



**When Is It Okay? Restarting Sports After 9/11 (2/28/19)**

00:00:23

(clip begins)

Mike Greenberg (in clip): What is the concept of the exhibit? What do you hope that people will take away when they come here?

Clifford Chanin (in clip): In this museum, we really focus on the day, of course, and all the ramifications of the event. But we come down, at the crux of it, to the question of, "How do people react when their world is shattered? What happens next?" Whether you have, you know, over 100,000 people at a NASCAR race, whether you have the people who came to Shea Stadium, that first public event in New York, it was the way for people to be together in large numbers for the first time after 9/11.

00:01:04

Mike Greenberg (in clip): We have stopped in front of the picture of President Bush throwing out that first pitch before game three of the World Series. Of all the things that happened in those months, I think that is the one that stays with me the most.

Clifford Chanin (in clip): The president coming out and going through this ritual that any baseball fan understands, it gives you a sense that things can be okay again.

00:01:26

Mike Greenberg (in clip): The exhibit finishes on November 4, which is a remarkable day. In the morning, New York City put on the marathon, and that night, the Yankees and Diamondbacks play one of their most famous

baseball games of all time, where the Diamondbacks win game 7 of the World Series.

Clifford Chanin (in clip): What is more expressive of the recovery of New York, the resilience of New York, the resistance of New York to say, "We're two million people. We're going to go into the streets of our city. We're going to cheer on these 30,000 runners who come from around the world-- they're not just our neighbors." It was this catharsis for the city.

00:02:01

Mike Greenberg (in clip): I love this exhibit for two separate groups of people: for those of us who love sports who are old enough to remember it, it brings back memories that are so powerful; and for a generation like my children, who did not live through 9/11, to understand the incredible significance that sports can play. That's what this exhibit is about.

00:02:27

(clip ends)

Mike Greenberg: I find the silence uncomfortable. Everyone clap.

(applause)

Man: Where are you sitting?

Mike Greenberg: I'll sit in the first one, so you go wherever you like.

Man: Be my guest.

(chairs scraping)

(Greenberg sighs)

- 00:03:00 Jessica Chen: Good evening, and welcome. My name is Jessica Chen. I'm senior director of public and professional programs here at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum. As always, I'd like to extend a special welcome to our museum members, and those tuning in to our live web broadcast at [911Memorial.org/live](http://911Memorial.org/live). As you just saw, "Comeback Season" revisits a time 17 years ago when sporting events helped the city of New York and Americans across the country begin to heal after 9/11.
- 00:03:27 Almost immediately after the attacks, there were questions of propriety: Should games go as planned? When would it be acceptable to resume competition? What would sports be able to offer in the aftermath of such devastating loss? Tonight, four of the most important leaders in sports join us to describe their personal experiences of 9/11 and how they and others answered these difficult questions.
- 00:03:51 National Basketball Association commissioner emeritus David J. Stern completed his 30-year tenure as NBA commissioner on February 1, 2014. Currently a C.E.O. of DJS Global Advisors, Mr. Stern serves as a senior adviser to the NBA. Mr. Stern was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and the Sports Broadcasting Hall of Fame in 2014, and the International Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016.
- 00:04:18 Mr. Gary Bettman has served as the National Hockey League commissioner since February 1, 1993, and has guided the world's top professional hockey league through more than two decades of growth and advancement on and off the ice. In recognition of his many contributions to the game, he was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame as a member of the class of 2018. A native of Queens, New York, Mr. Bettman has also served 12 years with the National Basketball Association.
- 00:04:45 Miss Val Ackerman was named fifth commissioner of the Big East Conference on June 26, 2013. She was the founding president of the Women's National Basketball Association, and a past president of U.S.A.

Basketball, which oversees the U.S. men's and women's Olympic basketball program. Miss Ackerman was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in 2011 and is a lifetime trustee of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, which presented her with the John Bunn Lifetime Award in 2008. Miss Ackerman is also a longtime Tribeca resident.

00:05:17 Mr. Paul Tagliabue served as the commissioner of the National Football League from 1989 until 2006. Prior to becoming the NFL's C.E.O., Mr. Tagliabue represented the NFL and other clients for two decades at Covington & Burling, where he is now senior counsel. Notably, he serves as member of the Knight Commission on intercollegiate athletics and as a co-chair of the board of RISE, the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality.

00:05:41 Last, but certainly not least, tonight's moderator is Mr. Mike Greenberg, host of ESPN's morning show "Get Up." For 18 years, he cohosted ESPN radio's "Mike & Mike" with Mike Golic. Together, Greenberg and Golic have been inducted into National Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame and the National Radio Hall of Fame. The video clip you just saw was from "Comeback Season: Sports After 9/11," an E:60 presentation anchored by Mike and produced by ESPN to help launch "Comeback Season" last fall.

00:06:09 I would be remiss not to thank Mike, a true friend and collaborator, for his ongoing support of the exhibition, and to all of our friends at ESPN for their generous partnership. We would also like to acknowledge and thank the Anheuser Busch Foundation, Major League Baseball, and the New York Mets with Jeff Wilpon for their help in making the exhibition behind tonight's program possible.

00:06:29 And our special thanks to all the commissioners for serving as honorary exhibition co-chairs and for sharing their time and insights with us tonight. So without further ado, please join me in welcoming David J. Stern, Gary Bettman, Val Ackerman, and Paul Tagliabue in conversation with Mike Greenberg.

(applause)

Mike Greenberg: Thank you, thank you very much, Jessica. That's wonderful. It is such an honor for me to be here with the four of you. And if I do my job well here tonight, then hopefully this will turn into a conversation amongst you, and I will just listen, along with everyone else.

00:07:03 Because I think that the insight you can provide into not, not, not only how you reacted after 9/11, but in the ways-- and that was what our television special was about-- in the ways you got to witness, from a very unique standpoint, the role that sports played-- your own individual sports and all sports in general-- played in America's recovery from one of the great tragedies that we've ever known.

00:07:27 So, so, Commissioner Ackerman, I'd like to start with you. It was mentioned that you live right in the neighborhood. I, I grew up in the neighborhood, as well. I grew up in the Village. My high school prom was in the Vista Hotel here. So for those us from New York, this was an extraordinarily personal thing, as well as, obviously, all of the other ramifications. What are your recollections, first and foremost, of that day?

00:07:47 Val Ackerman: Well, first I just want to thank the museum for having all of us. This is an incredible opportunity. And for me to be with three gentlemen that I have so much respect for is an incredible privilege, very exciting day. You know, as noted, I still live ten blocks north of here. I'll never forget that day. The sky was this color. The WNBA season, actually, had concluded a few weeks before 9/11.

00:08:17 I had just returned from a family vacation and was taking the day off because my two daughters-- then first grade and fourth grade-- were attending their first day of school in Brooklyn. So I had dropped them off, and was planning to sort of hang around for a couple of hours, until the half-day ended, and then the events unfolded.

00:08:37            So for me, it was a-- and my kids-- it was a very traumatic day. We were unable to get back into Manhattan until much later on in the day. We holed up at a friend's house, and it was there that we were able to get the first reports mid-morning about what had happened. And, and Mayor Giuliani, I think, in particular, was an extraordinary leader then in terms of communicating what was going on, trying to reassure all of us what the city was doing in terms of a response.

00:09:13            And it was later on that day that my daughters and I reunited with my husband, who... We met on Canal Street-- I'll never forget it. And we were able to go home later on, and it was really an incredible trauma for, obviously, many, many millions of people. But to be here in the neighborhood and to live through those first few days, the, the weeks that followed, you know, trying to explain to young children as a parent, you know, what was going on, to sort of reassure them that they were safe when they had a lot of questions about what they were seeing on television, was all, you know, indelibly imprinted on my mind.

00:09:56            So that was my personal sort of experience with it. As a sports executive-- of course, I was working with David, and he'll speak about the basketball response, I know-- but in terms of, you know, the expectations for the business, I think we were all looking for the leadership among people like Gary, and David, and Paul, Bud Selig at that time, in terms of the appropriate response and how the sports community could be helpful. So I'll sort of end it there. But for me, this has all been very personal, and then to see the neighborhood rebuilding, as it did over a period of many years, was itself quite an experience.

