

Sweet Spot

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ON THE BALL

Mastro plans guilty plea

Bill Mastro is expected to acknowledge at a newly scheduled hearing in February that he altered the world's most valuable trading card, a Honus Wagner T206 that has fetched millions of dollars in a series of high-profile transactions, including a 1991 sale for \$451,000 to NHL legend Wayne Gretzky and former Los Angeles Kings owner Bruce McNall. Its latest sale was to Arizona Diamondbacks owner Ken Kendrick, who paid a record \$2.8 million for the card.

As reported Nov. 30 by Michael O'Keefe of the *New York Daily News*, Mastro's case will be assigned to a new judge, federal Judge Suzanne B. Conlon. Mastro, who was indicted on a count of fraud in July — and accused of trimming the world's most expensive baseball card — has already signed a plea agreement that changes the not-guilty plea he entered in July to guilty, according to papers filed in Chicago federal court by the United States Attorney's office for northern Illinois. No reason was given for the judge change, *The Daily News* reported.

Prosecutors Nancy DePodesta and Steven Grimes had asked the court to set a change of plea hearing for early February 2013. Mastro's attorneys support the request, the papers said. Michael Monico, Mastro's attorney, told *The Daily News* that Mastro intends to resolve the case without a trial and is cooperating with the government.

A federal Grand Jury handed down a 16-count indictment in July that Mastro and former associates, Doug Allen and Mark Theotikos "routinely defrauded customers, rigged auctions and inflated prices paid by unwitting bidders," *The Daily News* reported. ►

THE ART WITH COLLECTING AUTOGRAPHS

Many sports artists, blessed with technical gifts, began as commercial artists or illustrators. Norman Rockwell painted slices of American life for *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Boys Life*, *Popular Science* and other publications. His tight, realistic paintings also found audiences in the form of posters, calendars, postcards and even puzzles.

Naturally, a slice of that life addressed sports. An icon was created. And so was a market.

LeRoy Neiman, born LeRoy Leslie Runquist, was a fashion illustrator before doing work for *Playboy* magazine. In 1960, with televised sports capturing a global audience, Neiman found a vehicle for his fast, loose painting style — the Olympics, Super Bowls, World Series, golf tournaments, Wimbledon. His easel and signature moustache and white suit became part of major American sports events.



Ron Lewis

He, too, found a market with editions of serigraphs, prints and any product that would hold an image.

Countless artists have found American life and, more specifically, sports a popular subject with a keenly interested audience. Dick Perez popularized his images through Steele-

Perez Galleries and the Leaf-Donruss Card Company.

Which brings us to Ron Lewis of Pocatello, Idaho, whose Currier & Ives-esque style brought him into the sports arena with its burgeoning autograph industry. Autograph fans needed collectibles to sign, and when Stephen Hisler organized autograph shows that saluted milestone clubs, Ron Lewis, doing his time in New York, actually a dozen years, found his way into cliques of American sports heroes.

"Sports is something I moved into,"

