

# DAILY NEWS

*November 11, 2007*

---

## Rock and Jock

by Michael O'Keeffe

Tony Bennett's "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," is a favorite here at The Score, and we've always wondered how another Bay Area icon would put his imprint on the song.

Now we know, thanks to "Chuckleball: Jailhouse Jocks."

"When I come home to you, San Francisco," Barry Bonds sings in the latest edition of the sports-based musical revue, "my golden pee will shine drug-free."

The off-Broadway production at Times Square's Snapple Theater Center is the latest edition of the Chuckleball franchise, a show that parodies sports the way "Forbidden Broadway" spoofs on theater and "The Capitol Steps" goofs on politics.

"Satire doesn't work if there isn't love and affection behind it," says producer Jason Goldstein. "I like going to a Yankee game as much as I like going to a Broadway show, but people take this stuff so seriously. Anything that self-important is easy to knock off its pedestal."

The world of sports, of course, gives Goldstein and his writing partner Ian Nemser plenty of material to work with. In one scene, an actor posing as Michael Vick contritely swears he's done with dogfighting, but then, with a devilish look in his eyes, breaks into Tom Jones' "What's New Pussycat?" In another scene, an actor dressed as a cop sings "Me and Pacman Jones."

In yet another scene, actors posing as Garden chairman James Dolan and Knicks coach Isiah Thomas discuss Anucha Browne Sanders' physical attributes.

"I hope she sues us," Goldstein joked. "It would keep us on the back page of the Daily News for weeks."



---

*December 3, 2007*

## **Martini Talk: Chuckleball by Michael Dale**

On a much lighter note I had a great time at the latest edition of Chuckleball, the musical revue which is essentially Forbidden Broadway for sports nuts. Creator Jason Goldstein, who co-directs and co-authors the continually updated show along with Ian Nemser, is very much a fan of that Off-Broadway satirical institution, as well as its politically-minded cousin Capital Steps. Together they've come up with an extremely funny, fast-paced topical revue of song parodies (showtunes, pop hits and standards) that spoof the back page headlines of your daily paper.

The show that has Yankee fans lamenting, to the tune of Rent's big song, that it's been "five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred pitchers" since their last world championship, has Barry Bonds singing his own version of a Tony Bennett classic, "I Don't Get Booed In San Francisco," and has football fans asking, to the tune of the Baha Men's hit, "Who Let The Dogs Fight?," certainly requires a decent knowledge of the sporting news in order to get the jokes. But even if you have no idea why James Dolan and Isiah Thomas have changed the words of "Hakuna Matata" to "Anucha's Ta-Tas" or why former Senator George Mitchell appears as a Harold Hill figure trying to end the trouble of human growth hormones in baseball ("Oh yes a ban will do it my friends./Yes a steroid ban, do you hear me?") the clever lyrics, spirited staging and performances of the young and very talented cast can keep you laughing all night.

Noah DeBiase Mike Mitchell, Jr., Katy Daniel and Justin Senense must be in constant motion throughout the 90 minute show, as they use an assortment of costumes and wigs to change themselves into Tiger Woods, Maria Sharapova, Don King, David Beckham, Michelle Wie, George Forman, King Booker, Tom Glavine and a league full of others, while frequently being called on to sing backup vocals from offstage. I couldn't say for certain if they were actually doing impersonations of all the celebs' voices, but, for those I'm familiar with, I absolutely recognized the persona the athletes project while playing. All four can power belt with impressive strength, as the pop song score demands, but they also possess an energetic sense of fun and silliness. Music director Meg Zervoulis provides fine accompaniment on piano.

This is Chuckleball's second stint in New York since its inception in 2004 and it has been touring colleges, corporate events and regional engagements since then. Subtitled Jailhouse Jocks, this edition features material covering former NBA ref Tim Doneghy's betting scandal, football player Pacman Jones' troubles with the law and, of course, the latest on O.J. Simpson.

When a new musical comes to town I usually try and imagine what the gang at Forbidden Broadway will do with it. Now, when a sports story makes headlines, I'll be thinking of Chuckleball.

# Bronx News

November 22, 2007

## Sports Spoof Opens Off-Broadway

by Howard Goldin

The mixing of musical comedy and sports is not a recent creation. More than a half-century ago, Douglas Wallop's book, "The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant" was adapted into the Broadway hit, "Damn Yankees." Since that time, many theatrical productions have had sports as their theme. An extremely entertaining production using music and comedy to parody recent sports events and personalities, "Chuckleball" opened last week at the Snapple Theater Center at 210 West 50th Street.

