



# First Annual Negro League Fan Fest Opens This Saturday

By Perry Green  
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A few months ago, Ray Banks, a Negro League goodwill ambassador, informed the AFRO that he and the Black Athletes and Lost Legends Association Inc. (BALL) were teaming up to do something that had never been done before in Baltimore.

Banks convinced the Applebee's Bar and Grill on Reisterstown Road to display for the first time ever photos of Negro League ballplayers on the walls of their restaurant.

And with the same motivation they had for getting those photos up for display, Banks and BALL will now pull another first-timer out of thin

air.

Sponsored by Forest City Science and Technology, East Baltimore Development Inc., Sage Policy Group and Harbor Bank of Maryland, BALL will hold its first annual Negro League Fan Fest July 26 from noon to 7 p.m. at 1731 E. Chase St.

Much like the purpose of displaying Negro League photos on the walls of local social establishments, the festival will take on the mission of "unveiling the past and discovering greatness by informing and educating adults and youth on the proud history of Blacks in baseball."

According to Tonya Thomas, executive director of BALL, the Negro League Fan



Courtesy photo

This year's Negro League Fan Fest will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the first Negro League All Star game.

Fest will showcase Negro League history by featuring BALL's popular "Barnstorming with the Negro Leagues" exhibit.

There will also be former Negro League players in attendance to meet and greet, sign autographs and take pictures. Players making an appear-

ance will be Luther Atkinson of the Satchel Paige All Stars, Eddie Banks of the Newark Eagles, Jimmy Bland of the Indianapolis Clowns, Al

Burrows of the New York Black Yankees, Hubert "Bert" Simmons of the Baltimore Elite Giants and James Tillman of the Homestead Grays.

There will be a parade to open up the festival at noon, and plenty of free food will be provided, along with fun giveaways and interactive games.

The event will also celebrate the 75th anniversary of the first-ever Negro League All Star game, as well as the recent Major League Baseball drafting of Bert Simmons.

Negro League merchandise will be for sale.

For additional information on the fest, contact Tonya Thomas at info.ballinc.org.

BALL Association Inc. is a nonprofit organization that acts as a goodwill ambassador to educate today's youth about the Negro League's untold legends as a vehicle to bridge the gap between the past, present and future, and to empower and encourage them to create their legacy for future generations.



Tim Lacy

## ANOTHER Viewpoint

### No Surprise

With the temperatures in the high 90s and everybody praying that their air conditioning will last at least one more summer, it is surprising that the hottest topic on the sports scene is football.

Back in March when Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre retired, I registered my doubts right here on this page. Considering that Brett has been making retirement noises the past three seasons, this seemed to be only a footnote to this drama.

The fact that Brett's 2007 season was one to be remembered is enough to stir the juices of his ego. During his entire career you could see that he was like a kid playing a game. And to walk away would be like being put him in time out, not allowing him to play with the rest of the kids frolicking in the neighborhood.

It is my feeling that when you have been doing something you enjoy for 17 years, as long as you are able to dress yourself, the only way you will give it up is if you are led away kicking and screaming.

His farewell speech to the press will be best remembered for his tears. Maybe at the time he was really serious about retirement, but it didn't take long for him to realize that there is only so much fishing you can do without getting bored to death. There are some fishermen out there that will disagree with me, but remember I am talking about an action junkie.

Well, this past week when Brett announced that he wanted to come back, microphones started buzzing and computer keys started humming. The talking heads were having a field day. There was some speculation that Brett retired to get out of the remaining three years of his contract with Green Bay.

If this is his reason, I can't blame him. I don't imagine it is much fun playing outdoors when the temperatures have you so cold you are suffering from an identity crisis. I would have been looking for employment in Miami about 10 years ago.

Now, there is the question of whether Brett's Hall of Fame credentials will be tarnished with this clash with his employers and the negative press it has garnered. I say no. I will bet the ranch he will take his place in the HOF on the first ballot of his eligibility.

After all, there are those out there that claim that Brett is the best quarterback to ever strap on a pair of cleats. I beg to differ. He is among the great ones, and he deserves his place in the hall, but let's not get carried away.

When you rate the greatest, you have to start with Sammy Baugh, Johnny Unitas and Joe Montana. Just for luck, you can throw John Elway, Terry Bradshaw, Dan Marino, Troy Aikman, Tom Brady and Peyton Manning into the mix.

I think his greatest achievement was starting 253 consecutive games. Football is a violent sport and anybody who can remain out of the hospital for 17 years gets my vote.

As far as Brett coming out of retirement is concerned, the first thing to be considered is the fact that he never filed his retirement papers with the league.

Now things get a little complicated. Brett wants back in, but he wants to play somewhere else. He is asking the Packers to trade him. Packers general manager Ted Thompson is playing hard ball. He has taken the position that if Brett comes back he will come back as a Packer, and his duty will be to carry the clip board on the sideline.

Thompson is adamant that Aaron Rodgers will be the starting quarterback, and he isn't going to trade Brett to another team where he can hurt the Packers.

For my money, Brett may be a little long in the tooth, but if the Packers are looking for a championship, they better put him at the helm. Rodgers is promising, but he just ain't ready.

