

THE SPORTS MEDIA BLITZ

The old saying, 'you can't go home again,' is not always accurate. In **Bonnie Bernstein's** case, the 16-year broadcaster returned to **ESPN** after eight years with CBS Sports.

"It was the best decision I ever made in my professional life," Bernstein said. "I wouldn't trade my experience at CBS and I had a prominent role as a sideline reporter, but it was tough for me to grow as a journalist."

"ESPN is a 365-day, 24/7 sports station with a lot of opportunities," she continued. "I've also hosted 'NFL Live' and Jim Rome's show, and I am also hosting 'The Road to March Madness,' which will be shown on Saturdays for six weeks in February and March on ABC."

Bernstein was 25 years old when she began her first stint with the 'Worldwide Leader in Sports,' and was assigned to cover the 72-win Chicago Bulls, who went on to win the 1995 NBA Finals. "They moved me to Chicago and I didn't know anyone, so I just threw myself into my work," she remembered. "It was a great experience with Michael Jordan and Phil Jackson and the rest of that team. When you're thrown into the fire like that, you don't have time to realize that you are the new kid on the block."

In short time, Bernstein added to her portfolio and has covered many different events, such as the NFL, Major League Baseball, NCAA Men's Basketball Championship, U.S. Open Tennis Championship, and the NCAA Women's Gymnastics Championship.

"The Super Bowl is the crown jewel of sporting events, and there is a rabid fanaticism about college basketball, but whatever it is that I'm covering at the time is the most exciting to me," Bernstein said in response to which event she prefers.

Passing on some of her expertise and experience is something that Bernstein is fond of doing, and she has her own consulting firm entitled **Velvet Hammer Media**, which caters to beginners that recently graduated college trying to break into the sports industry all the way to corporate giants preparing for board presentations, regardless of the field they are in.

Growing up in New Jersey, Bernstein has fond memories of the first Super Bowl she covered in January of 2001. "I'll never forget. I was on my way to the airport and I called my mom and sort of teary-eyed told her, 'I'm on my way to my first Super Bowl - and I'm covering the Giants.'"

Although her favorite team lost 34-7 to the Baltimore Ravens, Bernstein enjoyed the experience being on Big Blue's sideline, covering the game for CBS/Westwood One Radio.

"Every once in a while, you allow yourself to let your professional guard down. We do this (working in the sports field) because deep down, we're all sports fans."

The sports fan in Bonnie began as a child, who knew early on what she was destined for - although it may have taken a different path. "At about 12 or 13 years of age, I decided this is what I wanted to do for a living. But at the time, I wanted to write for Sports Illustrated."

Going by her many accomplishments, she would excel in that, as well. Bernstein was a four-time Academic All-American in gymnastics and graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of Maryland's prestigious Merrill College of Journalism, where she received the Thomas M. Fields Award for academic and athletic excellence.✉

-JOE PIETARO

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THE RUNDOWN



Although they didn't make any splashes, the Mets will have **Duaner Sanchez** back for next season. The reliever, who was recovering from a broken bone in his shoulder, should make a full recovery.



The Bombers seem to be set with a little battle in Spring Training for one starting spot in the rotation. Expect **Phil Hughes**, **Ian Kennedy** and **Mike Mussina** to battle it out for the last two spots.



The Jets' opponents for 2008 have been determined, and outside of their division, they will be facing: Denver, Kansas City, Arizona, St. Louis and Cincinnati (home); Oakland, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle and Tennessee (road). The combined records of all their opponents from last season was 86-106.



Rookie running back **Ahmad Bradshaw** ranked third in the NFL in post-season rushing yards after the first three playoff games with 163 yards. He averaged 4.2 yards per carry and a touchdown, becoming an important part of Big Blue's offense and a nice option for Brandon Jacobs.



Averaging a career-low 13.9 points per game, **Stephon Marbury** may miss the rest of the regular season following surgery on his left ankle. An MRI revealed that the guard had inflammation around a chronically fractured bone spur.



Although the jury may still be out on him, first round draft pick **Sean Williams** has impressed by averaging 7.6 points, 5.5 rebounds, and 2.1 blocks throughout his first 35 games. The BC alum started 18 of those, and has averaged just over 21 minutes a night.



Although the first half has been disappointing, **Scott Gomez** has had a good season, making an appearance in the All-Star game. The former Devil took very little time adjusting to Broadway, playing with both Jaromir Jagr and Brendan Shanahan.



Rick DiPietro finally made the All-Star team, backing up in the Eastern Conference. Even though some say it's by default, the goalie actually made strides to take his game to the next level.



After a slow start, **Marty Brodeur** came around, vaulting the Devils into first and being voted into the All-Star game. New Jersey needs a strong Brodeur if they expect to make a run in April.