See **RON LEWIS** on Page 7

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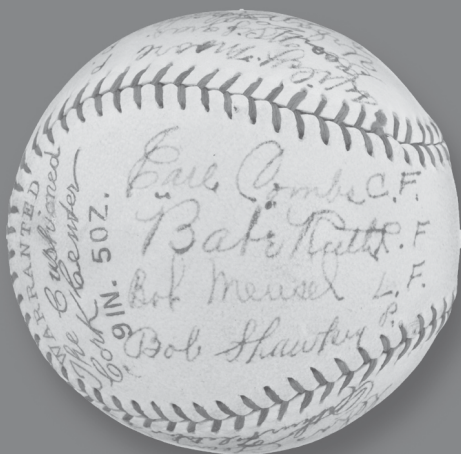
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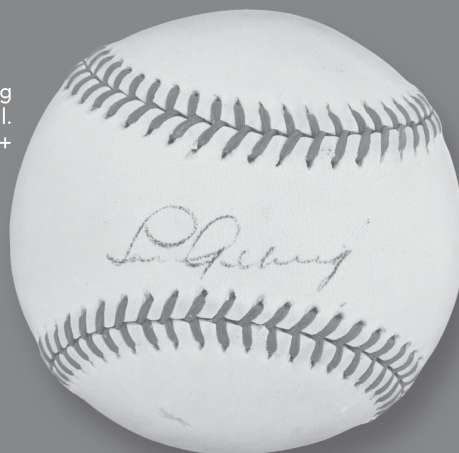
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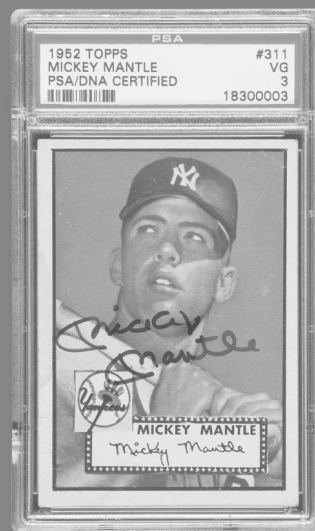
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Italy sports museum

TURIN, Italy — From the town that gave us the mysterious shroud of Jesus comes Italy's first Museum of Sports. Boxing gloves once used by Muhammad Ali are among 300,000 items on display in the 800 square meters of space in Turin's Olympic Stadium. Most of the items in the exhibit come from the private collection of Onorato Arisi. In addition to Ali's gloves and another set worn by Roberto Cammarelle, an Olympic gold medalist in the Beijing games of 2008, the museum also features:

- The vest worn by Livio Berruti, gold medalist in the 200 meters in the 1960 Rome Olympics;
- A helmet once worn by the late Formula 1 legend, Ayrton Senna;
- A track suit worn by MotoGP rider Marco Simoncelli before his death last year in a crash; and
- One of Diego Maradona's Napoli shirts.

All told, the exhibit includes memorabilia from 200 athletes, including 50 Olympic medalists.

Collectors, pay your taxes

Thinking about just not paying your taxes? Well, think again. Christopher York of Walworth County, Wisc., had owed \$320,000 in back taxes and the IRS resorted to selling off 130 memorabilia items on Nov. 1 to help settle the debt. Included in the auction were autographed Packers jerseys to models of Lambeau Field, a giant bobble head doll of Vince Lombardi and official footballs from Super Bowls 31 and 32.

Crystal Ferguson, a supervisor appraiser, told television reporters, "When a taxpayer does not pay their taxes, the revenue officer and/or tax collector will go out and seize their assets. When they seize them, we come in and sell them."

Taxpayers have a lot of rights that he can exercise and there are several options for collection. This is really the last resort — seizure," Ferguson said.

RaNdOm ThOuGhTs

Ruppert, O'Day lead vets

Umpire Hank O'Day, Yankees owner Jacob Ruppert and 19th Century catcher-third baseman Deacon White were elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame by the Pre-Integration committee. They will be joined by the Class of 2013, which will be voted by the Baseball Writers' Association of America on Jan. 9. The 16-member Pre-Integration Era Committee was composed of HOF members Bert Blyleven, Pat Gillick, Phil Niekro and Don Sutton, major league executives, media members and historians.

Have crazier things happened?

The 1990s were one crazy time for sports memorabilia. A woman paid more than \$8,000 for Ty Cobb's false teeth.

Tennis legend and heartthrob Andre Agassai revealed years after he retired that that mullet made of luscious blond hair actually was a wig. He even claimed that he'd lost his first Grand Slam because he thought the rag would fall off. A sports bar in New York, nonetheless paid thousands for the hairpiece.

And who will ever forget that days after tossing his seventh and final no-hitter on May 1, 1991, someone paid \$25,000 for the jock strap that the strike out king wore during that game.

