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I hate the Boston Red Sox. Typically that means I hate everybody that has ever worn the Red Sox uniform. Fortunately for me, I rarely have to make that value judgement because I rarely get to meet these guys. Recently, I had the chance to meet one of these guys who came up with the Red Sox in 2008 when I admittedly was not a fan and has since alternated in his career between the Houston Astros and the Oakland A's where he is currently the second baseman.

Jed Lowrie turned out to be a wonderful guy. Certainly not worthy of any (inaudible) of my part. We had a great conversation covering his path to the big leagues, growing up in Oregon, going to Stanford, the fact that he is a Foreign Service spouse which I think is awesome and makes him unique in Major League Baseball, if not the entirety of the professional sports landscape. We talked about his travels as a Department of State sports envoy when he went to Colombia with his wife who served as a translator. We finally wrapped things up talking about the role of sports in government.

Jed is a leader in the Major League Baseball Players Association which is the big leaguer's union. He had some really cool inputs on that and the role of sports in government. I'm really proud of this interview. It was a great conversation and with that I'll turn things over to Jed Lowrie.

Jed: Jed Lowrie. Currently I play for the Oakland Athletics. Second base this year.

Morgan: Was that a tough transition. Historically you've played all around the infield. What's it like getting ready to play in one position full time?

Jed: I played the majority of my career at shortstop. I played a fair amount at third base and a little bit at second base. It's been a little adjustment. I played second base in college, but the speed of the game in the major leagues is not like anything that you would see in college. Major league baseball is fast as the game will get. It's still a little bit of a work in progress. The foot work and reads are different off the bat. I still feel comfortable for the most part.

Morgan: When you got traded in November and you knew you were coming over here, did you start working on that right away?

Jed: I don't think they were sure yet when I talked to them. I did my normal off season routine. When I got to spring training that is when we started focusing more on second base.

Morgan: I read a real interesting article about you. When you are batting lefty against the shift, that is something you've been focusing on early on in this season and you've found a lot of success going the other way with the ball, at least in the early going. How, at this level, do you change your approach after

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your entire life you've been so successful on the baseball field? How do you come into a season and say, hey I want to tweak this and work on this?

Jed: I think this game is a game of constant adjustment. You have to adjust to the way that guys are pitching you, the way the defenses are playing you. Three quarters of the year in 2014, I really struggled with fighting the shift. There is a new stat with batting average with balls in play. Up until that last month, month and a half of the season in 2014, my batting average with balls in play wasn't even up to my career numbers let alone the league average. It carried over into 2015. I think I had a really low batting average with balls in play which you can look at as a couple of different things. Either you are having really bad luck or they are playing you in the spots they should be playing you. After 2 years of fighting it, I told myself, let's take what they give you. In those terms, when they shift you as far as the shifts have gone, you have to work on hitting balls the other way.

Morgan: When you say batting average with balls in play, I go back to looking at the backs of baseball cards growing up. You are a little bit younger than I am, but we grew up the same generation where it was home runs, RBIs, batting average. You play for the Oakland A's so anybody that has seen Moneyball knows that this organization, your current GM, was one of the forerunners in moving more towards a statistical based approach. One that's been adopted by the rest of the clubs. When did you become cognizant of playing the odds when you were in the field and using statistics as a way to enhance your approach?

Jed: It's one of those things that you don't think about when you're in the box. It's not like I'm in box thinking, I've been practicing this all year and I'm going to beat this shift right now. You are looking for a pitch you can handle. If I've been practicing hitting the ball the other way to beat the shift, when I get that pitch, you're prepared to do that in the game. I look at it more as a trailing statistic. I've always believed in baseball that as a player I define my numbers, my numbers don't define me. You can use certain numbers, certain indicators to predict, but all of what you see statistically is what has happened in the past. You use that to try to make adjustments moving forward.

Morgan: You're setting me up really well here. One of the reasons why I'm sitting here right now is to talk about the values of the game. How they've impacted you as a man, an American citizen, a father, and husband. How those games transcend what happens between the lines in Oakland, the Bronx, or San Pedro de Macoris in the Dominican Republic. One of the first values that I heard you talk about is calling this a game of adjustment and adapting. You also mentioned that you got traded in November. How has being flexible helped you improve as a ballplayer and as a human being? For a normal guy, you don't get a call on Nov 15 saying that you have to move from Houston to Oakland and that's that.