00:10:34            Mike Greenberg: Yeah, it's a shame Commissioner Selig couldn't make it tonight, because... (clears throat): Of course, the Major League Baseball season was very much in play, and we all will remember that unforgettable night at Shea Stadium, which came about a week and a half later.

And Commissioner Tagliabue, your season also had just begun. I had been at the Jet game two days before. The Jets lost to the Colts, and then here you are going into week two, and these events take place. So what

are your recollections? You, of course, had immediate pressing professional concerns, which is to say, you had games scheduled just a few days later. What are your recollections of the day itself?

(Tagliabue clears throat)

00:11:07

Paul Tagliabue: Well, I've talked a lot about this in a lot of places, so my recollections are pretty clear. I was on a-- I was chairing the board of the United Way of America at the time, and I was in my office with a conference call of other board members of the United Way. My assistant came in, and she said, "A crazy-ass thing just happened." That's the way she spoke all the time.

(laughter)

00:11:29

Paul Tagliabue: I said, "What's that?" First, I said, "Be quiet, I'm on a conference call." She said, "Forget about your conference call. It's really crazy. A plane has hit the World Trade Center." So at that point, you didn't know whether it was a pilot who lost his flight, you know, lost his way between LaGuardia and Newark on a small aircraft, but it wasn't that.

Shortly after that, I think it's 15 minutes, probably, between the North Tower and the South Tower, she came back in again and she said, "Another plane hit." So that was the end of the conference call. Then we learned that a third plane hit the Pentagon, the fourth plane crashed in Pittsburgh.

00:12:01

So by 11:00, we had a meeting of all of our employees-- probably 500 or 600 of them. And we were at 49th and Park at the time. And the first question was, "Who has got spouses, family members," working in that part of the city? Who lives in that part of the city? Who's got kids in school in that part of the city?"

- 00:12:24           And so forth. When we got finished with that, there were a lot of people whose answer was, "I do." So we had a lot of people who went to the phones, and went home, and trying to figure out where brothers, sisters, husbands, kids were. You know, the immediate uncertainty was, are there going to be more attacks? Is the city going to be shut down? How do I get home?
- 00:12:51           And so my wife and I, I called my wife-- and she's sitting over here—I said, "We're probably going to have a bunch of people sleeping in our apartment, because no one's going to be able to get out of the city. So go out and buy as much water as you can, because that's the only thing we're going to have to deal with."
- 00:13:05           But very quickly, we learned that two employees had lost their spouses. A woman had lost her husband. She was at the Broncos-Giants game on Monday night in Denver and did not come back. She was going to have business on that Tuesday morning with the Broncos. But she learned very quickly that her husband was missing.
- 00:13:27           You know, she knew where he worked, she knew where his office was. We had a guy who was in our labor relations group who lived on the West Side. If I can get through this without breaking up, it will be the first. He lived on the West Side, and he took one of the West Side trains, Eighth Avenue line, down to 50th Street, with his wife.
- 00:13:47           They went to work together every day. On that occasion, he left her, and she continued on the train. He stopped at Starbucks in our building to get a cup of coffee, went up to his office. And there was a message from his wife that she was-- she was isolated in the World Trade Center. She was gone. So that kind of set the stage for the rest of the day. It was all about people and it was about grieving already, because we knew people were dead-- you know, spouses of employees.
- 00:14:17           So we ended up with what I think is one of the first in the history of the NFL, and hopefully it's not the last, we ended up with a group of employees-- Christian, Jewish, Muslim-- going to mass at St. Patrick's

Cathedral at 5:00 in the afternoon. And that was kind of, encapsulated the day. The next day, we started to figure out, what are we going to do about playing football on Sunday? That was, that was-- that was September 12.

00:14:43

Mike Greenberg: What a remarkable story. We'll get to where it went from there. But I'd like to get your-- both of you, Commissioner Bettman and Commissioner Stern-- your recollections, as well, of the day. Commissioner Bettman, I'll start with you. What is your recollection?

Gary Bettman: I was actually in Omaha, Nebraska, at an event. And I was on a bus because one of the elements of the event, there was a dinner at the Omaha Art Museum the night before. And the first thing you could sign up for on September 11 was a SAC briefing—Strategic Air Command - at Offutt Air Force Base outside of Omaha, which is where they took President Bush when they couldn't figure out what to do with him.

00:15:22

And one of the people on the bus heading out to the base-- and we were an hour behind, Central time-- was on the phone with his office and said, "My secretary just told me that a plane, private jet, crashed into the World Trade Center."

Oh, everybody's talking about it on the bus. We then go into the officers' mess for breakfast, and the SAC commander came out and said, "Another plane has crashed into the other tower of the World Trade Center, and it's clear we're dealing with an act of terrorism, but we'll continue with the briefing, if you want."

00:16:01

Everybody finished eating, and we were going down the steps into the command center, which is a bunker below ground, and just as we were about to go in, another officer whispered something into this officer's ear, the commander's ear, and said, "A plane just hit the Pentagon, and we now have to ask you all to leave."

00:16:22           And we were all escorted out. My first reaction was to just find out about family and friends and people who worked at the NHL. And I learned very quickly that two of the scouts for the Los Angeles Kings were on flight, United Airlines Flight 175, which I think was the second plane that crashed into the World Trade Center, and they were gone. And then we were going to account for everybody else.

00:16:52           We were just opening training camps on that day, so we had a lot of people flying around to different places. We learned that all of our people could be accounted for. Interestingly enough, my office, the one I had at the time, was on Sixth Avenue facing downtown, and you could see the World Trade Center from there, and everybody was in my office. And the first reaction, again, on that day was, "Is everybody safe that we know? Who can we account for?"

00:17:25           And then I had to figure out how to get home because everything was grounded. There were no flights, I think, for two or three days. And we wound up staying overnight in, in Omaha. And somebody who I had met for the first time and I would soon become good friends as we journeyed 18 hours, only stopping all at once-- gas, bathroom, food-- and we did it in 18-and-a-half hours.

00:17:52           I dropped him off in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and continued, because I really wanted to get back to the office, because I knew we were going to have a lot of questions. We had exhibition games that were scheduled to start on Saturday. We actually had a team in Sweden that was now going to be stuck there for a few days because nothing was flying back to North America.

00:18:12           And when I ultimately, I got back the next morning, Thursday morning, gave my kids and my wife a hug, and then got in the car and drove into the city. And I'll never forget, it was eerie. I mean, first of all, driving back from the Midwest, you don't notice things in the air until they're not there. And it was, really, before XM Sirius, so all we were listening to was AM radio, which had a very surreal-- because it was people calling in talking about, you know, almost like this is the end of the world.

00:18:49                   And so got back, went to the office, and I don't know if people remember this, there were a lot of bomb scares in New York on Thursday. And after about three hours in the office, and the second or third building evacuation, I sent everybody home for the weekend. I said-- because it's, now it's Thursday afternoon. And then when we-- I and my deputy commissioner-- went back to my house in New Jersey and went about calling the clubs, canceling games, at least through the weekend-- exhibition games were supposed to start on Saturday.

00:19:25                   But to me, the-- and it makes my hair stand up on the back of my neck when I think about it-- driving from northern New Jersey that Thursday morning over the George Washington Bridge, there was no traffic, and looking down over the Hudson River and seeing the smoke, it's the eeriest feeling and the most depressing feeling I can remember. And I remember the city was literally depressed for weeks and weeks and weeks. You could go into restaurants or into stores shopping, and it was eerily quiet, because I think this whole area was in a state of depression.

00:19:59                   Mike Greenberg: I agree. Commissioner Stern, if you would, what are your recollections of that day?

David Stern: Well, I hadn't left the house yet, and my wife has never forgiven me for leaving the house, but I did, because I wanted to get into the city. We have a son who was living in the Village, who, when we finally reached him, said, "What are you worried about? I'm okay, thanks."

