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A chat between A's Beane, Cubs' Epstein

Mychael Urban, csn.com, 10/13/2011

It's not exactly Nelson DeMille's "Charm School" or David Baldacci's "First Family," but baseball fiction can be fun, too.

With that in mind, here's how a conversation between new Cubs general manager Theo Epstein, who recently left the Red Sox for Wrigley Field, and A's GM Billy Beane, who turned down a job offer from Boston before Epstein got the job, might go down today:

Beane: Theo, Billy here. Who's the best-looking GM in baseball?

Epstein: Wow, man. You didn't really say that, did you? I read it in "Moneyball," but I gotta tell you, it was a little unsettling.

Beane: I didn't know the Green Monster was about envy.

Epstein: Is there a Grey Monster in Oakland?

Beane: Huh?

Epstein: Never mind. Are there any "Just For Men" ads on your outfield wall?

Beane: Very funny. You get your learner's permit yet, young man? And how long until you can booze it up with your pitchers in the clubhouse?

Epstein: Touche.

Beane: Anyway, I was just calling to offer my congrats on the new gig.

Epstein: Thanks. I was just cleaning out my office. Want me to leave the stapler? It's got a 2004 World Series champs logo on it, but it's pretty sweet.

Beane: Huh?

Epstein: You're taking my place, aren't you? I figured I'd leave some supplies behind. I know you're a bottled-water guy, but I also have some shot glasses from the 2007 World Series that has "Idiots" engraved into the side. Johnny Damon gave 'em to me. Want those, too?

Beane: Whoa, hot shot. What makes you think I'm coming to Boston?

Epstein: I just assumed it was a given. You turned it down in the first place -- thanks for that, by the way -- so you could be close to your daughter, right? Isn't she in college now?

Beane: Yeah, but that's not the *only* reason I backed out.

Epstein: So you're telling me you *knew* you were going to get to hang out with Brad Pitt way back when?

Beane: Actually, I was more into meeting Angelina, truth be told.

Epstein: I heard she didn't even show at the premier in Oakland. Sucks to be you.

Beane: Not exactly. You know I own a piece of the team now, right?

Epstein: I do. But isn't owning a piece of the A's a little bit like being an Enron shareholder right before the funky stuff hit the fan?

Beane: You know what, for a guy about to take over a team that hasn't won a damn thing since dinosaurs roamed the earth, you sure are in a good mood.

Epstein: Why wouldn't I be? I ended one curse and cemented myself as a legend in one of the best baseball markets in the country. I pull the same thing off here and I'm a lock for the Hall of Fame. It's not like we don't have the resources to pull it off in Chicago. And what's with the dinosaurs crack? Is that a shot at Harry Caray?

Beane: No. Sorry. I guess I'm just a little on edge these days. We're expecting Uncle Bud's blue-ribbon panel to give us an answer on the stadium thing any day now.

Epstein: You are? I thought you were supposed to be a genius.

Beane: Keep Nelson Cruz out of this.

Epstein: Huh?

Beane: Never mind.

Epstein: Dude, if you're waiting for that panel to make a decision, you might want to pack a lunch. Or build a nuclear-bomb shelter. It's been almost three years. You keep waiting and you're going to miss out on some plum jobs. Like the one I'm leaving.

Beane: Not so sure that's a plum job anymore, Theo. Besides, I doubt that Boston's owners would be too keen on coming after me and potentially being turned down again.

Epstein: Why would you turn them down, though? You've never been able to be a *real* GM. I've been shopping at baseball's Bloomingdale's since I got to Boston, and you're hanging out at the Emeryville K-Mart, looking for blue-light specials.

Beane: I like the challenge, though.

Epstein: I'm starting to think you like not having high expectations.

Beane: Not true. If we get a new stadium in San Jose, the expectations will be raised considerably. We'll have resources. We'll get to keep our own free agents.

Epstein: You'll also have to start rebuilding as soon as you get the green light, and then you won't be able to booze it up with your pitchers in the clubhouse, either. None of them will be old enough!

Beane: We have a dry clubhouse, Theo.

Epstein: That might be part of the problem. What about the Angels?

Beane: What about 'em?

Epstein: They need a new GM, too. You're a SoCal guy. They've got coin. That has to be tempting. Or is Mike Scioscia too strong-willed for you?

Beane: The Angels are in our division, and who says I don't like strong-willed managers.

Epstein: Bob Geren told me. Regardless, I heard your owner said he won't stand in your way if you want to explore other opportunities.

Beane: Don't believe everything you read.

Epstein: Oh, I don't. Like I said, I've already read "Moneyball."

Beane: Success has gone to your head, punk. Good-bye.

Epstein: Good luck, Billy. I'll leave the Legal Seafoods gift card in the top drawer of my desk, just in case. Big Papi *loves* their chowder!

Mahtook drives in two in Surprise victory

Rays first-rounder goes 2-for-4, increases RBI total to five

By David Heck / Special to MLB.com

Mikie Mahtook is playing baseball for the first time since his college season ended in May. On Thursday, he looked anything but rusty.

The Rays prospect went 2-for-4 with two RBIs for the Surprise Saguaros as they defeated the Phoenix Desert Dogs, 6-2.

"My approach going in was to stay middle and get a good part of the bat on the ball," Mahtook said. "Fortunately, I was able to get some good pitches."

After hitting .383 with 14 homers and 29 steals in 56 games during his junior season for Louisiana State University, Mahtook was selected with the 31st overall pick in the June Draft. In five AFL games, the 21-year-old outfielder is batting .263 (5-for-19) with a steal and five RBIs.

"It feels really good," Mahtook said. "It's been about four months since the college season ended, and I didn't play in the summer. Being back in a uniform, back with a team feels great. The AFL is a great league, and I'm honored to be chosen as a guy to play here."

Marlins outfielder Kevin Mattison also enjoyed a two-hit game for Surprise, tripling and scoring twice out of the leadoff spot.

Phoenix's two runs were driven in by a pair of Reds prospects. Brodie Greene homered to begin the fifth and Cody Puckett followed with an RBI single five batters later.

Starter Nathan Adcock (Royals) earned the win for the Saguaros, striking out seven over three scoreless innings.

His opponent, David Phelps (Yankees), took the loss after surrendering three runs on four hits over three frames.

Overall, Mahtook's goal for the fall is just to get used to playing baseball regularly again.

"I haven't played in a while, so I'm just getting as many at-bats as possible and getting acclimated with pro ball life," he said. "Obviously, I want to work on every aspect of the pro game."

Though he comes with the first-rounder label, Mahtook said he does not feel additional pressure on the field.

"Not at all," he said. "Being a first-round pick has that status, but it's not something that puts pressure on me. Baseball has been a game I've played my whole life -- the game is fun."