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Jed: Yea, you are a commodity as a baseball player. If your current club decides that you don't fit on the roster for whatever reason you could be moved the next day wherever they can find a deal. I think you learn to live semi-nomadically in this life. You're always on your toes. It's very dynamic. I think it teaches you a lot. You don't really get into that type of lifestyle in very many professions. It is very dynamic.

Morgan: We'll get into this in a second, but one of professions that (inaudible) the lifestyle your wife used to be in. We'll talk about Milissa in a sec. The second value that struck me that you were talking about was your number is not defining in you and them being in the past. There are 2 tracks here. One is preparing and getting ready for a season knowing that you are graded on a daily basis by looking at the box scores, what it's like to live a life like that. Second, being able to brush off an 0 for 4 day or making an error in the field, how you take a mistake and use it as a learning experience instead of a soul crushing one.

Jed: That's a loaded question, but I think it's wise in baseball and probably in life in circumstances to have a short memory. A lot of people talk about that in baseball where you think about why you made the mistake, how you made the mistake, then you compartmentalize that and build on it. I think that's true with fielding and hitting in my profession where a guy strikes you out on a certain pitch or sequence then you can take that information and use it for your next at bat. I think that as you get older in your career, more experienced, you face the same guys over and over again. Those experiences and failures that you had prepare you for the moment. You have to give them their due diligence, the mistakes, because that is the only you get better, continue to grow as a player is to acknowledge them. You can't hide from them. At the same time you use those to better prepare yourself for the next situation.

Morgan: The adage is that if you fail 7 out 10 times in the majors you go to Cooperstown and the Hall of Fame. I make mistakes at work, but there aren't 35,000 fans in stands watching me.

Jed: It's a very public life. Everything you do is public especially with the emergence of sabermetrics. You can hide a lot in traditional statistics. Batting average is very to point out. You can have guys with very empty batting averages. They are hitting for a high average, but not doing a lot to help the team win. You can have a guy with a low average going a lot to help the team win. With these new advanced statistics there is not a whole lot of hiding. They have something at every ballpark now called the TrackMan where it's a Doppler radar and that is where you get all the exit velocities and route efficiencies. You can't hide from that. It is all seeing.

Morgan: It's almost like you need a degree from Stanford.

Jed: Not in political science though!

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Morgan: We'll get to your road to Palo Alto in a second here too. We talked about Billy Bean a little while ago. You were drafted by the Red Sox, correct? Were you drafted by Theo Epstein? You've worked for 2 of the most successful. Throw in Jeff Luhnow from the Houston Astros. You've worked with three of the guys. What Theo did in Boston alone in trying in the Hall of Fame and what it looks like the Cubs are up this year. Have you learned anything from any of those guys..just being around those guys?

Jed: Yea, when I was in Boston being a young guy it's not like a ton of interaction with Theo, but you could see the way that he went about this business. Obviously, very professional, knows the game and knows the numbers. As you alluded to earlier what he's building in Chicago right now, he knows how to build a winner. There is a lot of successes that have come from Theo.

Morgan: Talking about success, you grew up Salem, Oregon. Is that big baseball country? How did you find your way onto the diamond?

Jed: No, it is not, believe it or not. Not really a hotbed for baseball considering the summers are beautiful are there. The thing now thought is a lot of kids playing year-round. I always found a way to practice even if the weather was bad outside. I ended up taking private lessons from a guy who was in Woodburn at the time. He had an indoor cage. I would be inside, but I'd be practicing. I practiced or played baseball year-round. I played other sports as well. I played basketball all the way through my senior year in high school.

Morgan: Where did you go to high school?

Jed: North Salem High School, the Vikings. I made some of the best friends of my life on the basketball team. I'm really happy that I played all the way through my senior year. I thought about quitting basketball before my senior year to focus on baseball. I already signed early to go to Stanford, but I'm happy I played it all the way through and had other hobbies that were sport related.