The original production of "Chuckleball" was created by musical theater producer Jason Goldstein in 2003. Goldstein, a Rutgers University graduate, explained the reason behind his creation, "I wanted to do something that combined my passions for sports and theater. My idea was to create a show that sports fans, who aren't particularly known for their love of theater, could really enjoy." The present edition is an updated incarnation of the shows produced since 2004. The cast and material change periodically as the talented cast members obtain more remunerative theatrical jobs and as more recent and more ridiculous sports events take place.

"Chuckleball: Jailhouse Jocks," is a series of twenty-five short "blackouts" performed by a cast of four young, multitalented stage performers. Each of the four takes on a variety of roles in the fast-paced musical and comedy revue. Twenty year-old Katey Daniel, is the lone female and the youngest of the four. The Tacoma, Washington native is making her New York debut in "Chuckleball." She has

appeared in television and theater on the West Coast. Daniel is not a stranger to the city as she recently graduated from the American Musical and Dramatic Academy of New York. She, obviously, learned her craft well. Her talent, good looks, and appealing stage presence should lead her to great success. Among those she portrayed in the show were Michelle Wei, Victoria Beckham, Maria Sharapova, and the frustrated wife of a football fanatic. Noah DeBiase also learned his craft in New York. He graduated from New York University's CAP 21 Musical Theater program. The experienced off-Broadway performer adds to the success of "Chuckleball" with his work as Tom Glavine, James Dolan, George Mitchell, and Jason Giambi. His beefed up Giambi singing "I'm Working My Way Back from Juice, Babe" was hilarious. Mike Mitchell, Jr. has appeared locally in stage and television. His uncanny Barry Bonds singing "I Don't Get Boomed in San Francisco" was a highlight of the show. Mitchell also impressed the audience with his work as Isiah Thomas, Michael Vick, Kobe Bryant, and Don King. His numbers were very deservedly well-received. Justin Senese has toured in major musicals including: "The King and I," "Miss Saigon," "Beauty and the Beast," and "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." His portrayals of Tiger Woods, Eli Manning, and David Beckham were humorous and tuneful.

The performance was a non-stop 90 minutes of songs and comedy. The performers needed no scenery or special effects to provide an entertaining evening to those in the audience. The rapid change of costumes and wigs

was all that was necessary to transform a performer into a believable version of the sports figure being portrayed. Musical Director Meg Zervoulis accompanied the singing with her excellent work at the piano. The piano never stooped tinkling and made one forget there was not an orchestra in the theater. One could not stop one's foot from tapping to the rhythm of Zervoulis's piano. The witty lyrics written by Goldstein and Ian Nemser were sung to popular tunes that were familiar to many in the crowd. Smokey Robinson's "My Girl" became "My Grill" sung by George Foreman. "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" became "I Never Get Boomed in San Francisco." The Rocky theme, "Eye of the Tiger" was turned into a Tiger Woods number, "I am Tiger and I'll Sell Anything." The refrain "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" from the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" became "Torre, Torre, Sayonara" as sung by the ensemble.

The show is presently housed in the Snapple Center Studio Theater. Performances are scheduled at 8 pm on Monday, Friday, and Saturday and at 7 pm on Sunday. Tickets are priced at \$45. The stagehands' strike against Broadway shows has adversely disrupted the plans of many tourists and local theatergoers. The availability of "Chuckleball" is a wonderful alternative for those who planned a visit to the theater and wish to have an entertaining theatrical experience. The show is also perfect for anyone who has the responsibility for staging entertainment and a corporate function or for a college audience. It is a relatively inexpensive booking that will royally entertain an audience.



## Chuckleball Is A Grand Slam!

Written by Mark Healey  
Tuesday, 06 November 2007

Every scout dreams of the "five-tool" player. Every once in a while, a rare specimen that can run, throw, hit for power, hit for average and plays great defense makes his debut on some local ball field and becomes a star. On Broadway, the critic looks for the same kind of rare package in a new show.

Does it have a memorable score? What about the cast, the writing, the visuals and the space?

It's rare that these two worlds collide. But when they do (Damn Yankees, for instance), it's something special, and the new Off-Broadway musical Chuckleball is no exception.

