

LOCAL

Bucky Dent

Baseball great and man of faith

By Karen Granger
Good News

For nearly four decades, baseball has been the name of the game for South Florida resident and baseball great Bucky Dent. The three-time American League All-Star was named Most Valuable Player in the 1978 World Series as the New York Yankees won their second-straight championship.

After 37 years as a full-time player and coach in the major leagues, Dent took the last two years off to be at home with his two youngest children as they completed their last years of high school.

"I realized they weren't going to be home much longer. I felt the Good Lord leading me to be with them as they complete high school and develop their careers," he says.

That decision turned out to be a home run for Dent.

Dent and Larry Hoskin, his teaching and coaching partner for more than three decades, now focus on training and mentoring students at the renowned Bucky Dent Baseball School in Delray Beach. The school hosts winter and summer programs for students 5 years old and older.

"We have father-son weekends," Dent says. "Set in a camp-like setting, they provide a fun bonding time for fathers and sons."

Sue Trombino of Boca Raton says her son Michael walked around with a bat-in-hand as a 3-year-old. She's happy that Dent's school played a major role in their family life.

"I think the world of Bucky Dent and his family," Trombino says. "My son was practically raised there, worked there and is now playing baseball for Catawba College in North Carolina."

"Bucky is awesome," she says. "He's genuinely kind to everyone, and his family has become very special in our lives."

The discipline of the game

The school, which was recently featured on Good Morning America, is well known for teaching discipline in a program they call "Manners of the Game."

"The kids are taught to carry their own bat bags. The parents don't carry their things," Dent says.

He advises the students with great conviction: "We stay in the dug-out when we're not on the field. We run on and off the field from the dugout. We wear our uniforms correctly, and the baseball hat is always worn facing front, not to the side or back."

The baseball legend is known for bringing in other sports legends and major league players each season so the youngsters can see first hand what can happen as a result of hard work and discipline.

"This year we're bringing in Dan Uggla of the Florida Marlins," Dent says.

Uggla was actually a student of the Bucky Dent Baseball School when he was a 13-year-old.

Michele Maresca of Boynton Beach sent her son Michael to the school as a youngster.

"The kids get wonderful instruction," she says. "It's a great thing for the kids to interact and learn camaraderie with older kids and meet the featured guests from the big leagues."

"Our son learned respect for the game, and the kids are taught to be the best they can be," Maresca adds.

A family of athletes

Dent's own twins just graduated from a Palm Beach County High School and will be heading off to college on athletic scholarships. His son Cody will play baseball for the University of Florida, while his twin sister Caitlin will play softball at North Carolina State University.

Dent and his wife of more than 30 years, Marianne, also have two older children — one is a firefighter in Margate and the



THERE'S NO CRYING IN BASEBALL: Boys who learn the rules of the game at Bucky Dent Baseball School in Delray beach also learn manners and discipline. The former New York Yankee MVP now focuses on his family, his faith and the school.

other is a teacher at St. Andrews School.

Dent says being at home with his wife and children has given them great quality time.

"The Good Lord blessed us financially so that we were able to do it that way. I traveled a lot in my career," he reflects. "It was difficult at times to be so far from the family."

Dent's family life, as well as his faith, has played a tremendous part in their lives.

"The Good Lord has been a big part of our family life. My children went to Spanish River Christian School and received a solid Christian foundation," he says.

This year, the Dents will have grandchildren starting at the school.

The empty dugout

When asked what life will be like after the twins are away at college, Bucky exclaims, "Shock!"

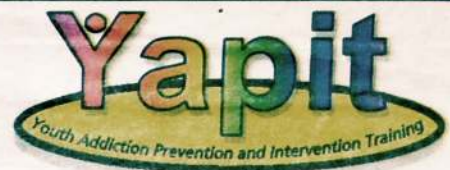
"I keep telling my wife we should just buy a motor home and drive between campuses visiting the kids at college," he says.

Like most parents going through empty-nest syndrome, Dent is not looking forward to the twins being away at school.

Yet, with a thriving baseball

school, a corporate speaking schedule and five active grandchildren, he won't be hanging up his cleats just yet.

For more information, visit BuckyDentBaseballSchool.com.



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