(laughter)

00:20:22                   David Stern: And... and I was busy trying to get-- as chair of the trustees at the time of Columbia University, we had an interview set up with a candidate who is now the president, the long-serving president, of Columbia University, Lee Bollinger. I couldn't get into the city. And I was trying to get into the office because I knew that there were people who

had watched it from my office, straight down Fifth, and had seen, you know, seen both towers, I think, go down.

00:20:52           And I thought it was a time for some kind of leadership, which led to grief counselors, and, you know, of course, we checked the boxes: is everyone safe, relatives safe, who needs help, et cetera. But, but we had grief counselors talking to our people who were... talk about depressed. People were losing sleep, and they just didn't understand where they were.

00:21:19           It was that traumatic an experience. You know, you look for easy things. We canceled a couple of exhibition games by some kind of, the NBA legends were playing in Taiwan and China, someplace. And we, you know... And it was worse, my office, but our whole office was, abuts St. Patrick's Cathedral. And for-- it seemed endless. Every funeral, and the bagpipes playing. It was-- it revisited it almost daily. It was incredible, as these poor souls who had gone rushing into the building, and others-- usually it was a fireman or a policeman, because they had turned out in their uniforms, so we could tell who it was. It was awful.

00:22:08           And I echo Gary. It was so intensely down. And as soon as it happened, and then, we then turned our thoughts to, "Okay, is this going to affect our business in an ongoing way?" And we, you know, we began to... I remember, by October, we had an owners' meeting. I brought in then-U.N. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke to talk to the owners about what this likely would be.

00:22:39           Gary Bettman: You and I went to the C.I.A., to Langley, for a briefing.

David Stern: We went to the C.I.A. for... What are we doing here? We're just sports commissioners. Why are we here? Why do I now need the plans for every one of our buildings, the architect's plans? Why do we have to know where the air vents empty into the streets? Because if you put ricin in them, it goes up.

Other things can happen. Why do we have to think about dogs going about before the game and sniffing out things? The world had changed for us completely, you know, beyond the fact of, how do we express ourselves, and things like that.

00:23:16 Because sports is tremendously resilient. And my sense was, you know, having heard Nelson Mandela in '93 say, "Sports brings people together," and then watch him in the recreation of the moment in the movie "Invictus," walk out and with an all, mostly white team that he wanted to bring his nation together with, I knew that sports would be okay, and would play a central role, some way or the other.

00:23:48 And I was transfixed on the-- on the baseball games that were played and the flags and the salutes, and, you know, and that... And we were all beginning to plan, "How do we do it? How do you..." The national anthem began to have a new meaning. Uniforms were adorned with patches, pins, you name it. Collections began at every league. I mean, the leagues responded, each in their own way, but all the same, it was all a big bundle. Sports stood up and did what had to be done. But it was... It changed, because on top of everything else, we knew that the first time a building was hit, our business was probably over.

00:24:34 Mike Greenberg: Very quickly, my recollection. I was on the air when it happened. We-- I was-- it was our second year of "Mike & Mike," and we were doing the show. And I saved to this day a file of email-- there was no social media then... (coughs): Pardon me, but email that I got over the course of time from people who said, "You were the one that I heard about this from," that Mike and I... We, at some point, abandoned any pretense of doing a sports show when we realized what was going on, and that has always been very meaningful for me in a variety of different ways.

00:25:02 Commissioner Stern, what I also remember about that day, is that I saved my notes from that day, the stories I was planning to talk about. And one of them was Michael Jordan is coming back to play in the NBA. That was literally the day that Michael Jordan announced he was going to come back and play for the Washington Wizards.

David Stern: Okay, yup.

(laughter)

David Stern: That wasn't such a big deal.

(laughter)

David Stern: And he didn't do that well.

(laughter)

Gary Bettman: Oooh!

(laughter)

00:25:35

Mike Greenberg: And, Commissioner Bettman, one of the most powerful things in the exhibit downstairs-- I hope everyone here has had a chance to see our exhibit. I feel so personally proud of it, having been sort of involved in it from its inception. But the story of Mark Messier, and that story, and the hat, and all of that. I would love for you, just through your eyes, recollect that event, and what you think it meant for people.

00:26:02

Gary Bettman: Well, a couple of things. I know it sometimes gets misportrayed. We actually had the first public event after 9/11. I think it was the Tuesday night of the following week. It was only an exhibition game. But it was, I think the Devils were playing the Rangers at Madison Square Garden. And everybody from us, NYPD, the FBI, very concerned about security in New York. It was the first public gathering. And hockey, and particularly the Rangers, have always been close to the NYPD and the

fire department. They actually play an annual hockey game against each other.

00:26:43 And our players were generally, you know, roll-up-your-sleeves, working kind of guys. And they go into the community, and they relate well to the people who are first responders. And I believe opening night of the regular season, Mark Messier came out in a firefighter's hockey jersey, and it was all about a tribute to the first responders. It's not relevant to tonight per se, but the concept jumped forward 17 years. The Vegas Golden Knights opened their first game in their history a week after the shootings from Mandalay Bay, where I think it was 58 people were killed, innocent, and this was a new team to the area.

00:27:28 And the players went into the community immediately and were with the first responders, went to the hospitals, saw survivors, families of survivors. And opening night was all about healing, and unity, and bringing Las Vegas together. And there are people in Las Vegas, I mean, this is a big deal that they have their own team there. And it was born there. But there has become unbelievably quickly this indelible bond between a team and the community and what they've represented.

00:28:03 It's, it's healing, it's unity, it's people gathering together at a time of sorrow and feeling the commonality of pain and the hope for the future. And sports teams, sports leagues, sports in general, bring people of diverse backgrounds together and give them a common focus and a path forward. And, unfortunately, there are incidents over time where we see it over and over again.

00:28:31 Mike Greenberg: That night was extraordinarily well handled, that opening night by the Vegas Golden Knights, and that team, for those of you who don't know, as an expansion team, made an improbable, almost impossible run all the way to the Stanley Cup finals, which is an incredible story.

Gary Bettman: Well, some of my other owners think we gave them too deep a talent pool.

(laughter)

David Stern: Let's not get carried away here.

00:28:52 Gary Bettman: But not to make light of it. So I had been speculating all year, as they were making this improbable run, that all sports are emotional, but hockey, we believe, particularly so. I believed that the players were playing for some higher purpose, that they believed every night that they needed to do this for the people of Las Vegas.

00:29:14 And interestingly enough, about a month ago, two of the Vegas players happened to be in my office having these little chats that I do, where I close the door and we're all off the record. And I asked them about that, and they looked at me and said, "Absolutely. We believed that we were on a mission to heal the city, and we went out every night and played that way."

00:29:34 Mike Greenberg: It really was a remarkable story. Commissioner Ackerman, you mentioned you live close by, and I was reading a piece that you wrote for ESPNW, in which you said that you walk here often, that you come down here to walk around and look around here often. And what-- I wonder what goes through your mind now when you walk around down here often, and how it informs the way you go about, these days, running a college sports league, and the way it informs your view on sports.

00:30:00 Val Ackerman: Well, yeah, you know, the... It was hard getting down here at the beginning, as I mentioned. Our neighborhood was more or less blockaded for several weeks. I remember actually the morning after 9/11, getting up early, and the night before, hearing... We were hearing all sorts of sirens as the first responders were attempting to get downtown, do their work. There seemed to be a need for them.