Morgan: Stanford is a powerhouse in baseball. When you went there, there were 4 or 5 other big leaguers on the roster, Sam Fuld, Carlos Quentin, Mayberry..

Jed: Yea, Sam Fuld, Carlos Quentin and if you count guys that had a day of major league service there is Danny Putnam, Chris Carter, Donny Lucy. I know I'm missing other...did I say Ryan Garko? Ryan Garko was there my freshman year. There are quite a few guys that ended up getting some major league time.

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Morgan: How did they find you?

Jed: I worked with a speed and quickness coach. I believe he's still the high school coach down at a school called West Albany. It's been a while, but he was brought in by Stanford to do their warmups and speed and agility training and evaluations. Part of the deal of him going to do the camp was he got to bring 4 of us. I was one of the guys that he brought with him down there. I just made a good enough impression on the coaches and they saw something in me. I had the grades which are an important part. I certainly didn't go down there thinking that I was going to get the opportunity to go to Stanford. There were a lot of Ivy League schools there. I garnered a lot of attention from them. Dartmouth being one. Probably the most prevalent, Georgetown was there which I know is not Ivy League, but a good school.

Morgan: They think they are.

Jed: I won't get into that. I went down there, made a good impression and ended up getting in and got a partial scholarship which most collegiate baseball players are on. There aren't many full ride guys due to the limitations on the scholarships a team can have. That's how I ended up at Stanford.

Morgan: Baseball traditionally has been known as a real cerebral game. For all the LSUs, Florida States that are in the college world series every year, you see the Vanderbilts and Stanfords of the world too.

Jed: It is. There is a lot of moving pieces in baseball and I think the best analogy is a duck on the pond. You look at it on the surface and it looks calm, but underneath the water there is a lot of motion, movement. It can be the simplest game or it can very complex. There is an adage with smart guys in baseball--analysis paralysis. I've always prided myself in being smart enough to be stupid because you take in all this data, you do all this work, but then when you are in the box, in the moment you clear it all and react.

Morgan: That is one of the beautiful parts of the game. At Stanford you studied Poly Sci. What attracted you to that major? Were you always into International Affairs and looking overseas? How did that become an interest of yours?

Jed: In high school I finished Calculus as a junior in high school so I took some college class as a senior, but I didn't do much math my senior year. When I got to Stanford, I wanted to be a little more well-rounded and work on writing a little more. Poly Sci gave me that opportunity. As I went through, I didn't

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decide on Poly Sci until my Sophomore year. As I learned more about Stanford's different roads of study, I realized that they didn't have a business undergraduate degree. I've always been interested in business and still love numbers, but Poly Sci, at the time, seemed like the best way to make me well rounded which I take pride in.

Morgan: Among your extracurricular activities at Stanford you met a lovely young woman who also shared a passion for government and international affairs. That is one of the ways you and I met was through the Foreign Service. She became a US diplomat. Has that colored your world view at all? Being married to someone who was posted abroad in the service of her country?

Jed: Yea, totally. She somehow ended up in Toronto and Mexico City which..we'll call her a North American specialist. She was still worldwide available. I lived with her in off seasons in both Toronto and Mexico City.

Morgan: So you're a Foreign Service spouse!

Jed: I was. We weren't married until she was in Mexico City so I was just a boyfriend.

Morgan: Member of household.

Jed: Yea, member of household, exactly. We got engaged which still counts as member of household, but when she was in Mexico we were married at that point. That changed everything.

Morgan: When the State Department doubled down on Diamond diplomacy, baseball diamond diplomacy, they were looking for people that were good representatives of the values of the game and the United States. I know for a fact that you instantly became one of the most sought after folks to send out there. The Department sent you to Colombia.

Jed: We did..we took a trip to Colombia.

Morgan: Maybe you can talk a little bit about your time down there. Anything that you enjoyed about it, what you thought you got out of the experience, what the Colombians got out of the experience?

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Jed: It was a great trip. We did Bogota, Barranquilla, Cartagena...

Morgan: In a real compressed time frame too.