A show that will delight sports fans and theater regulars alike, Chuckleball is an amazing combination of sharp wit, cabaret intimacy, laugh-out-loud comedy, and first-rate improv. First off, the script. In the style of the long-running parodies Forbidden Broadway and The Capitol Steps, Chuckleball takes its shots at Michael Vick, Jason Giambi, Tom Glavine and Isiah Thomas.

Produced by Jason Goldstein, who wrote the script and directs the play with Ian Nemser, Chuckleball takes on everyone, everything and most impressive of all, stays timely while doing it.

"We are constantly writing material, sometimes even just ours before a show." Goldstein said. "(Yes), it's really demanding on the cast, but it keeps the show fresh."

It's also funny as hell.

From the show's opening number, a hilarious duet by "James Dolan: and "Isiah Thomas", singing to the tune of the Disney classic "Hakuna Mata-ta", its obvious that the crowd is in for a good time.

Isiah: Anu-cha's ta-tas! What a wonderful thrill  
Dolan: Anu-cha's ta-tas! Cost me 11 mil  
Isiah: We had no worries not a care until  
Both: The embarr-assment, sex-u-al harassment  
Anu-cha's tat-as!

Both Noah DeBiase ("James) and Mike Mitchell Jr. (Isiah) are talented singers and move well, but their characterizations of the well-known duo give a context to the performance that a sports fan can really appreciate. Meantime, their ease and fluidity on stage immediately resonates with the theater aficionado.

The best part is, there's so much more. Specifically, 90 minutes of non-stop performing by the aforementioned DiBiase and Mitchell, and the equally talented Katey Daniel and Justin Senense

Each has a signature moment, and in some cases, more than one.

Mitchell spends the night transforming from character to character, and there are points when you think there's another actor in the show. From O.J. Simpson to Marion Jones to Barry Bonds, his attention to detail and character development is impressive at any level. In the intimate Snapple Theater, it's extraordinary.

The Bonds number is uncanny, and his accompanying tune (I Never Get Booped in San Francisco) sung to the tune of the Tony Bennett standard is both hilarious, ironic and down-right spot on as editorial commentary.

I don't get booped in San Francisco,  
It's such a thrill, they cheer for me  
To be where doctors let you slide,  
For dinero on the side  
The morning news will clear the air, I look square  
I love the fans in San Francisco,  
They have a clue, yet they don't see  
When I come home to you, San Francisco,  
My golden pee will shine drug free

As a sports writer, who has to cover this stuff every day, it's refreshing to see this kind of frivolity in a sport and industry that takes itself way too seriously sometimes.

DiBiase, who looks and sounds the part of a Broadway veteran, is equally powerful, though it is his voice and smile that charms the audience. It's hard to imagine anyone else capturing Tom Glavine as well, considering there's not much of an existing Glavine "persona". But the future Hall of Famer gets lampooned here, and thanks to some great writing and DiBiase's talent, the result is a bang-up job of translating. Using the tune "Bad Day", "Glavine" laments his performance in the Mets' final game of the season:

Our team collapsed at the end of the year  
Win one more game and we're in the clear  
I only got one batter out

Seven earned runs began the rout  
But I won't be carryin' on

Because I had a bad day  
I let the fans down  
A well placed pitch would turn it around  
I really don't know  
The stats don't lie  
Since coming here my well has run dry  
I had a bad day  
I feel like a flop  
I can't seem to win with no Tomahawk Chop  
I had a bad day  
I had a bad day

Simply classic.

Not to be outdone, Daniel's pantheon of characters are all delivered with a real theatrical punch and variety. The standout pint for her night's work is the rendition of "The Curse Is Over", sung to the tune of Survivor's Top 10 hit "The Search Is Over"

We were living for a dream,  
Waiting for that moment  
Taking on the Yanks,  
And their dynasty  
Now I have to close my eyes  
Wish it never happened  
The "Curse" is over,  
I have no identity

Daniel's performance deserves a special mention, because, as the show's only female, the sports guys in the audience are likely to spend most of their time focusing on her. That kind of pressure can be intimidating to an actor, but Daniel not only rises above it, she triumphs. Her standout vocals are obvious, but she comes off as a real Red Sox fan. Her emotion is real and the lament rings true.

