

Jack of all trades, master of most

By TOM LEDERER

The hot, summer sun gently baked the participants in the slo-pitch softball pitcher's duel at Depot Park on a recent Sunday afternoon. With his team trailing by three runs in the fifth inning, Jerry Asher came to bat with runners on second and third and one man out. The count was zero and two when he roped an opposite-field double, driving in both runners. Two plays later, on an infield out, Asher scored the tying run

with a daring head-first slide. In the bottom of the seventh inning, Asher singled home the winning run in the 8-7 come-from-behind victory which kept his team in first place. For 42-year-old Jerry Asher, it was a remarkable afternoon.

"Jerry Asher is a remarkable guy," said Bud Harrelson, former New York Met shortstop. He was not, however, referring to his friend and business associate's softball prowess, but, more specifically, to Jerry Asher the man,

the concerned citizen, the catalytic force in his community. "I have an infinite amount of respect for him."

Despite the rigors of running his own private law practice, and the demands of being a devoted family man, Asher has also been able to somehow weave sports activities, civic involvement, and religious commitment into the fabric of day-to-day living.

"Yes, I do live an active life," he said from his South Huntington home. "But I have found that if there is something that I really want to find the time to do, I can do it."

Sports has always been a major part of his life. Voted the outstanding male athlete in Huntington High School's class of '59, he went on to play lacrosse and football at Princeton. After law school and his discharge from the U.S. Army, he played semi-professional football for the Huntington Giants, and, for seven years, served as the club's general manager. He currently plays softball and basketball in Town of Huntington recreational leagues and, a dedicated jogger, he runs an average of five foot races a year.

Asher's sports involvement goes beyond the parameters of the playing field as well. For several years, he has been sports editor for the Huntington Cable TV Network, hosting a weekly interview show due to return to the airwaves in September. Asher also acts as a business consultant and legal advisor for a number of professional athletes, among them Bud Harrelson. Additionally, he works as an East Coast adjunct to professional sports agent extraordinaire Tony Atanasio.

"People like Jerry are hard to find in the business world," said Bud Harrelson, now a Met broad-



Jerry Asher interviews New York Mets general manager Frank Cushen (left) at Shea Stadium.

caster for Cablevision's Sportschannel. "Mixing business and friendship is not easy, but he does it well. He is the most trustworthy man I've ever met."

When you are able to corner Asher and sit him down for any length of time, you might chat casually about his past encounters with Bowie Kuhn or Neil Allen; or perhaps his candid views about town political races; or the relative merits of our country's legal system. However, will ultimately turn toward religion, which, for the past ten years, has been a focal point and a guiding force in Asher's life. Among the many hats that he wears as a member of St. Elizabeth's R.C. Church in South Huntington are those of a lector and a Eucharistic minister.

After his graduation from Princeton, Asher married his high school sweetheart, Sylvia Gazetsky. They have two daughters, Gigi, 16, and Lara, 10.

Nature day

Nature App...

Laundry lists of organizational participation are generally served for political who, with...

Dental Digest By Dr. William Berg Family Dentist

What Are Occlusal Sealants?

Today as in the past the most wide spread dental problem of children is dental decay. Dental decay is produced in both children and adults by bacterial plaque which forms around everyone's teeth. When this plaque formation occurs without removal the addition of sugar through candy or food products causes the plaque to produce an acid. The acid production on the tooth's enamel will cause a hole to be formed in the numerous small grooves of the tooth's chewing surface or through any side of the tooth. Although proper brushing, flossing and the periodic application of fluoride can inhibit decay, most children are neglectful of their oral care and even these measures are not enough to protect the teeth from decay.

The sealants themselves are clear plastic coverings applied to the tooth's chewing surface creating a physical barrier to the invasion of plaque on the tooth surface. Normally these sealants have the greatest benefit for children and are applied to either primary or newly erupting adult teeth. The posterior teeth are the teeth usually sealed since they have the deepest grooves and are hardest to keep clean.

The application of sealants is a relatively simple and painless procedure done without local anesthesia. The tooth surface is first cleansed thoroughly and then conditioned with a solution to make the enamel surface more porous. Then either a self curing sealant or one which is hardened by a curing light is placed on the conditioned enamel surface to harden. Sealants may need to be replaced periodically and should be monitored at a patient's normal recall visit to insure that they are intact. It is important to maintain these sealants through adolescence or the cavity prone years.

Through preventive measures such as sealants and routine check ups the patient will experience less discomfort and expense by alleviating the need for extensive restorative dental work in the future.

Village Green Professional Building
124 Main St. - Suite 15
Huntington, NY 11743
271-2310

Success Story

By LARRY NOVAK

The call to the newspaper office was not atypical. "Mr. Asher will not be able to make his 10 a.m. appointment," the reporter learned. He had to take care of "important business in New York." The reporter understood. After all, Jerry Asher is a lawyer, and lawyers do have to make a living. The reporter rescheduled the appointment.

