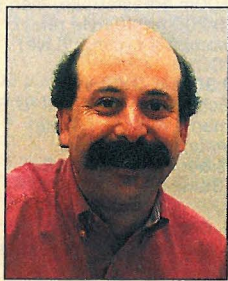


Meet Ms. 'DynaMets'

It wasn't until after baseball's latest labor stoppage that the empty suits running the game attempted to reach out to kids. It had finally dawned on baseball owners — aka The Lords of Larceny — that their sport appealed primarily to an



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older demographic. Kids were finding other things to do. Attending baseball games wasn't one of them.

But when it comes to the youth factor, the Mets and SportsChannel were ahead of the pack. Five years ago they joined forces to produce "DynaMets," a weekly baseball show designed for kids on which Jennifer Jiles, the host,

works with a cast of children who do player interviews and features. "It's definitely very empowering for the kids to express themselves, participate and not just be told what to do," Jiles says. "There's a lot of restrictions put on them all the time, which is a good thing. But something like 'DynaMets' helps them feel good about themselves as kids."

The kids Jiles works with are well aware of what's going on in baseball. "They can see right through the whole drug problem and money problem because they learn about it in school," she notes. "The kids don't use the word greed, but they comment on the money. They understand that playing baseball for money can change you and that getting away from the fun of the game can be a negative thing."

On the surface, it may seem like Jiles — in her fourth year with "DynaMets" — is an unlikely host. She didn't grow up a sports fan, but has worked closely with children throughout her multiple careers.

She's an actress who has performed off-Broadway and with national road companies, a dancer

who was a Radio City Rockette for three years and a comic. Last year she formed Third Rail Comedy, a sketch comedy troupe that has performed locally at Caroline's and Catch A Rising Star.

"I have many different personas," she says. "When I did the Rockette-thing I felt like the Unknown Comic. It was like I was in that kickline with a bag over my head. You are one of 36 [dancers] and you *better* be one of 36. That's the whole idea."

There is one common thread tying Jiles' occupations together. "People can see when you're acting; they know if you're really there — if you're that character or if you're thinking about your hair or something else.

"It's the same thing hosting a kids show," she continues. "The kids know if you are really talking to them. They can spot a phony."

Relating to her young "DynaMets" cast was never a problem for Jiles. But there were some baseball things she did have to get used to early on. She remembered former Met Eddie Murray not showing up for a scheduled interview — she waited an hour for him — and also thinks back to the time when she had her head in the clouds when it came to the Mets.

"I thought our show would've had more impact from Day 1 because I thought the Mets were going to have a terrific team," she says, laughing. "What did I know?"

Once reality set in, though, she kept plugging away, and has helped build "DynaMets" into a kids show with a grass-roots feel. Unlike some of the slicker sports productions geared to kids, "DynaMets" comes off as being very real.

And there's something about Jiles experiences on the show that have helped her as she expands her showbiz horizons.

"It may sound corny, but it's about finding yourself," she explains. "When you're interviewing a player or talking to kids in a world that's not really your world you have to be yourself — totally.

That kind of situation helps me in everything else I try to do." ■