Last but certainly not least, because this is a true ensemble piece from the director down to the stage crew, Senense takes some challenging material and makes it memorable, simply on the power of his voice. Taking milquetoast personalities like David Beckham, Peyton Manning and Tiger Woods and bringing them to life is one thing, making them funny and entertaining (and sympathetic) is a tremendous accomplishment.

In the "Eye of the Tiger" spoof, "I am Tiger", Senense really scores.

Because, I am Tiger and I shoot under par  
Have a hundred commercials out for Nike

Just in case you are wondering Buick makes a great car  
I'm the most endorsed athlete yes I, am Tiger

You know, the Rockefeller Plaza studio of Saturday Night Live is just a hop, skip and a jump away from the Snapple Theater Center (210 West 50th Street), and I would suggest that the producers of that show take a trip and see just how talented these folks are. Because I have got to say, as a rabid SNL fan, Chuckleball blows The Not Ready For Prime Time Players away. You could take any several of the numbers from this show on any given Saturday and it would be a standout skit.

To that, Goldstein and the rest of the production team deserve a large chunk of credit for the cast's performances, because in this writer's opinion, the casting job done here is really first-rate.

Let's not forget the smooth fingers of musical director Meg Zervoulis. There are no big "production" numbers here, only a piano and great voices who chime in on and off the stage in really impressive harmony (think that's simple? You try singing four-part harmony when the tenor is singing in front of the curtain and you're signing baritone behind it). Thanks to Zervoulis, the show's only instrument is as much part of the show as the actors. She tirelessly keeps the show moving, and when she's asked to kick it up a notch, her playing becomes another character in the performance.

Does it seem like I like it. You betcha, and I'm going back, if for no other reason than to see what new material they add to their script! I thoroughly enjoyed "Chuckleball" and trust me, you will too. If you're a fan of the theater, and you don't get to get out to see it much because "it's a playoff, game", drag your significant other along. They will thank you. If the reverse is true, get yourself in someone's good graces (or out of the doghouse) by suggesting a night out that starts/ concludes with a trip to the theater.

It's that good.

Chuckleball plays at the Snapple Theater Center, 210 West 50th Street (at Broadway) on Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 PM and Sundays at 7 PM. Calling (212) 921-7862 for tickets. For more information visit [chuckleball.com](http://chuckleball.com).  
Last Updated ( Tuesday, 06 November 2007 )



# WASHINGTON SQUARE NEWS

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER — WWW.NYUNEW.COM

## Sports stars satirized in 'Chuckleball'

by Josh Harrison on 11/30/07

Tiger Woods steps into the bare space. He is wearing his trademark Nike cap and a determined expression as he walks confidently to center stage. Once there, he clasps his hands as though he is holding an invisible golf club and smiles. He stands, frozen, while the lights shift around him. Soon, a spotlight pours down on him and music begins. The song is a classic: Survivor's "Eye of the Tiger." With each of the song's famous opening chords, Tiger strikes a new pose, changing positions with sharp movements. Eventually he launches into a perfectly choreographed dance sequence straight out of a Michael Jackson music video. With a smile on his face, he starts to sing.

---

---

"Chuckleball: Jailhouse Jocks,"  
Snapple Theater Center  
210 W. 50th St., \$45  
[www.chuckleball.com](http://www.chuckleball.com)  
Runs through Dec. 30th

---

---

Turning a famous golf champion into a character in a musical comedy is no small feat, but it is just one of the surprising scenes in "Chuckleball: Jailhouse Jocks." Described as a "Forbidden Broadway" for the sports world, "Chuckleball" puts today's sports headlines onstage to the tune of popular songs and show tunes. The current production of "Chuckleball" covers stories as recent as former Yankees manager Joe Torre's departure, and the program - called "Playball" - notes that new jokes are constantly being added to the lineup.

Although I did not get to see a full production of "Chuckleball," due to a show cancellation, I was given the opportunity to watch the cast film skits for publicity.

"Chuckleball" has a difficult mission to accomplish - think theater for the ESPN set - but it manages to blend sports and musical comedy with style. Its humor effectively caters to both its intended audiences.

One great scene has the cast gathering into a straight line to belt out a parodied rendition of "Seasons of Love." The staging and harmonies pay homage to "Rent," while the lyrics, lamenting the sad state of the Yankees bullpen, echo the sentiments of many New York fans. Another scene brings the cast together in the style of "The Music Man" - except that instead of Harold Hill railing against the evils of pool and gambling, "Chuckleball" has Senator George J. Mitchell describing the harmful effects of human growth hormones.

