

He Gave Back the Money!

As the world waits to hear where Carmelo Anthony will sign or where LeBron may go after making his second DECISION, let's not lose the lesson from Lyman Bostock.

If you're currently in high school or below, chances are you've never heard the name. Bostock broke into the Major Leagues with the Minnesota Twins in 1976. A terrific center fielder, he finished fourth in the American League batting race during his rookie year. The following year, he finished second behind Rod Carew and soon became a big-money free agent at a time when baseball did not have big-money free agency.

In 1978, Gene Autry, the California Angels owner was able to lure Bostock back to his hometown with a five year \$2.25 million dollar contract.

In April of 1978, perhaps feeling the burden of expectations, Bostock was hitting just .178.

You may want to grab a chair when I share what happened next..

Bostock refused to accept his paycheck for the month of April! That's right he gave back his paycheck!

When Autry would not take the money back, Bostock donated \$36,000 - his April salary to charity, including his church, Vermont Square Methodist in South Central Los Angeles, which ran recovery programs for drug and alcohol addicts.

"I just can't make that kind of money and not produce," he said. "I don't feel that I've done enough for this month." (Fifth and Jackson)

At a time when Reggie Jackson had captured national headlines for being the 'Straw that Stirs the Drink,' Bostock was arguing with his owner not to pay him.

While I do not fault any professional athlete for trying to make as much money as they can in a short window of time that they have to do it - approximately ages 22-40, try to imagine just for a moment Brian McCann knocking on Hal Steinbrenner's door and offering last April's salary back to Yankee ownership. Now, imagine Steinbrenner refusing his offer.

The lesson in recalling Bostock, who was tragically shot and killed just after that '78 season, has less to do with money and more to do with pride. As my friend and mentor Justin Dehmer, of 1 Pitch Warrior tweeted not so long ago, PRIDE is **Personal Responsibility In Daily Excellence**.

Whatever endeavor you are currently involved in, whether it be in business, school, sports, or in life, are you making your best effort to prove your worth?

In my book *Our Time- A High School Baseball Coach's Journey*, I wrote about concerns I had about cultural distractions such as Prom weekend and how that may distract our student-athletes from doing their best. Sometimes in today's day and age it is difficult to find role models in professional sports who are willing to make an unwavering commitment to be the best they can be. Below is an example of one I recently came across shared by TCU baseball coach Jim Schlossnagle:

When Texans Defensive Lineman J.J Watt was asked if it bothered him that his teammates made fun of him because he was "too busy to have a personal life", this is how Watt responded.

"I have a limited amount of time to build a career out of football and be the best that I can be at this job. When this job (football) is over, I have the rest of my life to do what I want to do with my time."

"Right now my job is to watch film, workout, and treat my body right. When I get done with football, then I can relax and drink as many beers as I want and hang out and be a regular guy. **Right now, I am a football player and I will sacrifice whatever is necessary to be the best.**"

J.J Watt – Houston Texans

As Schlossnagle wrote on Twitter, *"EVERY player who truly wants to be great do this! Most talk the talk but have zero desire to be abnormal"*

J.J Watt makes a lot of money. It seems to me he is worth it ..

Fifth and Jackson- <http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/eticket/story?page=bostock>