That night, as he watched the Mets beat the Montreal Expos, the reporter learned that the Mets had signed Lee Mazzilli to a minor league contract. Four days later, as he spoke with Mr. Asher in his corner law office at New York Avenue and Dewey Street, he learned that Mr. Asher was Lee Mazzilli's agent. Mr. Asher apologized for cancelling the previous appointment. The reporter, a Mets fan, understood.

The "Jerry Asher Story" is a variation on the theme of "Home Town Boy Makes Good — In His Hometown." After quarterbacking Huntington High School to the 1958 Suffolk County football co-championship, there were four years at Princeton, three at Cornell University Law School, and two years as a first lieutenant and captain with the Army's Air Defense Artillery in Korea. Along the way, he found time to marry his high school sweetheart, Sylvia Gazetsky.

Voted the "best athlete" in Huntington's class of '59, Mr. Asher jokes that at Princeton the best he and his then-158 pound frame could muster was "frustrated jock" of 1963. Still he looks back fondly on his athletic days, especially Huntington coach Al Donofrio, who, he says, "taught me discipline."

After his travels, Mr. Asher returned to Huntington, joining the law firm of Toaz, Buck, Meyers, Bernst & Meservy as an associate. In six years there, he "learned how to practice law," under the guidance of John Toaz, an opportunity he appreciated, but in 1974, after much praying and soul searching and consultation with his wife, he made the difficult decision to strike out on his own as a "sole practitioner." He doesn't regret it. "It's worked out very well," he says. "I practice law the way I want to practice law. And I love being a lawyer in my hometown."

Practicing in Huntington has helped him, he says, "because there are many people in the community that know me personally. That's generally how most attorneys in a small town build a practice."

Just last month, Mr. Asher's name was back in the news, and not in the sports pages: the Town Board named him to a seven-year term on the Planning Board. Along with the high esteem with which he is held in the community, Supervisor John J. O'Neil pointed to Mr. Asher's current South Huntington address as a contributing factor to his appointment. Mr. Asher agrees that living below Jericho Turnpike gives him a good perspective on development in that area.

"In Huntington Village, there's a dramatic



RECENTLY NAMED Planning Board member W. Gerard (Jerry) Asher (left) chats with Supervisor John J. O'Neil.

difference between now and 30 years ago. Yet, as crowded as it is here, it's much worse along the Route 110 Corridor," he says.

The current hot issue before the Planning Board is the proposed moratorium on further development in Melville. "In my personal viewpoint," Mr. Asher says, "the integrity of the zoning ordinances must be respected, always. Where a proposal is completely and totally within the zoning laws, that type of development should be looked at and not discouraged."

In addition to his law practice, he is chairman of the Huntington Site Selection Review Committee for the Mentally Retarded and is Director of the Ministries, a non-sectarian community service organization. At St. Elizabeth's R.C. Church, where he is a member, Mr. Asher is a lector and a Eucharistic minister. So how does he find time for the Planning Board, not to mention his wife and his two teen-aged daughters, Gigi and Lara? "For me," he says, "it's important to have some impact on the place where I live."

Alcohol abuse
IT HITS YOU RIGHT
WHERE YOU LIVE.



TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

1-800-ALCALLS

COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT

New York State Council on Alcoholism - New York State Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse

Sports Spotlight Focuses on Agents

By TOM LEDERER

HUNTINGTON

CONCERN was etched on Jerry Asher's face as he sat in his office late one recent evening. Frank Tavaras, a shortstop, had just received his unconditional release from the Montreal Expos. Mr. Asher was pondering what course of action, if any, could be taken to prevent the former baseball all-star from joining the ranks of the unemployed.

That same night, a short distance across town, Gary Wichard was on the telephone with the running back Rob Carpenter in another of a series of animated conversations on their contract negotiations with the football Giants.

Because they could not agree on a contract, Carpenter sat out the first two games of the Giants' season, which is now in abeyance — as are his negotiations — because of the players' strike. Mr. Wichard thus played a pivotal role in the Giants' fortunes. They lost their first two games without Carpenter, an outstanding back last season.

George Young, general manager of the Giants, has been negotiating with Mr. Wichard and, not surprisingly, believes the Long Islander may have a tendency to oversell his clients.

"Gary is a gentlemen. He never threatens or blusters like other agents do," Mr. Young said. "But he does tend to try and sell more than negotiate. Selling on his part is almost unnecessary. I am aware of the value of my players and I am certainly not

going to rap them. I also think that Gary has greatly reflected the attitudes of his client [Carpenter] in his dealings with us."

Ironically, Mr. Young was general manager of the Coits in 1972 when they drafted young Wichard out of C.W. Post.

"He was a pretty good quarterback but was up against some stiff competition in training camp," Mr. Young said.

Jerry Asher and Gary Wichard are both Huntington residents, they both attended Huntington High School, and both played quarterback for their alma mater's varsity football team. Despite some similarities, there are significant differences between the two men and the way they perceive their roles as advisers and alter egos for professional sports figures.

