

## Bengals spirit

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Managing Editor  
Friday, 26 May 2023 04:47

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## BROTHERS ATTEND EVERY GAME DESPITE DIAGNOSIS

The Gallup Lady Bengals' softball season is over, but if you had a chance to go to a game you might have seen two older men sitting in the stands, cheering as loud as they could.

Those two men are known as the "Bengals Number One Fans." Benjamin, 81, and Gilbert

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Brown, 83, attend almost every Bengals softball game, rain or shine, despite Benjamin currently undergoing dialysis for kidney failure.

“Every time he gets out of dialysis, he wants to go to a softball game,” Benjamin’s daughter Una Paseda said.

Benjamin said he’s had a lifelong passion for all things sports.

His first sport he ever played was softball, but later on in high school he was his school’s quarterback, a record-setting track star, and a basketball player.

“I like sports, especially the high school sports. I like to watch them play,” Benjamin said. “I’ve always been that way.”

Benjamin and Gilbert try to attend almost every Gallup softball, baseball, and basketball game they can. They also catch the occasional track and field meet.

Benjamin said his favorite part about watching high school sports, especially basketball and softball, is the players’ determination.

“In basketball, as well as softball, they try their best. ... That’s one thing I like about sports, you can feel the thrill that goes through them when they play,” Benjamin explained.

Gilbert said going to the high school games was initially just something for him and his brother to do together.

“We’re both retired and we’re both elderly and we had nothing to do, so that’s how we started,” he said.

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Although neither of them have any kids or grandkids currently on the team, some of Gilbert's kids did go to Gallup High School. Despite not having any relatives on the team, Gilbert said he likes being able to support the softball team.

"Not many fans follow the softball team except the parents of the players. But we like to watch them. We follow them everywhere, every game they play," Gilbert said.

The two men often sit in the stands and yell out supportive advice to the girls whether they're playing defense or offense. They often tell them just to have fun and do their best.

"We just encourage them to go out there and have fun," Gilbert said. "We tell them 'You'll remember this for a lifetime. Playing [sports] will be something that will remain with you the rest of your life.'"

Lady Bengals junior Jazmine Marrufo said the men's support means a lot to her and the rest of the team.

"They honestly mean so much [to us]. Knowing they don't have anybody on the team to actually watch in their own family, and [that they] come out just to support our girls and our team, it just means the world to know that we're trying our hardest for other people who appreciate the work that we put in," Marrufo said.

Junior Victoria Zarate said that this season Benjamin's presence really encouraged her to do her best and that she was "putting it all out there for him."

"For me, knowing that he was sick was the biggest thing. I knew I wanted to do my best for him," Zarate said.

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The girls showed their appreciation for Benjamin and Gilbert by presenting them with some hats, signed softballs, and signs that said “#1 Fan” during the team’s district championship game April 29.

The Lady Bengals made it to the state championship, losing in round two to the Silver City Fighting Colts with a score of 8-2 May 11.

By Molly Ann Howell  
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