



Left: Carter Kirk, 17, left, with his father, Bryan Kirk, fans from Woodbine, cheer during the Orioles home opener in Baltimore on Thursday, Right: Workers Tony Sellers, right, and Kalyln Wilson serve up hot dogs to, from left, Bella Malatt-Go, Andrew McGlynn and Arnelia Malatt-Go as Mykayla Dyson looks on, during an Opening Day celebration at the Hill Family Center in Westminster. Sellers, the center's facilities director, brought his own grill from home to cook the hot dogs.



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OPENING

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Maryn, who attends Manchester Elementary School, donned a white No. 18 Orioles jersey with "10th Mar" stitched across her shoulders.

She met Chris Davis, her mom's favorite player. She met the Oriole Bird. She saw Cal Ripken Jr.

She got to walk out behind the wall in center field with the players and watch them trot down an orange carpet toward the infield while many of the 45,469 fans inside Camden Yards stood and cheered.

Then it was her turn. Maryn got her own loud ovation as she darted down the carpet, lined with people

holding orange Orioles flags, took a spot alongside the line of players and stood for the national anthem. She said she felt like a "celebrity."

Her experience wasn't done yet — after the ceremonial first pitch, Orioles broadcaster Jim Hunter tipped his wireless microphone down for Maryn, nerves and all, so she could shout "play ball!" into it, signifying the start of another baseball season in Baltimore.

Pretty cool for her first Opening Day. "I was so excited," said Colleen Schreyer, whose cellphone battery didn't last long after friends and folks back home saw Maryn on TV. She snapped as many pictures as she could before the phone ran out of juice.

"When my husband told me ... I couldn't believe it," she said. "She got to see Adam

Jones and Manny Machado, all of our favorite players."

Schreyer said her son, who soaked in his sixth Opening Day, might have been somewhat jealous of his sister's good fortune. Maryn did her best to soothe things by giving Jack a baseball from her collection of Orioles goodies.

"It was a great day," Schreyer said.

Meanwhile, Westminster resident Perry Marquez brought his 5-year-old son Matthew for their annual pilgrimage — Matthew got to attend his fourth Opening Day.

"I've always wanted to come to a baseball game with my son," Marquez said. "Before I got married, I said, 'One day I'm going to be here with my son.' And here we are."

Marquez lived in Eldersburg for a time before moving to Owings Mills and then

Westminster, and said he has always been an Orioles fan.

Which is why Matthew, a rec baseball player in Finksburg, sported an orange Orioles shirt and proclaimed Machado to be his favorite player.

Opening Day might be a fun outing for kids of all ages, but it's an important date for diehard fans such as Marquez. It's the start of a new season, when optimism is a buzz word and expectations can start to take hold.

"I think it's going to be a great season," Marquez said. "It's the hope that everybody has for a great season, to make it to the... playoffs."

He continued, "It's nice for the families getting together. I love that, and I'm sure everybody here loves that."

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