

THE **HOT** LIST: Unmasking baseball's best

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after **LeBron's**
M.J. moment

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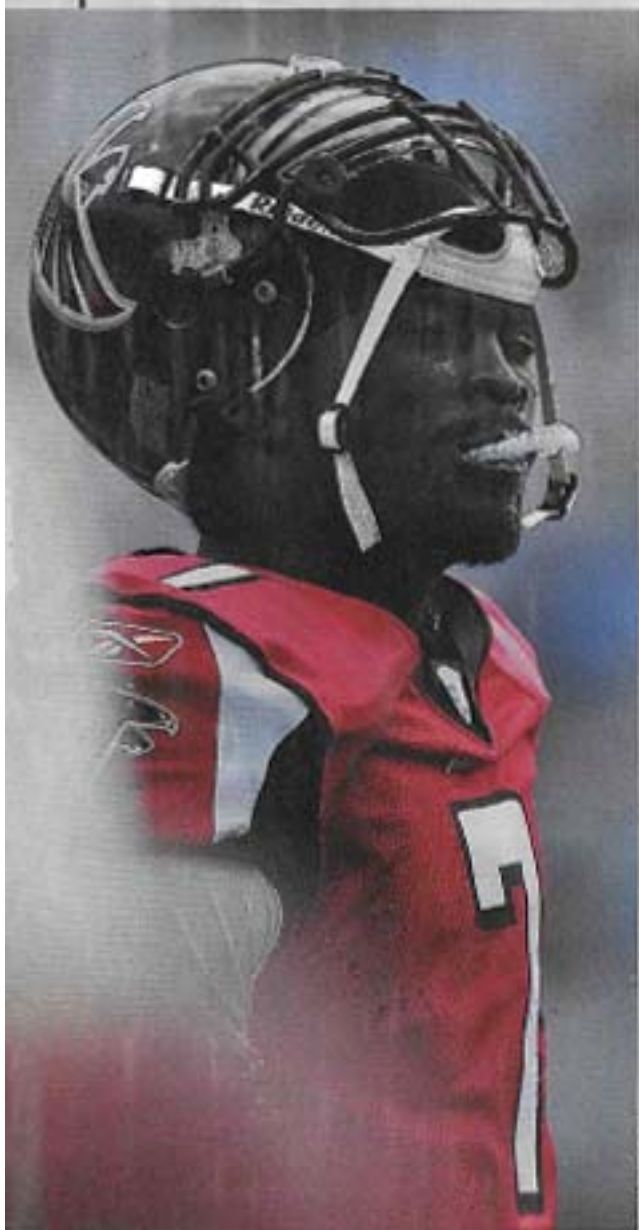
TO KNOW LIST

7 things to make you an INSTANT EXPERT this week

1

THE MAIN EVENT

A menacing dog collar



This isn't O.J. Simpson standing trial for murder. It isn't Mercury Morris selling drugs or Billy Cannon printing fake money. It might not even be Art Schlichter gambling his way into prison and financial ruin.

But dogfighting, in which dogs are bred and trained to rip each other to shreds, is a felony, and Michael Vick is squarely in the cross hairs of Virginia investigators. An indictment would make Vick a defendant in the highest-

This certainly isn't what Roger Goodell needs now. Since taking over as NFL commissioner in September, he has been making all the right moves—coming down hard on the league's criminal element, initiating a conference on concussions, banning alcohol from team functions and so on. Goodell seemed to be making progress—and now this. Pacman Jones has Vick beat volume-wise, but the ugly nature of dogfighting and Vick's stature in the league make



The ugly nature of dogfighting and Michael Vick's stature in the league make this Roger Goodell's prickliest situation yet.

profile criminal case involving an NFL star since Ray Lewis was accused of murder seven years ago.

The evidence against Vick is mounting. An April raid of a home he owned in Virginia revealed the presence of dozens of dogs, most of them pit bulls, along with materials that could be associated with dogfighting. Authorities say a line of informants connecting Vick to high-stakes dogfighting is forming. If charged and convicted, he could face five years in prison.

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This isn't what Bobby Petrino needs, either. Vick is one of the league's most exciting players, but his struggles as a passer and Atlanta's mediocre record on his watch have Falcons fans growing restless. The new coach thinks he can fix what ails Vick, but then so did Jim Mora and Dan Reeves. And if Vick is out of pocket (come to think of it, when is he *in* the pocket?), Petrino's Plan B is ... Joey Harrington.

