

It's Opening Day! Ever since we opened PNC Park I've tried to get to opening day of the baseball season, and, although I've not always been successful, I will always remember being there for the first one ever held at our beloved venue.

In the world of human capital this team has consistently gone against conventional wisdom and fought the trends happening throughout the rest of the league. There are definite winning formulas that the larger market teams use to position their teams to be in contention to win the title. One of the biggest ones is management. We are unbelievably blessed to have one of the greatest managers in this sport here in our town. Clint Hurdle is brilliant, driven, compassionate, inspiring with an exceptional eye for talent. He also knows how to motivate each player individually and mold those differences into a team that works well together and puts their best effort on the field every game. He is a treasure everyone in this region should appreciate and admire. That's a word I rarely describe anyone.

The other challenge is payroll. We're a small market team. That isn't going to change, ever. To be honest with you I don't want it to change. I like having some of the best universities in the country here, I like having 1 hour rush hours and not 3 hours, I like being able to find a place to park and go to a business meeting without being frustrated by parking or commuting challenges. I love the fact that I can have a great home in a neighborhood of friends and not have to be overly concerned about a very high crime rate that surrounds me. I like the fact that I can afford to live here and enjoy everything that any big city has but without all of the fake. I like the fact that we have best in class venues and entertainment and really good restaurants everywhere! But you know what I like most – our people.

Our team is going to make a great run at the title this year. They have most of the 'people' to make that happen. But this is the lowest payroll in all of the majors. Several of our players will be national standouts this year. And they're going to do it at a fraction of wage others are making. But most every player will put their heart into every practice, play and game. Are they going to win the Series? There's 162 games ahead of them. I plan to enjoy the ride and cheer them on and value the fact that we're one of the lucky ones – we're in Pittsburgh! Why? Here's why

Salk and Starzyl, Clemente and Stargell, Fred Rogers and Arnold Palmer, Lemieux and Crosby, Noll, Franco and Rocky, Elsie and Henry, Oakmont, CMU, AGH and UPMC, Schell, The Cultural District, the Strip District, North and South Park, Cranberry, Southpointe We're surrounded by the highest standards of grace, and caring and class here!!! And when I'm eating my hotdog and drinking my beer on the third deck looking into our great city I'm going to say to myself once again – aren't I lucky!!! Good Luck Clint and the boys of summer! I'll be there cheering you on!

Play Ball!!!!

Dave Baker