

## THE STRETCH RUN -

Well, it is about that time of year again - Postseason, Playoffs, October, Stretch Run. I am just so honored to be a part of several of these teams over the last 11 years. I have personally been on the roster for 9 of the 11 straight division titles we have earned here in Atlanta. Guys like Javy, Doggie, Glav, Smoltzie, Lock, Druw, and Ligt have all been with the team for 6 or more years. When you are able to keep such a quality core group of guys together, it is just incredible. Then, you add guys in the past few years like Rem, Julio, and B.J., and plug in guys from our system like Mill, Fukie, Marcus, Wes, DeRo, Steve, Jesse, Jason, Damian and Spooney, and you have a team of guys that know what it takes to win. How about Sheff? The guy is just one of the best in the game. How about Vinny, Matt Franco, Gryb, Chris, Darren, Blanco and Bragg? Can you say enough things about the role these guys have played? They have come in, fit into our system, not made one wave about playing time or anything else, and realized what we are trying to accomplish here. I just cannot say enough good things about every man on our roster this year. Again, I am simply proud to call myself a Brave.

And, lets not forget the guys that have been a part of this team during this 11 year run. Guys like Klesko, Booney, Clontzie, B.J., Andres, Blauser, Ashby, Ave, Tuck, Marquis, Bobby Bo, and the list goes on and on. Guys that may have done this or that in another uniform, or that may or may not have fit in at some other place, yet here they became a Brave and did whatever it took to keep this streak alive. I am obviously biased, but to say that we have won 11 straight division titles has got to be one of the all-time most impressive things for a franchise. I'm not taking anything away from the Yankees or the Canadiens or the Celtics or the Lakers. These organizations have a long and storied history that no one can replace. I'm just saying that this organization deserves some credit for having such an extended amount of success in a very tough sport for that to happen.

I am excited about our team as we head into the postseason. Our pitching staff has just kept us in almost every game this year. From Doggie, Millwood and Glav to Damian and Jason to every guy sitting in that bullpen, they have done about as complete of a job on the bump as you could ask for. We are going to have to do as complete a job in our lineup. Javy has been hitting the ball lately. He seems to have found his stroke. We are going to need him in the postseason. Andruw is also an important piece of our puzzle. Our 3,4,5,6 hitters have got to drive in runs and give our staff some run support. With guys like Fukie, DeRo, Lock, Matt and Julio setting the table, I feel like we can produce some runs this postseason.

I feel like we are a pretty complete team right now. Our bullpen is very strong, and with Sheff in the middle of the lineup, you have a deep threat at anytime. Hopefully, I can continue to swing the bat fairly well and find that power stroke more consistently down the stretch. I am going to need to do that if we are going to continue to advance through the playoffs. The guys in front of me and Sheff are going to have to get on base, and when they do, it is simply a necessity for us to drive them in. As everyone knows, the intensity of every situation is increased in the postseason. We've been here enough and I think that experience will help us.

Hopefully, the next time I touch base with everyone we will be World Champions for the second time in my career. See you soon.

- Chipper Jones