Jed: Very compressed. We had a couple days where Milissa and I could be tourists because neither one of us had been. We got to explore Bogota for a couple of days.

Morgan: She speaks like superior Spanish too.

Jed: That is what I hear. I was going to get into that. That is one part of the experience that I wish my Spanish was better. In Bogota she translated for me which was pretty cool. Such a great experience. We got work with some really interesting folks down there--the head of Little League. There was a guy who...I don't remember his exact title with Project Baseball, Project English Baseball in Spanish, but we worked with him. We were planning a trip to Nicaragua to do work with him as well and we've stayed in touch with him. Just a really great experience. The Bogota part was fascinating to me because its such a big city. I don't remember the exact number, but I think fewer than 5 baseball fields for a population that is multi-millions. The Ambassador at the time was very interested in trying to spread the game in Colombia even more. It's much more popular in Barranquilla and Cartagena on the coast. Bogota was awesome because you got to see kids from all over the city who probably wouldn't had the opportunity to play on the fields that they did if this program didn't happen.

Morgan: How many Americans do you think these kids have ever met in their life, right?

Jed: Yea. That is a good question. Getting the opportunity and a lot of their coaches were there as well so it was a great format. We did some stuff on the field, but I think the most interesting for me and hopefully the most informational and interesting to them was the hour or so we spent having a conversation. In Bogota, it went much longer. I think it was probably a couple of hours where the coaches and players were asking questions. I wish my Spanish was better, but being able to interact and hear what their questions and what they were interested in in the game makes me realize how international the game is and how its a universal language.

Morgan: You've played with guys from all over the planet throughout your career. We were just talking before the mics went on that the A's right now are necessarily the most international, but coming up on the Astros and Red Sox you played with a lot of international players. How do the dynamics inside the locker room work there? Are you able to all come together because of the common game or are there any obstacles you have to overcome?

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Jed: There are a few obstacles. Language being one. There are a few guys in the game, Spanish speakers and even the Japanese guys, who their English isn't conversational. For those circumstances its a little harder. Everybody has their clichés, even the guys who don't speak English well. For the guys who don't speak Spanish or Japanese well, you have these clichés. It's most little jabs. It's kind of the culture of baseball. It keeps it fun.

Morgan: When you go out for a mound visit and the infielders all come in...did you play with Uehara?

Jed: I never played with Uehara. I've played Daisuke.

Morgan: What would the manager or the pitching coach say?

Jed: I think both of those guys..maybe the translator didn't go out. A lot of the conversations are clichés.

Morgan: Like Bull Durham?

Jed: Yea..they are going out there to give the guy a break. They are not solving the worlds problems I can promise you that. You are given a guy..there is multiple situations, but it's usually about time. Let's take a deep breath. Let's lower your heart rate and get you back to where you need to be or we need to get a guy ready in the bullpen. Like I said, you usually have a few clichés in the language that you can throw around to have a good time together.

Morgan: From a fan's perspective..and it kills me to say this because I'm a Yankees fan. David Ortiz, I imagine, is an incredible leader in the clubhouse. The shining example was, or at least what it appeared, was after the Boston Marathon bombings. How he was able to bring the city together and they eventually won the World Series that year. I'm stuck by that it doesn't matter that he grew up in a small town in the DR. That he was able to come and embrace the game and rise to this level where is on the Mt Rushmore of Boston athletes. Is there anything you have to say about playing with a guy like that?

Jed: It was a privilege..it's probably the best way to say it. The guy, I know it's his last year, but he'll be missed in uniform. I can guarantee you that he'll be back in Boston a lot. He's got such a following there. A great ambassador of the game and does a lot to improve people's lives. He's such a big personality. He



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interacts with everybody. I haven't met anybody who didn't really enjoy their experience with him. I think that says a lot about the way he interacts with the world. He's a great ambassador for the game.

Morgan: Real nice dovetail there into sports and diplomacy. It's a great title and it's a true title, right? When you are an ambassador for the US you are selling our values abroad. When you are an Ambassador for the game, you are sharing with the city and local community. It's a lot more than just 27 up, 27 down out there.