Its lyrics are clever and its songs are easily recognizable, but the real strengths of "Chuckleball" are the sports legends and the actors who play them. Every character, from Barry Bonds to Posh Spice, is a skillfully crafted caricature, put onstage to be lovingly mocked. Justin Senense is hilarious as David Beckham, playing the soccer superstar as a fop who dances merrily despite his infamous injury. Senense also stands out as a police officer who sings of football star Adam "Pacman" Jones' trouble with the law. Two of the actors, Noah DeBiase and Katey Daniel, work especially well together, playing a Jets-obsessed husband and an ignored wife to the tune of "Monday, Monday" or a binoculars-wielding stalker and tennis pro Maria Sharapova in an adaptation of "Maria" from "West Side Story." Mike Mitchell, Jr. lends a more immediate form of comedy to the cast; he has his best moments in short scenes. His imitation of hyperactive boxing promoter Don King demands attention and his Marion Jones must be seen to be believed.

"Chuckleball" does have its weaker moments. Some of the lyrics are predictable and the transitions between numbers can be choppy. But when "Chuckleball" gets going, it taps into the charisma and energy of Broadway as well as the rowdy enthusiasm of a good sports broadcast. The cast is energetic throughout - they clearly have as much fun as the audience with every song. This keeps the jokes from seeming contrived, since the cast is sharing them as well. •

---

# THE DAILY TARGUM

---

## Rutgers Grad Presents Chuckleball

By: Nicole Capatasto / Theater Editor on November 1, 2007

After years of being on the road and being performed at colleges, Chuckleball, a sports musical revue created and produced by Rutgers alum Jason Goldstein, will open off-Broadway this month at New York City's Snapple Theater.

Chuckleball is a "unique theatrical event" in which "four actors impersonate dozens of top athletes, has-beens and soccer moms in about 30 musical numbers," according to press notes.

Chuckleball was conceived in 2003, while Goldstein was pursuing a masters degree at Rutgers soon after his 2002 graduation from Livingston College.

"I first took the show to Joe Mancuso's Theater Appreciation class and did a workshop," said Goldstein, who while at Rutgers founded the Livingston Theatre Company. "It was hastily done but the audience response was phenomenal."

Goldstein, after seeing the response at Rutgers, was hoping to take Chuckleball on the road to universities everywhere, and in the summer of 2005, opened in New York to prepare itself to do so.

"People saw it and began asking us for bookings and we began sending it on the road," Goldstein said.

Goldstein and his collaborators constantly update the material in

order to keep up with the changing headlines. The newest version is titled Jailhouse Jocks.

"This year's show is called Jailhouse Jocks because right now there is a lot of criminal stuff going on with sport celebrities," Goldstein said.

He is, of course, referring to recent events in the news such as Michael Vick's dog fighting case and OJ Simpson's Las Vegas robbery.

But it's not just sports fans who will understand and enjoy Chuckleball.

"Things like steroids in baseball, the George Foreman grill, David Beckham - they're household names," Goldstein said. "It's written so you don't really need to know anything about sports to have a good time. If you just kind of half listen to the news or read the last page of the New York Post, you'll know what's going on."

Goldstein continues, "A lot of people get intimidated by the sports thing. They think, I'm not going to like this show because I know nothing about sports ... If you're a diehard sports fan you're going to get it on a different level then if you're not. But if you're not a diehard sports fan, you're going to get it on an even different level."

Chuckleball is also aiming to reach college-aged audiences, having been successful at past student orientations at Rutgers, selling out the last

3 years to packed crowds at the Livingston Student Center.

"The show is targeted at a very broad audience but especially college students," Goldstein said. "College students tend to really respond well to it."

Chuckleball is modeled after the long running, largely successful musical revues Forbidden Broadway and Capitol Steps, which are Broadway and political parodies, respectively. But he realizes the merging of sports and theater in to a revue show might strike some as an odd pairing.

"A lot of people think that sports and theater are not a natural match," Goldstein said. "But what's interesting is that sports and theater have gone together for many, many years."

"I think you have to take a chance with this show," Goldstein said. "We're not targeting just your strict theater goer or strict sports fan - but people who like to laugh and have a good time. People like myself, who have just as much fun going to a basketball game as an opera."

