



Spring Training for Your Career

A ballplayer has a month in the sunshine to impress his boss. Steal these tips from a roster of longtime baseball veterans and become an all-star on the job.

BY STEVE CALECHMAN

BASEBALL IS LIFE, AND VICE VERSA

Get some sun. Mondays are easier if you spent the weekend in shorts.

First, make the team.

Always be prepared. Ten minutes of warming up beats five weeks with a pulled groin.

It's a long season, and you will be tested. So map out a plan.

Set an example—for yourself and your team.

Show up early; you're an essential guy.

Welcome a rookie's challenge. It makes you and the team better.

...and coach him up. Mentoring is another great tradition.

Then let the kid do all the grunt work.

When all else is equal, jerks get cut.

Bust it from day one; coaches and scouts are always watching.

It's a beautiful day. Quit your yelling.

Find a quiet corner and bury any simmering resentments now.

Practice calling "I got it" until it's automatic.

See your teammates in three dimensions.

Respect your competition. Everybody here was all-state.

Don't dwell on your screwups.

Get roughed up. Work on your weaknesses and become the five-tool guy Skip needs.

Tap all that expertise surrounding you.

Ride the bus. See, that ain't so bad.

SHOW YOUR UTILITY

"After 10 years in the minors, I realized my speed and versatility could put me on a major-league bench. There's a big difference between being a holler away and a phone call away."

Rex Hudler, former MLB player and current Kansas City Royals television analyst

BE THE MAIN MAN

"Pitching is the most important job, the most delicate job, and the one that requires the most patience. That's why pitchers and catchers report first."

Dennis Eckersley, Hall of Fame relief pitcher

PLAY NICE!

"I wanted talent, but I was also looking to assemble a kind of family. One bad attitude would ruin it. Give me the guy who plays the game to the fullest, day in and day out. That's the guy I want."

Tommy Lasorda, Hall of Fame manager

ENCOURAGE CHATTER

"Managers can play the heavy. As a coach, you want players to confide in you. If you always come down hard, they won't let you be a sounding board."

Alan Trammell, former player, coach, and manager, now a Tigers special assistant

KICK BACK TOGETHER

"We'd go to dinner, do March Madness, play golf. You get to know guys on a different level when you hang out together outside the ballpark. When you're watching them from the bench, you cheer a little differently. You care about them as friends, not just as teammates."

Al Leiter, former all-star pitcher, MLB Network and YES network analyst

KEEP TAKING YOUR RIPS

"As a manager, I focused on correcting mistakes quickly and staying positive. It's a game of failure, and if you dwell on it, you're probably going to repeat it."

Bob Brenly, former player, coach, and manager, now a television analyst

EXPLOIT ALL RESOURCES

"The coaches' job is to make you better. But you have to ask. They can't read minds. It's an open-door policy, but you have to go in."

Jay Buhner, retired all-star, Gold Glove, and former Seattle Mariners special instructor

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK MATCHO