

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Defined by your past

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Spring training has ended and the 2011 season has officially begun. Every team has the same goal- to be better. In doing so, every team must contend with its past; some of recent years and others which can go back for decades. The pressures of past successes, the agony of past failures and the perceptions of questionable character are the driving forces out of spring training. Teams with an unflattering past, regardless of the circumstances, are focused on getting their players and fans to replace past perceptions of passionless quitters with a vision of excitement in the promise of a new season and bright future.

History is a collection of events that occurred in past days, months or years. Our future is influenced by events which happened in the past regardless of the nature, positive or negative. We tend to hold on and cherish anything in our past that is fairly positive and build upon it. On that part of our past, motivation comes easy and for the most part we can cope with turmoil with a fair amount of ease.

However; when your past is filled with an assortment of failures, disappointments, unfulfilled goals and negative perceptions, most of our lives and careers are concerned with trying to get back on track. Hours and days are spent just trying to catch up, putting things back in order and prioritizing. Most of us have misfortunes in our past and dealing with that misfortune is not always as easy as forgetting about it. When others are involved, it is considerably more difficult.

Because a team must deal with its past as a group, it is always more difficult to live up to or overcome its past. Each member of the team has his own issues as well as the team's issues and each member handles his past in a different way. There is no question that the team's past affects the members and the fans. Fans are a big part of any sports organization and constantly reminds the team of its flawed past increasing the pressure on the players and team to make a change. A team's greatest task is overcoming the negative label placed on it by its past.

One of the most common mistakes made and phrases used is: "We are going to forget about the past." Besides being virtually impossible to do, it's never a good idea to forget your past. Denying your past won't make it go away. It is our past that motivates us to continue the course or change. You can't change your past. You can only influence the perception of the present and future. Acknowledging and understanding your past will help you achieve the positive image every team and player desires. Teams are defined by their past.

-Mookie Wilson