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On Saturday evening, October 23, 1993, the Philadelphia Phillies were fighting for their baseball lives. Down three games to two in the World Series against the defending champion Toronto Blue Jays, the Phillies were clinging to a precarious 6–5 lead in Game Six.

Until now the Phillies had ridden the wave of a Cinderella season. The roguish band of veterans, rookies, and castoffs defied the experts by going from worst to first in the National League’s (NL) Eastern Division. Somehow they defeated the Atlanta Braves, the most feared team in baseball, in the National League Championship Series (NLCS).¹ Now the Fightin’ Phils had taken the heavily favored Blue Jays to a sixth game in a world championship Series that they, if nobody else, believed was theirs to win.

It was the bottom of the ninth inning at Toronto’s SkyDome, and Mitch Williams, the Phils’ erratic closer, took the mound, determined to preserve the one-run lead and force a seventh and deciding game. Williams, nicknamed “Wild Thing” because his unpredictable pitching unnerved his teammates, recorded a club record forty-three saves that year. But after sixty-five regular-season appearances and six more in the postseason, his arm was hanging by a thread. Worse, Williams was coming off a devastating blown save (sv) in Game Four, a dreadful performance that elicited death threats from some deranged Phillies fans.² Still, Phillies manager
Jim Fregosi refused to deviate from his routine, sending his closer out to pitch the ninth. Thus, the Phillies were pinning their hopes for a seventh game on Williams’s tired left arm.

True to form, Wild Thing walked Toronto’s lead-off hitter, Rickey Henderson, on four straight balls. Pitching coach Johnny Podres called time and ambled out to the mound. He suggested that Williams pitch from the slide step because the quicker delivery would prevent Henderson from stealing second base. First baseman John Kruk, a slovenly throwback from the hills of West Virginia, also trotted to the mound to offer his teammate some encouragement. “There’s no fuckin’ way we’re losing this game!” snarled the burly Kruk. “Get them motherfuckers out!”

Inspired by the support, Williams retired Devon White on a deep fly ball to left, but then served up a base hit to Jays designated hitter (DH) Paul Molitor. With runners on first and second and one out, Toronto’s dangerous cleanup hitter, Joe Carter, stepped to the plate. Tension filled the Phillies’ dugout.

Wild Thing, who once pitched for the American League’s (AL) Texas Rangers, had faced Carter on four previous occasions, and the power hitter lost every single one of those battles, going 0 for 4. It looked as if Williams would prevail once again when he worked the count to 2-2. Carter chased a slider for the second strike and was guessing that Williams would throw another one. Behind the plate, catcher Darren “Dutch” Daulton was thinking the same thing and called for the slider. But Wild Thing shook him off. He wanted to throw a fastball up and away in the zone, figuring he could get Carter to chase it for a strike out or, at worst, force him to hit a lazy fly ball to the outfield. The catcher reluctantly agreed.

The stage was set. Wild Thing toed the rubber, looked in for the sign, and threw his fastball. He had the right idea but the wrong execution. Instead of throwing the heater up and away, he delivered the 2-2 pitch down and in. The slide step had altered his ability to locate the pitch. Carter, a natural low-ball hitter, drilled the delivery over the left-field fence to clinch the game and the World Series for Toronto. Williams didn’t bother to turn around; he knew the ball was gone the second he released it.
Lenny Dykstra, the Phils’ impish center fielder, was stunned. “It was a weird feeling watching that ball go out,” he told a group of reporters in the visitors’ clubhouse afterward. “I can’t describe it. I really thought this was meant to be our year.”5

To his credit, Williams didn’t run and hide from the wave upon wave of sportswriters who surrounded his locker after the game. Nor did he alibi or apologize. “Ain’t nobody walking this earth that feels worse than I do,” he said. “There are no excuses. I just didn’t get the job done. I threw a fastball down and in. It was a bad pitch. I’ll have to deal with it. But don’t expect me to curl up and hide because I gave up a home run in a World Series.”6 He went on like that until well after midnight. Finally, pitcher Terry Mulholland walked over and grabbed him by the hand. “C’mon, Mitch, season’s over,” he said and led Williams into a trainer’s room that was off-limits to the media.7

The Phillies’ joyride had come to an inglorious end.

To be sure, no one expected the Philadelphia Phillies to go from worst to first in 1993. Contending was more than wishful thinking for the faithful. Appearing in the Fall Classic? Downright delusional. Yet the ’93 Phillies made believers of their fans, the sportswriters, and the city of Philadelphia itself. The team was embraced not only because they won a pennant but because of the way they won it. They were “lovable” in a blue-collar way, much like the St. Louis Cardinals’ famed “Gashouse Gang,” who captured the 1934 World Series, or the more colorful Oakland A’s, who fought and feuded their way to three straight world championships between 1972 and 1974. Pitchers threw inside, hitters glared at opposing hurlers, and runners crashed second base to break up double plays. The players performed with pain and reckless abandon, wore their emotions on their sleeves, and could care less about their personal appearances. In Philadelphia parlance, the ’93 Phillies had “attytood,” and for good reason. Most of the players were throwbacks from other organizations who had given up on them.

Only five of the twenty-five-man roster came through the Phillies’ farm system: Kim Batiste, Darren Daulton, Ricky Jordan, Mickey Morandini, and Kevin Stocker. All the other players were signed
as free agents (Larry Andersen, Mariano Duncan, Jim Eisenreich, Tommy Greene, Pete Incaviglia, and Milt Thompson), acquired in trades (Wes Chamberlain, Lenny Dykstra, Danny Jackson, John Kruk, Tony Longmire, Roger Mason, Terry Mulholland, Ben Rivera, Curt Schilling, Bobby Thigpen, David West, and Mitch Williams), or drafted from other teams (Dave Hollins and Todd Pratt). Collectively, they were also among the least expensive teams money could buy, with an average salary of $916,383.

Profane, arrogant, unkempt, and determined to overachieve, these Phillies had something to prove to the baseball world. No one wanted them. Except Lee Thomas, the Phillies’ general manager (GM), who assembled the team, and Jim Fregosi, the individual who managed them on the playing field. “I like ‘em,” insisted Fregosi. “They play hard. They work hard. They police their own. That’s what makes a good team.” If nothing else, those attributes make for good team chemistry, which was instrumental to the Phillies’ success. But special chemistry wasn’t the only reason they won.

