

# Sportsman's Grille scores home run with food fans

By Bob Phillips  
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You'd expect a place called the Sportsman's Grille to be a dimly lit place with dark paneled walls, ceiling fans, a few game fish mounted on the wall and one of ESPN's non-stop basketball games going on TV.

If that's what you'd expect, you wouldn't be disappointed. The small building at 5405 Harding Road is just a long fly ball away from the V where West End splits into Highways 100 and 70. The forest of signs surrounding it make it difficult to spot.

But, once inside, you're away from it all — surrounded by people in jogging suits and baseball caps. It's a perfect place to have a brew and watch a game.

And there are plenty of brews to pick from. In fact, 29 imports (priced between \$2 and \$2.50) and 18 long necks (all \$1.25.).

You'll sit at dark, wooden tables so heavy The Refrigerator would have trouble moving them. There are two pinball machines and four poker machines on one wall. A few ferns hang over the booths. In

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## THE EAT BEAT

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one corner, almost unnoticed, stands a grand old Wurlitzer juke box.

There is no music, however. Just the sounds of talk broken by, an occasional cheer for a good play on TV.

The menu consists mostly of sandwiches like burgers, ham and cheese, tuna melt and the like. There is also barbecue on corn bread.

The sandwiches are OK, but they'll never draw a sellout crowd. The burgers, for example, are a tad bland. They are served with grilled onions, which is a nice touch — although many folks go for lots of raw onion on their burgers. All in all, it was far from a home run — more like a ground single up the middle.

Specials of the day are posted on a small blackboard near the bar.

include a club sandwich and red beans and rice.

The solidly constructed club is about as good as you can find in Nashville. It comes with a generous order of french fries.

The red beans and rice are nicely seasoned, although people who prefer highly seasoned dishes of this type might think it too mild. The mix of beans to rice is a good one. The small bits of sausage have a fine flavor.

The rest of the all-star team are the desserts. These are not made at the Sportsman's Grille. They come from the kitchens of the cook's and the manager's homes and vary from day to day.

Reportedly, best of the desserts are the lemon ice box pie. (This reviewer, being on a diet, had to refrain.) Others include German chocolate cake, chess pie and pecan pie.

The Sportsman's Grille, which opened in September, takes credit cards and is open 11 a.m. to mid-