

# Little Takes Laid-Back Approach to Dodgers

By STEVE HENSON  
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It has dawned on Ned Colletti that any time he wants to slow the frenetic pace he has established since becoming Dodger general manager, all it takes is a conversation with his new manager, Grady Little.

Homespun Little is equal parts Texas cotton fields, North Carolina honeysuckle and dug-out chewing tobacco. He was introduced at Dodger Stadium on Friday and, with grinning Colletti standing at his side, lobbed one-liners in an easy drawl.

He was asked why he took the job. "The money," he deadpanned.

Team chemistry has been a hot topic with the Dodgers, who didn't have much while going 71-91 last season. Little downplayed it by saying, "My chemistry with my wife would be bad if we lost 91 games."

Apparently his managerial approach is anything but rigid. "My style changes on a daily basis according to the team we put on the field," he said. "You could say I'm an aggressive manager who likes three-run homers."

Uptight he's not.

"You aren't going to be able to tell a lot of days whether we won or lost," he said. "That's the way I

live my life."

Little spent four years tending to a Texas cotton farm after a short career as a minor league catcher. But when a storm wiped out his crop, he opted for a steady job as a rookie league manager. Sixteen years later, the Boston Red Sox hired him as manager and fired him in 2003 after two seasons.

Now he has a second chance with the Dodgers. Little is counting on Colletti to supply him with enough talent to win — when he's not ribbing his new boss.

"Ned's sleeping about 30 minutes a day," he said.

It appears the Pittsburgh Pirates have met Bill Mueller's request for a three-year contract, so the Dodgers might have to bump their offer from two to three years to land the free-agent third baseman.

Another possibility at third is a trade for David Bell of the Philadelphia Phillies, who are interested in reliever Duaner Sanchez and Dodger prospects.

"I have one trade I'm lukewarm to positive about," Colletti said without mentioning Philadelphia. "It's one of the areas I want to resolve."

The Pirates have increased their efforts to trade for outfielder Milton Bradley, a source

said. The Dodgers could get a left-handed reliever in return because the Pirates are overstocked after acquiring Damaso Marte from the Chicago White Sox. Left-hander Mike Gonzalez is expected to compete for the Pirate closer role and John Grabow is a top setup reliever.

Free-agent first baseman J.T. Snow, who spent the last nine seasons with San Francisco, said the Dodgers and San Diego Padres have made him offers. The Dodgers are close to signing backup catcher Sandy Alomar Jr. A source close to Alomar said the 18-year veteran is awaiting a phone call from Colletti to finalize the deal.

The Dodgers named Tagg Romney chief marketing officer, a job that had been held on an interim basis by Drew McCourt, the oldest son of team owner Frank McCourt and president Jamie McCourt.

Romney, who earned an MBA from Harvard Business School in 1998, was a vice president at Reebok, where he was responsible for marketing partnerships with the NFL and the NBA. He managed the successful Massachusetts gubernatorial campaign of his father, Mitt Romney.

*Times staff writer Tim Brown contributed to this story.*