



Get to know Derek Jeter in 'The Captain' on ESPN and ESPN+

If you think you know everything there is to know about Derek Jeter, a docuseries upcoming on ESPN and ESPN+ offers a few new insights on the man behind the icon.

"The Captain," a six-episode documentary premiering Monday, July 18, delves into the life and career of the Hall-of-Fame shortstop who helped transform the New York Yankees into a late-1990s dynasty after years of futility. Through archival footage and interviews with friends, family, contemporaries and teammates, including David Cone, Darryl Strawberry, Jorge Posada and Andy Pettitte, the documentary paints a portrait of a young man from a solid upbringing who seemingly was destined to be a Yankee.

A winner of five world championships, Jeter was the picture of cool and class. He was raised in Michigan by parents Charles and Dorothy, who taught him that "can't" was a forbidden word and to never set easy goals. And the grief he got over having been raised by an interracial couple helped give him the thick skin he needed to deal with New York.

Once in the majors, he shined both on the field and off and his leadership was apparent. That surfaced in one incident highlighted in the series, when Yankee pitcher David Wells threw up his hands in exasperation after a teammate's error. Jeter, still a youngster, was unintimidated when he later pulled the burly veteran aside and told him, "We don't do that here."

As series director Randy Wilkins ("86-32") says, Jeter was all about team first and winning.

"(His attitude was) we don't create distractions and that we're supposed to have each other's backs," he explains. "And that chemistry and being on the same page and support for one another matters just as much as getting a big hit or making a big defensive play. I think that Derek understood that if you keep doing that, it's going to be a story and ... if there's a story you're taking us away from this magical season."

It also touches on Jeter's relationships. Strawberry took Jeter under his wing and warned him about the temptations of life in New York, while manager Joe Torre acted as his second father. But when it came to sticking with the Yankees, there was one party he had to please and that was the team's mercurial owner George Steinbrenner.

"Mr. Steinbrenner challenged stars and I think he liked to challenge Derek when he could," Wilkins says. "But he respected Derek because Derek didn't back down and Derek was authentic with him. And I think that if ... Mr. Steinbrenner sensed some fear or apprehension, he would keep going after you."

"And I think that Derek didn't demonstrate any of that," he continues. "Derek was confident in himself. ... Despite obviously being different generations, I think they're wired the same way and they connected on that."

Derek Jeter is featured in "The Captain," premiering Monday on ESPN and ESPN+.

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