspect of it. My mom did a great job of involving my brother and I in her charitable endeavors. She set a very high bar, and I just try to get close to that bar.

There are some big names taking part of this year's event (Jordin Sparks, Terrell Owens, Frank "Knuckles" Walker, David Johnson, Willie McGinest, Patrick Peterson and Anquan Boldin are just a few of the participants). Does it take much convincing to get these athletes and celebrities to get involved?

I come from the old-school. Closed mouths don't get fed. I ask everyone if they have some time, and I would love to have their support. Some people can, some people can't. Most people like doing things for others and if they can do it in an athletic form, it is even better.

Are you ever surprised by some of your fellow athletes' softball skills?

Absolutely, I have been surprised. I was surprised last year by Tyrann Mathieu and Devon Booker. From running and catching, hitting and the power they have. Then, you have guys like Darnell Dockett. He strikes out at slow-pitch softball. It was really tough to do, but he was able to do it.

Tell us about the First Down Fund.

I established the First Down Fund in 2004. Initially we wanted to raise the visibility of early detection for women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer with mammograms and research dollars that were going to saving women's lives because that is what I lost my mother to. I wanted to expand on that and deliver capital to organizations that put children first, give them positive outlets. When I was growing up, I had a lot of mentors who were able to guide me to do the right things and be a productive citizen in society. I want to make sure I am doing my part and doing that for the next generation behind me.

Why is aiding children and families such an important mission for you?

Children are our future. They are an investment that are worth investing in. Like I said, there are a lot of people who poured a lot of time and resources into me. From coaches to guidance counselors to teachers. People who did not have to do that but had it in their heart to do it. Programs that I went to after school, that taught me how to play chess, taught me how to study, had teachers available to help me with my homework—I want to make sure programs that like are being supported for young people so they can reach their goals also.

Q & A: Larry Fitzgerald on the Double Play Celebrity Softball Game

Written by Melissa Larsen

Want to attend the 7th Annual Larry Fitzgerald Double Play Celebrity Softball Game? Purchase tickets online at www.SaltRiverFields.com. General admission is \$20. First or Third Base Dugouts including four tickets in each dugout, allowing fans to sit in the dugout with players, are \$500 each. Parking is free.