"An agent must be very familiar with the concepts of deferred payments, inflation, annuity clauses and all that makes a contract so much more than just a number," said Mr. Asher, 41 years old, a lawyer who sees his primary responsibility to a ball player as that of a legal adviser.

"Legalese is a very small part of the business," said Mr. Wichard, who holds a degree in criminal justice from the C. W. Post Center. "Being an agent is very much like being a salesman. When I sit down and negotiate, I'm selling a quarterback, I'm selling a wide receiver, I'm selling value to a team."

At the heart of the National Football League's strike is the wage scale being sought by the N.F.L. Players Association. Should the owners agree



The New York Times/Nancy K...

Jerry Asher, right, talking with Gary Wichard in Huntington

to the wage scale, a player's salary would be based upon his years in the game and what position he plays, in addition to a rather complex bonus plan.

Mr. Wichard feels that a wage scale would eliminate the need for a player's retaining his own personal agent, and since most of Mr. Wichard's clients are football or hockey players, he believes that a wage scale might prove devastating for him as an agent.

"Football players are not clones or assembly line workers," Mr. Wichard said. "Every man is different, they perform different jobs, and they have different strengths. They should be paid accordingly."

"I don't mean to be critical of Gary in any way," said Mr. Young of the Giants, "but I don't think he fully understands the owner's perception of the wage scale. To management, the wage scale represents a minimum wage, not a maximum. That is our main objection to it. There would still be further negotiations and there would still be agents. I am a firm believer in the right of a player to have agent representation, but the wage scale is ludicrous."

Mr. Asher is the East Coast representative for ADA Financial Inc., a consulting concern for professional athletes headed by Tony Attanasio, a former pro baseball player with San Diego. Although most of his work is done in concert with Mr. Attanasio, Mr. Asher has clients of his own, such as Frank Tavaras and Bud Harrelson of Hauppauge.

Becoming an agent had been a back-burner ambition for Mr. Asher for some time, but his involvement ultimately evolved rather by accident.

"I met Lee Mazzilli in 1980 through a mutual friend, and I helped him close a deal on a house," Mr. Asher said. "Mazzilli subsequently intro-

THE NEW YORK TIMES

OCTOBER 17, 1982

duced me to Tony, who asked me to become part of his firm."

Mr. Wichard was working for his family's automobile business, selling European cars, when he met a foreign-car buff who also played professional basketball, Julius Erving, then a resident of Locust Valley. The basketball player introduced Mr. Wichard to his agent, Irwin Weiner, who asked the young automobile broker to work with him as an assistant. After a few months, Mr. Wichard had made enough contacts to branch out on his own.

"When I played football, I quickly found out my likes and dislikes about agents," said Mr. Wichard, a former college All-American who in 1973 was beaten out by Bert Jones for a back-up quarterback spot with the Baltimore Colts. "In college, I had a lot of guys pulling on my shirt sleeve saying: 'Hey kid, I'm going to make you a star.' I never liked that approach or what it stood for."

Since becoming an agent in 1980, Mr. Wichard has rapidly lined up as clients some of the more prominent names in local professional sports, including Richard Todd and Mark Gastineau of the Jets, Rob Carpenter of the Giants and Bobby Bourne and Bobby Nystrom of the Islanders.

"I get extremely involved with my clients," said Mr. Wichard, who, at 32, could pass for a professional athlete himself. "If I'm going to handle the business affairs of a player, we have to have a deeper relationship than just business. When Rob Carpenter and I are negotiating together, I'm banging away for him as if he were my brother. You're talking about a man's future. A lot of agents just don't want to get that involved."

"There are some agents who are attracted to the money and less concerned with helping the players," said Mr. Asher, himself a stand-out athlete in high school and at Princeton University. "An important role of an agent is to help prepare a player for the future, when he can no longer make a living on the playing field."

The two Huntington agents, who until recently had never met, agree that the huge salaries that star players earn today are not without merit.

"The big numbers were what the players were always worth," Mr. Asher said.

Mr. Asher has lived all his life in Huntington and speaks proudly of his participation in community activities. Despite what might overtly appear to be a preoccupation with matters involving jurisprudence and athletics, he says that his church plays a very central role in his life. He tries to jog at least three or four days a week and is sports editor for a local cable television station.

"Yes, I do live an active life, but I've found that if you want to find the

time to do something, you can," he said. "And I will never compromise the time that I spend with my family."

He and his wife, Sylvia, have two daughters, Gigi, 15, and Lara, 9.

Mr. Wichard echoes his colleague's sentiments about the importance of family life. He lives in Huntington Bay with his wife, Maura, and two daughters, Dana, 4, and Jessica, 1.

A self-proclaimed "tennis nut," he also stays in shape by playing basketball. He has various business investments, among them a nightclub he will be opening soon in Syosset, called Shorty Lavender's. ■