

# Baseball's Misbegottens: A Menagerie of Expansion Era Managers

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Because major league baseball's championship seasonal format always has produced a raft of losing teams, team field managers have become wretched scapegoats to be sacrificed to the bloodlust of fans. Although the cashiering of managers has been the rule for the last century in baseball, by 1970 the custom was exacerbated until managerial tenure now averages about two years. Moreover, during the 1970s other instances of status deprivation reduced managers to the status of impotent foremen.

The drastic lowering of a manager's status owed to direct attacks on the manager's importance as a field general, to power plays from strongly organized players and umpires, to usurpations of managerial functions by a new breed of training and coaching specialists, to undercutting bureaucratic functionaries raised up by club owners, and to meddling owners of the Finley-Steinbrenner stripe.

To adapt and to survive as a species, struggling managers appear to have abandoned the autocratic "McGrawian" model of handling players. Hence, expansion era managers seem to emphasize more their role as counselors, teachers, and inspirers of team spirit. Thus, ex-player Jim Brosnan speaks of vanishing "I" type managers, and rising "We" and "They" type personalities.

For all their problems, including thunder from owners, writers, players, umpires and fans, managers manage to survive. Despite cynical sneers about the overrated importance of managers, charismatics like Earl Weaver, Billy Martin, and Chuck Tanner are much sought after. Men like these still breathe life into the much-maligned managerial mystique.