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Defining Moments

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During the course of a player's career and the course of a season for a team, there will be an event, a moment that will define that player or team. As a matter of fact, most of us experience this time in our life. During this period, we realize what we want to do in life and what kind of person we want to become. I call these moments defining moments.

For individual players and teams, defining moments tell them what type of players and teams they are. Both players and teams have two defining moments; realization and confirmation. The first moment helps them realize their abilities and desires. The second moment confirms who and what they have become. That moment can be an at bat, a pitch, a series or a season. It is these moments when a player realizes that he or she has the talent and desire to perform at the highest level. It is also during these moments that a player gets confirmation or proof that he or she belongs and have achieved what they realized they were capable of doing.

For a team, these moments help them to realize that it has the players to compete with the elite teams in their league and confirmation when your team has competed and defeated those elite teams. Confirmation takes more than performing, it also involves handling adversity. Players who are unhappy with playing time, contracts and other distractions can influence the performance of a team.

I've been asked on many occasions, "when did you know you wanted to or could be a professional baseball player?" I did not know I wanted or could be a professional ball player until I was drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1976 after two years of college. Although I chose to continue college, it was at that moment when I realized that being a professional baseball player in the major league was something I had the talent for and wanted to become. It wasn't until 1982 that I received confirmation of not only belonging in the major league, but also what kind of player I would have to be. It was a regular game against the St. Louis Cardinals when I scored from second base on an infield out that was my defining moment. I did it twice that very week.

As for the team, it usually takes a series or even a season. After the '85 season, we knew we were going to be different. During the spring of '86 the mood and personalities of the players suggested that we had grown, developed and arrived ready for the challenge. We believed that we were ready to take on the rival St. Louis Cardinals. Early in the season we received confirmation by defeating this elite team with an elite manager named Whitey Herzog (The White Rat) at home and in Busch Stadium- a very difficult place to win. Because of this series, we knew we were the team to beat.

Defining moments, moments of realization give you hope goals and the desire to dream. Defining moments, moments of confirmation give you confidence and the seal of accomplishment.

-Mookie Wilson