The 1993 Phillies won because they played smart baseball. On the mound their pitchers knew how to set up hitters and get them out because they carefully studied the opposing lineup. Infielders and outfielders understood the responsibilities of their respective positions, the best defensive strategies in a given situation, and executed them well. At the plate Phillies’ hitters were patient. If they saw that the pitcher was having difficulty locating, they’d make him throw strikes. Nor did they try to do too much in a single at bat. They knew the value of getting on base and that a walk was just as good as a hit. What made it all work was the fact that Fregosi knew his team. He never made wholesale changes to a lineup that had finished in last place the previous season. Instead, he kept the lineup intact, made effective use of platoons, and managed all of the players according to their capabilities.

The ’93 Phillies also won because they played by the Code, baseball parlance for the unwritten rules of the game. The Code governs all aspects of baseball, from hitting, pitching, and base running to dealing with management, umpires, and the media. Designed to preserve the moral fabric of the game, the Code contains rules for
individual and team behavior in common situations, punishments for ignoring the rules, and the understanding that those rules must never be discussed outside the clubhouse. In short, the Code is about respect—respect for the team, respect for teammates, and, above all, respect for the game itself.11 By the 1990s these idiosyncratic rules had become passé in Major League Baseball (MLB). Free agency had ushered in an era of multimillion-dollar athletes who placed personal success above the team. Most refused to risk injury by retaliating for another team’s infringement of the Code. After all, the injury might prove to be career ending, costing them millions in income. Nothing—not even the game itself—was worth that for the high-priced athletes who placed money above anything else. The ’93 Phillies were a refreshing change to that selfish attitude. They restored the significance of the Code and made it an integral part of their success. They were an “old school” team in every sense of the word. There were no superstars. Players seemed to check their egos at the clubhouse door and protected each other when a teammate was disrespected by an opponent, the media, or management.

Six players, in particular, reflected the club’s colorful but gruff personality: Darren Daulton, Lenny Dykstra, John Kruk, Mitch Williams, Dave Hollins, and Pete Incaviglia. They lockered together at the far corner of the Phillies’ fraternity-like clubhouse in a cozy but cluttered section called “the Ghetto,” or at least that’s how the players referred to it. The beat writers, compelled to be politically correct, dubbed the area “Macho Row.”12 Together, the six veterans gave the ’93 Phillies a hard-core edge. They could be cantankerous, profane, and brutally candid, flaunting their image as outcasts and underdogs. Masters of the one-liner and no-holds-barred zingers, the veterans of Macho Row could make life miserable for a rookie until he proved himself. Few, if any, teammates dared to cross them.

At the same time, Daulton, Dykstra, Kruk, Williams, Hollins, and Incaviglia could be disarmingly funny, fiercely loyal, and remarkably insightful in their knowledge of the game. They endeared themselves to the fans, especially the clock punchers who wore their passion on their sleeves. And they embraced a blue-collar approach to the game. But the stars of Macho Row were cautious with the Phil-
adelphia beat writers and self-styled “analysts” of sports-talk radio known for their intrusiveness and arrogance. Only Darren Daulton, who’d been with the organization for more than a decade, had earned their begrudging respect. As a result, Daulton was the only player willing to protect his teammates from the media. While the savvy catcher met with the press in front of his locker, the other members of Macho Row often retreated to the trainer’s room. Afterward, Daulton would join them to talk baseball into the early-morning hours. As the season progressed they opened their inner sanctum to other teammates until nearly everyone spent some time in the trainer’s room after games. It became a ritual, a way of cultivating team loyalty among a diverse group of personalities.

“We accepted people for who they were,” explained Kruk, who loved the clubhouse so much he actually spent many nights sleeping over between games. “On most teams, you’d have the black guys in one corner or the Latin guys hanging out with each other and nobody would mix. Not with this team. We talked baseball, we busted on each other and we all went out together—blacks, Latinos and whites.”

Darren Daulton presided over Macho Row from a secondhand lounge chair crammed inside his locker stall. Daulton, affectionately known to fans as “Dutch” and to teammates as “Bubba,” was a hard-edged catcher admired for overcoming a career-threatening knee injury to become a three-time All-Star. He was also the longest-tenured Phillie, the only homegrown regular, and the team’s untested leader. Daulton signed with the Phils in 1980 as a 170-pound catcher after being drafted in the twenty-fifth round out of Arkansas City High School in Kansas. Promoted to the Majors in 1983, the promising backstop suffered repeated injuries, postponing his rise to stardom for six years. Never did the setbacks alter his “take no prisoners” approach to the game, though.

Daulton was both physically and mentally tough, a “man’s man.” His chiseled physique and movie-star good looks made him the envy of male fans and an object of desire for females. When he spoke, teammates, coaches, and the manager listened. Most of the time, however, he chose to do his talking behind the plate or
up at bat. In ’93 Dutch hit 24 homers and drove in 105 runs and was the National League’s starting catcher in the All-Star Game. Behind the plate he got the very most out of a makeshift pitching staff and threw out 33 percent of the runners who attempted to steal on him. For Daulton, the Code was more than the unwritten rules of the game; it was a way of life.

Lenny Dykstra, a feisty lead-off hitter and center fielder, was the team’s most prominent castoff. Unwanted in New York, Dykstra was traded by the Mets to Philadelphia, where he found a home. A native of Southern California, he favored words like dude and bro, played with reckless abandon, indulged in high-stakes (and high-loss) gambling, and took pride in the fact that he never read a book because it would ruin his batting eye. Dykstra, appropriately nicknamed “Nails,” endeared himself to the city’s blue-collar fans with his arrogance, tobacco chewing, and scrappy play. He was the type opposing teams and fans love to hate, a throwback to an earlier era when ballplayers played hard and partied even harder. On the road Dykstra would chide the opponent, “We’re going to take your money and fuck your women.” Win or lose, he allegedly made good on the threat.