- 00:30:30 The next morning, I remember waking to silence. It was almost as if people had concluded that there was sort of nothing that could be done in terms of the effort. So I got up. I live on-- at that time I lived on North Moore Street-- and walked down our street west, to Greenwich Street, took a left, and I remember seeing the crumpled remains of 7 World Trade. It was just steel beams that were-- that were just in smoke.
- 00:31:00 And already at this point... This is, whatever, 24 hours later, there were first responders, not just from here in New York City, but, really, from everywhere. It was from Long Island, from FBI, it was, you know... Eastern Pennsylvania. They were coming already, at that point, from all quarters. But you couldn't walk downtown very far. And so little by little, the neighborhood kind of freed up, and you could get further and further downtown to, you know, to sort of see.
- 00:31:30 You know, we were impacted, at least in part because, at that time, North and South Towers had a, sort of a large underground mall underneath them, and that was where people in the neighborhood would shop. You know, you'd go there for the Gap store or the bookstore, or the shoeshine guy. And so for me, you know, it was really a process of years of sort of going down, sort of seeing how the construction was going, getting closer and closer, it seemed, over time.
- 00:32:00 And then I remember the emotion associated with the opening up, Mike, of this whole area, you know, when the... When the fountains, the waterfalls were completed, and 7 World Trade, I think, was the first of the buildings to get restored. That was a big deal to the end of Greenwich Street, to see that rising. The buildings were very different. They were sort of glass-encased buildings, which I guess is sort of the modern commercial office structure.
- 00:32:29 And then, of course, the plantings came, the emotion associated with the opening up of the memorial, and the museum, and so forth. So, you know, I mean, my... And then, of course, the Oculus opening up. If anybody hasn't seen the interior of the Oculus, you're missing something amazing. It's really quite a sight.

And so just to be part of that as a member of this community, to see the resilience of the members of our community. Some people moved out. They didn't want to stay here anymore. There was really a sense of doom about what might hit next. You know, we didn't do that. I felt like the neighborhood was very resilient.

00:33:03           And so I guess, you know, the answer to your second part of your question, what does it mean for us as leaders? I mean, again, I took away a lot that day about how the city responded, the communication, trying to keep people informed about when the subways were going to reopen and whether it was safe to go back underground, and when, sort of, streets would open up so vehicular traffic could get restored, and, you know, when cell phone service was going to come back.

00:33:27           I mean, there were so many things that we didn't know, living here, whether our lives would ever get back to normal again. And so to see how the city responded to that was impactful for me. And then, you know, as Paul and David and Gary noted, as a leader in a business that's affected by this, you do have to go through... Sort of saw most of all through David, you know, and the checklist that he had, you know, what, sort of the things you have to think about.

00:33:52           And, you know, how you handle the communications internally, and showing the right amount of compassion for your staff who may be affected. And then, of course, dealing with the business concerns, are all things that you sort of learn. And, you know, it doesn't have to be this kind of a crisis. I think sports leagues every day, you have the things you can plan for, and then the things you don't plan for, and you have to respond to, and that's part of the test of a leader.

00:34:14           David Stern: But you know what? I think it was a wake-up call of types that caused us all to begin thinking about, for example, the, the first responders. We lump everyone together, but it was a new respect we had for the people that put their lives at risk, in addition to the armed services. The cop on the beat, the fireman, the Port Authority officer.

00:34:41 I mean, these people, wow. And did we give them enough? You know, were they entitled to have a good communication system? Which they didn't have. And the logistics of whether firemen should be told to go running up 40 flights to, probably, their certain death or not. And why, indeed, was, you know, certain things rebuilt at a place where they shouldn't have been built?

00:35:08 I mean, it was... Everyone was questioning everything about, you know, what... What we were doing and had been doing, and should have been doing, to protect those very people whose lives were at risk, not to mention the people who were in the buildings when it was announced, you know, "Don't go... Don't go down the stairs." Holy Moses! Dooming people. Making their deaths certain. And most people listened, because we're a rules-abiding city.

00:35:41 And there's a certain kind of person that says, "No, no, I'm out of here." And maybe that person is smart, and we're all a bunch of sheep by listening to authority. I don't know. But everything was up for play, all of a sudden.

Val Ackerman: Well, let me just... On the first responder thing, let me say this, because that, that I... really comes back to me with the first game, I guess the Mets played. The sort of coming together there of the players and then the FDNY, and the NYPD. I mean, that was impactful for me. And I think the ability of sports platforms to laud the first responders in ways that other companies can't do, I think, is one of the ways that sports can be helpful, unique, et cetera.

00:36:25 And, you know, I think this tradition of honoring, lauding first responders, is very much carried through. I mean, I can tell you, at the Big East tournament every year, we bring out, we recognize first responders. I mean, I've asked for it. We have it. And it gets probably the biggest rise out of our crowds. Everybody gets on their feet, because they know, to David's point, what these people do every single day to put their lives at risk, sometimes, to help other people.

00:36:50 Gary Bettman: They're appreciated, perhaps more than ever before, as they should be. But the other thing, and we're getting close to touching on it, so let me get it out there. One of the important things about sports is to give everyone a sense of normalcy, that life can go on.

So while all of us took a step back, canceled games, and, and said, "We need to pay our respects to what happened here," at some point, particularly in the face of terrorism, you've got to move forward and not let, as they say, the terrorists win. We have to resume life. And I think sports helps people do that. Not only is it a distraction, it's a place to come together and celebrate.

00:37:32 Mike Greenberg: And so, Commissioner Tagliabue, that brings me to you, because you had to weigh those things. You had games scheduled that weekend. You had players... I know, this whole thing began because Herman Edwards told a remarkable story-- he was then the coach of the Jets-- about how so many of his players didn't want to play. So you had to weigh all of those things.

So take me back, take all of us, back to that, and all the things you weighed in making the decisions you did make, which was ultimately to postpone the season for one week.

00:37:58 Paul Tagliabue: Well, I said, I told you before what I did on Tuesday. On Wednesday, I started talking to owners on conference calls. Different owners were available at different times. And two precedents, you know, people... People have a way of thinking about what's been done before. The two precedents that a lot of owners and team people knew about were baseball after the beginning of the Second World War, after Pearl Harbor.

00:38:26 As I recall, President Roosevelt had written a letter to the commissioner of baseball saying, "Play the season, don't cancel the season," after Pearl Harbor. That was the 1942 season. And after President Kennedy was

assassinated, my predecessor, Pete Rozelle, made a decision to play the games on the Sunday after President Kennedy was assassinated. And...

Mike Greenberg: On a Friday.

- 00:38:50 Paul Tagliabue: Yeah. And he did it in part because he had been a business partner of Pierre Salinger, before he was commissioner of the NFL, and he called Pierre Salinger, who was one of President Kennedy's top aides, and said, "What should we do?" And Pierre Salinger said, "Play the games. The president would not want life to be interrupted." And that's a little bit of what Gary's talking about. It gives you an opportunity to come to grips with your grief.
- 00:39:17 So we had a lot of conversations. And two schools of thought. There was another school of thought: "Don't cave to the terrorists. That's what they want you to do." And I was, at the beginning, there were a lot of macho ideas about that. My attitude was born of my experience in the Pentagon. I had worked at the Pentagon from 1966 to 1969. And one of the things I had done in those years was participate in a study—big study, government-wide-- of how-- what was the risk of an attack on the continental United States, with or without nuclear weapons?
- 00:39:57 And a lot of it had to do with airplanes coming into JFK with bombs in the belly of the plane and things like that. We looked at incredible, crazy, off-the-wall scenarios. I can say this today, no one ever dreamed that commercial airliners could be turned into intercontinental ballistic missiles. That was not one of the crazy scenarios we looked at at the Pentagon.
- 00:40:23 So when I thought about what happened, here are civilian airliners, full of civilians, going into a building full of civilians, and it's like intercontinental ballistic missiles, the United Airlines and American Airlines planes. That's what it became. So we had one conference call, and the owners were talking about Pearl Harbor and President Kennedy.

00:40:41           And I said, "Look, this is worse. "This is the first time since 1812, I guess, or 1814, "that the continental United States has been attacked, and we don't even know who the attacker is. And it's been done with civilian means of living turned into weapons of war in the worst possible way. So we're not going to play, in my opinion."

00:41:01           But I gotta listen to everybody. So I'm listening to those people who said, this is what they would do in Israel. This is what they would do in South Africa. You know, if you got 32 owners, you've got 38 opinions.

(laughter)

Paul Tagliabue: So...

Gary Bettman: You can only say that now because you're not working with them.

(laughter)

Paul Tagliabue: If I was working with them, I would say we have 38 good opinions.

(laughter)

00:41:30           Paul Tagliabue: But, so what happened after a day of conversation... My wife and I were celebrating her birthday-- if you can call it "celebrating"-- on Wednesday, which happens to be her birthday. And... We were walking home from 50... from 49th Street-- 55th Street to 78th Street-- and it was like you were walking in a chimney. The air was so acrid. The soot and the smell was so terrible.

