

"If it's important enough to you, you'll find a way. If it's not, you'll find an excuse." »Ryan Blair

Everyone's MVP



I frequently remind people that I do not believe all of life and business can be summed up in sports analogies.

And yes, I always do that right before I make a sports analogy.

I also realize that the city of Houston is going to become insufferable over the next year with Astros talk.

And I, for one, am really looking forward to it. After a summer of natural disasters, no American city is more deserving of feel-good stories.

A few years ago, a buddy joked with me that he took his glove to Astros games – not to catch a foul ball, but in case they needed an upgrade at third base. I am

Earning Their Stripes



I ended up in the middle of an interesting training event last week.

My son's basketball team was invited to scrimmages with a few high school teams from 5A programs in the Houston area.

These 5A schools are roughly the size of small cities.

What I wasn't aware of was that these scrimmages were also going to be used as training and certification for basketball referees.

During basketball season, referees are not exactly on our list of favorite people.

Walking into a gym with three dozen of them produces instant apprehension.

guessing those days are over.

And with an epic championship run over Boston, New York, and Los Angeles (That's just a great list, isn't it?), my favorite story of the entire championship run is George Springer, III.

Springer went 3 for 26...yes...3 for 26 against the Yankees in the ALCS.

Ready to put his hitting struggles behind him on the biggest baseball stage on earth...he then struck out four times in game one of the World Series.

He...struck...out...four...times.

Experts sitting on their couches everywhere screamed for him to be benched. A lead off guy has to hit! This guy was going to cost us the series!

However, shocker of shockers, experts sitting on their couches are sometimes wrong. Go figure.

By game 7, Springer would set or tie several all-time World Series records, including most home runs and total bases in a series.

He was named the World Series MVP, and there was no argument.

And, as uplifting a story as his incredible World Series turnaround is, Springer's backstory is even more so.

He was bullied and became shy and withdrawn during his youth because of his stuttering. He has since turned that situation around as well.

Springer is now a spokesperson and major fundraiser for SAY: The Stuttering Association for the Young.

He is a worthy MVP on and off the field.

The facility we were playing in contained three separate gymnasiums. (Did I mention these schools are huge?)

As I walked between gyms while our team was on break, I used my old and trusted technique of observing folks at work by acting as if I belonged wherever I was standing.

Seriously, what guy is going to walk into the middle of a group of referees receiving critiques and instructions from their lead ref if he doesn't belong there?

(Uh...this guy.)

I was wearing a black pullover, so I blended right in.

Truth be told, I was impressed by the instructions they were being given. Some of it involved positioning on the court and what angles gave better views of the action.

I was particularly interested when the lead ref talked to them about not watching the game as fans watched a game.

Too many rookies were following the ball with their eyes when their job was to follow action away from the ball.

I almost spoke up to agree and then realized...whoops...not my party. Be quiet, dude.

It was a particular game management tip that really struck a nerve with me.

One of the lead guys told the refs that if a player did something positive like acknowledging a foul or helping a person up or showing respect out there in other ways, they should acknowledge it.

He told them, "Most often, by the end of a game, you will have whatever dynamic

We may not face our struggles in front of stadiums filled with people or on TV, but most of us have stretches when even our best efforts aren't producing the results we hoped for or expected.

There is no guarantee that success is right around the corner. However, there is also no guarantee that it isn't.

The way to find out is to keep working. Yesterday is history. Today is a new day.

Step up to the plate and take your swings today.

out there that you allowed. Be fair, clear, and nip bad conduct in the bud. But, look to recognize players and coaches for good sportsmanship. You'll see more of it."

That was close to a Tom Peters' quote, "Celebrate what you want to see more of."

I almost pointed it out, but just nodded approval... and snuck away before anyone asked, "Uh... who are you?"

Who and what will you acknowledge today?

"Motivation is simple. You eliminate those who are not motivated." »Lou Holtz



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