Chuckleball: Jailhouse Jocks will run for 10 weeks at the Snapple Theater in Times Square. Tickets are available through Ticket Master or at the Snapple Theater box office. Student Rush tickets, priced at \$25 each, are available the day of the performance with a valid student ID.



## Sports Beat

by Lloyd Carroll on 11/20/07

If you are looking for a fun theatrical night in New York, check out a new show called Chuckleball at the Snapple Theater Center on 50th Street and Broadway that satirizes sports the way Forbidden Broadway lampoons big-time theatrical productions. Among the musical parodies that would make "Weird Al" Yankovic proud are "Who Let The Dogs Fight? (Vick! Vick!)", "My Grill," a tribute to George Foreman's Lean Mean Grilling Machine set to the The Temptations' "My Grill"; and Daniel Powter's "Bad Day," with Tom Glavine lamenting his pitching performance against the Florida Marlins in the final day of the season. The young talented cast makes this a very enjoyable and rather inexpensive night out in the big town.

## "Chuckleball" takes a look at sports through satirical songs and skits

by Barry Wilner, AP Sports Writer on 11/22/07

---

NEW YORK — George Foreman croons. Jason Giambi lyrically laments. Tiger Woods boogies, not bogeys.

They're all on stage, or at least being parodied on an off-Broadway stage, in "Chuckleball," a hilarious and very up-to-date musical revue that spares just about no one in sports.

The 90-minute musical at the Snapple Theater, which actually is on Broadway in the theater district, is the brainchild of Jason Goldstein and Ian Nemser. It's not their first shot at skewering sports figures, and the latest production has the working title "Jailhouse Jocks."

That hardly limits the four actors (three male, one female) from portraying athletes who walk the straight and narrow, such as Foreman, Woods, David Beckham and Maria Sharapova. But it also lets them needle Giambi, Barry Bonds, Pacman Jones and Isiah Thomas, among others. Many others.

"I like to do comedy that is smart and more sophisticated," says Goldstein, who also produced "Jailhouse Jocks" and its predecessors under the "Chuckleball" heading: "Performance Enhancers," and "There's Always Room for Balco."

"You must have material that does not offend people. These are celebrities, high-profile people. We don't get into the really personal.

"I ask, 'Would they enjoy it if they came and saw it?' "

Goldstein's revues follow the path set by "Forbidden Broadway," which makes fun of Broadway hits and stars and became something of a cult favorite among actors - so much so that they would ask to be parodied in the show.

"I would really love that if the athletes would come see it and say: 'I got to get myself roasted.'"

If Foreman came to the show, he'd probably get more than a chuckle out of seeing his character singing "My Grill" to the Temptations classic "My Girl." And Woods proclaims "I Am Tiger" to Survivor's "Eye of the Tiger," with hilarious results.

There's also a brilliant rendition of "Me and Pacman Jones" that had the entire audience howling with laughter during one presentation.

"We go for the smarter joke," says Goldstein, whose show will run through Dec 30. "We are a pure fun show, but with some sort of commenting on sports and what goes on."

Such as Bonds doing his best Tony Bennett to "I Love to Play in San Francisco."

"It says something: 'The world is changing in terms of sports and people are willing to forgo the rules and take steroids, but San Francisco doesn't care,'" Goldstein explains.

The four actors - Katey Daniel, Noah DeBiase, Mike Mitchell Jr., and Justin Senense - are not particularly big sports fans. DeBiase says he likes boxing, but rarely watches other sporting events. Senense admits his roles in "Chuckleball" now have him searching the Internet and reading the sports sections.

"Before I went to college and focused on my acting career, I was a basketball fan of the Rockets and Hakeem Olajuwon, way back when," Senense says. "This has made me appreciate sports more, and I'm also gravitating back to watching sports."

"We can also draw on much of the fact that theater and sports are similar. That energy you can use throughout a show is something you also use in sports. They kind of are parallel."

Senense also bears a striking resemblance to Woods, which makes the "I Am Tiger" skit even more entertaining. Mitchell is a dead ringer for Isiah Thomas, whom he portrays in another number.

One challenge is keeping the material current. During a recent performance, one day after Joe Torre signed to manage the Dodgers, Goldstein and Nemser updated the show with a song about him to "California Dreamin'."

