

Title:

Meeting Mickey Mantle - His Idol

Word Count:

406

Summary:

Being on the same field with your hero was great. Sitting down with him and getting to know him was better.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Meeting Mickey Mantle would be a dream comes true. A dream realized for Dan on his 38th birthday, when his wife honored him with a week long stay at the Yankee Fantasy Camp in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. For a Yankee fan could it get any better? For a Mickey Mantle fan there was nothing better.

Dan played with some of the Yankee legends like Bobby Murcer, Mickey Rivers, Ron Guidry, Moose Skowron and Catfish Hunter. Rubbing elbows with some all time New York Yankees had Dan bubbling with joy. The games were great and being on the same field with some of the players he had watched on TV or at Yankee Stadium was mesmerizing.

What made the week particularly special was the friendship he nurtured with his childhood hero. As a kid Dan thought of playing in the same outfield as his hero. The Mick was in center and Dan and his father Al played left and right field respectfully.

Mantle, Markim and Markim was the way Dan envisioned it.

The Mick took a likening to Dan. He even gave Dan a nickname - "Nails" for the scrappy, Lenny Dykstra-way that Dan played. While Mickey didn't play in these games, he did spend a lot of time with all the campers. Dan took this time to get to know Mickey. He loved his down to earth quality. He loved his honesty. He loved being around him.

"Getting to know Mickey Mantle was as much fun as playing with the pros," Dan told me later.

In one of the games that Mickey was umpiring, Dan strolled to the plate with the

bases loaded. His big chance was here and he didn't miss the opportunity as he walloped a long double into the gap. He hit a rope, and as he glided into second base Mickey yelled to him, "You hit the sh*^ out of that ball, Nails!"

This was like a call from God. Hearing his idol tell him how well he hit the ball was more fulfilling than Dan could ever have imagined. What could be better than meeting and then hanging out with Mickey Mantle? How about being recognized as a ballplayer by your childhood hero?

It doesn't get any better than that.

This content of the story was contributed by Dan Markim. A long time Yankee fan.

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