Like Daulton, Dykstra’s career had been riddled with injury, though he had already begun to take measures to eliminate the problem by the time he arrived in Philadelphia in 1989. He was a gym rat who in the off-season could be found in the weight room pumping away feverishly to add muscle. He also took “vitamins” to build body mass, suggesting that they were nutritional supplements. In 1993 Dykstra reported to spring training thirty pounds over his normal 165-pound weight. It wasn’t fat—it was muscle—thanks to performance-enhancing anabolic steroids. PEDS not only improved Dykstra’s recovery time from injury, but also increased his power hitting and speed on the base paths. The results were impressive, almost earning him the National League’s Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award that year. In addition to batting .305, Nails led the league in runs (143), hits (194), and at bats (637). He was the catalyst in the Phillies’ batting order, the player who got the offense started.
At a time when Major League Baseball had no policy prohibiting the use of PEDS, Dykstra was free to use whatever edge the drugs provided. Even if baseball had had an established policy against steroids, Nails would have ignored it. “Cheating,” he once admitted, “is okay if that’s what it takes to win.” And Lenny Dykstra played to win. To be sure, Dykstra’s use of PEDS was a violation of the Code because many players considered it a form of cheating even before Major League Baseball outlawed the practice. Nevertheless, there were players who were already juicing, like José Canseco and Mark McGwire of the Oakland A’s, Ken Caminiti of the San Diego Padres, and others who were highly suspect, like Pete Incaviglia, Dave Hollins, and Daulton of the Phillies. At the same time, Dykstra’s steroid use was protected by the Code that prohibited his teammates from speaking about anything that was said or done in the clubhouse.

First baseman John Kruk was a kindred spirit of Dykstra’s and the most slovenly looking player on the team. With his ample belly, shaggy hair, and fondness for beer, he looked more like a weekend softball player than an athlete. Kruk actually took pride in that fact, correcting a female fan who once berated him for being out of shape. “I ain’t an athlete, lady,” he replied. “I’m a ballplayer.” Despite the denial and his portly appearance, Kruk was a remarkable athlete and a consistent .300 hitter, which made him the hero of many slovenly fans.

A third-round pick of the San Diego Padres in the June 1981 draft, Kruk earned a starting job in the Padres’ outfield in 1987 when he hit .313 with 20 home runs (HR) and 91 runs batted in (RBI). The following season was a nightmare, as his batting average plummeted to .241. Once, owner Joan Kroc tried to shout some encouragement to him from her field box after he struck out. Without looking Kruk snapped, “Go fuck yourself!” Thus, it was no surprise when the Padres, in June 1989, shipped the irreverent outfielder to Philadelphia, where he felt right at home.

Born on the West Virginia panhandle, Kruk flattered himself a “hillbilly” and exploited that self-deprecating image with the media. “In the minors, one of my managers said I reminded him of an
Alabama truck driver,” he once told Paul Hagen, a beat writer for the Philadelphia Daily News. “That followed me to the big leagues where I became a dumb hillbilly. Well, I live in the hills. But I don’t think I’m that dumb. I’m getting dumber every year, but I don’t think I’ve reached stupidity yet.”25 A natural comedian, Kruk captured the national spotlight in ’93 when he appeared on Late Night with David Letterman. When asked later about the appearance, he said, “I drove two hours for five minutes on the show; that kind of sucked.”26 It was all an act.

Kruk was arguably the smartest player on the ’93 Phils, and he used his baseball acumen to compensate for what he lacked in natural ability. He hit third in the lineup not only because he was the best hitter on the team, but because he somehow also managed to get his chubby body on base, advance runners, and drive them home. In 1993 Kruk hit .316 with 85 RBI and an on-base percentage (OBP) of .430, the highest of any regular on the team. He also made his third straight All-Star Game appearance that season, this time as the National League’s starting first baseman.27 Like Daulton, Kruk considered the Code a way of life, and he would give the shirt off his back to any of his teammates, especially if it would help the Phillies win.

Mitch Williams, the team’s closer, was known for his proclivity for pitching into trouble before getting out of it. Signed by the San Diego Padres in 1982, Williams made it to the Majors in 1986 with the Texas Rangers. But Texas soon tired of his nerve-racking tendency to walk the bases loaded before striking out the side and shipped him to the Chicago Cubs.

Williams looked as if his career was over in 1991 when the hapless Phillies traded for him. If nothing else, Wild Thing was entertaining, as his unorthodox delivery sent his body flying sideways through the air, a sight made even scarier by his long, unruly hair. In fact, Kruk once observed that Williams “pitched like his hair was on fire.”28 To his credit Williams never allowed his critics to get the best of him. Instead, he kept his job in proper perspective. “You need two things to be a closer: no mind and a short memory,” he explained. “I’m a genius when it comes to the ‘no mind’ stuff,” he added.29
There was no denying his success with the Phillies, though. In his three seasons in the City of Brotherly Love, Williams appeared in 207 games, including 7 in the postseason, compiling a total of 105 saves. In 1993 alone he set a new club record 43 saves, including 13 straight between July 18 and August 24. His 3.34 earned run average (ERA) in 65 appearances was good enough to propel the Phillies into the postseason that year.30

Wild Thing was also a clubhouse prankster who assaulted the star of a game with a shaving-cream pie in the face and challenged fellow reliever Larry Andersen to belching contests. He could also be extremely generous to others. During an off day, for example, Williams flew Andersen, pitcher Danny Jackson, and play-by-play announcer Harry Kalas out to Reno, Nevada, for a good time and paid for the entire trip.31 On another occasion he purchased expensive ostrich boots for the entire bullpen staff to express his gratitude to them.32 Nor did he forget the clubhouse staff. Wild Thing always left money (at least twenty dollars, but often fifty or a hundred) in the back pocket of his game pants, telling Pete Cera, who did the laundry, that if he found the bills, “they’re yours to keep.” Whenever Cera tried to return the money, telling him it was “too much,” the closer refused, insisting that “it’s only paper.”33

But Williams could be downright nasty when a save opportunity presented itself. No opponent was spared—veteran or rookie, journeyman or future Hall of Famer. Wild Thing would just as soon deck a batter with a high, hard, inside fastball than get beaten in the series of one-on-one battles that took place between hitter and closer in what was usually the final inning of play. Williams’s motto was “No Fear,” a core principle of the Code, which he embraced whenever he stepped onto the mound.

Third baseman Dave Hollins was the most intense member of Macho Row. Teammates claimed he had an alter ego named “Mikey,” who reflected his game face. In other words, Dave Hollins was a hustling third baseman and an enthusiastic player loved and admired by his teammates. But once he stepped into the clubhouse or onto the playing field, he became Mikey, a foul-mouthed, hotheaded son of a bitch who played the game with reckless abandon and brooded.
about how much better he should have performed after it. “If you had twenty-five guys on the team like Hollins,” said Larry Bowa, the Phils’ third base coach, “they would have all killed each other by the third week of the season.”