00:41:59            When we got home, I said, "We're not going to play this weekend," but I got to bring people around to that point of view with the biggest consensus that I can get. So I woke up in the middle of the night, and I wrote-- I wrote a memorandum, which talked about, "This is something that America will never forget, and rightly so. It's going to produce grief that will be never-ending. We need to be resilient."

00:42:23            I thought about Thomas Paine and "The Crisis." I used to go to Marie's Crisis Café over here on the West Side. And I thought about Thomas Paine's essay "The Crisis," and so I wrote, I wrote a memo, which was a draft of a memo to the teams saying, "We're not going to play." I had two copies of the memo. One said, "We're not going to play," the other said, "We are going to play."

And I used different versions with different owners. And those who said we should play, I said, "Read this memorandum. Do you think you can play... You read this memo of what America has just experienced, and can you live with the last sentence which says, 'We're going to play football?'"

00:43:05            A lot of people changed their minds. And the counsel for the Players' Association called me up recently and said, "Were you actually getting ready to do this?" I said, "No, I was getting ready to... I was trying to beat the brains out of owners who wanted to play. And when I read that memo to them, I said, 'No, you can't say that.'"

So as soon as you described what had happened, you had to conclude you were not going to play, and that's what we did on Thursday morning. In the meantime, you know, I had talked to Bud Selig. I talked to Tim Finchem. I talked to Brian France. I talked to a bunch of people. Everyone was saying, "What are we going to do?" And I said, "As soon as we get a consensus, which will probably be tomorrow morning, we'll make our announcement."

00:43:39            You know, and one other thing, just to come back to the last thing, the impact of this and the importance of sports, which Val, Gary, and David have talked about... Two months ago, I got a letter from a fan-- I get a lot

of letters from fans, I'm sure they all do. A letter from a fan saying, "Commissioner, I worked in the World Trade Center on 9/11. Sports have kept me from suicide. Sports have enabled me to live a decent life the last 17 years. Because you were the commissioner of the NFL, and the NFL has been a big part of my resilience, I want to you autograph what's in the enclosed envelope."

00:44:20

What was in the enclosed envelope, he explained, was one of the lenses of the sunglasses he was wearing that morning. And he was outside the building, and the building came down, and he was blown off his feet and the sunglasses were destroyed, but he kept his broken sunglasses. He sent that lens of his sunglass that he was wearing on 9/11, and said, "Would you autograph it?" And he enclosed a Sharpie. I couldn't believe that. I couldn't believe it in particular, because I knew I was coming down here to talk about 9/11 and the impact of sports on people. That happened two months ago.

00:44:56

Gary Bettman: You know, one thing that Paul touched upon, moving forward, we're looking back through a lens 17, 18 years later. In addition to the fact that the country, particularly New York, had suffered a terrible trauma, we had a lot of uncertainty as to whether or not another shoe was going to drop. And until we could all get assurance that we were somewhat safe-- never any absolute guarantees-- bringing tens of thousands of people together might not have been the most responsible act that any of us could have participated in. And I think that was a concern. It goes to what David said about, it changed the world on security. But we weren't going to be in a position to up security in 48 hours, any of us.

00:45:43

Mike Greenberg: That's why, to me, and you saw when Cliff and I did that walk-through that we put on the TV special, the fact that the exhibit ends with the marathon, which... I don't know, I mean, I'm more of a traditional sports fan. I don't follow the marathon closely every year. I can't tell you who wins the marathon every year.

So it hadn't really crystallized in my mind until I was there and really gave it some thought of what an extraordinary victory it was for the city to put

the marathon on less than two months after the attacks. We're talking about hundreds of thousands of people in the streets just spread out literally across all five boroughs. So that, I think, might have been the greatest victory, in its own way, of them all.

00:46:24

Commissioner Stern, I want to come back to you here, because I would like to talk a little bit more, spinning it forward. In what ways do you recall seeing and feeling the role that all of sports-- and maybe your teams in particular-- played in the recovery and in the return to whatever degree of normalcy we were able to find?

David Stern: I guess I would say that... Sports itself, I often say, it's... It's an everyman capacity. Whether you sit in the fancy suites or sit on the field, you get to voice your opinion. And a bunch of total strangers come together for the common purpose of rooting for the home team, usually.

00:47:04

That's a very unifying fact about sports. And I think that helps when you... You know, where you make the point that it doesn't matter which jersey you're rooting for. We're all in this together, and we're all subject to the same risks. So let's get over this, you know this, whatever it is that, that tends to separate us, something as foolish as a game.

00:47:29

Seriously. You know, they take it, and in America, we've always taken it less seriously than in Europe, where what you Americans call soccer, you know, separates, you know, countries and cities. Whereas here, "Okay, we lost." You know, if you live in New York, it's, "Wait till next year, the Dodgers will be back." You know? Well that's a long time-- I just dated myself. My God.

(laughter)

David Stern: Holy Moses! But that's, that's, you know, that's the beauty of sports. We're all in this together, and everyone comes together. And so sports did play an important role.

00:48:08 Gary Bettman: David just made me think of something, when we talked about seriousness. I don't have the date right, but it was shortly after 9/11, on the night that President Bush was giving his nationwide address, and there was an exhibition hockey game in Philadelphia. And during the intermission, when the speech started, they started by showing on the video screen the speech live.

00:48:34 And when the players came back on the ice, everybody was chanting, "Leave it on." And instead of continuing the game at that point, everybody, including the players in the stands, stopped, and they watched the entire speech, and then resumed the game after it was over, that that was the most important thing.

And here, collectively, all Americans-- some Canadians, obviously-- but were there and wanted to understand the bigger picture outside of sports.

00:49:06 Mike Greenberg: Commissioner Tagliabue, when your games did come back, that I remember so vividly, one of the things we pointed out in the TV special that is not relevant to anything, but it's another remarkable story, is that the first games that were then played, which are now a week and a half removed from September 11-- including one in Foxborough, which is famous for the Andruzzi brothers being out on the field and being honored-- was also the game in which the New York Jets injured New England quarterback Drew Bledsoe, who was replaced in that game by a sixth-round draft pick out of Michigan...

00:49:41 David Stern: Come on, Greenberg, cut it out!

Mike Greenberg: ...who no one had ever heard of...

David Stern: Just cut it out.

(laughter)

Mike Greenberg: Named Tom Brady. That's exactly what happened. That was that week.

Gary Bettman: So if Paul hadn't canceled the games the prior weekend...

Mike Greenberg: Correct.

Gary Bettman: Brady might never have happened.

Mike Greenberg: You would never have heard of us.

(laughter)

Gary Bettman: Okay, we're out there now.

Paul Tagliabue: Well, David didn't remember...

Val Ackerman: Conspiracy theories.

Paul Tagliabue: He didn't remember the thing about Michael Jordan, and I don't remember the Drew Bledsoe...

(laughter)

00:50:06 Paul Tagliabue: What I do remember is that we spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to present that first Sunday of games.

Mike Greenberg: Oh, boy.

Paul Tagliabue: And what we did, one of the things we did, we had Jon Bon Jovi record, I think, "America the Beautiful" in a firehouse on 51st and Lex. With the firemen, the surviving firemen, and their families surrounding Jon Bon Jovi. And we had Mary J. Blige do the national anthem on the Brooklyn Bridge, with the Trade Center-- with the smoking towers in the background.

00:50:40 And those, those were the two-- the "America the Beautiful" and the anthem-- that was played before every game on the big board. And we tried to sync it up, I think, so that all of the early games, those presentations were basically live. In the later games, they were taped. And that-- that was a big thing, I think.

00:50:59 That was the first little inkling that life could again be normal. But as has already been stated, anthrax was a big issue. The FBI was telling us, "If they're looking for targets, they found two targets in Lower Manhattan with 15,000 people who worked there, they can find a target full of NFL fans, 80,000 people in one building. What are you going to do about that?"

00:51:29 David Stern: And there were attempts to get into the subway with sarin gas. We were at risk as a nation.