One more. Luis Gonzalez hit a homer run and scored the winning run that helped win the 2001 World Series over the New York Yankees. Gonzo became part of Arizona lore and promoted one collector to pay \$10,000 for two pieces of Gonzo's gum. the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Historic Harvard sweater

Harvard's football program is one of the oldest in the world, having begun competing in the sport in 1873. The Crimson has a legacy that includes 8 national championships and 20 College Football Hall of Fame inductees and is the eighth winningest team

in NCAA Division I football history. A sweater given to all football letterman upon graduation, not the entire student body is being auctioned off in the Dec. 12 auction by Grey Flannel Auctions. The sweater is made of heavy, crimson wool long sleeve turtle neck sweater with "1902" on front in large felt numbers. The felt has turned to a shade of pink, presumably being white originally with the red from the sweater bleeding during washing. There are several holes throughout the sweater, some of which have been repaired with a different colored thread. Overall magnificent, original condition.

Larsen-signed '56 program

A 1956 World Series program and ticket stubs signed by Don Larsen is on the block at Heritage Auctions. The sale closes Dec. 30. The sale also includes an autograph page with Chuck Dressen and Roberto Clemente. A lot of 20 game-used bats, some signed, from such players as Manny Mota, Garry Sheffield, Mike Hargrove, Jack Clark and Howard Johnson are for sale. A wide range of single-signed baseballs is also available.

Game 3, 1927 WS program

A 1927 New York Yankees World Series Game 3 program, in which Babe Ruth hit a home run is on the block through Huggins & Scott Auctions. The sale closes Dec. 13. The sale also includes a 1896 dinner invitation signed by George Wright; and a ticket for Yankee Stadium on April 17, 1951, when Mickey Mantle, the "Commerce Comet," made his major league debut. He went 1-for-4 in a 5-0 win over the Boston Red Sox.

Ozzie's Gold Gloves:\$519K

The Wizard, Ozzie Smith, sold his complete set of Gold Glove Awards for \$519,203 in a SCP Auction that closed Dec. 2. He won the prestigious Rawlings fielding award from 1980 to 1992. Talk about domination at his position. Only one shortstop besides Ozzie won the award four years in a row. Nope, not Barry Larkin, who won three in a row. Yep, it was Dave Concepcion, who won the award four consecutive years. A second replica set of these awards, also produced by Rawlings, is on display at his restaurant in the St. Louis area. ►

Sweet Spot

NEWS AND INFORMATION

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EDITORIAL

Dream national championship matchup for collectors

College football collecting is about to enjoy a surge in popularity. Why?

Because, love 'em or hate 'em, Notre Dame is in the national championship game with Alabama. Since collectors love history, it's going to be time to trot out a long line of Notre Dame greats, including Heisman winners, famed quarterbacks and coaches, and, finally, the Four Horsemen. Manti Te'o will try to add his name to so many golden domers, from Lujack, Lattner and Guglielmi to Hornung, Montana, Tim Brown and so many more. I should never have gotten started with naming names.

Collectors and the rest of the college football are about to relive the greatness of Rockne, Parseghian, Leahy, Devine and Holtz. Look for new demand at autograph shows and among dealers.

Of course, if Notre Dame loses to Alabama, the back-to-back national champion Crimson Tide will gush with equal glory for all of the players and coaches from today to the houndstooth hat era.

The New York Knicks-New Jersey Nets would appear to be a nice interstate rivalry, but nothing like the potential of a Knicks-Nets rivalry between a couple of boroughs as in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

So far, the away games between the two teams in Brooklyn's Barclay Center attract more fans from the more populous borough with Madison Square Garden.

