

Re: This Week In Baseball
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TWIB Show #1218 "Pittsburgh Pirates"

Act One "Pirates": Historically, the Pittsburgh Pirates are a team that has been synonymous with winning. But although the storied Pirates have a rich baseball tradition, they haven't finished over .500 for the past 18 seasons. But new manager Clint Hurdle has a knack for motivating young players and he saw Pittsburgh as the greatest coaching opportunity in sports. He has consequently built team chemistry, confidence and self-esteem. With Hurdle at the helm, the Pirates are playing exciting baseball and are fighting for the division title with more wins at this point than in any season since 1992.

Much of the credit goes to two of the Pirates young stars -- second baseman Neil Walker and electrifying center fielder Andrew McCutchen. The pitching staff is also emerging as a force. This year the Bucs have a trio of first-time All-Stars: outstanding closer Joel Hanrahan, the five-tooled Andrew McCutchen and starting pitcher Kevin Correia.

The resurgence at PNC Park has electrified the fans and motivated the players. There is an unbelievable atmosphere of hope and anticipation.

Educational theme: Clubhouse chemistry is a form of bonding -- i.e., the formation of special relationships that are deep and lasting. This is a challenge for every team. This is a particularly good example of team chemistry.

Educational theme: Competition is the essence of sport. It is a test of skill or ability leading to a rivalry between two teams. Competition is a valuable motivational tool for the promotion of optimal performance, especially when the consequence is considered to have merit.

Educational theme: All-Star team recognition is earned through superior performance, service, merit or longevity. This formal acknowledgement is meant to show appreciation by reward of public honor.

Educational theme: Fans and communities often establish passion for teams and individual athletes. Spectator support is an important component of success. Cheering raises the emotions of athletes and that leads to enhanced performance.

Act Two - "Hometown Hero Neil Walker": Pittsburgh's native son, Neil Walker, is a local hero. He has excellent baseball ability, a great personality and best of all, he's from the Pittsburgh area. Neil graciously spent some time with TWIB and shared some of his earliest memories of the Pirates; such as the Braves playoff victory over the Bucs in 1992. His favorite player was the speedy Andy Van Slyke, whom Neil tried to emulate even though he lacked that type of running speed. Neil also takes part in the Pirates' active legacy of community service, which goes back to the days of the biggest humanitarian in baseball history -- Roberto Clemente. The Pirates want to make a difference in the world and do so in part by supporting the Miracle League of Southwestern Pennsylvania, which provides those with special needs the chance to enjoy baseball. On this day, Walker, Hurdle and assorted other players and coaches ran a set of baseball skills clinics.

Neil Walker was asked the *TWIBIA* question. Who was the last Pirate to have at least 200 total bases in each of his first three seasons? The correct answer is Ralph Kiner, who had an impressive 873 total bases his first three years with the Pirates.

Winning Road Trips celebrates the teams and players that know how to win away from home. Angels' pitcher Ervin Santana had never won a game in Cleveland until this week, when he threw the ninth no-hitter in Angels' history.

Educational theme: In athletics, iconic players and performances are recognized as enduring symbols of achievement. They are respected and held in high esteem by aficionados. This respect is earned by achievement, accomplishment and approach.

Educational theme: Giving back to the community through community service activities or fund raising programs is important to the life of the health of a community and its cultural aspirations.

Educational theme: Trivia is a seemingly superfluous and insignificant event; however, it is an important component of baseball legend, lore and tradition. For both fans and players, trivia is a source of fun and interest in the American institution called baseball.

Educational theme: Landmark performances are those that mark a turning point in history. An athletic accomplishment with historical significance is one that is marked for preservation by aficionados, players and national governing bodies of sport.

Act Three - "Pepsi Max": Once again from the high-tech, interactive, hardball haven called "The MLB Man Cave," *TWIB* and the two intrepid baseball fans continued to answer the question - what would it be like to watch every inning of every MLB game for the entire season of 2011? Together they have watched more than 1500 MLB games and entertained more than 100 celebrities and MLB players who have visited the cave, including Miss USA. From the sublime to the ridiculous, one never knows who will turn up at the cave. Mikey Oh hung out with reality TV visitor Ami James from New York Ink. Mikey Oh got a Sharpie "tattoo" of the Yankees logo on his arm. Then the atmosphere got a bit more acoustic when recording artists "Sublime with Rome" took the stage. In a brief interview they shared their interest and fondness of baseball.