Paul Tagliabue: I looked it up. It was two weeks after 9/11 that the anthrax arrived at Tom Brokaw's office.

David Stern: Brokaw's office.

Paul Tagliabue: And President, Vice President Cheney said, "I think there's good reason to believe that it's tied to Osama Bin Laden." A lot of that's forgotten.

Gary Bettman: Yup.

Paul Tagliabue: It was the whole fall leading in through the winter and through the seasons that these people were playing.

00:51:58 David Stern: One of the things that technology is-- technology is supposedly going to do for us is make our buildings more secure with facial recognition and other ways of protecting buildings, and who gets into Super Bowls and the like. But it hasn't, it's not 100% there yet, but everyone's focusing on it. How can we use this technology to assure our fans that they're safe in our venues?

00:52:26 And it should occupy a lot of our time, because we're supposed to think of it, we don't want our fans thinking about it. Everyone wants to go out to the game and have a good time. But, you know, we were living with the fact that if you had plastic strapped on you, enough to take an entire building down, you didn't get picked up in the magnometer, or the walk-through, or whatever it was. So we began learning more than we ever thought we would have to know about assuring that our fans would be safe.

00:52:59 Mike Greenberg: Now, the remarkable thing, I think, about leadership and the position that each of you have had, and-- and in some cases still have, is that we have the benefit of hindsight now, sitting here looking back and knowing that none of this ever happened. But you have to make these decisions before you know that. You have to make them in the absence of knowing that 17-and-a-half years later, we will be able to talk delightfully.

David Stern: That's astounding.

Mike Greenberg: Yeah. That nothing bad has happened.

00:53:23 David Stern: When Ambassador Holbrooke came in and said, "The next act, whether it's in Omaha or some other place, is going to be like a kettle drum. It's going to resound far beyond the borders." "And it will happen," said he. And everyone believed him. And there was no reason not to, because we were vulnerable. We were very vulnerable. And thank heavens it hasn't happened.

00:53:48 Mike Greenberg: Commissioner Ackerman, I'm curious to get your perspective now, running a sports, a collegiate sports conference, where you're dealing with all of these young people who are not old enough to remember these events. So what do you think the legacy of all this is for that? That was one of the things I tried to allude to in that video, is for younger people to understand the role that sports plays and the role that it can play in their lives today.

00:54:10 Val Ackerman: It's a great question, Mike. I was thinking about that, as well, because, you know, as we sort of walk around this, you know, these grounds and we see the bustle of tourists snapping pictures and the young people who may not have even been born on 9/11/01, you do wonder how we can continue to carry forward the memory of what happened.

00:54:36 And, you know, that's why, not just a nod to the museum, but a nod to the museum here is, having the exhibitry here to remind people about the, the... the trauma of that day is one step. You know, we have young basketball fans who don't know who Julius Erving was, or don't remember Michael Jordan, except on the video game.

David Stern: That's so true. I was going to say "get over it," because that's the... That's what happens, the next generation.

Val Ackerman: They just move on.

00:55:06 David Stern: When there was these things being circulated that says, the average kid who's 20 years old, "Vietnam what? Oh, that's the place where President Trump met"... No, no, no, there was many lives lost there. And we did it. And you know, it's, you can joke about it, about, you know, Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays, and Duke Snider. "Who were they? Did they ever play in New York?" "Yeah, they played in New York. We lived them, and we died with them."

00:55:33 But that's-- that's just something that happens. Future generations forget. They forget Pearl Harbor. They forget the Vietnam War, and they will forget 9/11. But that's why institutions like this become so important and curricula get to be developed that make sure-- make best efforts that people don't forget.

00:56:01 But we see it forgotten in the context of sports, when someone, literally an all-star, asked us-- I won't, I won't reveal them-- "You know, did Dr. J. used to play? Or did Lenny Wilkens?" Who is in the Hall of Fame twice, as a player and a coach, a pro and in college, et cetera. "Did he play?" Are you kidding me, kid?

(laughter)

00:56:25 David Stern: You know and so, what we began to do was to show movies, you know, the "NBA at 50," it talks about our history. "You're a rookie. Sit down, shut up, and watch this." But it's hard, it's hard. Because you don't want to make it painful for them, but on the other hand, you don't want them to forget, or at least it isn't about forgetting. It's about learning about the history of what preceded them. And it's a worthy effort.

00:56:53 I can't say enough good things about this museum. I had trouble getting the smell out of my nostrils. We came down here shortly thereafter, and all I kept thinking is, is that people were told it was safe to come in here

and do a lot of things, and those people's lives have been changed-- in many cases shortened-- forever. So it pays to be vigilant to make your own decisions.

00:57:20 Mike Greenberg: So, what I'd love to do, and we're going to set aside a few minutes to take some questions here in the room, but sort of as a good way to wrap up this part of the program, I'll start with you, Commissioner Tagliabue. What do you think, in your own mind, is sort of the lasting lessons that you've taken from that experience? Of all that you went through, from having to deal with the players, dealing with fans, dealing with security, dealing with the owners, what lessons did you take from that that you think have stayed with you in your-- in your life ever since?

00:57:50 Paul Tagliabue: Well, I guess there are two-- one positive and one not so positive. The first is what has been alluded to throughout, the impact that sports and athletes can have in a positive way on society. It goes back to... Jesse Owens in 1936, the Berlin Olympics, and goes forward to Joe Lewis and Jackie Robinson, Earl Lloyd and lots of other African-American athletes.

00:58:21 And it continues today with some of our societal... It continues today with issues of LGBT athletes, men and women. And I think sports has proven that it can be a positive force to change people's attitudes and bring people together, as David so eloquently emphasized.

00:58:41 On the downside, I think, if you look, if you think about the legacy of what happened after 9/11, it produced massive changes in our infrastructure dealing with homeland security, but it hasn't left a lasting... It hasn't become a lasting force in terms of service and community and togetherness. We wouldn't have the divided nation that we have, we wouldn't have the egocentric nation that we have, if the lessons of service and community that so dramatically were demonstrated in the aftermath of these attacks, the emergency responders.

00:59:21 But not just the emergency responders. The brothers-- my brother spent two months with his wife at the Fresh Kills Landfill out there on Staten Island. We know what they were doing. They were feeding the emergency responders, working 16 hours a day, as Red Cross volunteers. They were just ordinary citizens who did that.

00:59:41 We haven't taken that lesson and let our generation... We used to have-- we used to fight wars with a draft and with tax increases. I read something recently that said that the 17 years we've been in Iraq and Afghanistan is the first time in our nation's history that we fought wars without mandatory service and without a tax increase. So I think we've missed an opportunity as a nation. But this museum can be a powerful force filling that gap, creating that legacy in a more constructive way.

Mike Greenberg: That was beautifully said. Beautifully said.  
Commissioner Stern, a similar question, I suppose, to you-- the lessons you've taken from all of this.

01:00:24 David Stern: When I speak to start-ups, young groups, and they want to know what-- what they should judge, how they get better, what about leadership? I say, "You know what? You're going to be judged ultimately by your responses to circumstances that not only couldn't you anticipate, but that you couldn't imagine. And so the best you can do is generally be a good person and arm yourself with as many skills as you can, make good judgments along the way."

01:00:58 To Paul's point, which I concur with--and it's sad, the negative-- we began urging our players that they're-- they're citizens. People admire them, look up to them. They should feel free to speak out on social issues. That's important. And sort of, if you ask me what I'm proudest of about my... hundred years as commissioner...

(laughter)

01:01:24 David Stern: With owners who I just love and I only agreed with. It seemed like 100, it was only 30. And with brilliant owners and compassionate people, it was that, you know, at the beginning, our players were held in low regard, and now, athletes and "B" athletes and others are, like, at the top of the celebrity pyramid. And that's a good thing, because I think they're-- and it's the job of the sports leagues to make them, you know, proselytizers of and for good. And I think it's an enormous opportunity that sports has, both at the collegiate level and at the professional level.

Gary Bettman: I assume it's the same question. I, of course, agree with everything that Paul and David have said.

David Stern: You better.

Gary Bettman: I do.