An All-State quarterback at Orchard Park High School, near Buffalo, New York, Hollins began his professional career with the San Diego Padres. But in December 1989 when the team left Hollins off their roster, the Phillies swiped the switch-hitting infielder in the Rule Five draft. The move paid off big time. In 1992, his first full year in the Majors, Hollins hit .270 and was second in the National League with 104 runs and tied for fourth with 27 home runs and seventh with 93 RBI.

In ’93 the six-foot-one, two-hundred-pound third baseman enjoyed another productive season. Named to the NL All-Star team, Hollins finished the regular season with a .273 batting average, 18 home runs, 30 doubles, and 104 RBI. When Hollins wasn’t hitting so well, he was still determined to get on base, even if it meant taking a walk or getting plunked by a pitch. Once on base there was nobody better going from first to third or breaking up a double play. Nicknamed “Headly” for his disproportionately large skull, Hollins was arguably the most hard-nosed player on the team. He took the game so seriously that the other members of Macho Row made him the enforcer of the Code for the rest of the team.34

Finally, there was Pete Incaviglia, a burly outfielder who added to the often bawdy clubhouse with his witty one-liners and supplied some right-handed power to an overloaded left-handed lineup. At Oklahoma State Incaviglia’s power hitting led the Cowboys to the College World Series for three straight seasons between 1982 and 1985. One of the greatest power hitters in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I history, “Inky” hit a total of 100 home runs for a career slugging percentage (SLG) of .915 over his three-year collegiate baseball career. He was selected in the first round of the 1985 amateur draft by the Montreal Expos but was traded later the same year to the Texas Rangers.

Having never played a single game in the Minor Leagues, Incaviglia made his Major League debut on April 8, 1986, and went on to
hit 30 home runs, a new Rangers club record, and 88 RBI. It was a standard he was unable to match in subsequent years, as his home run total steadily dropped with Texas. Traded to the Detroit Tigers in 1991, Incaviglia became a part-time player, hitting just 11 homers and 38 RBI in ninety-seven games. He posted similar numbers the next year after he was traded to the Houston Astros. It looked like his career was over, until the Phillies signed him as a free agent after the ’92 season. Inky resurrected his career in 1993, batting a career-best .274 with 24 homers and 89 RBI. His blue-collar approach to the game endeared Incaviglia to teammates and fans. Along with Hollins, Inky was dubbed an enforcer for Macho Row.35

Darren “Dutch” Daulton, Lenny “Nails” Dykstra, John “Krukker” Kruk, Mitch “Wild Thing” Williams, Dave “Mikey” Hollins, and Pete “Inky” Incaviglia—the motley sextet of Macho Row—lived by and enforced the Code. But they also made the game fun for each other, their teammates, and the fans. The 1993 Phillies were made for Philadelphia. The swaggering, trash-talking band of outcasts went from worst to first in a year when there were absolutely no expectations to succeed. Like their fans, those Phillies were diehards who lived in the same black-and-white world of heroes and bums. We embraced them because they showed their humanness—warts and all—and we admired them because they were throwbacks to the days when baseball was played for little more than the love of the game. Rooting for those wild, wacky, woefully wonderful Phillies was, for many of us, like cheering for ourselves.

Macho Row explores the 1993 Philadelphia Phillies and their remarkable season, which fell just short of a World Series title. The book goes beyond the existing accounts of the team by focusing on the six members of Macho Row.36 It also examines the Phillies’ pennant-winning season in the context of baseball’s unwritten code of ethics and the beginnings of steroid use at the Major League level. The book does not pretend to be a comprehensive study of either subject. Readers interested in the Code or baseball’s steroids era can find many other books that are more suitable.37 Instead, Macho Row offers a fresh examination of a team whose approach to the game was both historic and futuristic. Not only were the play-
ers throwbacks to an earlier era that emphasized team accountability, but they also anticipated changes on the horizon, specifically the so-called Moneyball system of player evaluation and the power explosion created by anabolic steroids.

Like the old-time players, the 1993 Phillies played hard and partied hard. That kind of lifestyle took an unforgiving toll. Cancer, alcoholism, drug abuse, bankruptcy, and jail time were among the reality checks for some of the key members of the team after their playing careers ended.

Ultimately, *Macho Row* is a story of winning and losing, success and failure, and the emotional highs and lows that accompany it. Uproariously funny and profoundly tragic, this is a very human story about baseball stars, their dreams, and the fragility of fame as well as of life itself.
On March 15, 1987, Darren Daulton was rehabbing from a left-knee injury in the weight room at the Phillies’ spring-training camp in Clearwater, Florida. Nine months earlier Mike Heath of the St. Louis Cardinals barreled him over at home plate, bringing Dutch’s season to an inglorious end. Three separate surgeries on the injured knee followed before the end of the year. But after three months of intensive rehabilitation, Daulton still couldn’t fully extend the knee without excruciating pain.1

Shortly after completing the rigorous workout, Dutch learned that team president Bill Giles had signed free-agent catcher Lance Parrish to a one-million-dollar contract. The news struck like a lightning bolt. In short order disbelief morphed into frustration, then anger, and finally rage.2 Daulton felt deceived. He had already paid his dues.

Drafted out of Arkansas City (Kansas) High School by the Phillies in the twenty-fifth round in 1980, the six-foot-two catcher had spent the better part of five seasons in the Minors. When he was finally promoted to the Majors in 1985, Daulton rode the bench, first as an understudy to Bo Diaz and, later, Ozzie Virgil. Not once did he complain—about bouncing between Philadelphia and the farm system, about the sparse playing time he received in the Majors, or even about the near-career-ending injury he sustained from the
home-plate collision in 1986. But now Diaz and Virgil were gone, traded to other organizations. Daulton was next in line to become the Phillies’ starting catcher, and he was justifiably upset when Giles signed Parrish, a perennial All-Star.³

Daulton confronted the team president later that day, demanding to know “what the hell was going on.” Dutch liked Giles as a person, and his affection for him would become so great that, by 1993, he would address the Phillies’ president as “Uncle Bill.” The feelings were mutual. Giles prided himself in being a father figure to the young catcher. Known for a strong desire to make others happy, Giles assumed the role of a Dutch uncle for many of the team’s younger players. But the Phillies’ president also knew how to take the “hard love” approach when necessary. He anticipated a confrontation with Daulton and was fully prepared.

