Written by Maury Brown
Thursday, 01 December 2011 18:42

(L-R) Larry Lucchino, Ben Cherington, Bobby Valentine, and John Henry at the end of the press conference introducing Valentine as the new manager of the Boston Red Sox

Bobby Valentine was introduced today as the 45th manager of the Boston Red Sox, and in it showed that the club that saw an epic collapse in 2011 was looking for a veteran leader, signing him to atwo-year contract with club options for 2014 and 2015.

Even though Valentine hasn't managed in the majors since 2006, the man that once snuck back into the dugout wearing a fake mustache after being ejected, was unscripted and, at times, emotional as he welled up with tears.

"The talent level and the players that we have in this organization is a gift to anyone and I'm the receiver of that gift," said the 61-year-old Valentine, adding, "I'm honored, I'm humbled and I'm pretty damn excited."

"We are thrilled to welcome Bobby as the manager of the Red Sox, and I'm eager to begin working closely with him in our preparations for the 2012 season," said new Red Sox GM Ben Cherington in a statement. "He is one of the brightest baseball minds I have encountered, with a wealth of experience in the game, an unmatched passion for winning and a proven track record of success in demanding environments. In Bobby, we have the right man to lead the Red Sox."

During the press conference Cherington offered thanks toPete Mackanin, Sandy Alomar Jr., Torey Lovullo, Dale Sveum, and Gene LaMont, who was the other finalist along with Valentine, for the management position left open when Terry Francona's contract was not renewed.

Valentine has more than 40 years in professional baseball, previously serving in parts of 15 seasons as a Major League manager with the Texas Rangers (1985-92) and New York Mets (1996-2002), compiling a 1,117-1,072 (.510) record. He ranks fourth among active managers in games and fifth in wins. The Stamford, CT native becomes the sixth Red Sox manager born in New England and the second from Connecticut, joining Meriden's Jack Barry, who managed the club in 1917.

His previous managerial experience includes parts of two seasons at the helm of the Mets Triple-A Norfolk club in 1994 and 1996, and seven years over two stints with the Chiba Lotte Marines of Japan's Pacific League in 1995 and 2004-09. In 2005, Valentine led the Marines to their first Pacific League pennant in 31 years and a four-game sweep of the Japan Series for the Nippon Professional Baseball Championship. Chiba Lotte also won the inaugural Asia Series that year, defeating the Samsung Lions of the Korea Baseball Organization. Valentine was presented with the 2005 Matsutaro Shoriki Award, given to an individual who makes great contributions to professional baseball in Japan.

At the end of the interview for the photo op with John Henry and Larry Lucchino joining Cherington and Valentine, the now new manager put his hand on top of his GM's with the two owners doing likewise in a sign of solidarity. "I know it's corny, but…," Valentine said.

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