

# How one team's clubhouse design creates bonds

The Chicago Cubs' new Wrigley Field clubhouse is unlike any other in major league baseball because it's a circle. Others are large, spacious and rectangular.

The unusual shape of the Cubs' clubhouse promotes equality and collaboration. Thanks to its circular design, players' lockers are closer together and they can interact easily with teammates across the room.

"You can see everybody regardless of where you're at, so it invites camaraderie and interaction with guys," says Brett Anderson, a Cubs pitcher.

Better yet, players pass through the circle to reach the weight room or dining area. They wind up engaging in more informal chats as a result, which contributes to team chemistry.

Other teams have unveiled lavish clubhouses in recent years. But because they are often rectangular, players might wind up with lockers in far corners that make them feel removed from the central hubbub.

The circular layout leads individuals to mingle in unexpected ways. Players who might not normally get to know each other well can build rapport.

Traditionally, teams set up locker rooms so that certain players cluster together. Pitchers are near other pitchers, outfielders are next to other outfielders and so on. This can lead to the development of cliques that inhibit team unity.

The circle also reinforces a team-first mentality. Stars do not get private lockers with nicer amenities; instead, everyone's locker has exactly the same dimensions.

"If there was any hierarchy, this was the way to neutralize it," says Primo Orpilla, co-founder of Studio O+A, a San Francisco design firm.

— Adapted from ["The Chicago Cubs' Circle of Trust,"](#) Jared Diamond, *The Wall Street Journal*, [www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com).