“I just heard some pretty upsetting news, Mr. Giles,” began the young catcher, cutting to the chase. “Is it true that you signed Lance Parrish?”

When Giles acknowledged that he had made the deal, Daulton braced himself for what he had to say next. He was a quiet, reserved person by nature. “Speeches” never came easily for him, so he had to choose his words carefully. Giles was, after all, his boss and deserved his respect.⁴ But Dutch also felt compelled to defend himself. It was a lesson his mother had taught him as a youngster. “If you’ve got a problem with another person,” she’d say, “you go to him and straighten it out. Don’t ever go behind his back. That person might not like it, but they’ll respect you for it.”⁵ Now it was time to put the lesson to use.

“Since 1980, I’ve given everything to this organization,” said Daulton, looking the team president straight in the eye. “Before last season I was told to be patient; that my time would come. Well, last season my time came.”⁶

Giles was impressed. He had never seen this side of the young catcher. But he still defended his decision to sign Parrish, explaining that the Phillies’ performance “had declined” since they “won their last pennant in 1983, and the star players were aging.” “If I can
sign a top-notch catcher who can also hit for power, I think we can legitimately compete for one more division title before we rebuild.”

Daulton took exception to the suggestion that he couldn’t hit for power. “Before I got hurt in June, I caught forty-nine games, and I hit eight homers and knocked in twenty-one runs,” he argued. “Only Schmitty [Mike Schmidt] had more at the time. If I hadn’t destroyed my knee, I would’ve had at least twenty homers and sixty-some RBIs. And that was hitting in the bottom of the order. If I’d hit higher, I’d’ve had even more!”

Giles hesitated. He realized that Daulton had shown promise as a power hitter the previous season and that his slugging helped the team jump from the .500 mark in May to third place in June before he tore up his knee. But the Phillies’ president also felt that Dutch was still a year away from starting full-time and that Parrish was an established cleanup hitter, who would immediately improve the team’s offense.

“Look Dutch, I know you’re disappointed,” Giles conceded. “But I’m getting a lot of pressure from the older veterans to sign Parrish. They want to win now, and time is running out for them. Schmidt’s at the top of the list. Just think how much he would benefit with Parrish hitting behind him. He’d see a lot more fastballs, and that means a lot more RBIs for us.”

Deep down, Daulton couldn’t disagree with the logic. Parrish, who helped the Detroit Tigers win a world championship in 1985, was one of the most dominant catchers in the American League. He was a six-time All-Star who had won five Silver Slugger Awards and a Gold Glove. Parrish was also an intimidating power hitter, averaging twenty-five home runs and one hundred RBIs per year during his last five years in Detroit. By comparison, Dutch, in parts of three seasons with the Phillies, never batted higher than .225 and hit a total of just twelve homers and thirty-two RBIs. Nor had he proved himself behind the plate. The twenty-five-year-old Kansan was much better known for his movie-star good looks and chiseled physique, which resembled that of a Greek god. He still had pride, though.
“Don’t give up on me,” Daulton told Giles before walking away. “I’ll be an All-Star one day, too.”

It would’ve been foolish to bet against him.

Born on January 3, 1962, in Arkansas City, Kansas, Darren Arthur Daulton was destined to be a Major League catcher. Raised by a family of strong German stock, Daulton learned mental and physical toughness, the will to achieve whatever goals he set for himself, and the leadership skills that made others around him better. Mental and physical toughness was cultivated by his older brother, Dave Jr. “Darren and [Dave] Junior got into it all the time,” recalled Dave Daulton Sr., their father. “Junior was two years older and had to work pretty hard at school and sports, but those things came naturally for Darren. So they were bitter rivals growing up.”

One night Junior got so mad at his younger brother that he jumped into his ’65 Mustang and chased him around the local Little League field. The two brothers caused such a commotion that the neighbors called the police. When they were hauled down to the station, their father had to bail them out. At six foot seven, 260 pounds, Dave Sr. was an intimidating figure. “They were pretty scared when I showed up,” he said. “They didn’t mess with me. I was big on accountability. They knew what was coming. I lifted Junior’s [car] keys and grounded both of them for two weeks.”

On another occasion Darren, who was physically smaller than his brother, instigated a fight. Then he ran inside the house, locked the door, and stuck his face up against the window to taunt his older brother. “It was the dumbest thing I ever did,” recalled Darren years later. “Junior punched me in the face. He just put his fist right through that window.” Not until Darren left home to pursue a career in professional baseball did the two brothers end their rivalry. Since then they’ve been close friends.

“Darren was pretty ornery when he was a kid,” said his father. “But he was also compassionate,” added his mother, Carol.

I taught both of my sons to respect other people and never be critical of anyone until you’ve walked in their shoes. I remember when Darren was in middle school. We had a little boy across the street...
who was always getting into trouble. His parents were divorced. He had no friends, and he just wanted someone to pay attention to him. I told Darren that he should be nice to the boy because he was hurting. Whenever the kids picked on that boy in school, Darren would go up to the bullies and tell them to stop. It took a lot of compassion and courage to do something like that at his age, and I know that that little boy looked up to Darren because of it.15

“Compassion,” “courage,” and “sympathy”—three qualities that Carol Daulton instilled in her sons and would later inform the leadership Darren demonstrated as a Major League catcher. “My mother taught me those things,” he said in a 2013 interview. “She always took the underdog’s side, no matter how unpopular it was. That taught me the importance of putting myself in another person’s position, the importance of listening to someone else’s side of a story.” But it was his father, Dave Sr., who gave Darren his work ethic and explained how to apply the sympathy his mother taught him on a baseball diamond. “My dad tossed me a catcher’s mitt when I was six and told me, ‘That’s your position,’” he recalled. “Even in winter, we’d clear snow in the driveway to play catch. My dad worked with me year-round, insisting that I had to put in the time if I wanted to be good at it, that catching comes first. He also told me that handling pitchers is a big part of catching and that I needed to know how to call a game, how to get the most out of my pitching staff. A catcher needs to know his staff inside out. And that lesson registered loud and clear.”16

Daulton’s will to succeed, however, was learned in three different sports. Although he was a natural athlete, Darren possessed a fierce competitiveness and a unique ability to prevail in any athletic endeavor. He was also ambidextrous and exceptionally coordinated, attributes that allowed the youngster to excel in wrestling and football, as well as in baseball. At age ten Darren weighed just sixty pounds, but he was such an aggressive wrestler that he earned the respect of teammates and opponents alike. His youth coaches were so impressed they voted him into the Ark City Takedown Club’s Hall of Fame. Daulton was also known to put the team first,
something that enhanced his capacity to lead others. As a sophomore at Arkansas City High School, he was only five foot nine and 140 pounds, but he slipped his weight up or down into whatever class the team needed to compete successfully. Not only did Darren earn two varsity letters in wrestling, but he also received All-State honors in his senior year.