And the Knicks gear, the top sellers in the NBA, has more color and tradition. One would have thought the league, with its focus on the sale of licensed items and hip-looking gear, would have come up with something much more esthetically pleasing than the current Nets stuff. For the sake of nostalgia, could Brooklyn have built in the B so lovingly displayed by Dodgers fans? One would think Brooklyn is a place that's gone back to black-and-white televisions. We like throwback uniforms as much as the next fan, but there's nothing classic about these uniforms. Look for this boring design to give way to the Nets' development as the resurgence of Brooklyn continues. ►



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Confession fails to sell

— WEST BERLIN, N.J.

The priceless Pete Rose signed confession fetched eight bids but failed to meet the reserve price during Goldin Auctions' inaugural sale. The item had a listed minimum bid of \$100,000 and an estimate between \$50,000 and \$100,000. The highest priced item that did sell was a Babe Ruth-signed bat for \$23,582. A 1986 Mets World Series ring sold for \$22,840; and Michael Jordan's game-worn jersey from the 1995-'96 championship season sold for \$22,413. Norm Van Brocklin's game-used Rams helmet sold for \$16,105. Among other items that sold were:

- Roger Staubach's game-worn jersey from 1977-'78 Super Bowl, \$14,271;
- Drew Brees' first NFL game-used and inscribed rookie jersey for \$12,973;
- A 1934 team-signed New York Yankees team ball, including Ruth, for \$11,274;
- Rickey Henderson's 1993 World Series trophy with the Toronto Blue Jays, for \$9,435.

A total of 15 lots donated by the company founders raised \$5,000 for the American

Auction Report

Red Cross relief effort for Hurricane Sandy victims. The Goldin sale grossed more than \$800,000, the company reported in a statement.

Ruth bat: \$253,000

— LOUISVILLE, KY.

An autographed 1924 Babe Ruth pro model bat sold for \$253,000 at an auction held at the Louisville Slugger Museum.

The sale, the latest annual event held at the famed bat factory, also featured two collections of sports memorabilia, including autographed baseballs collected by the general manager of the St. Louis Jefferson Hotel in the early 1900s. They sold for more

than \$102,000. An auction at the Louisville Slugger Museum pulled in \$253,000 for a 1924 Babe Ruth autographed professional model baseball bat. Another major holding of 20th Century baseball programs sold for more than \$89,000. Among the items that sold were:

- Harry Kalas 2009 Philadelphia Phillies National League Championship ring for \$17,000;
- A Honus Wagner professional model baseball bat from the 1920s for \$24,000; and
- A 1927 Yankees team-signed baseball for \$21,780.

'56 Aaron jersey: \$30,343

SOUTH MILWAUKEE, Wisc. — A signed and game-worn Hank Aaron Milwaukee Braves road jersey from 1956 sold for \$30,343 in a MEARS Auction that closed Dec. 1. A 1953 Jackie Robinson Brooklyn Dodgers Louisville Slugger game-used bat sold for \$27,349 on 29 bids. Reggie Jackson's game-worn Jersey from 1981, his final season as a Yankee, sold for \$14,351. ►

RON LEWIS, FROM PAGE 1

Lewis said in an interview. "I didn't have that in mind as an artist, but for years that's all I was doing. I hate to pigeonhole myself. I recently produced an exhibit of portraits, with subjects of people I know." Vintage automobiles and Victorian homes are among favorite images in his other work. Expect chasing dogs somewhere in those compositions.

He gained great visibility for 20 years in the sports genre, then left the arena for the next decade. He only returned to sports recently when he was commissioned to produce a painting honoring Jewish Baseball Players. The large (48-inch-by-36-inch), original oil features 72 people, the most Lewis has ever put into one of his paintings. Signed prints from the painting are available, including everyone from Shawn Green Braun and Kevin Youkilis to the only living Jewish Hall of Famer, Sandy Koufax. (The late Hank Greenberg is in the painting.)

Ryan Braun agreed to be in it, but he also demanded that his dad be in the image as well. Most of the proceeds are going to charity.