Vick could, as he claims, be totally innocent. Maybe his greatest sin was stupidity—trusting others who did nasty things in his absence. But NFL fans are growing weary of their heroes being linked to criminal activity, and with investigators nipping at Vick's heels, Goodell and Petrino can only hope the face of the Falcons isn't in for a legal dogfight of his own. —Mike Nahrstede

NEWS YOU CAN'T USE

"So what if we're boring," Duncan says before taking nap >>> Cubs pile in Piniella's basement to watch 'Anger Management' >>> Donovan to spring for tacos

2

QUICK CLICKS

They just can't hold it in

"The Brewers make me feel so good about myself—like I'm on the right path now and all the choices I've made were leading me to this moment," explains the webmaster of peeyourpantsforthebrewers.com. The site is an expression of love, and, well, let's just call it enthusiastic support for the unlikely division leader in the big leagues. Let you assume otherwise, PYPFB is a pretty clean site, too. And funny. To date, more than 5,200 Brewers die-hards have pledged to PTP if the Brewers make the playoffs for the first time in a quarter-century; one of them describes the best part of being a Brewers fan as, "At 220 pounds, I'm in the lightweight division." Thin, fat, really fat—these days, all Brewers fans are tasting the good life. —Steve Greenberg

3

IT BEARS REPEATING

'There is obviously demand for top-level professional football. The NFL wants and needs competition.'

—Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban on his website, Blogmavenck.com. Cuban is part of a group that is considering launching a rival pro football league called the UFL. The league would play on Friday nights.

4

LIFESTYLES

Health Nats

Alcoholic beverages are not the only things that have been banned from the Nationals' clubhouse. The team also got rid of snacks such as M&M's, Milky Way bars, Twinkies and Skittles. In are fruits, walnuts, carrots and a salad bar. Fried chicken also has been banned from the premises. Instead, the team will feast on rotisserie chicken. According to general manager Jim Bowden, the idea came from players Brian Schneider and John Patterson, who felt it was time for the team to eat healthier. —MLB.com



Look, just do us a favor and wait until you get home, OK?

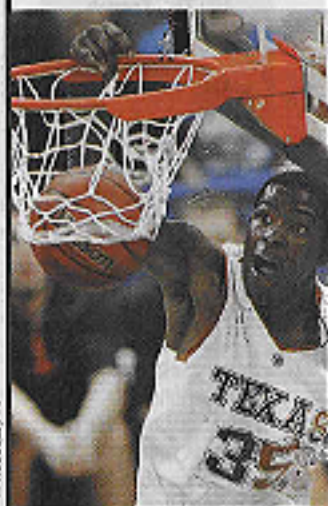
REUTERS/PHILIPS / AP

5

YOU HEARD IT HERE

'Kevin Durant can pretty much play any position he wants to.'

—Trail Blazers coach Nate McMillan, on *Sporting News Radio's Tim Brendo Show*



TY RUSSELL / AP

6

GET IT BEFORE IT'S HOT

Legends of the ball

Take a deep breath, Cubs fans. Turn away from the trades and the tussles and relive some of the finer moments in Cubs history with the *Chicago Cubs Legends: Great Games Collector's Edition* (\$84.99, in stores). The DVD set devotes a disc each to eight of the biggest stars in team history. Watch Ryne Sandberg's 7-RBI game in 1984, Sammy Sosa's 62nd home run or Kerry Wood's 20-strikeout performance—anything but what's going on at Wrigley these days.

Also newly available is the *Baltimore Orioles Legends: Cal Ripken Jr. Collector's Edition* (\$59.95, in stores). The six-disc set includes highlights from Ripken's All-Star appearances, his 6-for-6 game against the Braves in 1999 and, of course, the night he broke Lou Gehrig's storied consecutive games record.

—Incia Garner



7

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: SPURS FORWARD ROBERT HORRY

Bob has some big shots left

Back in the first round of the playoffs, with the Spurs leading the Nuggets by one late in Game 4, Robert Horry, 36, did the one thing that has kept him in the league over the past few years—he made a backbreaking 3-pointer. "He's been known to do that," deadpanned Spurs coach Gregg Popovich.

Indeed, from his first Finals game-winning 3-pointer (as a member of the Rockets in 1995, when his shot with time running out beat the Magic) to his last (in overtime to beat the Pistons during Game 5 in 2005), Horry has been a late-game fixture in The Finals. But he has struggled since his two-game suspension in the conference semifinals—he shot just 22.2 percent against Utah in the West finals.

Still, the Cavaliers, according to one scout, would be wise not to leave Horry alone with a game in the balance. "I just get the feeling he is due to win them a game with a 3, don't you?" the scout says. "Every now and then, he needs to remind us all why he's still in the league."

—Sean Deveney



He's not the main event, but Bob usually provides a killer sideshow.

PHILIP HANAUER / AP