



MIKE ALBANS DAILY NEWS

OF THE TIMES Brandon Steiner of Steiner Sports Marketing places some bats for Yankees first baseman Tino Martinez to sign. Martinez and several members of the world champs signed bats, jerseys, baseballs, photos and other merchandise, to be marketed by Steiner's company as memorabilia.

Bombardiers' signing bonus

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Tino Rivera is focused, slow and deliberate. Tino Martinez, like Jose Canseco, is whip fast. They're working with ferocious intensity, signing stacks of bats, balls, photos and jerseys last week in cluttered offices on W. 27th St.

Yankee players are cash-king and large, one last before they head home for vacations. Approximately four hours' pay will each make between \$20,000 and \$80,000 depending on individual star power.

More than 22 players and staff will sign 1,800 pieces of merchandise. Derek Jeter and others will add their names

to memorabilia is hot. The new team-signed bats will retail for \$3,500 each. Photos and balls will sell for \$2,000.

The non-intensive assembly line began last Sunday, moved toward meeting a petite still hungry for trophies and championship glo-

Autograph on items is big biz

Paul O'Neill and Andy Pettitte had the merchandise trucked up to the hotel they stay at in Rye Brook, Westchester County, and were signing in their rooms as late as 3 a.m. Monday, the day of the big parade through the Canyon of Heroes.

Rivera wanted to go home to Panama on Tuesday morning, so the merchandise was trucked up to his home in Eastchester. But the great closer couldn't finish this job on deadline, and he had to postpone his departure.

So here it is, Tuesday afternoon, and he's at that desk, with workers handing him one ball after another. In another room, infielder Jose Vizcaino is signing team photos; nearby, utility player Clay Bellinger is moving through a pile of jerseys. A few feet away, first base coach Lee Mazzilli is doing bats. A worker places one on his lap, he signs, another worker picks up the bat, with the process repeated again and again.

Presiding over this \$4.5 million Yankee merchandising move is 41-year-old Brandon Steiner, originally out of Flatbush, Brooklyn, and John Dewey High School.

He is now the head of one of the world's largest sports marketing and memorabilia companies, Steiner Sports Marketing Co. He started the company 12 years ago with \$4,000, after

stints as an accountant, cook and theme restaurant manager.

Along the way, he met several pro athletes and found a niche in marketing personal appearances and memorabilia signings.

And now the big-time agents are calling him. On Thursday afternoon, in a separate office on a floor above where the players are laboring, Steiner is on the phone with four people on hold. He's talking to the agent for Mets second baseman Edgardo Alfonzo. The agent and Alfonzo want a piece of the World Series marketing action.

"Listen," Steiner says, "Besides [Mike] Piazza, on the Mets, nobody has a market, maybe [Al] Leiter, but it's shaky. You want \$35 [for Alfonzo] plus the price of the ball, that's \$42, I gotta make 35 points, that's like \$60, so that the ball has gotta retail for \$100 and that's a Bernie Williams. It's not going to happen."

Then a call about a personal appearance for Mia Hamm, forward on the U.S. women's Olympic soccer team.

"Mia will be with all the girls," Steiner says. "We'll divide them up into groups, five groups, and they'll all get time with her. You've got it, okay, okay."

Downstairs, Tino Martinez is finished. "Flew him up this morning from Tampa and we're flying him back tonight," Steiner says.

Dwight Gooden walks through the hall on his way in.

"Hey," he says, "I'm coming back next season. I talked to them [Yankees management] and I'm coming back, pretty definitely."

Only a few of the players aren't participating. "Bernie Williams, he won't do it, because he only does a few things, big things," Steiner says. "El Duque [Orlando Hernandez], I don't know why, Scott Brosius, he's not, and Roger [Clemens], we're not doing Roger."

"This is big," he says, his enthusiasm growing. "But you know what else we have? Listen, we do 2,500 to 3,000 appearances a year, card shows, speaking engagements. We're about to enter into a special arrangement with Jeter for a lot of stuff."

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