

Royster

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lot of things going on. The things we accomplished then, I thought, were great because we didn't have a bunch of guys crying," he said. "That was the one thing I was most proud of.

"All the adversity we went through, the Sharperson thing, Homer Bush breaking his leg, these things were really traumatic, but the guys dealt with it in their own way, and they're still dealing with it."

Royster says to deal with the loss of veteran third baseman Mike Sharperson — who was killed in a car accident in May on his way home after learning he had been called up to the big leagues — the team takes his jersey with them on the road and

hang it in the dugout.

"They've rallied behind it. I'm fortunate to have what is known as a veteran minor league team. They've made it a lot easier on me than I thought it was going to be," Royster said.

"Everyone knows what we've been through, but we haven't ever used that as a crutch. The guys know that 'Sharp' wouldn't want that to happen, and they won't let each other use that as a crutch, even though I know that it's been extremely difficult. There's been times when it's been hard to go out and play."

But with all the adversity Royster and the Stars have faced this year, they're looking forward to making a run at the second-

half title.

"The outlook is really bright right now," Royster said. "I'm here to get these guys to the major leagues. These guys have now seen a couple of our pitchers go up. Jason Thompson, our first baseman went for the first time in his career. So a lot of good things have happened. It's really been rewarding."

Just as rewarding, he adds, would be to bring a winner to Las Vegas.

"When we came in here we were not a very good team, but all of a sudden we were battling for the first-half championship. That's what I can do for the people. I can try to find a way to win. I stress, though, that I'm not going to sit here and try to win a

pennant at the expense of some of my players," he said. "My goal is to get their careers jump-started, not necessarily to win a pennant in Las Vegas. I think that with the veterans that we have here, we're going to be capable of doing both.

"My goal is also to win for the people of Las Vegas. In my heart, I don't think that the fans here believe that they can produce a winner. There is a fan base here, no matter how big it is, there's a fan base that I personally have come to know, and I would like to see them have a winner."

As for the future, Royster, the Stars' 10th manager in their 14-year history, will be the first to admit he doesn't quite know what will happen, or where he'll end up.

"It's hard to tell," he says. "Opportunities come, and if the right opportunity comes, I'm going to have to leave. But I tell you what — without tooting the horn of the city I'm in — there's no better place to manage in the minor leagues. I can't imagine that there is, and I've been in the

minors now for six years. This is ideal for me. If I don't come back here, there's got to be a pretty good offer out there for me not to come back. And that includes the major leagues. I wouldn't just take any major league job over this job."

His wife and two-year-old daughter have adjusted to Las Vegas, as well.

"It's ideal for us," he adds. We know a lot of people here, and we knew people before we came in, so, it was really easy for me and my family to slide right in here."

In addition, as an avid golfer, Royster will also be the first to admit that Las Vegas is also ideal for that reason.

"I really feel fulfilled," he adds. "The one thing I'd really like to do is manage in the major leagues. That wasn't my goal when I first started. But now I want to do it, just because I think I can."

"I think there's a way to do it. I don't know if I have anything new to offer, but I think that the way I'd go about it would be different. It may make a difference in major league

baseball, or it may not. I just think that I have something to offer and I'd just like to see if I'm right at that."



Royster, who played 16 years in the majors, is the Stars' 10th manager in their 14-year history.

Baseball

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Rich Abajan, general manager for Saturn of West Sahara, recently presented a check to Ricky Towers Sr. and the Mets baseball team for the Community Baseball League.

Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

back to West Las Vegas.

"We've felt that African Americans were actually getting away from the game," Towers said. "They took up basketball and football. And it was only because it (baseball) wasn't implemented in the area. "So I went to some competent individuals in the community and organized it.

"That was one of the motivational factors for me really bringing baseball back to West Las Vegas. I grew up playing baseball on those fields in the late 60s. So, the game has actually been away from there for over 20 years."

Though the league was funded by the Las Vegas Housing Authority this year, Towers said he will solicit private funding, from groups like Saturn of West Sahara who recently donated \$500 to the program, next year.

Towers also admits that because of a lack of volunteer coaches, nearly 200 youth were unable to compete this year. He hopes to improve on that next year, as well as get the league registered and certified to

compete in various tournaments on a national level.

"One of our goals is to become sanctioned by the Little League," Towers said. "Sanctioning is based on application and population. We'd like to get sanctioned within the next two years so the kids can compete on a national level."

He does praise those, however, who have helped make the young league a success.

"We do have a great staff of commissioners and we have a great staff of volunteer coaches," he said.

Towers recognizes, though, that there are other things more important than baseball.

"My overall goal, as one of the co-founders, is to provide an outlet for our kids, to provide an opportunity for them to interact and learn other skills and become better citizens," Towers adds. "We also plan to implement other classes with the program. We plan to have self-esteem classes, crime prevention classes — those are some of the requirements that we are implementing for the future. We will also follow-up on

their academics.

"One of our goals in building this kind of program is to groom the kids and prepare them for the future — whether it be baseball or life in general. That's very important."

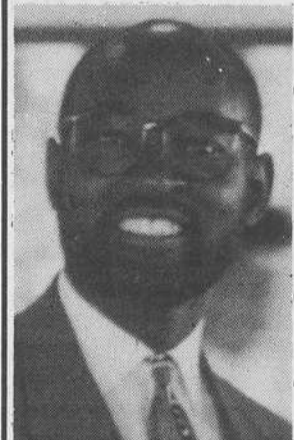
Towers, a blackjack dealer at Caesars Palace, is a former Clark High School standout who played on the Chargers' 1973 state championship baseball team. He says he benefited greatly from playing on one of the better programs of the '70s. After his high school success, he played at Taft Jr. College in California.

Last year, Towers won the "Unsung Hero Award," a state award given by the National Association of Retail Sporting Goods, for the success of the young program.

He sums up the sport nicely, "baseball's my life."

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