

CHARLIE'S HUSTLE

Rose remains controversial figure in baseball world

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between at-bats.

"All the guys were saying, 'Geez, is that your dad? I've never seen him give attention to anybody,'" Richardson said. "The next time up I hit an RBI single. He whistled to me and shook his fist. He was just incredibly good to me."

While Richardson said he remembered all the advice, the best memory was when Rose came to his aid after a strikeout.

"I remember Pete telling me before I went to bat that the strike zone is six inches off the plate and high and low for rookies," he said. "I got strike two called on me. I turned around and said where is that at? (Umpire) Joe West said, 'six inches outside, that's a strike for you.'"

"The next pitch I couldn't even see, it was so far outside and he wrung me up. Pete came flying out of the dugout and threw his hat down. He got thrown out protecting me. I will always remember that."

Rose's advice and managerial style also has stuck with Richardson. He said he does many of the same things at Louisiana Tech as Rose did with the Reds.

Despite Rose's detractors, Richardson has remained loyal to the non-hall-of-famer not only because of his on-field legacy but also because of Rose's personal side, something few fans were able to see or read about.

"I thought he was a great guy," Richardson said. "He was great to me and taught me a lot. I knew him personally and remember a lot of the good things he did."

Richardson recalled a game in San Francisco where Rose picked a couple kids out of the crowd before the game and brought them into the dugout where players autographed balls for them.

"He did this at most places we went to," Richardson said. "I saw what he did for these kids and I thought he was good for them."

"I still think he is going to get into the Hall of Fame. Most baseball players think like that. They understand how hard it is to get that many hits. I know I was happy to get one a night."

No matter how many starry-eyed memories exist in the minds of kids who are now adults, one thing remains — Pete Rose is a gambling man.

Rose admitted on national televi-

sion in 1989 that he was a compulsive gambler. It was Rose's gambling on football games and allegedly gambling on baseball games that led Giamatti to ban him from baseball for life.

However, for the last 10 years since being banned from Major League Baseball fields, dugouts and press boxes, Rose has continued to deny ever gambling on baseball games.

Despite Rose's denials, two baseball commissioners, Vincent and Bud Selig, have turned down Rose's letters for reinstatement. At 58, Rose still has hope that he will be elected into Cooperstown someday, but he doesn't waste his time worrying about it.

"I like to think (I will be)," Rose told a group on CBS Sportline chat May 12, 1999. "It would be the icing on the cake. But as I sit here, I don't need a plaque in Cooperstown to tell me what kind of player I was. But I would appreciate it as much as anyone ever has."

Through the past 10 years, Rose has remained defiant as ever, pushing the limits of his banishment and being outspoken against baseball officials who won't reinstate him.

But the commissioners since Giamatti have stuck to his original punishment.

"The matter of Mr. Rose is now closed," said Giamatti, the day after banning Rose for life. "It will be debated and discussed. Let no one think it did not hurt baseball."

"The hurt will pass as the great glory of the game asserts itself and a resilient institution goes forward. Let it also be clear that no individual is superior to the game."

Rose said he and Giamatti stood for the same things and the only difference was that "I loved and cared for the game a hell of a lot longer than he did."

As for ex-commissioner Vincent, there was no way he was going to reinstate Rose after Giamatti died. In a July 15, 1998, Detroit Free Press article, Vincent said he opposed reinstatement for Rose.

"It's time for Pete Rose to tell the truth," Vincent said. "The truth is, Pete Rose bet on baseball. We have phone records from the dugout and Pete's house to bookies. You can't have people in the Hall of Fame who have corrupted the game."

"And gambling is a very serious problem. It's the biggest threat to the integrity of the game."

Rose argues that gambling pales in comparison to some of the other offenses players have committed.

"I'd have been better off if I'd killed somebody," Rose told the Sacramento Bee in a May 29, 1999, story. "I'd probably still be in baseball, managing... or something. I never hurt anyone, but if I had been a wife-beater or a drug addict, baseball would have paid for my rehab."

"It's sad to say that, but there it is."

Rose, whose primary occupation now is a restaurant owner in Florida, applied for reinstatement to baseball in September 1997, but had to wait nearly a year and a half to get a denial from Selig.

In May 1999, Rose wasn't sure he ever was going to get a response.