Jed: At the end of the day, your career will be judged on the numbers you put up, but to soften those edges you have guys who are great personalities and go out of their way to use the platform they have to make people's lives better. I think those are the ones that are always going to be remembered even more fondly.

Morgan: Who's your favorite teammate that you've played with?

Jed: It would be hard to narrow it down to one. David is great. If I had to pick one guy, Dustin Pedroia is a guy that...he's five foot nothing and I would probably pick him, if I had to pick a guy to compete with to have on my side, you just know that he's going to give everything he's got. He's also a great great leader. He's one of the ultimate competitors in my estimation. There has been a lot, but if i had to narrow it down I would put him on top.

Morgan: Jumping around a little bit here, I mentioned a little while ago that you're a switch hitter. How did that come about? How did you learn that skill and how long before you started breaking it out in games? Is this something in Little League, high school?

Jed: I mentioned the private lessons before. It was one of those facilities that had the coin operated machines. I think I just finished a private lesson and got a couple of coins to take a few more swings with my dad. Just off the cuff, hey why don't you turn around and try hitting left handed. I thought it would be fun so ok, why not? I took a few swings and was like, ok that is kinda cool. Then all of a sudden..I don't know if it became an obsession, but I think it became a challenge. As I get older, that is something I look for, for myself. I'm always looking for a challenge. I think that is one of the great things about baseball in general is that...we were talking about failure, right? Seven out of ten times you fail, you're considered one of the best of all time. That doesn't exist in the real world so you have to embrace failure. That constant challenge is something that has always drawn me to the game of baseball. I started doing switch hitting during those lessons. I practiced for 2 years before I did it and I did it as a freshman in high school in a game for the first time.

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Morgan: What is your least favorite play out in the field? Defensively.

Jed: I don't know...that is a good question. Second base...

Morgan: Oh yea...that's right. Do you have different opinions for each position?

Jed: Yea, that's one of the misnomers about the infield too that every position is the same. Every position is different. If you have a guy who plays proficiently at all 3 or 4, it's a valuable guy. I couldn't really tell you what my least favorite would be. There are plays that are going to be more challenging depending on your skillset. For me, playing shortstop and there is a ball deep in the hole between short and third being able to plant, throw, and get a lot on it, but I think that's true for any shortstop.

Morgan: Do you jump in the air like Derek Jeter did?

Jed: I never jumped. I always caught and I was leaning backwards. I threw it while I was leaning backwards or I would get a throw and a spin at the same time.

Morgan: What made me think of that was that A-Rod notoriously hates pop-ups and there were a couple in the game. I should ask Jed.

Jed: Pop ups in the Coliseum in particular can be tough because of the wind.

Morgan: You have foul territory for days.

Jed: Yes, a lot of foul territory. You have to cover a lot of ground and the wind swirls there. Generally, it blows in from right to left, right field to left field, but sometimes it'll switch. It's a different than catching a pop up in Houston where you have a dome. It's a very controlled environment.

Morgan: 72 degrees.

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Jed: Exactly! Catching pop ups in Oakland is a lot different than Houston.

Morgan: Did you meet President George H.W. Bush?

Jed: I did. That was really cool.

Morgan: Did he throw out a first pitch?

Jed: He did...I think it was Game 3 or 4 of the ALDS last year against the Royals. He threw out the first pitch. The night before the PR guy came to me and said would you want to catch the first pitch tomorrow? I said, yea..who's throwing it? Originally it was going to be his wife and I guess he woke up that morning and decided that he wanted to do it. It was great. I got to interact, caught the pitch, and went out there and got to shake his hand. Thanked him and told him what an honor it was. Barbara was out there as well and got to say hello to her. Got to thank her. I wanted to ask for an autograph but I was going to. She told me, you should have him sign that ball. He signed it for me. It's now in a display at my home. I had a really nice piece with a ticket from the game and a picture of me catching the ball and a picture of the three of us on the infield with the ball signed.

Morgan: What was your hesitation with asking him to sign it?

Jed: Probably health. He was in a wheelchair when he threw the ball out.

Morgan: It wasn't like a pride thing.

Jed: It's the President of the United States. I've interacted with other foreign diplomats, but it's the President of the United States. I didn't know where the line was so I deferred until Barbara told me you should have him sign that for you.