(laughter)

01:02:12 Gary Bettman: You taught me well. But, you know, of the things we've talked about tonight, whether it's Paul's example of the letter he got two months ago from the guy who didn't commit suicide, thankfully, in big and small ways, sports can make a difference in people's lives. They can make the difference in how a community is and feels about itself.

01:02:35 And I think all of us in sports, particularly in a leadership role, have a responsibility to enact and execute the things that we have, the assets that we have as professional sports leagues, and even college leagues, to make a difference in people's lives.

01:02:54 The second thing I take away from it is, life is fragile. You never know what can happen. And so live each day as a good person. Love the people you love and let them know it. And make the most of whatever time you

have, because bad things can happen out of the blue that nobody can anticipate. And that's not to be doom and gloom. It's a call to live life.

01:03:23 Val Ackerman: And my reinforcing comments would be three: the importance of good leadership. "Good" meaning sensitive leadership, calm and collected, making good decisions in unanticipated moments. And I think we saw that coming out of 9/11. And the importance of sports leaders to have those same skills, so that's one.

01:03:53 Two: we've all talked about the unique platform that sports are to provide for communal joy-- that's a normal sporting event, for the winning team, at least. And communal grieving. You know, in times like 9/11, the extraordinary moments. And then finally, I'll just add, you know, it's sort of the power of the human spirit.

01:04:17 Again, sort of being a Tribecan here, what struck me coming out of 9/11 was how our neighborhood came together. People that you sort of saw in the street but never really talked to, all of a sudden, you were hugging. You know, we had a common bond that was unanticipated and very powerful. And so it brought everybody together. But after a while, people kind of went back to their lives.

01:04:38 And that kind of bothers me, you know? The fact that it takes crises moments to bring us together, but those-- those bonding moments are sometimes fleeting. And it really picks up on Paul's point, I wish there were, you know... In good times, we could find ways to stay together instead of just coming together in the tough moments.

David Stern: They used to call that civics in school.

(laughter)

01:04:58 Val Ackerman: And maybe it's just being a New Yorker, and we're busy, and we just sort of keep moving at a fast pace.

Gary Bettman: Although, it's back to normalcy.

Val Ackerman: It's normal. That's maybe our normal, which is not the great story. But the resiliency story, I think, is the good point.

Mike Greenberg: Yeah, when we did the special and we were going back and looking at the old footage of all of the games that followed, as a New Yorker myself, seeing the support that New York City was receiving in different places, "We are all New Yorkers," and signs like that. There was, there was definitely a sense of national community that, that perhaps we don't necessarily feel each day.

01:05:35 Okay, I'm going to make sure that we get an opportunity to take some questions in the crowd. I want to mention two things before we do that. One of them is that our exhibit downstairs, "Comeback Season: Sports After 9/11," is open through May 12. If you have not seen it, that gives you a few months left to. And I can tell you, if you appreciate sports, if you've not been there and you love sports and appreciate the power that sports has to bring people together, and are interested in things like this, I really think you will find it spectacular. And you can plan your visit at [911memorial.org](http://911memorial.org). [911memorial.org](http://911memorial.org).

01:06:09 I also want to mention there will be another event like this one here on Thursday, April 4. Bernie Williams, the former Yankee, will be here reflecting on the 2001 World Series and on what it meant for the Yankees to become America's team during that time. And for more information and tickets on that, you can visit [911memorial.org/programs](http://911memorial.org/programs). So [911memorial.org/programs](http://911memorial.org/programs).

01:06:33 So the exhibit is open through the middle of May. And Bernie will be here on April 4. So having said those two, I would love-- how would you like

to... Would someone start, to raise their hand? We have a microphone back there that I see. Would anyone like to ask a question? We would love to entertain them. I see one over there.

01:06:57 Man: Hello. Thank you, everyone, for being here, and for your wonderful insight. My question is for Commissioner Tagliabue, specifically as it relates to that year's Super Bowl, in New Orleans, the Patriots, U2, the logistics of it, with the delay in the season. Are there any particular stories, challenges, things that you could share with us from that particular Super Bowl?

01:07:22 Paul Tagliabue: Well, I guess two. One is sort of inconsequential. I think the other is very consequential in terms of what we were talking about. We had to move the Super Bowl a week, and we had to wipe out the automobile dealers' convention in order to move the Super Bowl a week. I use the word "wipe out" advisedly. We had to buy them out.

(laughter)

01:07:44 Paul Tagliabue: And during the course of that, one of our people said, that was in New Orleans, said, "I think it's going to take a minimum of \$20 million to buy out that automobile dealers' convention." And Roger Goodell and I were thinking about \$2 million, not 20. So we were coming back from a meeting with the automobile dealers' people in Washington, and I said to Roger, "Let's think about playing the game in New York instead of in New Orleans. We'll give New Orleans the future Super Bowl. We'll play the Super Bowl in New York. It will be phenomenal to bring that to the city, six months after, five months after 9/11."

01:08:20 Of course, it didn't happen that way. But that became the genesis of the New York Super Bowl idea. And every time John Mara and others pushed for a Super Bowl, they used to say, "It was your idea."

(laughter)

Paul Tagliabue: Yeah, in unique circumstances. But that, that was the one thing.

David Stern: You know...

Paul Tagliabue: The other, the other point I think is consequential has to do with the attitude of the nation. And David Hill-- the famous sports director of Fox Sports, an Australian-- I think gets a lot of the credit, came to see me, and he said, "You know, music has enormous power, especially when coupled with sports. So we're going to do a lot of special things with the Super Bowl in New Orleans."

01:08:59 And we sat together for days on end talking about what kind of music would be uplifting. And Bono, Bono said it after the halftime show. "We wanted to have joy while being defiant. We wanted to have grief while being resilient." And David Hill gets a lot of that credit. The pregame show was the Boston Pops orchestra playing Aaron Copland's "Lincoln's Portrait," with the words of Lincoln read by the four, I think, surviving presidents at the time.

01:09:35 That-- that was one moment. The halftime show was U2, and the fabulous music, but the names of all those whose lives had been lost at 9/11 scrolling on that magical board behind Bono. And that-- that was the other end of the spectrum. So I think, I think... You look back, and everything I've read says that was the greatest musical-- those were the greatest musical performances ever at the Super Bowl.

01:10:05 And it grows out of two things: the uniqueness of the circumstances, which was this terrible, horrific attack, and the insight of David Hill and others of how music can produce an experience that's incomparable. You can think about Beethoven. You can think about Aaron Copland. You think about U2. It changes the way people think about themselves and about their future, and that's what we accomplished, I think, in that Super Bowl music.

01:10:36 Mike Greenberg: That is a remarkable... I must tell you that I never heard the first part of that, that the genesis of the New York Super Bowl came from there. I do recall, I was at that game in New Orleans, and I had been at the Super Bowl the year prior, as well. My wife, Stacy, is here, and we brought our daughter-- my wife was actually on maternity leave with my daughter when, the Super Bowl the year before.

01:10:56 And we brought my daughter, who at that time was four months old, which, and that game was in Tampa. And I remember, we had free rein. We could do anything we wanted. We went and took a photo for my I.D., and my daughter, we put my daughter's picture on it. I mean, it was all sort of fun and games. And then the next year, in New Orleans, was the beginning of security as we now know it at sporting events.

It changed so dramatically, the experience, even as a reporter, a credentialed reporter who was there to cover it, the experience of just getting, not even into the stadium, but getting into any event, getting anywhere near anything that was going on. It just changed the spectrum of it completely.

01:11:29 Paul Tagliabue: David made the point earlier, we had-- we had security guards, National Guard, and dogs protecting all of the air conditioning systems in the Superdome because people were worried about sarin gas and anthrax.

Mike Greenberg: That's incredible. That's a great question. We have time for a couple of more, if we can. Go right ahead. I see some up here.

Woman: So there was a bit of conversation about players as role models, and I'm curious if there were any notable player reactions or experiences that stand out to any of you after 9/11.

