



PBATS NEWSLETTER

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Leaving it Better than it Was

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Jamie Reed is one of the most respected athletic trainers in Major League Baseball. The Maryland native began his career in the Baltimore Orioles organization where he spent 7 years working his way through the club's minor league system. An offer in 1989 to become an assistant AT with the Orioles Big League team from then Orioles Head Athletic Trainer, Richie Bancells, sparked a long and successful career in MLB for Reed. After 8 years with the Orioles, Reed became the first Head AT with the expansion Tampa Bay Rays, a role he held from 1997-2002. Reed's next and final stop in MLB was with the Texas Rangers as Head Athletic Trainer from 2003 – 2013 and then Senior Director Medical Operations from 2014 – 2025.

With such a long career, Reed saw many changes within baseball and athletic training. Advances in technology, modalities, rehab programs, and larger staffs. "You are obligated, and you owe it to your team and your players to be caught up on the science of making people better. Don't be stubborn or dug in on 'this is how we're going to do it'. Be flexible and fluid in your studies and your reading," shares Reed.

Jamie is a leader without an ego. In his first Head Athletic Trainer position with the Rays, he hired Ron Porterfield and Ken Crenshaw. The two had previous roles in athletic training and strength and conditioning. "We spent a year putting the program together for Tampa Bay and I learned the true value of a weight room and SCC, since the last 30%-50% of a rehab is in the weight room, so I was open to communication and all of us collectively working as a team for the best of the player and what's best for the player is best for the team," shares Reed.

With his open-minded approach to athlete care, Reed's staff with the Rangers included athletic trainers, physical therapists, massage therapists, a Pilates instructor, and a dietitian. "I got better when I set my ego aside and allowed the specialist to come in and do whatever they could to help the players be better," admits Reed. "It's not about me or my staff; it is about the player and the team. Having open dialogues with each other where you can say what you think, that has really been part of my success, and I hope the Rangers' medical team's success."

In addition to his work directly with each ball club, Reed also devoted much of his career to PBATS (Professional Baseball Athletic Trainers Society). It began with Jeff Cooper appointing Reed to run the PBATS Spring Training Seminar in Florida early in his career. "I do not think I was experienced enough to do what Coop asked me to do, but I wasn't going to say no," admits Reed. For the next 19 years, Reed was synonymous with PBATS, serving on the Executive Board as American League Assistant Athletic Trainer Representative for one year; 3 terms as President; and 3 terms as Past President, a testament to the respect and trust the membership had in Reed. "I have been proud to be associated with that group and to see now how much MLB respects and leans on PBATS for education is incredibly rewarding," shares Reed.

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During the busy days of a long season, Reed found a way to give back to the community. “I have a passion for youth baseball injuries and the negatives of sport specialization. I would like to see MLB tap into PBATS and have a truly educational forum of preventing youth injuries. If I had a legacy, it is my passion to protect kids. To protect the great sport of baseball by giving these kids a chance to pitch in high school, college, and maybe in the pros,” shares Reed. Jamie has spoken to many groups of parents and coaches on this topic. Now, with 4 grandsons playing baseball and 2 granddaughters playing softball, the pressure placed on kids to play and pitch day after day, is even more evident to Reed. “As Richie used to say, ‘education is the difference maker,’ and we have the power of MLB behind us to protect your child,” shares Reed.

In addition to trying to improve the setting for kids playing baseball, Reed also hopes there is change for athletic trainers in MLB. The season consists of 162 games played in 180 days, plus post-season if fortunate to qualify. This grind of the season is a concern for Reed. “It is such a demanding job. Long hours and consecutive days. No offseason anymore. It is the playing season and the non-playing season. The physical and mental health of AT’s and the respect they deserve is always a concern of mine,” admits Reed. With more educated leaders in baseball, Reed hopes someone will step up and make the necessary changes for the betterment of players, coaches, athletic trainers, and all support staff in the game.

In 2020, Reed started talking about stepping away from the game with his wife Jean. He shared this with John Daniels, Rangers GM at the time. Together, Reed and Daniels devised a plan for his transition. The Rangers then won the World Series in 2023, which would have been an easy time to leave, but new GM Chris Young asked Reed to stay as involved as he wanted in any capacity that he and Jean were comfortable with. That transition slowly worked its way to the end of the 2025 season. “I have probably spent more time at the ballpark over the last 44 years than I have at home. I was ready for the transition and so was Jean,” admits Reed. “The time was right. I am not taking World Series trophies or rings away from my career, I am taking my friendships from my career and that is the best part.”

Reed’s influence on the game and leaving the setting in a better place than when he started is important to him. He is very proud of the assistants that he has had on his staffs, how he may have impacted them, as well as the impact they all have made on those that followed. “I was the first branch in Richie’s tree, so I think it would make

me feel good to know that I left a footprint as I go out. I have had so many blessings in my career, but I can’t think of any bigger than Richie Bancells,” shares Reed. “I learned so much from Richie that if you are going to use blessed in a word, that would be one of them. To be his assistant for 8 years was a blessing. And then when I went to Tampa Bay and was able to work with Ken Crenshaw and Ron Porterfield, two of the biggest shakers and movers in PBATS and the generation after me. It is truly amazing,” continues Reed.

Jamie, you can step away from baseball and go spend more time with Jean. Go spend more time with your kids and grandkids and enjoy their little league baseball and softball games. Put your captains license to use and sail wherever you and Jean desire without having to worry about a calendar. Do all that knowing that you have left a positive imprint on the game of baseball and PBATS.

