

Manto musings

The Bisons' ceremony to retire Jeff Manto's number last Friday was certainly one of the more memorable moments in Dunn Tire Park history (even if the No. 30 pyrotechnics were a little slow in igniting). The team has received many congratulations for the numerous touches to the event and is posting Manto's speech on its web site (www.bisons.com).

In response to several e-mails and voicemails to this corner, here's the memorable climax of Manto's remarks to the crowd:

"Please let your children know when they ask why these numbers are up there on that (left-field) wall. Tell them it symbolizes what it means to work hard, what it means to dedicate, what it means to sacrifice, what it means to have a passion. Tell them it represents what it takes to be a teammate. Tell them it symbolizes what it takes to be a friend. But most of all, tell them that all this added up is what it truly means to be a Bison."

Here are some of the best lines on Manto in the days leading up to the event.

Former manager Jeff Datz: "I remember Scranton put the shift on him and he said, 'You better shift a long way and Velcro somebody up on that net up there (in left field).' He was beautiful."

Current Bisons manager Eric Wedge: "He's an icon. There's Manto stories left and right here."

Bisons outfielder David Roberts, a three-year teammate: "People expected big things out of every time he came up, and he produced. The reality of baseball is people get excited about things and very rarely does it happen when it's anticipated. . . . He was the first veteran baseball player I was really around who knew so much about the game. He was the first one I had seen with that kind of insight."

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