

# Have the Phillies learned from Connie Mack?

Connie Mack, Philadelphia's paragon of baseball virtue, understood that there are no shortcuts to success.

"There are many," he wrote in 1912 as he was building the first of two championship dynasties, "who think that an organization with plenty of money to spend in salaries and a firm knowledge of the game can easily construct a winning baseball machine out of nine willing athletes and a large payroll. In fact, success takes time and comes because of teamwork and because the players love the game more than anything else."

Eighty years later, in an age of mad-cap free agency when mediocre players demand and receive multimillion-dollar contracts, when profits and egos mean more than the game itself, the Philadelphia Phillies are making an earnest effort to apply Mr. Mack's wisdom.

While the average major leaguer will make \$1.1 million this year, the average Phillie will collect \$800,000 and over half of them will make \$260,000 or less. That would make the Phillies one of the lowest-salaried teams in the majors. And though they may not have the big-money players — that superstar power hitter or pitching ace — to carry them, they do have a *team* full of young talent with a strong desire to win.

Players such as Len Dykstra, John Kruk and Mitch Williams have cultivated a team spirit based on a single-minded passion about baseball. Their examples have provided a young, inexperienced Phillies team with the type of leadership they will need to be successful — something reminiscent of the attitude Pete Rose inspired among another young group of Phillies over a decade ago.

Since their glory years ended in 1984, only one Phillies team has finished a season above .500 and, thus far, the current season promises to be no exception. But I, for one, have no problem with that because for the first time in years the Phillies organization has displayed some patience, sound judgment and integrity in building a young team with the desire to win instead of going out and attempting to "buy" one.

Perhaps the Phillies have learned that success is a journey, *not* a destination. Connie Mack would be proud.

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