Mark McGwire Essay, Research Paper

Mark McGwire is one of the most electrifying figures in

sports today. This six-foot five inch, two hundred and fifty pound monster is a

man on a mission. In fact, for the most part he is about as average as you and

me. Almost except for one major thing, he is the record holder of the most

prestigious record in all of pro sports. His name is Mark McGwire and the record

is his 70 homeruns, shattering the old record held by the Minnesota native named

Roger Maris. McGwire?s mission began when he went on to play high school

baseball for Damien High School in Claremont. After high school McGwire attend

the University of Southern California to play college baseball. McGwire would

then go on to break a few home run records while at USC. The great work he did

in USC earned him a spot on the US Olympic baseball team in 1984. This would be

the beginning of a successful career. From there, McGwire became the tenth pick

in the first round and signed with the Oakland Athletics. In McGwire?s first

year with the Oakland A?s he became Rookie of the Year. Whether hitting home

runs on the field or working with children, Mark proves he is dedicated,

successful, and one of baseball?s most popular players to watch today.

Whenever people walk into a ballpark to watch Mark McGwire on the field, people

can believe he is a dedicated player to the game of baseball. McGwire has had

much success because of all the hard practicing he does to get better each day.

After reading the a book on Mark McGwire it stated, ? McGwire is always the

last player to leave the field and he workouts a few extra hours a day in the

weight room after practice? (Rains 64). McGwire?s dedication also came

?When Coach Stanley hit ground balls to McGwire, he tried to hit them hard

enough that it would hit McGwire on either the wrist or the shin? (Rains 61).

I believe the long hours of taking ground balls helped him become one of the

best fielding first baseman and earned McGwire a few Gold Glove Awards during

his career. McGwire has also shown his dedication ?When McGwire took countless

ground balls on a patch of rocky ground, trying to practice some of the bad hops

and unusual bounces? (Rains 62). Without a question McGwire was determined to

work hard on his fielding. When McGwire wasn?t fielding ground balls, he would

be practicing his swing during batting practice. McGwire would make his

adjustments in batting practice to find his right stance to hit a home run. Many

players don?t take the time to work on their stance to become a better hitter

like McGwire does, which is why I think he has shown much dedication in hitting

the big home run. With this dedication, ?Mark started this quest for the

record early in spring training, setting his mind on accomplishing this one goal

to be the king of all homerun hitters? (Reily 37). ?When the season was all

over McGwire accomplished this goal hitting a homerun every 7.3 at bats, which

was a record pace? (Reily 36). McGwire has also shown a dedication off the

field by setting up his own foundations for children. I found an article from

the Sports Illustrated called ?Mark McGwire Is A Hero For More Than His

Homers?. In this article I found out a lot of important information which

McGwire does off the field when he?s not playing baseball. When McGwire

isn?t hitting homeruns on the field, he?s spending his time off the field

interacting with the kids from ?The Mark McGwire Foundation for Children,

which is a foundation he has committed three million dollar of his salary to

help physically and sexually abused children in local hospitals in St. Louis and

around Los Angeles? (McGregor 22). Without a doubt this homerun hero is more

than what people think of him with the dedication he has off the field. McGregor

states, ?His affinity for kids is evident when signing autographs, fulfilling

Make-A-Wish dreams or meeting abuse victims? (McGregor 22). With this

commitment to children , McGwire has been recognized by fans, media, coaches,

players, and the abuse children themselves for his time and contribution towards

these programs. McGwire has put much time into these programs for this main

reason. In the article I was reading it states, ?According to the National

Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, last year protective service agencies

confirmed more than one million cases of abuse, ranging from physical and sexual

to neglect and emotional maltreatment? (McGregor 22). With these kinds of

statistics, McGwire wanted to change these numbers and donate his time and money

to support abuse child programs. McGwire shows how important kids are to him by

signing autographs for his fans and by working with abused kids who need a role

model to help them. Without a doubt McGwire has been known for achieving his

goals and for being a public figure for what he has done for his community off

the field. As for me I see Mark McGwire as my role model in this situation

because he?s doing a great thing for these kids. McGwire also started up the

foundation because he states, ?When you have a child of your own, you

definitely look at things differently? (McGregor 22). Since McGwire has a

ten-year old son, he?s changed in many ways emotionally to make sure his son

grows up taught the right way to do things. In all with his busy schedule

McGwire said, ?He wants to help people? (Reily 45). That?s why I believe

McGwire is such a dedicated player not just on the field but also off the field

with his foundation. Finally to prove McGwire is such a dedicated player is when

McGwire comes to the ballpark early to sign baseballs, hats, and cards for fans

who await his arrival to the stadium and even after the game McGwire finds time

to make his fans happy. As McGwire continues his success in baseball it all

comes down to the hard dedication he puts on the field during practice, and also

off the field to be one of the best baseball players of all time. Mark McGwire

has been a successful player throughout his career with Oakland and St. Louis.

