



EVERETT
AQUASOX[™]

*FROM THE
 PACIFIC
 NORTHWEST
 COMES*

WEBBLY,
ONE COOL FROG

IN THE WORLD OF MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL, there are few team names more inexplicable and quirky than the Everett AquaSox. Albeit Everett's nationwide popularity is yet to rival clubs such as the Durham Bulls and Toledo Mud Hens, almost any baseball fan that has seen the AquaSox logo, let alone heard the nickname, finds it impossible to forget.

So what exactly is the intangible allure the Everett AquaSox possess that continues to make them one of the most popular minor league clubs year in and year out?

Certainly the nickname's peculiarity and uniqueness is one of the major factors to the team's appeal. There are plenty of other teams that boast zany, funnier, or stranger nicknames; yet, the reasoning for most of these names can be easily and readily explained with a quick glance at a dictionary or by having a limited knowledge of the team's home city. With the AquaSox, this is not the case.

From their exhibition season in 1984 until 1995, Everett had always shared a title with their parent team, the San Francisco Giants. The AquaSox materialized after eleven seasons when a shift in affiliation to the Seattle Mariners inspired management to choose a new identity. The unconventional means by which the 'AquaSox' was created are almost as unique as the nickname itself.



Photographs Courtesy of the Everett AquaSox

It is a cross between a Pacific tree frog and a Central American red-eyed tree frog. It's not really a specific frog to the area, but they went with a frog to pay homage to the wet, rainy environment of the Pacific Northwest. They also wanted to do an animal to pay homage to the area's sensitivity to the environment.

—Brad Baxter,
Director of Special Projects



THE LINEUP: Webby takes a break from tree-jumping to pose with AquaSox fans.

Explains Brad Baxter, director of special projects for the team: “Our owners at the time were looking to make a change to a more individualized name. They ran some contests, and first came up with the Frogs. From that, they went with the AquaSox; the Sox part of it being the tradition of baseball, like the Red Sox and White Sox, and the Aqua part being the habitat for frogs.”

“It was a two-fold process: they came up with the Frog first and then they came up with a name to go along with the Frog.”

This Frog that Baxter speaks of remains the centerpiece of the AquaSox identity. Appearing on every piece of team merchandise, the Frog representation, used in today's primary logo, remains identical to the '95

original: a lime green frog with tropical red legs sprawled out on a splashing water droplet, donning a teal cap with an ‘E’ and catching a baseball with its out-stretched tongue. The logo is classically comical. Coupled with the AquaSox nickname, it is no wonder that the silly cartoon frog with huge, goony eyes is unforgettable—a perennial fan favorite.

“It is a cross between a Pacific tree frog and a Central American red-eyed tree frog,” says Baxter of the Frog. “It's not really a specific frog to the area, but they went with a frog to pay homage to the wet, rainy environment of the Pacific Northwest. They also wanted to do an animal to pay homage to the area's sensitivity to the environment.”

In addition to being the AquaSox

HATS OFF



New Era Fits™



GET ME OUT OF HERE: Webbly and mascot friend Frank N. Furter join in on the ballpark races.



COMING DOWN THE STRETCH: It's down to the wire, but Webbly loses another between innings mascot race. Maybe it's the webfeet that slow Webbly down?

primary logo, the Frog is also the team's mascot. When he "hopped" on the scene at Everett Memorial Stadium in 1996, Webbly the Frog instantly earned the hearts of all AquaSox fans. He comes dressed in his favorite team's uniform—still wearing the teal 'E' hat—to every home game, but is yet to earn any playing time. Although Webbly has perfected the art of snagging pop flies with his tongue, he still struggles with catching the ball with his bulky orange-red—and ironically un-webbed—fingers.

Webbly is only half of a dynamic mascot duo for the AquaSox. His partner, Frank N. Furter, originally served as the Everett Giants mascot in 1986, and represents one of the few links between the two eras of Everett baseball—not counting the Everett Smokestackers one-season stint in 1905.

Despite being a six-foot tall hot-dog smothered in ketchup and mustard, Frank remains inedible—much to the chagrin of hungry baseball fans

everywhere. Considering he has teeth and always wears his AquaSox uniform, cap and gigantic sunglasses, he might not actually be that tasty after all! While the unusually long frankfurter may not be able to satiate a fan's appetite, he has been masterful in rallying the crowd behind his favorite team for almost twenty years.

"[Webbly and Frank] are a two-some. There are a lot of promotions, like Race the Mascot, in which they both will be involved. They do a tag-team, where Frank will start and run from first base to second base, and then Webbly runs from second to home plate...They both do visits to local schools for our reading programs here in Everett," says Baxter of the mascot twosome.

Webbly and Frank may be the prominent mascots, but Everett also boasts one of the most compelling and odd non-human cheerleaders in all of sports.

Unlike most mascots that are dressed in costumes and have vowed silence, Pop Fly is literally a walking,

talking puppet. "Pop" looks as if he just wandered off Sesame Street: round yellow head, bald on top with brown sideburns, orange oval nose, pink eyelids and, of course, an AquaSox jersey.

Pop Fly's aqua puppet house is a compelling contraption in its own right. The aqua puppet house comes out of a backpack that the puppeteer wears. As "Pop" is visible to the crowd, the invisible puppeteer looks out behind a fine black cloth—the backdrop to the puppet stage. The theater's design enables mobility for the puppeteer as he performs his act.

"He does a T-shirt giveaway every night, and then just kind of cracks jokes," says Baxter of the AquaSox favorite puppet since 1998.

Despite improving to eight games over .500, the AquaSox took a hop backward in the standings from second to third this past season. As they hibernate in the rainy Washington winter, the Frogs remain hopeful they can leap to the top of the Northwest League in 2006. **E** Eric Karlton