- 01:12:09 Gary Bettman: Well, we talked about one, Mark Messier, honoring the firefighters on opening night, Madison Square Garden. I think in each one of our buildings, every night when they opened the season, there was a tribute to New York, to the victims, to the first responders. But beyond, you know, part of this is, as we sit here tonight and we all reflect on it, we're basically New Yorkers. Paul was an adopted New Yorker, now he's back in Washington. But the fact is, I actually think, as painful as it was for the country, I actually think in New York, we felt it more than anywhere else in the country.
- 01:12:51 David Stern: I, I remember recording something that opened up every game of the year, saying, prior to the national anthem, I don't remember what it was, but it was, "Let's honor the flag." And people were looking... And, "Let's honor the first responders and those who lost their lives." People were always looking for some way to come together. I'm, I was thinking before, as I heard Paul talking so eloquently, that we were the first-- we had scheduled an all-star game in New Orleans after Sandy. And we all-- was it Sandy? Or I guess it was Katrina-- Katrina.
- 01:13:27 And we all watched in horror before that as New Orleans was decimated. The Lower Ninth Ward, my God, we all got to know what the Lower Ninth Ward, saw the conditions that people were living in. And the city literally... A great migration occurred. We'll leave the politics of it away, but a lot of people abandoned New Orleans and went to Atlanta and Houston, et cetera.
- 01:13:52 And when we put our all-star game there, and everybody said we were crazy, "You can't go back to that city," but we did. And we had a day of service. And our visitors were so anxious to do something, anything-- paint walls, build buildings, get dirty, make, do construction work. And I think that just speaks to people wanting... You know, the good in people. And we have to find better ways to bring that out and give people the opportunity to express their desire to help others, because I've seen it.
- 01:14:29 You commented on it, and it's just... We've somehow missed the boat on following through on that. That's it. We still have a day of service every

year in the NBA, but what... The outpouring after Katrina was extraordinary. I'll always remember that.

Mike Greenberg: I was there when the NFL played its first game back there, that famous Monday night game, where Steve Gleason blocked the punt, and U2 played there, also, that night, along with Green Day. And I can tell you, I have been covering sports for 30 years. I've been in a lot of places. I've never heard anything as loud as the Superdome was that night.

01:15:07 That was one of the—a different tragedy, of course, of an entirely different nature. But that was that-- that was one incredible night. (coughs) If you ever wondered about the power of sports to bring people together during times of tragedy, that night was as good an example of it as I've ever seen.

01:15:23 Val Ackerman: Hey, Mike, let me just, on the player, please, I'll just add, in the college world, the service piece that's been talked about. It really matters. I mean, we see, more often than not athletics programs where the, the... You know, the players are not only doing their... their thing on the floor or, you know, on the sports fields of play.

01:15:45 They're working it out in the classroom, but they're also really committed to community service. So I think notwithstanding some of the cynicism here, which I sort of buy into at some level, I do think there is, among young athletes, in particular, this sense of service and whether that's infused by, you know, what they're taking back from events like 9/11, however indirectly, other things that are going on in our world today. I do think there is a sense among the younger generation of this, you know, the importance of that in their lives.

01:16:12 Mike Greenberg: I think, too, and I think you each probably could speak to this... Again, keeping as Commissioner Stern said, all politics out of it, the way we have seen athletes in, in various sports using their...

Val Ackerman: The activism.

Mike Greenberg: ...celebrity to advance meaning... things that are meaningful to them. Commissioner Stern, you said that you encouraged it amongst your players. But the way we have seen that happen in the NBA, in all of our sports, I think, has been very encouraging, as a person of my age, to see people a generation younger than me taking that sort of leadership and being that actively involved socially in things that matter to them. I think it's been very encouraging.

01:16:51 David Stern: It has become embedded in young athletes that they have a voice, and they have the ability to help others. And I'm always warmed by seeing what has happened. Across all sports. You know, in the old days, it didn't matter whether you wanted to do well or you wanted to do good. Just do something that helps others. And it became embedded, in a way, Val. That it happens at the universities. It happens at the high school level. It happens all over. So it's not about athletes being willing to serve. I think I was focusing more, with my own cynicism, about remembering what happened on 9/11. That's just a different subject.

01:17:34 Mike Greenberg: Right, I have time for one more from the audience before we have to let everyone go. Anywhere you'd like. I don't want to be the bad guy. You choose.

(laughter)

Man: So I guess kind of beforehand and after 9/11, did you see kind of-- did it change the impact, also, of things, if something did happen in a game situation? I still remember watching, for example, like the Mets-Phillies game when Osama Bin Laden was killed. And suddenly you see everyone in the stadium and the information kind of going there.

01:18:04 Did you see a-- did it force, also, a response within the league to change the infrastructure as to kind of preparing for, well, what happens not

even at a game, but something in the world happening, to kind of increase communication throughout the entire leagues and to kind of make a quick response?

01:18:23 David Stern: Technology took care of the communications issue, number one. I mean, you know, now... You know, we used to laugh when we wouldn't-- you know, everyone in the world would see something, and everyone would see the replay on their cell phone, and we in sports would say, "Or we're not going to replay that for the fans in the arena." It took it away from us. But other than that, I think that the focus has been on the safety of the consumer.

01:18:51 Gary Bettman: I also think, in terms of technology, 20 years ago, games kind of get, got played, and if there was a problem, immediate, somebody would pick up the phone and try and reach somebody. We all have setups now where in real time, we can talk to anybody who's in control of a game in any building.

01:19:13 And so whether or not there's an incident, or the building loses power, or a player gets severely injured, we can-- we don't have to rely on the people on the scene. We can all make centralized decisions as to how to handle a crisis.

David Stern: And coming soon to a league near you, we'll overrule the missed call between...

(laughter)

David Stern: ...New Orleans and Los Angeles.

01:19:39 Val Ackerman: Well, instead of making that the last word, I'll make it a more sobering word. I think we have fixed it. We have figured this out on the entry point. I mean, you can't go to a sporting event anymore without

going through a metal detector, and all those measures taken. If there was something that were to happen during a game that required an evacuation, I'm not convinced it would be orderly. But that's just my cynical view on that. I'm not sure we've mastered that one.

01:20:01 Paul Tagliabue: I've been saying that leagues and conferences-- leagues at the professional level and conferences at the college level-- are in the process, whether they know it or not, of redesigning their organizations. And they have to redesign their organizations because the organizations were designed and built to provide entertainment.

David Stern: Right.

01:20:21 Paul Tagliabue: Now the organizations are being expected to provide leadership on off-the-field issues, community issues, societal issues. And to do that intelligently, it's going to take time. And I think all the leagues are doing a great job. But there's some rough spots in the road. But they're redesigning themselves to be much more capable of contributing to society. As effective as it's been, when they were focused on entertainment, it's going to be better—as David has been emphasizing-- in the future.

01:20:52 David Stern: You know, you... I-- I believe that down to my socks, because there are-- there are going to be, you know, so much medical wisdom that's going to be gained by the monitoring of players. And I don't mean to change the outcome of games, but talking about levels. We're now seeing people focusing on sleep, and recovery, and strain. It's fascinating to me.

And-- and sports can lead the way about, you should eat well, you can-- you should exercise, you should do all... You know, it's a big... Every time there's another exposé or a report in "The New York Times," "This is a new thing: exercise and diet really matter."

(laughter)

01:21:32 David Stern: You know, but, but sports is going to pick up on that in a reorganized way. And I think Paul's 100% correct. We have to change lives and be used to change lives, rather than just, you know, same-old, same-old, because things are changing around us.

01:21:52 Mike Greenberg: Well, I would like to just repeat very quickly again that the exhibit downstairs, "Comeback Season: Sports After 9/11," is here through May 12. If you have not visited, please be sure to plan your visit. You can do so at [911memorial.org](http://911memorial.org). And Bernie Williams will be here Thursday, April 4, talking about the Yankees and the 2001 World Series. And for tickets, you can go to [911memorial.org/programs](http://911memorial.org/programs).

01:22:15 Folks, please join me in saying a most heartfelt thank you to Commissioner, Gary Bettman, David Stern, Paul Tagliabue. Thank you all so much for coming. Have a wonderful night.

(applause)

David Stern: Another one for you.

(applause)