

## **Red Sox and Yankees Sign No Player Left Behind Act!**

by Linda Massucci

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A few months ago, I found myself at a dinner party trying to explain the No Child Left Behind Act. The guests ranged from accountants to nurses to stay-at-home moms. As I started my explanation, all in attendance started to get the same dazed look. I quickly realized the possible reason so many parents do not place greater emphasis on trying to reform the No Child Left Behind Act. The lack of a clear, parent-friendly explanation is inhibiting a unification of parents and teachers for a much needed reform of the act. So, how does an educational consultant answer the question- what is the No Child Left Behind Act? The following is my attempt to answer that question with a bit of the following: humor, America's favorite past-time, and the true components of the NCLB act- no matter how ridiculous they may sound.

According to the Associated Press, Henry (owner of the Boston Red Sox) and Steinbrenner (owner of the New York Yankees) have agreed to pilot a training program. This training program will guarantee a World Series Championship title by 2014. The following is a transcript of the press conference conducted earlier this morning.

Press: Steinbrenner, what's the real reason behind this new training program you and the Red Sox are signing up for?

Steinbrenner: the No Player Left Behind program is the turning point for superior baseball for all. Our players will all display sheer perfection by 2014....and that's something our paying fans deserve.

Henry: We can't expect people to pay good money and not get perfection. How can we ask our fans to support us if we can't guarantee 100% perfection at every game.

Press: So, you can guarantee all your players will display perfection-

Steinbrenner: Absolutely! Every player will be proficient at every position in baseball or they won't play at all.

Henry: Of course, during the next few years we will offer some special training and hire some consultants, but if no improvement is made, those services will be taken away.

Press: So, how will improvements continue if the services are taken away?

Henry: It's the player's responsibility to make improvements and the consultant's job to motivate them! We will not continue to pay for services from people if they can't do their job.

Steinbrenner: Our players are expected to perform the best and set the standard for all future baseball teams who enter the No Player Left Behind program. Once they see our players get the job done- there will be no excuse for every other player to master the program.

Press: What about the guys like Mirabelli?

Henry: Mirabelli is a great catcher, but he can't hit. I've spoken to Mirabelli and he knows he must improve his batting average to reach the mark of excellence by 2014.

Press: And that mark would be?

Henry: .400 is the goal for all our players.

Press: But that hasn't been accomplished since Ted Williams!

Steinbrenner: And that shows us we have been too easy on our players these past years. We've had no ramifications for players or coaches who don't produce excellence.

Press: So this program includes the coaches too?

Steinbrenner: Absolutely! If coaches can't produce quality players, then we will find a coach who can. The coaches have been informed of their tasks and what needs to be accomplished.

Press: How can you expect every player to master every position on the baseball field?

Henry: We have received money for the best equipment and continue to receive support from the best consultants and trainers. Every player is receiving a highly qualified individual to teach them all the ingredients that make-up a successful baseball player.

Press: But some players will never be great hitters?

Steinbrenner: I hear your frustration buddy, but how can we call these men baseball players and give them a uniform if they haven't mastered all the aspects of baseball?

Press: What has Donald Fehr said about this?

Henry: There is not much the player's union president can do. We make the rules and we can show how the sport of baseball will be improved in the future. People don't want to see average players playing America's favorite past time. Heck, how can these players complain they are over-stressed- they don't even work year-round! People want perfection...they want to get their money's worth!

Steinbrenner: Magadan and Long are going to have to step-up as hitting coaches and get their teammates in quality condition. They know their jobs are at stake and they will give their all to the game.

Press: So, you would fire Magadan and Long if excellence weren't achieved by 2014?

Steinbrenner: It's a new game folks, but our players are in better condition than those players of yesterday. We have the right to expect more from them.

Press: What about the age-old saying that there is no I in TEAM?

Henry: There still is no I in TEAM. However, now all players can rely on any player to get the job done...no matter what that job may be!

Press: It seems to me if every team masters the No Player Left Behind program, they will all win the World Series in years to come?

Steinbrenner: Yes! Every team in baseball will be a winner. The talent on one team will be equal to the talent on another. Some teams may have to work a little harder, because of field conditions in their area, but all results will be equal.

Press: What if a team doesn't master the No Player Left Behind program by 2014?

Henry: The team may continue to practice on their own, but the players will see a decrease in pay... also, equipment and qualified staffing will be reduced until their baseball proficiency improves.

Press: Does that make sense to you?

Steinbrenner: I don't hear our fans complaining. I have heard for years how easy it is to be a baseball player and make a lot of money for playing all day. I believe if we

can show the people a team of baseball players who are fine-tuned athletes, then we can prove as owners-managers-coaches that we are doing our job.

Press: And the players passion for the game? The friendships formed through teamwork? The process of learning that one person isn't good at everything, but together we can overcome all odds? The importance of realizing it's our differences that create a fruitful society, not our likenesses? That won't be diminished?

Henry: Hey, let's keep in mind this is baseball. These are grown men signing a contract to accept the requirements of being part of the baseball league.

Steinbrenner: Yeah- it's not like we are expecting perfection from an eight year old who still sleeps with a night-light!

*Linda Massucci writes monthly educational articles for the Putnam Villager and many other town newspapers. If you would like to view other articles she has written, please visit her website at [www.landmeducationalconsultants.com](http://www.landmeducationalconsultants.com)*

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