The commissions for his sports work at least give buyers the licensing rights. Autograph collectors will recognize seeing his work in such series as "Gridiron Greats," which carried the images of Johnny Unitas, Gale Sayers, Don May-



nard and Len Dawson. A total of 2,500 sets were produced. The series of Negro Leaguers in the late 1980s gave collectors items suitable for signing at a time when very little topical Negro League items existed.

It remains one of Lewis's favorite projects, though he is most fond of a series of Negro League paintings that showed players off the diamond, around the old buses they used to barnstorm. The first series was held in conjunction with a symposium on the Negro Leagues at Hofstra University.

"The players were really pleased to have the opportunity to come out of obscurity," Lewis said. "They were thrilled

and I was happy to see it."

The painting that "got the ball rolling" for Lewis was a painting of living members of the 500 Home Run Club. The image, from left to right, showed Ted Williams, Frank Robinson, Harmon Killebrew, Reggie Jackson, Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, Mike Schmidt, Ernie Banks, Eddie Mathews and Willie McCovey. Yankee Stadium was the backdrop. The players were standing on tan dirt, on the edge of the Bronx green.

All the players are represented as pretty much the same height, though McCovey was 6-feet, 4 inches and Mickey Mantle and Harmon Killebrew

COVER STORY

RON LEWIS, FROM PAGE 6

were 5-feet, 11-inches tall. As in the minds of collectors, Mantle is shown larger than life.

"Autograph collectors just want to have a good likeness," Lewis said. "When you start working on these things you go with what's in your mind. I don't want to copy a photograph that's out there. I want to bring something new if I can. I'll bring a head with a different body. I don't want people to say, 'I know where that image comes from.'"

Lewis figured collectors would sign in the dirt at the base of the image so as not to obscure the artwork.

As he sat in the Trump Tower, the artist saw the signatures going everywhere on the lithographs. Some signatures were across the chest; others were up the leg. Collectors made “windows” to indicate where they wanted the players to sign the piece,” Lewis recalled.

He said about 5,000 people were expected for the show in Atlantic City, but 35,000 showed up. One thousand of the pieces were lithographs, then there were three pallets of the image on printed posters.

“Everything was in such a rush,” Lewis said. “I would be at the front dispensing the posters and signing them for the public.”

While the 500 Home Run Club poster started a trend for creating autographed product, it was also “the beginning of the end,” Lewis said. At the time of the Hisler show the signatures of these most-in-demand players — DiMaggio not included — was \$5 to \$8. Eventually, select few players entered the \$100-plus orbit. The high cost carved out a different level of collector.

The 500 Home Run Club piece opened the gates to other milestone paintings: The Ryan Express 5,000 Strikeouts, The Kings (of home runs), the 3,000 Hit Club, the 3,000 Strikeouts Club, the 500 Goal Scorers Club. (Lewis said Wayne Gretzky wouldn't participate in the signing. And when he painted a piece of the men who walked on the moon, Neil Armstrong wouldn't sign "Moonwalkers," while the others did.) The original 500 Goal painting from 1995 sold in a 2011 auction for \$10,575;



a signed Moonwalkers, sans Armstrong autograph, still fetched about \$2,400.

Lewis said a fan favorite, particularly along the East Coast, is his "Upset of the Century," a tribute to the 1969 Super Bowl III New York Jets, with portraits of Don Maynard, Emerson Boozer, Weeb Eubanks, Matt Snell and Joe Namath.

The artist acknowledges that collec-

tors' passions are focused more on the autographs than his artwork, although he has cultivated a following who like to purchase pencil drawings of some of the athletes.

The drawings, of course, are often a part of the creative process. They help the artist work out composition issues

Continued on Page 8

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**ON THE
BLOCK**
AUCTION NEWS

CLOSING Dec. 21: Newcombe items

A Jackie Robinson game-worn home jerseys have been added to the Leland's fall auction that will close Dec. 21. Both jerseys date to 1950.

