

Re: This Week In Baseball
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TWB #815

TWIB used behind the scenes cameras and microphones to capture the sights and sounds inside the 2007 MLB All-Star Game with a focus on “The Brew Crew.” For the first time in more than two decades, the Milwaukee Brewers had four All-Stars – pitcher Ben Sheets, pitcher Felix Sanchez, infielder J.J. Hardy and first baseman Prince Fielder. Later many of MLB’s best players were shown engaging in some friendly baseball banter.

AL manager Jim Leyland and NL manager Tony La Russa were briefly featured giving pre-game motivational and information speeches to their respective teams. In a pre-game ceremony, the legendary New York Giants center fielder Willie “Say Hey” Mays was given a moving tribute.

The game itself had AL Seattle Mariners superstar Ichiro Suzuki hitting the first inside-the-park home run in All-Star Game history. Then in the ninth inning, Cubs outfielder Alfonso Soriano hit an opposite field home run to make it a one-run game. His home run brought high drama to the final inning, as the game ended with the bases loaded. The AL had won for the eleventh straight time and earned home field advantage in the World Series.

Educational theme: Fun and competition are important when combined to create the ultimate motivational experience for children of all ages. Fun is simply the worthwhile use of one’s time.

Educational theme: Intrinsic rewards are the best type of motivation. Young athletes have a need for stimulation and excitement, i.e., to have fun.

Educational theme: Honoring a leader by paying tribute to his life is an important method to teach children to emulate and live with character.

“Act Two”: The Top Five All-Star Game Moments were remembered, including former Baltimore Orioles shortstop Cal Ripken, Jr.’s home run in his last All-Star Game, the Minnesota Twins Torii Hunter’s spectacular catch to rob the San Francisco Giants Barry Bonds of a home run, and the Philadelphia Phillies Bobby Abreu’s record setting performance in the Home Run Derby.

This year’s contestants include Milwaukee’s Prince Fielder, Minnesota’s Justin Morneau and St. Louis’s Albert Pujols. With the Los Angeles Angels Vladimir Guerrero at bat, David “Big Papi” Ortiz stopped the action. In dramatic fashion, Ortiz threw Guerrero’s bat away, then opened a beautiful wooden case and presented Vladimir with a new bat. With the new bat in hand, Guerrero went on to win the 2007 Home Run Derby.

With Ichiro’s exciting home run in mind, TWIB recalled another All-Star Game landmark home run. Nearly a quarter century ago, nine-time All-Star Fred Lynn hit the only grand slam home run in All-Star Game history.

Educational theme: Children must remember the legacy of extraordinary performances. Documentation of great performances is a part of sports history.

Educational theme: This was a particularly excellent example of good sportsmanship. Children’s desire to demonstrate good sportsmanship must be equal to the desire to win.

Educational theme: Fun and competition are important when combined to create the ultimate motivational experience for children of all ages.

“Pitch, Hit and Run”: The TWBIA question was answered with the fact that St. Louis Cardinals legend Stan Musial holds the record for the most career home runs in the All-Star Game with six.

The candidates and the winner of the Clutch Performer of the Month were announced. Candidates included the Yankees Alex Rodriguez, Detroit’s Justin Verlander, Colorado’s Troy Tulowitzki, Seattle’s Ichiro, Cleveland’s C.C. Sabathia and the winner from the LA Angels Chone Figgins.

The TWIB Note cited that Ichiro has more hits in his first seven MLB seasons than any player in history.

Educational theme: The most important character trait that a child can have is leadership. It is often called “taking the team on his or her back.” Leadership through action is exactly what a true leader does.

Educational theme: Documentation of record setting performances is a method to measure accomplishment and establish standards of achievement.

“Front Row Fans”: Hall of Fame musician Paul Simon is this week’s front row fan. Paul showed some of his favorite baseball mementos and memorabilia. His boyhood idol was the great Mickey Mantle of the New York Yankees. Among other items Paul proudly showed a photo of himself and Mickey taken during the video recording of “Me and Julio Down By the School Yard.” Simon also showed a newspaper clipping that reported his steal of home when he played high school baseball in Queens.

Simon compared playing baseball to performing on stage. Paul knows that when playing baseball you must focus on the game rather than the audience.

Educational theme: Collecting memorabilia is a way to maintain a connection with events and experiences worthy of remembrance. Often these are objects that serve to remind one of past events.

Educational theme: Outstanding performance requires outstanding concentration. Many experts believe the control of attention is the secret to success.

“How ‘bout that!”: This week TWIB featured the best plays of the first half of the 2007 MLB season. There were spectacular leaping and diving catches, incredible throws, very athletic running catches, and long home runs. Landmark performances by Justin Verlander (no-hitter), Sammy Sosa (600 career home runs), Chicago White Sox Frank Thomas (500 home runs), and Houston Astros Craig Biggio (3000 career hits) were recalled.

Educational theme: The aesthetic value of athletics is found in the beauty, grace and rhythmic movements of premier athletes.

Educational theme: Children can learn a variety of athletic skills and movements to be physically educated. Once children have carefully observed the biomechanical movements, they can be better comprehended, then repeated and performed.

Educational theme: Documentation of athletic achievements and record setting performances are part of sports history. Many baseball traditions are based upon such historic performances that are a measure of accomplishment and standards of achievement.

Educational theme: The demonstration of the incredible effort needed to play at the highest level of baseball reinforces the early childhood concept of relating success to effort.