In football Daulton starred at cornerback for the Arkansas City Bulldogs in both his junior and his senior years. “Darren was outstanding defensively because he was such a tough kid and a real hard hitter,” recalled Ron Hill, the Bulldogs’ head football coach from 1977 to 1980. “Of the thirty interceptions our team had in 1978, Darren, as a junior, had one-third of them.” One of those interceptions came in the state championship game. The Bulldogs were clinging to a two-point lead late in the fourth quarter when Daulton intercepted a pass. It should have clinched the state title for Arkansas City, but the Bulldog offense turned the ball over on the next set of downs and lost the game in the final seconds on a field goal. In 1979, Daulton’s senior year, he quarterbacked the Bulldogs to a perfect 12-0 record and led the team to a 19–7 victory against Liberal High School in the state championship game. “Darren was by nature a running quarterback,” said Hill. “We didn’t throw the ball much. Instead, we played a Wing T formation and divided up the carries among our backs. We also ran a pitch-sweep, and Darren, as the QB, would lead the blocking. He was one of the very few quarterbacks in the state who could block backside because he was so tough. That offense worked so well that in 1979 we were ranked one of the top teams in the nation, averaging forty-seven points a game.”

Despite his small size, Hill believes that Daulton could have played Division I football. “Darren would have been a good defensive back at that level,” he said. “What he might’ve lacked in speed, he made up for in aggressiveness and intelligence. But I knew that Darren never had any intention of playing college football. Baseball always came first with him.” Hill came to appreciate that fact in August 1978. That summer Daulton’s American Legion baseball team won their region and was competing for the state title. While the team was in Hayes, Kansas, where the state tournament
was being played, Hill notified the rising juniors that they had better return to Arkansas City for preseason practice, or they would lose their starting positions that season. Four of the five kids who played both baseball and football did as they were told. But when Daulton learned of the ultimatum, he said, “Bullshit! I’m staying here. Baseball’s more important!”

To be sure, Daulton’s love affair with baseball began at age six when his eight-year-old brother began playing Little League. Their father, a former pitcher and catcher, coached the team. He allowed Darren to play in games until the other parents began to complain that he was too young to be eligible. Despite Darren’s pleas his father complied with the league’s rules and benched his younger son. But he continued to coach Darren through Babe Ruth League. American Legion and tournament baseball followed. One season Darren caught for a Chandler Bat team that went undefeated with a perfect 41-0 record. At Arkansas City High School he was the starting varsity catcher his sophomore, junior, and senior years. “Darren was a five-tool player who could field, run, throw, hit, and hit for power,” said Mike West, who was the head baseball coach at the school. “In addition, he was a left-handed-hitting catcher. So he was truly exceptional, and I think he knew early on just how good he was.” Although the game came naturally to Daulton, West said that he also worked hard to become better and that his desire and drive made the team better.

“Once, in a game against our rival, Winfield High School, our starting pitcher was trying to do too much, and he was getting hit pretty bad,” recalled West. “I asked the umpire for time to go talk with him. When I reached the mound, Darren was already there, chewing him out. He knew all our pitchers, how to handle them, and he was always spot-on.

“Darren made people step up. He always gave his very best whenever he stepped on to the field, and he wouldn’t tolerate anything less from his teammates. To find someone that young with that kind of passion, selflessness, work ethic, and integrity was truly exceptional.”

Baseball was the driving force in Daulton’s young life. Although he had the potential to play the game at the Division I level, Dar-
Dutch

ren wanted to play in the Majors and to get there as soon as possible. Pro scouts began coming around in his junior year, but their numbers swelled in his senior year. Many high school athletes would let all the attention go to their head; not Daulton. “Darren was a very polite and intelligent young man,” said West. “He had a certain swagger, but his parents made sure he stayed grounded.”

Mike Dobson, who taught world history at Arkansas City High School, remembers Daulton as a “solid B student who could’ve easily been an A student.” “He just didn’t apply himself because school wasn’t as important to him as baseball,” recalled Dobson. “I knew he was a good kid who could make something of himself if he went to college.” One day Dobson tried to convince Daulton that a college education would take him much further in life than baseball.

“Darren, what are you going to do with yourself after high school?” asked the history teacher.

“I’m going to play Major League Baseball,” he replied.

Dobson had anticipated the response and persisted. “Darren, when I was your age I told everyone that I was going to play professional football. But that never happened. So, let me ask you again, ‘What are you going to do with your life?’”

The teen looked his teacher straight in the eye and said, “I’m going to play Major League Baseball.”

“Okay,” said Dobson, determined to give his student a reality check. “What are you going to do when baseball doesn’t work out?”

For the third and final time, Daulton replied, “I’m going to play Major League Baseball.”

There was nothing discourteous about the exchange. Darren was always respectful to his teachers. But he was adamant that his future was in professional baseball, and no one was going to convince him otherwise. “I look back on that conversation now, and I realize how foolish I was to ever question him,” said Dobson in a recent interview. “Darren knew what he wanted, went after it, and achieved it.”

That fact didn’t register with Carol Daulton until June 1980. Until then she had been hoping that her son would accept a baseball scholarship to the University of Kansas or to the University
of Arkansas. But she realized that Don Williams and Dave Burroughs, scouts for the Philadelphia Phillies, had been following him closely since March. After the Phillies drafted him in June, Carol, Dave, and Darren met the two scouts at a Wichita hotel, where he signed his first professional baseball contract. It was one of the saddest days of her life. “On the car ride home, I began to cry,” she recalled. “When Darren asked what was wrong, I told him how upset I was because I really wanted him to get a college education. After I said that, he and his dad looked at me like I had four heads. At that point I knew Darren’s future was in baseball.”

