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Q&A With Mark Teixeira: Baseball, the Yankees and More



Article by: [Kyle Stack](#) | December 7, 2011



Mark Teixeira is known as one of the good guys in Major League Baseball. That notion was reinforced last week when the New York Yankees first baseman appeared at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City to accept an award as Honorable Sportsman of the Year from the March of Dimes, an organization dedicated to improving the health of infants.

Teixeira held court with a group of reporters to discuss this off-season and the upcoming 2012 MLB season. (STACK Media's questions are bolded.)

Q: What do you think of the Red Sox hiring Bobby Valentine?

Mark Teixeira: I think it's great. I was joking around on Twitter and Facebook that I don't know if he's going to let me hit at his facility any more in Stamford. I've been hitting there for two years at Bobby V's academy. He's there a lot; he's a very busy man, obviously, but we'll go and talk about hitting and talk about baseball. [Smiles] I don't know if those conversations are going to be put to a minimum now. [Laughs]

Q: What do you think having that personality is going to do for the [Yankees-Red Sox] rivalry?

MT: I think it's great. This rivalry is great for baseball. I've said it a million times. It's great for both cities, but baseball, as a whole, it seems like everyone stops just to watch those 18 games. And Bobby Valentine is a great manager. He's a funny guy; he has a great personality. So, I think the interviews either before or after games are going to be a little bit more interesting.

STACK: As a switch hitter, if you have a young athlete—say, 14 years old—who hits from one side of the plate and wants to transition to being a switch, what advice do you have for him on making that move?

MT: Yeah, I always tell young kids to make sure to master one side first, because it's very difficult being a switch hitter. As a right-handed hitter, I felt like I had it down pretty well, and then I started working on the left hand. And stick to it; don't give up. It's not going to be easy.

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Q: When did you get started on cagework and other stuff?

MT: All that stuff starts January 1. Baseball-specific starts then. I've been running and lifting weights for a couple weeks now. I really start focusing on the other things in another month.

Q: You talked about last off-season, how you tweaked things to try to get off to a faster start. Are you going to mirror what you did last off-season, or tweak it again?

MT: I'm going to do the same things but focus more on left-handed and using the whole field. I look at everything at the end of the season; I go through everything. I need to hit more singles left-handed. That's the fact of the matter. Right-handed, I felt like I had a great year. Power-wise, I felt like I had a great year. But my average was very disappointing. Being able to hit the ball the other way a little bit more, use the other field, to take the shift away, is really going to help me out.

Q: Are you expecting that you might be hitting fifth [in the Yankees lineup] this year?

MT: It doesn't really matter to me. I can hit anywhere in the lineup. I'm going to drive in my runs, hit my home runs. We have such a great lineup that it doesn't matter where I am.

Q: Are you any lighter?

MT: I am.

Q: How much lighter?

MT: About 10 pounds and I feel really, really good. I'm eating a lot healthier. I've always eaten pretty healthy but ... I've been able to run so much more these past couple years just being in better shape and getting over some nagging injuries. Being able to move more and eat better really helps.

STACK: Are your diet and fitness geared for any specific purpose on the field?

MT: No, just overall ... Our strength coach is great—Dana Cavalea. He says that for every year older you get, you should drop a pound or two. [As you age], you don't want to be gaining weight. You don't want to be fighting against yourself. You want to be losing weight and getting stronger.

Q: What do you think of the wild card?

MT: We'll see. As a Yankee, we want to win the division every single year. If you are the Wild Card, it's a big disadvantage. You know, the St. Louis Cardinals were the Wild Card team this year; they won the whole World Series. They could've been out in one game; I think they lost their first game of the playoffs. So, it's going to be tough on the Wild Card teams.

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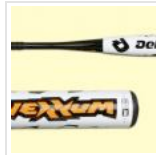
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