Not only that, but the fans in Green Bay are ready to put on their cheese hats and storm the castle if the Packers mess with Brett. There is no question that he is the most popular person in Wisconsin, and from the fan perspective, the fact that he wants to continue to play comes as no surprise.

## Sports Digest

### Local Sports

#### Baltimore County Athletes Participate in Md. PAL Field Day

The 4th annual Maryland Police Athletic League (PAL) Field Day will be held on July 30 at Catonsville High School. The event will consist of PAL members from Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Frederick City and Laurel. More than 400 participants will compete in 50, 100, 200 and 400 yard dashes, and a 4x400 yard relay race. The event will also feature football and softball throws, and a tug-of-war competition. The kids will be grouped into three categories: 7-10 years-old, 11-13 years-old, and 14-17 years-old.

Each youth will receive a free lunch from Pizza Hut, snacks from United Healthcare and athletic give-aways from Dick's Sporting Goods. Crystal Palace USA, an international soccer team, will also conduct soccer drills in between sporting events.

For information on how to sign your child up with the PAL organization, call 410-887-5892.

### Professional Basketball

#### Hometown Star Durant's Jersey Retired

The University of Texas will retire the jersey numbers of nine athletes during the 2008-09 school year, including D.C. native Kevin Durant.

The school had previously retired only four athletes' jersey numbers (Earl Campbell, Ricky Williams, T.J. Ford and Roger Clements), but will now add Durant's number along with NFL star Vince Young.

"We've given this a lot of thoughts over the years," said Texas athletic director DeLoss Dodds. "With the completion of renovations at our football and baseball stadiums, as well as Kevin and T.J. as national players of the year, we feel that now is the right time to honor some of the greatest of our really great players."

Other players to have their numbers retired this academic year are Bobby Layne Tommy Nobis, Greg Swindell, Burt Hooton, Scott Bryant, Brook Kieschnick and Slater Martin.

### Professional Football

#### Ravens Use Suggs' Roster Spot to Sign Phillips

With hybrid-defensive player Terrell Suggs as the only unexcused absence during the Baltimore Ravens' first team meeting of training camp Wednesday night, the Raven used his roster spot to sign cornerback Anwar Phillips, who was released by the New Orleans Saints on Monday.

The Ravens used the franchise tag on Suggs to keep the 2003 first-round pick from becoming a free agent this offseason. Suggs, 25, will earn \$8.5million this season. Because Suggs has not yet signed the franchise tag tender, Suggs can skip training camp without being penalized or fined.

It's still uncertain as to when Suggs will report to training camp.

The only other veteran missing from camp is cornerback Samari Rolle, who was excused to attend his father's funeral on Monday.

Despite the Ravens using a franchise tag on Suggs, general manager Ozzie Newsome has said the team wants to sign Suggs to a new long term deal after the season.

#### Vernon Davis Weekend Extravaganza a Hit

San Francisco 49ers tight end and former University of Maryland star Vernon Davis held his Stop the Violence Football Clinic for the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington last Friday at his alma mater Dunbar High School.

Following the football clinic, Davis invited some of his celebrity friends, such as Melissa Ford and Niecy Nash, to join him in hosting a flag football game. Unfortunately for Davis, his team would fall to the Capital Punishment (D.C. police squad team), 26-6.

Davis also hosted function at Love nightclub that Friday night and another function on Saturday night at Layla's nightclub.



Kevin Durant

The weekend extravaganza ended with a meet-and-greet brunch on Sunday.

#### Redskin's Thomas Goes Down in Training Camp

Wide receiver Devin Thomas, the Redskins' top draft pick, has been carted away from practice after pulling his right hamstring at training camp.

Coach Jim Zorn says the team doesn't immediately know the extent of the injury.

Thomas was hurt Thursday while reaching over his head to catch a pass from quarterback Jason Campbell during 11-on-11 drills. Thomas was drafted in the second round, 34th overall and signed a \$4.83 million, four-year contract last week.

### More Sports

#### Legendary Black Sportscaster 'Jocko' Maxwell Dies at 100

Pioneering Black sportscaster Sherman "Jocko" Maxwell, who chronicled the triumphs of Negro league baseball players before the color barrier fell, has died at the age of 100.

Maxwell died Wednesday at Chester County Hospital in suburban Philadelphia after battling pneumonia, according to his son, Bruce Maxwell.

Supporting himself by working at the post office during the day, Sherman Maxwell went to work at night as a sportscaster and was a prolific writer, submitting stories to the *Ledger* in Newark, N.J., the predecessor of *The Star-Ledger*, on games played by the Newark Eagles.

"His life was nothing but sport," Bruce Maxwell said. "He read about sports, he listened to sports, he talked sports."

Maxwell began his broadcasting career in 1929, doing a five-minute weekly sports report on WNJR in Newark at the age of 22. He went on to broadcast on other stations in northern New Jersey and eventually became the announcer for Sunday afternoon Newark Eagles games. His broadcasting career ended in 1967.

Maxwell also founded and managed the Newark Starlings, a semipro, mixed-race team.

Maxwell, a 1994 inductee into the Newark Athletic Hall of Fame, was preceded in death by his wife Mamie and daughter Lisa.