To be sure, Daulton’s signing didn’t attract much attention in June 1980. The Phillies and their fans were in the midst of a season that would culminate in the organization’s first world championship. Besides, the 170-pound Arkansas City native was one of only four catchers selected in the draft by Philadelphia that summer, and the least promising. Henry Powell of Pine Forest High School in Pensacola, Florida, was the Phils’ first-round pick. Doug Maggio of Shaler High School in Pittsburgh was selected in the second round and Jerome Kovar of Southern Methodist University in the tenth. The Phillies picked Daulton in the twenty-fifth round (the 628th overall selection). It was hardly an auspicious beginning. But Dutch would prove to be the most successful of them all.

Daulton began his professional career in the Pioneer League at Helena, Montana, where he hit .200 in 37 games with 1 home run and 10 RBI. During the next five years he would make a slow but steady rise from Class A ball at Spartanburg, South Carolina, of the South Atlantic League (.230, 3 HR, 29 RBI) and Peninsula, Virginia, of the Carolina League (.241, 11 HR, 44 RBI) to Double A at Reading, Pennsylvania, of the Eastern League (.262, 19 HR, 83 RBI), and to Triple A at Portland, Oregon, of the Pacific Coast League (.300, 9 HR, 48 RBI). Bill Dancy, who managed Daulton at Reading, called him a “good defensive catcher, who runs well,” and a “left-handed hitter with power, who has a good eye at the plate.”

Dutch spent parts of the 1983, ’85, ’86, and ’87 seasons with the Phillies but was used sparingly. Between those four seasons, he played in a total of 140 games, batting .209, with 15 doubles, 1 tri-
ple, 15 home runs, and 45 rbi. “Daulton’s not much of a ballplayer, but he’s a great guy to be seen with in the hotel lobby,” quipped Richie Ashburn, the former Phillies outfielder turned broadcaster, referring to the catcher’s handsomeness. Despite his mediocre performance, Dutch’s experience exposed him to the daily routine of a Major Leaguer and taught him how to prepare himself, both physically and mentally, for the demands of the game at that level.
Daulton learned the most from future Hall of Famers “Lefty” Steve Carlton and Mike Schmidt. “Lefty was definitely a great role model,” said Daulton.

By the time I came up to the Phillies he was near the end of his career, but he was in better physical condition than guys my age. He was an expert in martial arts, which gave him unbelievable strength and flexibility and the power to concentrate on the mound. Lefty showed me how to prepare myself, how to stay in top physical shape. He also taught me about good food and wine by taking me and some of the younger guys out to nice restaurants when we were on the road. Lefty always told us how important it was to live life to the fullest because a Major League career is so short.

Carlton also had a rowdy side. One night after a game against the San Francisco Giants, Carlton took Daulton and a few of the other young players out to dinner at a nice restaurant in a small Bay Area town. It happened to be the mayor’s birthday, and the restaurant presented him with a huge cake that was cut into slices and shared with the patrons. “We had already polished off a few bottles of wine and were feeling pretty good,” recalled Daulton. “When Lefty got his piece of cake, he started a food fight. Let me tell you, he just tore the place apart. It finally ended when he head-butted the mayor’s wife. We’re lucky we weren’t thrown in jail that night.”

Mike Schmidt had a more staid personality. He cared about his image too much to participate in such sophomoric behavior. But Schmidt also took his role as a mentor to the younger players very seriously. “Schmitty taught me that you have to work at this game to survive in it,” said Daulton.

The fans and the media always thought the game came easy to him. But let me tell you, he spent a lot of time in the [batting] cages working on his swing. Schmitty also reinvented himself as a hitter. He wasn’t just a slugger at the end of his career. He also hit for a pretty high average, which is why he was able to win that third MVP in 1986. Schmitty also cared about the younger guys. He was always there to encourage us, to share his knowledge, anything he
could do to help us out. I tried to emulate that kind of leadership later in my career when I saw younger guys coming up.\textsuperscript{30}

But in March 1987 when Bill Giles signed Lance Parrish, it seemed like Daulton would never enjoy the luxury of having a long-term career with the Phillies, let alone realize his ultimate goal of becoming a dominant big-league catcher. But Giles was desperate for one more chance to win a world championship, so desperate he made the deal at the risk of alienating himself from the other owners.

Two years earlier the owners reached an unwritten agreement not to compete against each other for free agents and to reduce significantly the length of contracts they would offer. The agreement was allegedly a response to Commissioner Peter Ueberroth’s demand that the owners exercise more fiscal responsibility as well as greater discipline and discretion in free-agent negotiations in order to prevent the financial ruin of the sport. In meetings with the owners, Ueberroth repeatedly invoked the term \textit{fiscal responsibility}, which was code for short-term contracts, no free agents, and owner conformity.\textsuperscript{31} The action, however, was in direct violation of Major League Baseball’s Collective Bargaining Agreement, which prohibited collusion among the owners.\textsuperscript{32} Giles believed that collusive behavior was wrong. But he had to weigh his loyalty to the other owners and the commissioner against his obligation to Phillies fans and his ownership partners to improve the team. It was an extremely difficult decision for a man whose father, former National League president Warren Giles, had always taught him to do the right thing. The elder Giles came from a time when baseball ownership was more of a noble calling than a means to gain wealth. As a result, Bill acted cautiously in making a legitimate effort to sign Parrish.

Adopting a “get-along-to-go-along approach,” the fifty-two-year-old Phillies president asked the owners’ player relations committee (PRC) for permission. Barry Rona, one of the owners’ lawyers and an authority on the arbitration process, gave him the green light. “You’re free to do what you want,” Rona told Giles. “No other club can tell you what to do, but I suggest that you pay no more than
a $700,000 base salary, with performance incentives on top.” To be certain, Giles contacted Lou Haynes, another one of the owners’ lawyers. Haynes was even more encouraging. “Sign Parrish,” he said. “It’s good for the Phillies and it’s good for baseball. There’s got to be somebody signing a free agent.”

The deadline for a free agent to sign with his original club was January 8, 1987. If Parrish didn’t reach an agreement with the Tigers by that date, Detroit could not sign him until the following May. Giles, hoping to avoid charges of stealing another club’s star player, waited until late January to meet with Parrish and his agent, Tom Reich. At the meeting the Phillies’ president explained the best he could do was a one-year $1 million contract. “That’s more than the PRC wants me to offer,” Giles admitted. “You have to understand that I’m catching tremendous heat from all over. Some clubs are even saying that they won’t trade with the Phillies anymore if we sign you.” Parrish and Reich were clearly disappointed in the offer. Considering the Phillies’ pay structure at the time, they wanted a salary somewhere between the $1.3 million that Von Hayes was earning and Mike Schmidt’s $2.1 million salary. To make his offer more palatable, Giles offered to supplement Parrish’s salary with promotional and endorsement work and promised to do better the following year once he had played in Philadelphia. Parrish agreed to entertain the offer.