Leland's reports that the jerseys have been in private hands and are being offered for sale for the first time. The item has opened with a \$50,000 bid.

Another first-time-to-market jersey is another game-worn Brooklyn beauty from 1950 worn by Roy Campanella.

Don Newcombe's memorabilia collection, including his 1956 Cy Young and MVP Awards and his 1949 Rookie of the Year Award, will be sold December 21 in an auction organized by Leland's. Another treasure in the sale include's Satchel Paige's 1951 St. Louis Browns game-worn jersey.

Among other items in the sale are:

- A 1927 New York Yankees signed baseball;
- Ted Williams Boston Red Sox game-worn cap from the 1950s;
- A single-signed baseball by Jesse Burkett;
- A single-signed baseball by Joe "Iron Man" McGinnity (est. \$75,000);
- A 1952 Team Canada Olympic jersey from the gold medal game; and a 1952 gold medal from the same unidentified player;
- Guy Lefleur's HOF induction ring and 1975-76 Art Ross Trophy;
- Bobby Orr's 1969 Boston Bruins game-worn jersey;
- The debut gloves worn by Sugar Ray Leonard;
- A twice-signed item by Jack Johnson; and
- A complete run of Baseball Magazine (1908-1965)

REA: Balls, bats, jerseys

The extensive grouping of single signed baseballs come to the Robert Edward Auction block in the spring. In addition, Rob Lifson of REA is offering a variety of game-used jerseys, including a signed 1960 Sandy Koufax Dodgers home jersey, a road 1963 Sandy Koufax Dodgers jersey, a home 1970 Hank Aaron jersey, a 1970 Brooks Robinson Orioles road jersey, and a 1968-1972 Wilt Chamberlain Lakers road jersey. Numerous game-used bats will be in the auction, including a signed 1959-

LEWIS, FROM PAGE 7



ARTIST RON LEWIS, known by sports collectors for his 500 Home Run Club and other sports subjects, suitable for autographing, shows his passions, style and technique in his nonsports subjects artwork.

before carrying out other steps before a painting becomes the finished product. These aren't caricatures, folks. Lewis may take a work in its final stages and actually turn the canvas up-side down, "so I don't get caught up in the (subject of) the painting."

He said Norman Rockwell clearly was a "big influence" on him early in his career, what with his photoreal painting technique. As with many artists, other influences creep into the canvases. "I've incorporated some Picasso-esque cubism to convey an idea, but not necessarily," he said. "With the faces in my paintings, I do a lot of things that have optical illusions."

His other artwork is more tightly painted, with stronger compositions. While the sports projects have made Lewis a household name among many autograph collectors, most of these folks are clueless about the grand homes, idyllic scenes, signage and vintage cars of his other paintings. "Most of those people couldn't care less about my other stuff," he said. "A lot of sports collectors seem to be more interested in the autograph than the actual image."

In truth, sports collectors and art collectors share the desire to display something, so the marriage of art and autograph is a long and happy one. ►



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Dec. 4, MEQUON, Wisc.

(262) 367-1300
Guest: Tramon Williams

Dec. 7, HAVERTOWN, Pa.

(610) 789-4996
Guest: John LeClair

Dec. 8, RUTHERFORD, N.J.

(201) 967-9667
Guests: Bart Oates, Jim Burt, Leonard Marshall, Mark Collins, Perry Williams

Dec. 8, CINCINNATI, Ohio

(513) 409-7300
Guests: Norm Charlton, Tom Hall

Dec. 8, MINNETONKA, Minn.

(952) 545-6460
Guest: Tommy Kramer

Dec. 8, POTOMAC, Md.

(301) 299-9201
Guest: Lorenzo Alexander

Dec. 8, 9, KING OF PRUSSIA, Pa.

