

TOTAL ACCESS

BY JOHN BRODER

SIGNING DAY WITH DEREK JETER

THE BOTTOM LINE



Ever wonder why it's so tough to get an autograph from your favorite player?

Welcome to our private signing party. It's at sessions like this one, at an office building in New Rochelle, N.Y., that Derek Jeter puts

his name on the line over and over again. He's one of many jocks who sign autographs for Steiner Sports, a marketing company owned by Brandon Steiner that rakes in some \$30 million yearly from athlete appearances like this one. Jeter has an exclusive three-year, multimillion dollar deal with Steiner (this year, \$750,000 went to his Turn2 Foundation). Steiner's client list includes Mia Hamm (a top seller), Mark Messier and Phil Rizzuto (who sent the company's fortunes skyrocketing when he was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1994). But today, it's all about Jeter—and we won't charge admission.



HOT BATS

Steiner knows what's hot: He commissioned a commemorative bat stamped with both the All-Star Game and the World Series logos. Jeter, MVP of both in 2000, adds \$599 in value by simply signing as "Derek Jeter, MVP." (A regular Jeter game-model bat sells for \$700; this one will go for \$1,299.) Want Derek's scrawl on your team bat? That'll cost you \$500.



OLD SHOES

One collector sent in a game-used baseball shoe for DJ to sign, with strict instructions about where. "You always see some of your old stuff popping up. It's kind of weird," says Jeter. He wants to sign in silver, on the plastic covering the Jordan symbol, where he usually signs spikes. But it's not what the customer wants, so Jeter signs on the front. Cha-ching! Another \$500



BAD SIGNS

Steiner tells his players not to sign memorabilia they feel will be resold. "We tell them to personalize stuff or not sign at all," he says, because adding a name makes an item harder to sell. Jeter signs every day, but only inside the stadium: "I don't like little kids coming up to get things signed and then seeing grownups pay them. I know who they are. I see the same faces in every city.

STICKY FINGERS

Wacky requests come in all the time. "Someone wanted me to sign his forehead, and I wouldn't do it," says DJ. "I don't sign body parts." Although the Yank shortstop is puzzled by the collecting bug, he totally gets the business. Want him to sign a Skippy jar? Sure. Forget about card shows: He won't work those. But he's always got a pen out for fans at games.

