

Pass It On®...

The Baseball Player you've Never Heard of is the Player we Should All Aspire to be.

David Ross played for three MLB teams, winning two World Series, hitting a home run to cinch the championship for the improbable Cubs, and solidifying his place in sports history as a great teammate.

Many of us dream of being the hero in a baseball game. Bottom of the ninth, bases loaded, the world championship on the line. The pitch. The swing. The hit ... and it's gone!

What makes dreams so exceptional and wonderful is that they rarely happen the way we envision them playing out. David Ross grew up in a baseball family. When he played for Auburn University, his team appeared in the College World Series. The Dodgers drafted him before his senior season, but when he made his debut as a pinch hitter, he struck out. He did hit a dinger later in the year in a blowout win over the Diamondbacks, but no one paid much attention. As a catcher, Ross got very few looks. There was a glut of catchers in the league, and Ross just didn't have many chances.

For 13 of his 15 years in the league, he was a backup. In that short window when he was a starter, he got cut from the team for being a bad teammate. He decided right then that he was never going to let anyone call him a bad teammate again. He got a second chance in Atlanta as a backup catcher.

The year in Atlanta started differently for Ross. He positioned a whiteboard in the locker room and asked everybody who passed by, "Give me three words to describe the best teammate you ever had." Then he built a list for himself of the habits it would take to become a great teammate. For the next four years, he worked at it, telling himself every morning, "I will be those things today."

He got traded to Boston and won a World Series. Then he got traded to Chicago, where, in the last game of his professional career, at his last at-bat, he hit a home run, and the Cubs won the World Series. It was the first time the Cubs had won the World Series in 108 years.

Of course, there are a lot of emotions in that thrilling situation. When David Ross, the hero of the moment, was being interviewed on TV, in the middle of the conversation, his teammates crashed the interview and lifted him onto their shoulders. Not because he is a great player, but because he makes others better.

"It's rewarding riding into the sunset," Ross said. "What better way to go? My teammates carried me off the field — it doesn't get any better than that. Now it's time to be a dad. To be as successful at that as I was at baseball would be nice."

In Everything You Do, Be A Great Teammate...PassItOn.com

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