The two sides met again in mid-February and appeared to be close to an agreement on a one-year $1 million contract. But when Giles insisted that Parrish waive all rights to future litigation, the negotiations broke down. Reich refused to agree to such a clause. The implication was that Giles had buckled under pressure from the PRC, which took its orders from Ueberroth. But Giles insisted otherwise. “We wanted Parrish to sign a contract that would hold the Phillies harmless, but not baseball,” he said. “The origin of the idea came from Phillies attorney Bill Webb. I don’t recall being pressured by the commissioner’s office or the Players Relations Committee.”

Not until mid-March did the parties reach a compromise. The contract stipulated that Parrish would not sue the Phillies but would not prevent the players’ union from taking appropriate legal action.
The language satisfied both the Phillies and the players’ association, which had already filed a grievance over the manner in which Parrish had been treated as a free agent. Parrish, on the other hand, reportedly retained the right to sue baseball officials or clubs other than the Phillies over alleged collusion. According to the terms of the one-year contract, Parrish would earn $1 million, plus $200,000 if he remained injury free from a chronic back problem. The contract also included incentives for making the All-Star team and for winning the league’s Most Valuable Player Award. Although Giles got his man, the Phillies were slapped with a $750,000 fine by the commissioner’s office for signing Parrish against Ueberroth’s and the other owners’ wishes.35

Giles hoped that Parrish would push the team over the top. It never happened. In 1987 the Phillies came within six and a half games of first place in mid-August but finished the season in fourth place. Mike Schmidt, the franchise player, enjoyed his last productive year, hitting .293 with 35 home runs and 113 rbi. Von Hayes (.277, 21 HR, 84 RBI), Glenn Wilson (.264, 14 HR, 54 RBI), and Parrish (.245, 17 HR, 67 RBI) did not produce the numbers or power hitting they were expected to deliver. Nor was the pitching very solid. Aside from reliever Steve Bedrosian (5-3, 2.83 ERA, 40 SV), who won the Cy Young Award, the most consistent hurler was Shane Rawley (17-11, 123 K, 4.38 ERA). Bruce Ruffin (11-14, 93 K, 4.35 ERA) put up some respectable numbers, but would never again win more than six games in a season with the Phillies and was traded four years later.

Daulton played in only fifty-three games in 1987, splitting the backup catching duties with John Russell. In 129 at bats Dutch hit just .194, the lowest in his professional career, with 3 home runs and 13 RBI.36 But he learned a lot from watching Parrish. Dutch carefully studied the way he called a game against some of the league’s toughest hitters, how he handled the various personalities on the pitching staff, and how he kept himself in good physical condition during the season. The two catchers would often lift weights together and sometimes wrestle each other on the clubhouse floor. “Both Daulton and Parrish were big men,” recalled Dan
Stephenson, the Phillies’ videographer. “Dutch was six foot two and weighed about 190 at that time, and Parrish was six foot three and about 220 pounds. But Darren had been an All-State wrestler in high school, so he could actually pin Lance in under a minute. That shows you just how quick and strong he was, because Parrish outweighed him by 30 pounds. So I guess you could say, Darren taught him a thing or two himself.”

In 1988 the Phillies dropped to sixth place. The team played poorly from the start, and Schmidt’s performance was partly to blame. He was hitting .214 by the beginning of June, with just 5 homers and 23 RBI. His play at third base was just as dismal, having committed 10 errors by mid-July. Parrish was in and out of the lineup with a chronic back problem, which meant that Schmidt no longer enjoyed any protection in the batting order. Daulton wasn’t much help, either. In 144 at bats that season, he hit .208, with just 1 homer and 12 RBI. Then, after an especially bad performance, Dutch, out of sheer frustration, punched a clubhouse wall and broke his hand, putting an end to yet another miserable season.

“I was a bad ballplayer, and I knew it,” Daulton admitted years later.

I had lost my mobility after the knee injury, and there were things I just couldn’t do anymore. I was trying to come back after a complete reconstruction of my left knee, and there was a lot of pain that affected my hitting as well as my running. After every season I had to have more surgery just to clean the thing out. The fans didn’t understand, and they booed me. You want to explain it to them, to tell them about the pain. But that’s not the way it works in Philly.

Deep down, I always thought I could be a better player, but I had reached a point where I didn’t know if that would happen. I just about accepted that there was nothing else.

Then Daulton’s luck began to change. On June 21 Bill Giles announced the hiring of Lee Thomas, director of player development for the St. Louis Cardinals, as the Phillies’ new general manager. Thomas made immediate changes. Before the end of the ’88 season, manager Lee Elia was fired and replaced by Cardinals coach
Nick Leyva the following season. Farm director Jim Baumer was also gone, replaced by Lance Nichols, who had served in a similar capacity in St. Louis. Thomas also replaced unproductive veterans like Parrish (.215, 15 HR, 60 RBI) with younger prospects and began revamping the Minor League and scouting systems. No one was safe, not even established stars like Juan Samuel, who was once being groomed to replace Schmidt as the franchise player. Samuel was asked to change positions from second base to center field to make room for another former Cardinal, Tommy Herr. Thomas hoped to improve attendance with Herr, a local guy who had played only second base. He believed that Samuel, one of the top second basemen in the National League, could make an easy transition to center field because of his speed. Von Hayes was the organization’s other untouchable star before Thomas was hired. Within three years both Samuel and Hayes were gone, traded to other organizations.

By the spring of 1989 the Phillies were well into the rebuilding process. As the team continued to lose, Schmidt received the lion’s share of blame, both from the fans and from the local media. After a solid April, when he hit 5 home runs and 18 RBI, the veteran third baseman went into a monthlong tailspin. His fielding deteriorated, and there was very little consistency in his performance at the plate. At the end of May, Schmidt was hitting a dismal .203, with just 1 homer for the month. With the Phillies languishing in last place, the future Hall of Famer, on Sunday, May 28, decided to retire. Schmidt’s announcement marked the end of the organization’s longest period of sustained success.

For twenty-seven-year-old Darren Daulton, however, it was a new beginning. Dutch was healthy and getting his first real opportunity to start as the Phillies’ regular catcher. Success was just around the corner.