Morgan: That is one of the coolest things. Do you keep memorabilia? What else do you have around the house?

Jed: I do! Right now, that is the only one up on the house, but I've got a ton of jerseys I have framed. The house that we're in right now there isn't a whole lot of space to put up jerseys. One day when we have a

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bigger house, we'll put up a lot of the framed jerseys. I've got some really cool ones, some personalized. Which to me is really cool. I've got a lot of Hall of Famers..Cal Ripken Jr personalized one to me. Ken Griffey Jr personalized one to me. Ken Griffey Jr is probably the one that is..just because he's one of my favorite players. He was my favorite player.

Morgan: I should say it's very interesting that those are the first two guys that you mentioned. In addition to being a MLB professional ball player, all three of you guys are US Department of State sport envoys.

Jed: Oh really? There you go! Good company, right? Those two and then I've got a few that I just bought from a dealer. I got a Sandy Koufax that is really cool. I got a Derek Jeter that is personalized that was pretty cool. I played against him for quite some time.

Morgan: I'm biased, but everyone loved Jeter, right?

Jed: Like David, I haven't met anyone who didn't enjoy their interactions with Derek.

Morgan: Just because of the way he carried himself? The way he played the game? Anything that stood out?

Jed: New York is a fishbowl. Particularly when you play for the Yankees. I've never played there, but from an outsiders perspective..I would put Boston in the same league as far as fishbowl is concerned when it comes to baseball. I have a similar experience with my time in Boston. Just the way he handled himself in the media and the success. Going back to how people are always going to judge your career. He's got Hall of Fame numbers. If Derek Jeter doesn't have Hall of Fame numbers all the other stuff falls to the wayside, but Derek Jeter has Hall of Fame numbers, he has World Series rings, he did it all.

Morgan: It's interesting with Boston too. When you guys are coming up through the farm system you hear about the Ryan Kalishes, the Jed Lowries, the Trot Nixons. Even when you guys are in Pawtucket the media machine is very powerful there.

Jed: I got called up and before they even made it official I went to buy a shirt and a guy asked me if we were going to get the game in that day because it was supposed to rain. They are well connected. They know what's going on in the organization for sure.

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Morgan: The last phase of the conversation is one of the things I'm studying is the interplay between sports and government. This being an Olympic year one of the big things we are facing going into the Rio game is worldwide doping. Throughout your professional career, going back to 2004-2005 as a minor leaguer, you were in the that next generation after the McGuire/Sosa guys. With performance enhancing drugs should the US government be involved? Is this something baseball should handle internally? I presume you are anti-PEDs. Maybe share some of your thoughts about baseball and that issue.

Jed: I think baseball has an interesting relationship with the US government because of the long standing anti-trust exemption. I don't think it's really my place to say, the government should be getting involved in baseball's business, but historically baseball has been given the leash to handle its own affairs. I think that baseball has done a really good job of implementing drug testing in a timely and well thought out manner where there aren't a whole lot of snap decisions made on that front. Some would probably say it didn't happen quick enough, but I think they did it in a timely fashion.

Morgan: If there were any delays its because there isn't a baseball czar. It's a collectively bargained issue and it needs to be something that involves the union. You are involved..are you the team rep for?

Jed: I'm not the team rep of Oakland, but I am involved.

Morgan: Maybe you can talk a little bit about the role of labor in baseball and why it's important that the player's association exists and the good that it brings the game.

Jed: You look at what the previous generations of baseball players have done to shape the game. To make sure that guys are compensated fairly for the work they put in. I have a lot to be thankful for for those guys who went on strike and lost days of service and pay. I think baseball has always had a great perspective. The union has a great perspective on teaching the next generation about what those guys did and why the minimum salary is what it is and why it continues to go this way and why you need to take care of the guys who sacrificed to make sure that you are in the position you are in now.

Morgan: It's interesting. I'm hearing when you are talking the word mentorship where it's not just about Jed, it's about the guys that are coming up, having their major league debuts.