Gillette presented *The Rookie of the Month*, which honors the league's top rookies throughout the season. The Phillies Vance Worley has won his last five starts and has fielded his position well. Vance's latest victory was a three-hitter and his first Major League complete game.

Educational theme: Tattooing has been around for more than 5000 years, and its history is a diverse and an interesting one.

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Educational theme: Family and friends are critical components for success. The family is the primary support system for an individual. It presents the first opportunity for well-being, learning and love. True friends provide deep and lasting relationships that are critical in solving the problem of social isolation.

Act Four - "Diamond Demos": To play baseball one must execute the fundamentals of the game. MLB Network expert Harold Reynolds offered some sound baseball advice on bunting a baseball. Harold explained how to utilize the shape of home plate to

properly set the bat angle, so that you can bunt to either the right or left side of the field. Harold advocates pivoting to bunt, rather than squaring up to the pitcher.

Going All Out is a segment that honors special players and teams who continually show maximum effort. When Pirates fans dream of the post season, they are inspired by the great Bucs team that won the World Series 40 years ago. The 1971 Pirates were offense personified and were led by two key players -- Willie Stargell and Roberto Clemente. Stargell led the NL that year with 48 homers and was the MVP runner up. At age 37, Clemente finished fourth in the NL with a .341 batting average. Despite four batting titles, 10 Gold Gloves, and a MVP award, Clemente was under appreciated. The favorite Orioles won the first two games of the World Series and were feeling confident. But a disrespectful comment by an unnamed Oriole player appeared to motivate Clemente to play even more brilliantly and he led the Pirates to beat the Birds. Roberto's magnificent performance of hitting .414 with two home runs led to his honor as the series MVP and cemented his reputation in all of baseball, as "The Great One."

State Farm State of the Game spotlights players and teams that have reached a better state. The Florida Marlins' Hanley Ramirez struggled over the first few months of the 2011 season. But since mid-June, he is playing the way he is capable of playing. Since June 19th, he has hit .322 with a .938 OPS.

Educational theme: Sports pedagogy is an important aspect of the learning process. Demonstration and explanation are initial steps in the process. Children learn best by watching and mimicking athletic performance.

Educational theme: The glory and romance of sport are preserved in the chronicles of landmark performances, because history is written by the victors. Documenting important events in a career create the history of the present, for if you lose sight of the past, you will lose sight of the future.

Educational theme: Recalling phenomenal career records and landmark performances are methods to evaluate performance, activity, and achievement. It is an account of history collected, written, and preserved for future generations. Remembering accomplishments gives fans a greater appreciation of winning and championship achievements.

Educational theme: The difference between a pro and an amateur is that a professional will demonstrate mental toughness after failing to perform successfully. They will continue to compete to the end of the event.

Act Five - "How 'bout that!": Taco Bell presents the best plays and misplays of the week set to the song "Panic" by *Sublime with Rome*. Individual players were cited making the outstanding plays that are examples of MLB. Yankee first baseman Mark Teixeira made a diving tag play, Brian McCann hit a long homer and CC Sabathia recorded his 14th strikeout. In addition, Jason Kipnis got his first MLB base hit, Ervin Santana's no-hitter was re-visited and the Seattle Mariners ended their 17-game losing streak. A couple of defensive errors were also shown. Finally, an umpires' horrendous safe call allowed the Braves to win an extra-inning game against the Pirates.

Educational theme: Teachers and coaches can instruct that baseball is considered to be the most difficult sport to master. It takes great skill and ability to play the game successfully.

Educational theme: Learning to play by the rules allows for the maximum enjoyment of the game, for both fans and players.

Educational theme: The artistic value of sport can be found in the beauty, grace, and rhythmic movements of elite athletes. The aesthetic quality of a well-executed play enhances the appreciation of baseball.

Educational theme: Once the student-learner has carefully observed the required effort and the bio-mechanics of the premier athletes, then the movements can be more easily duplicated and performed by the learner. The student is then physically educated.