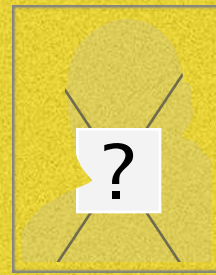


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 620 What We Can Learn From Mookie Betts

The 2020 Major League Baseball season is upon us, and just before the start, something took place yesterday that validated a lot of the things we've been talking about for the past two and a half years, We'll run it down for you next, on The Extra Point.

Baseball season. It starts today. In the year of COVID-19, life will get a little more normal, even if it's the new normal, by welcoming back some of the old normal.

There will not be any fans in the stands and it's going to seem a little strange I'm sure, but the action on the field should be good enough to keep our attention focused.

For the past few years the best team in baseball has arguably been the Los Angeles Dodgers. They've won a ton of games but have not won a World Series championship. It's been 32 years since they last won the World Series, and I know the Dodgers fans in the Ray Gibson audience are screaming out, "We were robbed in 2017 by the Astros. Okay, fair enough.

The Dodgers are again figured to be the best team, and yesterday made sure they'll be in that conversation for years to come, signing outfielder Mookie Betts to a 12-year contract extension worth \$365 million. It is the second largest deal in baseball history, behind the one given to L.A. Angels star Mike Trout. Other than Trout, Betts is considered the best player in baseball.

The Dodgers have some high-priced talent on their team but current management has never signed a deal for more than \$100 million. They have underbid the market for every major star who has become available.

Dodgers fans have long complained that the team continually raises their ticket prices, as well as the cost of food and other

concessions, and have the richest local television deal in the league — but they would never aggressively pursue the one player who could lift them over the top. Until now.

So why spend the money on Mookie Betts when they've had a legit chance to pick up any one of several players with great skills who could lead them to a World Series win? Why Mookie? I think Mookie showed them qualities that others had not, and they knew he would deliver off the field as well as on it.

First of all, Betts didn't have to sign now. At the end of this shortened season he would become a free agent and could fire up a bidding war for his services. He could have picked up a deal worth north of \$400 million had he waited. Now here's where Betts made an incredible impression on the Dodgers.

He said he wanted to sign a long-term deal before the season began, so his contract situation wouldn't be a distraction during the games. He did this, knowing he would make less money.

Mookie Betts is a self-described "country boy," having grown up in the country and he still has family there. He has country values and he displayed them to the Dodgers. He showed up at the facility for his daily workout and team activities at 5am, well before others. He doesn't goof off during practice. He practices with intention, to get better every day. He helps those who need help, acting as a mentor to those who will accept.

He has made motivational talks with the team and in just a few months has changed the mindset of a team that won 106 games last season, making them hungrier to win that elusive title. Mookie Betts is all of 27 years old.

(Con't.)

When asked about all this, Betts responded with words that raised eyebrows. He dismissed all the praise being showered upon him and said this: "I'm here to bring some rings back to L.A." Team first, win first, rings first, then if you want to talk about my influence on the team, we'll talk. But there's business to take care of first.

Andrew Friedman, Dodger's President of Baseball Operations, said that Betts' talent is off the scale, then said, "I think what's really stood out to us in the couple months being around him is the work ethic, the burning desire to get better on a daily basis. I think it's a tone he will set, that standard for our young players that are in our clubhouse now and also the ones that will come up in the future."

This is a great lesson for anyone who wants to get ahead in their career. I can't promise you millions like Mookie is getting, but I know you can do much better than most others if you make a big contribution for your employer.

Come in early, stay late, become a master of your job. Like I've said before, do your job like you invented it. Help others, volunteer to do more. Get known in your organization and get excited about what it does and what the team accomplishes.

Don't do all this to get promoted, do it because it's right to do it — and that it says good things about your work ethic. And keep contributing at a high level.

Work so that your boss will say the kind of things about you that the Dodgers said about Mookie.

Eventually, it will pay off, others will notice. The right people will notice. It happened for Mookie Betts and it will happen for you.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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