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ARCHIVE



## TALK2AMERICA

## VOA Online Discussion: "Super Bowl XLII"

Date: 01 February 08

Guest: Mike Richman, VOA Reporter &amp; Author, "The Redskins Encyclopedia"

Moderator: Rick Pantaleo

[»» Back to Past Chats](#)[»» Back to T2A Home](#)New England Patriots  
Quarterback, Tom Brady

It was a **special edition T2A Chat on 01 February 08** and we previewed the Forty-Second U.S. National Football League Super Bowl championship game which pits the AFC Champion New England Patriots against the NFC Champion New York Giants.

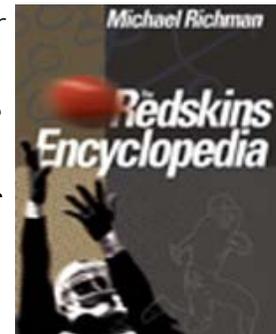
VOA reporter Mike Richman joined us for the chat and we also discussed one of the wealthiest sports franchises in the world. Mike chronicles the Washington Redskins in a new book, "Redskins Encyclopedia".

[»» Mike Richman's Website](#)New York Giants  
Quarterback, Eli Manning

*Rick: Welcome to a Special Edition T2A chat for 01 February 2008. Today we preview the Forty-Second U.S. National Football League Super Bowl championship game, which pits the AFC Champion New England Patriots against the NFC Champion New York Giants. We'll also take a look at one of the wealthiest sports franchises in the world, the Washington, DC Redskins. VOA reporter Mike Richman has authored The Redskins Encyclopedia; it's a new book about the US Capitol's home pro-football team. Mike is here to answer your questions so let's start with one from Wondwossen in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia.*



Mike Richman



**Wondwossen - Addis Abeba, Ethiopia:** I would like to know what role American football has played in American society and to the whole world where other sports and games are popular and profitable? What has is being done to save professional sports from some of the bad publicity it has received such as drug or steroid abuses by players. Thank you.

Mike: American football is a major part of American culture. Football has been around professionally for many years – the NFL was formed 1920 but it wasn't until 1960 that the game came into the living rooms of Americans in large numbers. Since then Football has overtaken Baseball by far as America's favorite sport. The Super Bowl itself is an icon in American culture and is followed not only by millions of people in the United States but also by millions of others around the world. The popularity of football in the United States may stem in part from the violence in American culture, but it is also a very exciting game with the potential for breath taking moments. As far as drug or steroid abuse among professional athletes it really depends on the sport. Professional baseball has been going through some difficult times lately due to the allegations of steroid abuse and the game has been tainted in the minds of many because of this. Football on the other hand has had a drug monitoring system in place for many years and is thus much better equipped to detect any potential steroid abuse. In the coming years pro sports in the

United States will be more cognizant more than ever of the potential dangers of drug and steroid abuse.

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Anil Kumar Upadhyaya - Lucknow, India: I am India based freelance journalist and my question is that in India we have no wealthiest sports channel partners in football sports. Is it possible that such type of channels can be organized in India, so that Indian sports lovers for football can enjoy the game?

Mike: If you're sports leagues are broadcast by big TV networks it will only enhance the popularity and visibility of the sport. That is exactly what launched pro-football into the spotlight in the United States and is a major reason why it has prospered financially over the years. As far as channels that specialize in Indian sports would be developed, if business leaders see that there is a market for the sport they will be more inclined to arrange for television contracts. If major American sports expand to countries such as India they will likely attract television coverage that will allow business figures to see for themselves the benefits of broadening the exposure of the sport.

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AC Rathinavel - India: Could you please tell us about the Redskins and the NFL?

Mike: The Washington Redskins are one of the most storied NFL teams. Formed in 1932 in Boston, they moved to Washington, DC in 1937 and immediately captivated fans in the area by winning an NFL championship. They have since won four other NFL championships including three Super Bowls during the first coaching era of Joe Gibbs (1981-1992). That was the Redskins' last "glory period." In terms of the Redskins standing here in the Washington, DC area, they are the most popular pro-sports franchise by far. The nation's Capitol is a five pro-sport town that includes, football, basketball, baseball, hockey and soccer, but there's something fascinating about the way one of those teams - - - the Redskins - - - stands head and shoulders above the others in the hearts and minds of Washingtonians. As the saying goes, the three most important people in this town are the President of the United States, the Head Coach of the Redskins and the Redskins' starting quarterback, not necessarily in that order. The Redskins fight song; "Hail to the Redskins," is arguably just as, if not more popular, than the salute to the President "Hail to the Chief." Regarding the NFL, please look back at my answer to the previous question.

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Ilene Richman: Who do you think will take the place of Joe Gibbs as the new coach of the Washington Redskins?

Mike: The names being tossed around as the front-runners for the job are former San Francisco Forty-Niners and Detroit Lions football coach Steve Mariucci, former New York Giants football coach Jim Fassel, current New York Giants defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo and Indianapolis Colts defensive coordinator Ron Meeks. The Redskins have said that they're going to announce a new coach after the Super Bowl. Now, knowing Redskins owner Dan Snyder and his propensity for making a "big splash," he could pull out of his hat a "big-time name" that the sport media have not identified yet. Former Pittsburgh Steelers coach, Bill Cowher, whose team won Super Bowl 40, could be that name.

To this questioner - gee your name seems familiar, have we met before? (LOL).

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Arslan: Which player will have the biggest impact in Super Bowl XLII?

Mike: I'm going to name two players. Both of them are New York Giants running backs, Brandon Jacobs and Ahmad Bradshaw. They are like a two-headed monster for the Giants and if New York is able to control the game on the ground their chances for pulling an upset rise demonstratively. The Patriots allowed nearly 4.5 yards on the ground per carry during the regular season, so if the Giants are able to exploit that weakness we could see the Patriots fall short of their bid to become the first undefeated team in the NFL since the 1972 Miami Dolphins.

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**Rana Hanan, Feltham UK: Where do you think the Washington Redskins needs improvement?**

Mike: The Redskins will definitely need improvement from quarterback Jason Campbell next year. He showed great strides in 2007, his first full season as a Redskins starter, but he must take a step up next year. The offensive line also could use improvement, but it will be bolstered by the apparent return of right guard Randy Thomas and right tackle Jon Jansen, who suffered serious injuries early in the 2007 season that kept them sidelined. I would also like to see the Redskins either acquire through free agency or the upcoming college draft a tall powerful wide receiver in the mold of the Patriots' Randy Moss or the Giants' Plaxico Burress. The defense finished eighth in the league last year but the Redskins could still use a dominant pass rusher who could change the complexion of a game in one or two plays. I hope the Redskins will be able to ride their momentum from the 2007 season when they won their last four games and made the playoffs. A lot of that will depend on the new coach. If there is a lot of change in terms of player personnel, the Redskins could be looking at a rebuilding year.

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*Rick: That wraps up today's Special Edition T2A chat with Mike Richman, VOA Reporter and author of "The Redskins Encyclopedia". You can learn more at <http://www.redskinshistorian.com/>. We'd like to thank Mike and you for joining us today. We hope you can come back on Wednesday, February 6th at 1800 hours UTC to discuss results of the biggest day yet in the U.S. Presidential election cycle. It's called Super Tuesday -- the day when the most states simultaneously hold their primary Presidential elections. It's the single day when the most nominating delegates can be won. Political analysts Stuart Rothenberg and Bruce Miroff join VOA National Correspondent Jim Malone here on T2A February 6th at 1900 hours UTC on [voanews.com](http://voanews.com).*

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