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Jed: That is the way this game has always been. It would be hard for a major league team to be successful with nothing but rookies. You have to have some veteran presence that can calm nerves or help guys through situations. I think that rings true with bargaining. Just knowing how bargaining has evolved and be aware of where it's been so you know where it should go.

Morgan: Baseball in the 21st century...the game we were at today was pretty swift. It was 2.5 hours. Some of those Red Sox/Yankee games would go 4 hrs 10 minutes. Speeding up the game, do you think that is important? Is that something that the majors should focus on to keep it in a Twitter society to keep it relevant? How can the game breach this next generation?

Jed: I think it is important. It's going to be a balancing act to say the least. The one beautiful thing about baseball is that there isn't a clock. I guess now technically there is a clock in between innings, but I think that keeps everybody a little more on schedule. There isn't a pitching clock which they've played around with in the minor leagues in the Arizona fall league. At the major league level there is no clock. I think that's important, but at the same time you don't want dead time. The theatrics are great, but the action of the game is exciting enough without a ton of theatrics. I think the big thing will be trying to force more action. Walks and strike outs have become more and more prevalent. People like to see action so sometimes walks and strike outs can be a little boring. I get it.

Morgan: There was a new rule out about take out slides at second base. How do you feel about that?

Jed: I'm a big advocate. I was a part of the committee that helped draft our proposal from the unions perspective. Just like the home plate collision rules. I think it's made the game better. I think it's evolved from the first iteration of it, but I think the rules that are in place for the new slide rules are great. It doesn't force guys to be less aggressive. The idea behind is that it will limit the amount of slides that would potentially be injury causing. With some of the leeway that was given with these slides..I've had plays where a runner has zero intention of touching the base. Sliding 10 feet wide of the base and sliding 10 feet past the base. It just doesn't seem like a baseball play to me where you have no intention of touching the base. One of the first rules you teach kid when they are learning how to play the game is touch the base. You start at first, you go to second. How far away we got from guys having to touch the base or trying to touch the base, I think it steers it back into the right direction.

Morgan: From the written rules, which we just talked about, to the unwritten rules, do you sign off on Bryce Harper's campaign to make baseball fun again? Do you think its ok for bat flips after big home runs? Where do you draw that line? You are a veteran, Jed. How do you set the example for these young guys coming up?

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Jed: I think it's all about the situation. I think a lot of it boils down to respect. I think guys' egos get hurt when they feel disrespected. Everybody talks about bat flips, but no one talks about pitchers undercutting or clapping when they get a big strike out. If you have a big moment and you show some excitement whether you are on the pitching or hitting side, I don't have a big problem with it. There has to be some discretion shown with the situation.

Morgan: The last thing I want to get you out here on is growing the game globally. Baseball is very popular. It's a national pastime not just in the States. We saw it in Cuba this year. The President went down and sat with Raul Castro at a Tampa Bay/Cuban National team game. Baseball is very strong in the Caribbean, it's very strong in Japan and Korea and Taipei. How can we grow the game in Africa, in India, even further down in South America?

Jed: The simplest way would be exposure and then accessibility to equipment. That is probably one of the bigger hurdles with baseball is it does take a lot of equipment. To field a team, you need 9 gloves, at least 1 ball, at least 1 bat. Hopefully, all the kids out there are wearing helmets when they are hitting. It takes a lot of equipment to play the game if you are talking about developing nations. Exposure being one and accessibility to equipment.

Morgan: That is all I have. Anything you want to plug?

Jed: The Project Baseball people that we've worked with have been great. They were on the ground well before we got to work with them. That is what they do..they provide equipment and access for kids. They do a lot of work in Nicaragua and Colombia, but we've been fortunate to work with them and donate equipment with one of my equipment sponsorships, Easton. We've donated a lot of equipment through Easton. There was also a program that union does through Cal Ripken Baseball. We sent a lot of equipment through them as well.

Morgan: That's great. Would you go out again if the State Department called upon you?

Jed: For sure! I think that diamond diplomacy was, as Milissa my wife put it, is the melding of our two worlds and we both have a keen interest in international relations and if involves baseball even better.

Morgan: Thank you very much for your time.

Jed: Thank you, Morgan.

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