

CHICAGO CUBS SPECIAL EDITION SPRING TRAINING

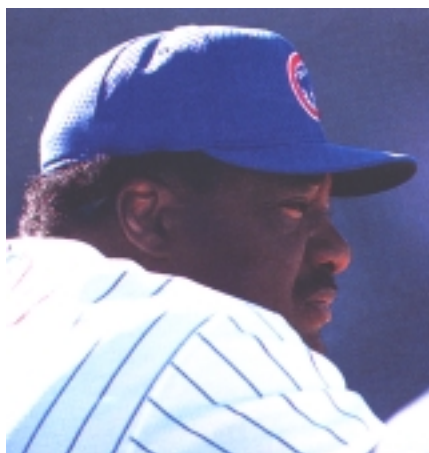
Mack Newton wants one idea entrenched in the hearts of the Chicago Cubs and their fans — they will be playing in the World Series at Wrigley Field.

“We are going *Last to First*”, says Newton. “That’s our mission statement. That’s our goal. Notice that I didn’t say we’re going to try. I said that we are.”

It will be a long way from “worst to first.” The Cubs have had the longest dry run in baseball history. They tied for the most losses in baseball last season. They last played in the World Series in 1945.

And during spring training in Mesa, Mack held up a faded gray T-shirt on which was printed: “World Championship, Chicago Cubs Baseball Club 1908.”

“This is the last time this team has won a World Series,” he told the players. “No one else in baseball can do what you can do. No one else can break a 93-year-old losing tradition.”



A decision is made

The decision to change came first from manager Don Baylor,” who insisted that Mack was the man to work with the Cubs during spring training.

“I’ve always wanted Mack in my camp,” says Baylor. I’ve worked on hiring him for the last two years. Sometimes we got into the doldrums like last year and couldn’t get ourselves out. This is why Mack was brought in.”

Baylor participated in workout stretches with his coaching staff and even enrolled his wife in a Newton conditioning class. “After a week she wondered if I still liked her,” he says.

Mack’s job during spring training was not only to condition the team physically, but to motivate them and instill new attitudes. He refers to the job as the “VP in charge of winning.” Says Mack: “This began with Don Baylor. He has never been a loser in his life. Don Baylor is a winner. He’s a visionary.”



Wrigleyville must change

“Then there’s this whole element of what I call Wrigleyville—the park, the neighborhood around it, the houses around it, the bars that line the street around the park, the El train, the whole experience. Wrigley Field is a comfortable, cozy ballpark. Fans can sit and smell the grass, drink beer and sing *Take Me Out To The Ball Game*. Win or lose, if Sammy Sosa hits a home run, everybody goes home happy.”

Mack contends that this may be great for the owners who make money selling Cubs memorabilia, hats, and t-shirts, but it’s not so great for the players themselves, who are continually recycled and expected to be the “lovable losers.”

“Every team I’ve been associated with has won championships.”

“My job is for them to reject that tag,” he says. They accept the reality of 93 years of losing and then reject their prognosis for the future. Their future is not determined by their past, it’s determined by their will and attitude.”

Mack Newton has a long history of turnarounds in his career of motivation and



rehabilitation. His best-known client Bo Jackson retired from football after hip replacement surgery. Mack got him into physical shape for baseball and watched him hit a home run in his first at-bat with the Chicago White Sox.

At the start of Mack’s nine-year stint with the Oakland Athletics, they were next to last in the previous season. The Dallas Cowboys were dead last when he began his three year coaching job with their team. “I was part of changing that back into a winning tradition, says Mack. “Every team I’ve been associated with has won championships.”



A winning formula

What was Mack's formula for creating winners out of the Cubs? During the six weeks of spring training, he led them through three sessions a day, each lasting about 30 minutes or longer.

In the first session, mental training began with discussing personal issues. "We talked about things like relationships, anger, forgiveness, fear, very personal stuff." This first session took place indoors, out of the reach of the cameras and microphones of the press.

Outdoors, the second session consisted of a stretching and conditioning class. New Cubs member Matt Stairs was impressed. "It was a very outstanding workout. It's amazing how you can do certain stretches and get every single body part. I might actually see stomach muscles I haven't seen in about 10 years."



Catcher Joe Girardi agreed. "Any time you're in top physical shape, it's an advantage. I think he's trying to develop mental toughness more than anything. There are some times when you don't want to do it, but when you're going through it with a friend or a teammate, I think it brings you closer together."



One substantial advantage of these sessions, noted Mack, is that the Cubs were the only team in baseball without a single muscle-related injury throughout all of spring training.

The final session was more mental training, which took place outside with the press allowed to listen in. These sessions were to instill winning attitudes and change their expectations. Mack used his familiar formula:

IA (Inborn Attributes or talent) + AA (Acquired Attributes or practice and skill) x A (Attitude) = PPP (Predictable Peak Performance). Attitude is the wild card that multiplies all your other attributes.

Two important acronyms also played a central role: WIN – What's Important Now and WIT – Whatever It Takes

Says Cubs star Sammy Sosa: "The advice he gives you is great. He says things that make you think. Trust your teammates. Believe in yourself. Be a team leader. Have a good attitude. I'm hearing a lot of this for the first time in my career. He's made me a believer and I'm not the only one."

Matt Stairs agrees: "I've heard people say that the goal for the Cubs is to get to .500. Bull. That would mean we don't get in the playoffs. Hopefully everybody believes (we're going to be in the World Series) or they shouldn't be here. Mack's enforcing that. You have to believe in yourself and your teammates in order to win."



The Cubs played over 30 games in spring training and won about three-fourths of them, says Mack, but that's not what's important. "We were *practice winning* in spring training. You have to lose in the process so that you can learn the things that it takes to win. It's another word for failure. The reason I've been so successful in the past 10 years is because I took early failure and learned from it. I like to remind people that Thomas Edison was the most famous failure in history. He failed thousands of times in his inventions, but also patented more inventions than anyone else in American history. He learned from failure."

A new attitude

Will this year be different for the Cubs?

Already, fans have not just seen the difference, they have felt it, says Mack. The real change, players say, is in the attitude.

"We are going to surprise a lot of people"

"A lot of baseball is believing in yourself," says Girardi. "Being able to relax when you come up with the bases loaded, being able to relax when you're on the mound and you're one pitch away from getting out of the inning. And when you believe in yourself, you create an attitude."

"Attitude is a start," says second baseman Eric Young. "Attitude is getting your mind and body right to perform on the field. Mack Newton can't catch a ground ball for us, he can't hit and can't throw, but he has given us a mind-set to get the job done."

Mack Newton has insisted that this attitude spread to the entire Chicago Cubs organiza-

tion, including management and staff. Secretaries in Chicago now answer the phone with *Last to First*. Mack even met with groundskeepers to tell them everything had to be first class for the Chicago Cubs. "Someone has to break the cycle and reject what has come before."

"I never have had this chemistry in the clubhouse before," says Sammy Sosa. "I have never felt so great. I don't want to leave the clubhouse because we are so good together. We only have one thing in mind—last to first. With our attitude and mentality and the way we are, we're not afraid to play against anybody. We are going to surprise a lot of people."



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3243-A E. Indian School Rd.
Phoenix AZ 85018
Tel: (602) 957-6492