(610) 354-8212
Guests: Bob Ayrault, Bob Molinaro, Chase Utley, Dave Winfield, Dennis Eckersley, Frank Robinson, Gene Garber, John Kruk, Kevin Stocker, Mark Davis, Ricky Jordan, So Taguchi, Terry Mulhol-land, Tommy Greene, John Banaszak, Steve Carlton, Tim McCarver

Dec. 9, WACO, Texas

(254) 756-1633
Guest: Lee Roy Jordan

Dec. 9, TOMS RIVER, N.J.

(954) 986-0707
Guest: Todd Frazier

Dec. 11, BALTIMORE, Md.

(410) 461-8664
Guests: Dannell Ellerbe, Gino Gradkowski, Joe Flacco

Dec. 12, FOREST HILL, Md.

(410) 420-0732
Guest: Torrey Smith

Lee Roy Jordan, authors to sign at Texas HOF

Joe Nick Patoski, author of *The Dallas Cowboys: The Outrageous History of the Biggest, Loudest, Most Hated, Best Loved Football Team in America*, and Jenna McEachern, author of *DKR — The Royal Scrapbook*, will sign their books Dec. 8 and 9 at a sports memorabilia show at The Texas Sports Hall of Fame in Waco.

Also, on Dec. 9, former Cowboys linebacker Lee Roy Jordan and former Texas A&M and Alabama football coach Gene Stallings will sign autographs.

Dec. 15, CONCORD, Ontario

(905) 760-8404
Guests: Bobby Baun, Johnny Bower

Dec. 15, 16, HASBROUCK HEIGHTS, N.J.

(973) 808-1740
Guests: Dave Kingman, Eddie Murray, Frank Robinson, Juan Marichal, Orlando Cepeda, Steve Carlton, Wes Un-seld, Al Atkinson, Bill Baird, Bill Mathis, Brooks Robinson, Buddy Ryan, Dave Herman, Don Maynard, Earl Christy, Eddie Bell, Emerson Boozer, Gerry Philbin, Jerome Barkum, Jim Hudson, John Dockery, John Riggins, John Schmitt, Larry Grantham, Michael Stromberg, Mike D'Amato, Paul Rochester, Pete Lammons, Ralph Baker, Randy Ras-mussen, Winston Hill

Dec. 15, FAIRLESS HILLS, Pa.

(215) 579-0731
Guests: Dave Schultz, Lonnie Smith

Dec. 15, MINNETONKA, Minn.

(952) 545-6460
Guest: Cole DeVries

Dec. 16, COLUMBUS, N.J.

(732) 928-8600
Guests: Bob Kelly, Joe Watson

Dec. 17, STERLING HEIGHTS, Mich.

(586) 566-8331
Guest: Ndamukong Suh

Dec. 29, TROY, Mich.

(248) 680-9766
Guest: Scotty Bowman

Jan. 5, 2013, INDUSTRY, Calif.

(714) 761-6414
Guest: Troy Glaus

Jan. 26, SECAUCUS, N.J.

(201) 863-8700
Guests: Chad Curtis, Chili Davis, Homer Bush, Jeff Nelson, Jose Cardinal, Mike Buddie, Mike Stanton, Scott Brosius, Tim Raines, Eduardo Nunez, Gary Thomasson, Jesse Barfield, Larry McCall, Rawley Eastwick, Roy White, Shane Spencer, Tommy John

Feb. 15-17, SOMERSET, N.J.

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Guests: Fred Biletnikoff, Jim Plunkett, Andy Dalton, Bo Jackson, Darren Sp-roles, Desmond Howard, Marcus Allen, Matt Leinart, Ndamukong Suh, Patrick Peterson, Reggie Bush, Ryan Tannehill, Isiah Thomas, Larry Johnson, Lesean McCoy, Michael Vick, Phil Simms, San-tonio Holmes

Feb. 23, HOOVER, Ala.

(205) 985-3020
Guests: Bo Jackson, Cam Newton, Pat Sullivan

April 26, SOMERSET, N.J.

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