McGwire has become a successful by hitting home runs. His recent success came

two months ago on September 8, 1998 when McGwire broke Roger Maris? single

season home run record of sixty-one homers. It wasn?t one of his long homers

either; however, it barely cleared the 330 foot fence. After all was said and

done Mark hit 62 homeruns in 145 games, his homeruns traveled a total of 26394

feet or 4.99 miles, for an average of 427.7 feet per homerun. McGwire also set

the home run record for rookies at forty-nine homers in 1987. When McGwire steps

into the batters box he is feared by pitchers and by coaches. McGwire has set

all kinds of records since his college years at USC. McGwire is also the first

player in his first four years to hit thirty of more homers in each season. Mark

has also been proven to be one the most successful players of all time with his

great achievements he has had throughout his career. In 1995 McGwire led the

Major League for average home run distance with 418 feet. McGwire has also hit

homers that have gone 538 feet long. ?His longest has been said that it went

600 feet long that ricocheted off a Range Rover in the players? parking lot in

Denver? (Reily 40). McGwire is a serious man when it comes to hitting the long

ball far. ?On June 18th Mark sets a Major League Record with his thirty-three

homeruns, giving him the most homeruns before July 1st in any season. On August

22nd Mark sets another record when he hits his 162nd homerun in the last three

seasons beating Babe Ruth’s record of 161. Finally on September 5th Mark finally

hits his 60th homerun of the year joining Maris and Ruth as the only players in

League history to hit sixty or more homeruns? (Verducci 77). With all this

success many people don?t know that, ?the biggest, strongest man in baseball

is really a softy. His eyesight is 20/500, which means that without his

contacts, he is Mr. Magoo? (Verducci 76). This may not be important but how

does a man with poor eye sight hit a home run so far. The question may be

solved. With all the hard work McGwire does, he also has tremendous strength

which gives him the power to hit the ball so far. McGwire?s name has also came

up throughout the media of his announcement of taking supplements to pursue

Roger Maris home run record. However; this season in the year 2000 the media is

saying that this big homerun hero isn?t taking his supplements this year.

However; whether it?s true or not we will have to find out towards the end of

the season where McGwire will try to reach his milestone of seventy-homeruns

again. However; it is to believe McGwire became involved in lifting weights and

taking care of himself when his brother Jay moved in with him. ?Mark learned

how to lift weights the right way and stay flexible. Mark would work out six

days a week in the off season, four during the season. He lifts after home games

now and is routinely the last to leave the clubhouse? (Reily 40). This has

shown why McGwire has broken many records and has been a successful player

throughout his career. ?McGwire strength also comes from the supplements he

takes such as: Muscle Nitro, Met Max, Lean Gainer and the famous Androstenedione?

(Reily 40). These supplements are legal and is also a major part of the success

McGwire has had the past couple of years. Without a doubt McGwire will continue

to hit many more home runs in his career with his strength and maybe this year

he might break his home run now of seventy home runs. ?Ladies and gentlemen

and children of all ages, viewed from Waveland, McGwire?s batting practice is

the greatest show above earth? (Big Verducci, 76). Mark was now becoming the

biggest draw all around the majors, teams who normally couldn’t give tickets

away were now selling out there stadiums when Mark came to town. The Minnesota

Twins couldn’t get 50,000 over 150,000 people. Everyone was swarming to

ballparks all around the league to get a chance to see Mark hit a homerun. When

ever people come to the ball park to watch the game everyone is out to watch

Mark McGwire a very popular baseball player in today?s society. McGwire has

brought out many new fans to the game of baseball ranging from little kids to

senior citizens. With the attendance records doubling in numbers this past year

because of the Roger Maris home run chase; millions of people have came to see

McGwire hit a home run. ?A few years back when the Major League Baseball was

on strike many people didn?t bother to come to the baseball games? (Rains

89). With McGwire?s record breaking home run record many people have came back

out to the ballparks to watch America favorite pastime. It is also amazing what

one guy can do, to make such a difference in the game of baseball. For example,

many people come out early to the stadium to watch McGwire take batting

practice. During batting practice people line up along the leftfield fence and

along the sides to take many pictures of McGwire. McGwire is a man who loves to

sign autographs, cards, and baseballs for kids. McGwire comes out early to the

ballpark and stays also late to please his fans. It also said when McGwire steps

into a batter?s box, ?a sea of screaming red and white-clad of St. Louis

fans, with thousands of flashbulbs sparkle like fireflies on a late summer

evening? (Bragg 1A). With this much pressure at every at-bat, McGwire manages

to see the small white baseball and hit it a long way. With all the attention

McGwire gets he?s a man who doesn?t do shoe deals. In his fourteen years as

a pro McGwire has yet to do a shoe deal with any company. McGwire said, ?Its

too distracting? (Reily 35). Even though McGwire is such a popular player,

?He has turned down Letterman, Leno, sixty-minutes, book deals and movie

deals? (Reily 35). During McGwires fourteen years in the pros he has signed a

few major contracts in his career with Oakland and also with St. Louis. ?While

McGwire was in Oakland he signed a five-year, twenty-eight million dollar

contract that included a seven million dollar signing bonus? (Rains 155).

Being a popular player like McGwire can have many advantages and disadvantages.

With the many awards, records, and deals McGwire has done, have proven to turn

McGwire into one of the most popular players to watch in baseball. McGwire

popularity has also came from the many All-star games he has appeared in and the

trendmendous home runs he has hit throughout his career so far. Many people say

when McGwire retirees he will be one of the players to make it into the Hall of

Fame with Babe Ruth, Roger Maris and with many other great baseball players that

are there now. As the 1999 baseball season came to an end Mark McGwire

accomplished many goals and shattered many records. In 2000 we can probably

expect a bigger, stronger, and smarter hitter for the St. Louis Cardinals. When

the season just kicking off, we can also expect many people to come watch

McGwire play and shot for the new record of seventy home runs. As we look back

on the years McGwire has played in, he has gone through a lot of problems. That

why I believe Mark McGwire is one of baseball greats. While I was doing my

research on McGwire I got to learn more about Mark McGwire and what he done for

baseball and what he does off the field in the community. That?s why whether

hitting home runs on the field or working with children, Mark McGwire proves he

is dedicated, successful, and one of baseball?s most popular players to watch

today.