"I know he's not scared to answer me - it's yes or no," said Rose on CBS Sportline. "He'll go on TV and say it, but not tell me. I know he can afford the 35 cents. But we follow baseball, we're used to situations that are the opposite of what the people want."

"But there is no bitterness on my part. I made some mistakes, but I paid for them. I don't like to live in the past. I can reminisce, but I don't want to live there. Seems like some people in baseball have a harder time with that."

While waiting for a decision to be made earlier this year, Rose made special appearances at two Cincinnati Reds minor league fields and in Sacramento with the Steelheads, an independent Western League team.

For \$50,000, Rose served as a special hitting instructor for a day with the Steelheads, ran two team workouts, dined with team sponsors, signed scores of autographs and as a bonus, gave a motivational speech during spring training. He also came back on May 28 to throw out the first pitch for the opening game.

Rose denied that the appearances were done to draw attention to his reinstatement case.

"I'm not doing this for baseball, I'm doing it for these young guys," Rose said in a May 11 Sacramento Bee article. "These are the guys I really respect. They're still trying to make it. They could have given it up a long time ago. Knowing baseball as I do, they probably think I am trying to rub their noses in it."

"But it's not the first time baseball has criticized me, just for talking to young players. I think it ticks them off because whenever I go somewhere, it sells out. Sure I want back in. I could manage again. I could help some team

Major League Records

- Most career hits (4,256)
- Most games played (3,562)
- Most at bats (14,053)
- Most singles (3,315)
- Most total bases by a switch hitter (5,752)
- Most seasons of 200 or more hits (10)
- Most consecutive seasons of 100 or more hits (23)
- Most seasons of 600 or more at bats (17)
- Most seasons of 150 or more games (17)
- Most seasons of 100 or more games (23)
- Only player in to play more than 500 games at five different positions
- Played in most winning games (1,972)

MATT HANEY/DN

become a champion. But right now, I am having fun."

If there is one baseball player who has perfected the art of marketing himself to the public, it would have to be Pete Rose.

The night Rose was banned from baseball he was on television promoting some of his own memorabilia. And the appearances haven't subsided.

Ten years removed from baseball on Aug. 23, Rose has done everything he can to stay in the public eye via web chats, home shopping shows, baseball card shows, public appearances, a radio show, two restaurants and various other engagements.

Plus, Rose has had some help from old friends who like to keep his name in the public eye through a fan club and most recently a museum just down the street from the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

"The public enjoys him because he always has something to say," said Warren Greene, Rose's Florida-based agent for the last eight years. "Pete's career is making personal appearances, be it a card show, an automobile convention or a speaking engagement."

Rose is in high demand, Greene said. He gets more than 500 media and philanthropy requests a month. Greene said Rose has been spending more time with his family in California lately, so he hasn't been doing as many events. When he does make an appearance, Rose can make anywhere from \$5,000 to \$50,000. He also donates his time for charity events.

At a Roger Craig Benefit Golf Tournament earlier this summer, Rose was the top autograph draw, said Dr. J.J. Heavilin of Grand Island.

However, along with the high visibility, Rose has paid a price.

Not everything that has Rose's name on it is associated with him.

Take, for instance the American Baseball Experience at Main Street museum that was dedicated to Pete Rose July 23 at Cooperstown. The museum had featured a Mickey Mantle display, but when he died last year, the group wanted to recognize another living player too, Greene said.

Rose, who had made appearances in Cooperstown the last five years, was their choice.

"They approached him and said 'we would love to do something for you,'" Greene said. "Pete said, 'I'm flattered and honored.' They were charging a fee and wanted to give Pete some of the proceeds. He donated the money to cystic fibrosis."

None of the profits from that museum will go to Rose, Greene said.

Profits from sales at the official Rose web site and fan club, <http://www.peterose.com>, also don't go to Rose, Greene said. John Esposito, an acquaintance of Rose's, is in charge of the club. Rose signs the items for free.

Greene got Rose into some business deals including opening two Pete Rose Ballpark Cafe restaurants in Florida. These restaurants have a collection of Rose's record-breaking memorabilia.

The Rose name is a draw in itself because of the success he had in baseball.

"Pete is terrific because he appeals to everybody," Greene said. "He fits into a lot of categories for memorabilia. He played for three generations and he also was a member of one of the greatest teams in baseball."

Plus it doesn't hurt that Rose has perfected what he does.

"Rose makes a lot of money," Greene said, "and he is very successful."