

www.usatoday.com

USA
TODAY

Sports

SECTION C

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Eye-opener Roberts' Red Sox moment to remember

Dave Roberts played in the major leagues for 10 seasons, but his "moment" came in 2004.

He stole the base in the American League Championship Series against the New York Yankees' Mariano Rivera that led to a come-from-behind win when the Boston Red Sox were down 3-0 in the series. They would become the first Red Sox team since 1918 to win a World Series.

The Red Sox are kicking off a "Moments" campaign, and fans can vote at redsoxnation.com through May 27 on the top moment in team history.

Roberts was not aware he was making history with his stolen base.

"I would be lying if I said I did," he said. "I knew at that moment if I was (thrown) out, that was it. . . . After that play . . . I just felt that the (fans) felt a sense of hope."

Manager Terry Francona told Roberts he would run for anyone who got on base in the eighth and ninth innings, so he spent much of the game studying video. Roberts says, "I got a great jump. I studied Mariano's tendencies and what he was going to do,



By Jed Jacobsohn, Getty Images

Turning point: The Red Sox were near elimination when Dave Roberts stole this base, sparking an epic comeback from a 3-0 ALCS deficit to the Yankees.

. . . I had a good feeling that I was going to be safe. . . . Funny, when I look back at the video, I didn't realize how close it was. It's crazy."

That 2004 team had a reputation of being unconventional, and that may have won the day.

"It balanced out the intensity and the expectations of the fans and

media," Roberts said. "If it had been a tight group, I think we would have succumbed to those pressures."

— Reid Cherner

Click here for the full Q&A with Roberts and to tell us your top baseball playoff memory

gameon.usatoday.com