It's also critical that the songs be familiar to the audience. Most of them are either Broadway show tunes, Motown or well-known and recent pop hits.

"You have to find songs that have the right tone for the number, but also are popular enough," Goldstein says. "We feel 80 percent of the audience should know the song."

The production itself is minimal, with many of the costumes being team jerseys. Pianist Meg Zervoulis accompanies every skit.

Goldstein hopes to eventually regionalize the show so that a company in each city could concentrate on local teams.

"Sports is such a broad topic, and there's probably another hour's more worth of material we could do in the show," he says. "We could do just a whole show on one team, roast the Red Sox or Celtics in Boston, do the Yankees in New York."

He's not likely to run out of material. The athletes make sure of that with the headlines they keep making.

"Sure," Goldstein says. "That's why we love sports."



## **Torre's Incentive To Leave The Yankees**

*by Lloyd Carroll on 11/15/2007*

Versus, the poor man's ESPN, has launched a new show on Tuesday nights, "Sports Unfiltered With Dennis Miller," in which the comic allegedly unleashes his wit on sports targets. I have long been a fan of Miller's delightfully biting sarcasm but he comes off as stiff and unconvincing reading his lines off the teleprompter. Miller's targets such as Michael Vick and Ron Artest have been lampooned mercilessly countless times already and he offers little new to create laughs.

A far more clever sports spoof is "Chuckleball" that is playing at the Snapple Theater Center at 50th Street and Broadway. The four-person show is modeled after "Forbidden Broadway" as the cast belts out numbers as "My Grill" (to the tune of the Temptations' "My Girl") in honor of George Foreman's marketing skills, and "Bad Day" with a character portraying Mets pitcher Tom Glavine wistfully singing the lyrics after the Mets' last game debacle. It is good inexpensive fun

# QUOTES ON THE SHOW

"If you love sports and love scandals,  
you'll LOVE Chuckleball."

*- Juliet Papa, 1010 WINS Radio*

"I've been a sportscaster for more than 35 years, and Chuckleball is the most unique, funniest, sharpest and hippest show of its kind ever. I laughed out loud all evening. If you like sports and music and know anything about current events, Chuckleball is a must-see."

*-Brad Sham, Dallas Cowboys Play-by-Play announcer*

"A thoroughly entertaining evening. Pure enjoyment and warm-hearted fun. Sports fan or not, you'll love the characters, adore the songs, and be awed by the brilliantly talented performers."

*- Dr. Judy Kuriansky, noted clinical psychologist, sex therapist, radio call-in advice host and commentator on CNN Headline News' Showbiz Tonight.*

"I thoroughly enjoyed it!"

*- Ann Liguori, WFAN and WLIU Radio Host*

"Savvy, funny, even insightful 'Chuckleball' captures sports in all its motley madness."

*- Ira Berkow, author and long-time sports columnist for The New York Times.*



## Musical cuts pro athletes down to size Chuckleball laughs at sports controversies

By Joey Wahler 12/24/07

---

---

It begins with the soothing, nostalgic sounds of late, long-time Yankee Stadium organist Eddie Layton's baseball tunes, heard before the show via recording. That's a just a warm-up for about 30 timely, funny, highly clever song parodies during Chuckleball, a one-of-a-kind show aimed at sports fans, from diehard to casual.

From the moment you receive the Playbill -- in this case called the "Play Ball" -- you realize this is a rare theatrical production, a musical about sports. Chuckleball is in its final week off Broadway, but is located on Broadway at the Snapple Theatre. The production is looking for its next home as it concludes a successful run in the Big Apple.

"There's a challenge," said Jason Goldstein, Chuckleball's producer and co-writer with fellow New Jerseyan Ian Nemser. "We want the material to be broad enough in scope that even the casual sports fan, or even someone that just happens to flip on the news, can get all the jokes. But we also want those diehards to really say, 'Oh Wow!'"

"The people that follow every stat, they're on the websites every day, talking about the latest breaking news. We want them to also enjoy it."

Goldstein, a Rutgers graduate from East Brunswick, wanted to create a musical satire of celebrated sports figures, similar to the way Forbidden Broadway pokes fun at famous Broadway shows. The result is a fast-moving, eclectic collection of tunes that combine the melodies of popular songs with new lyrics that lampoon the latest sports headlines.

"I think the thing that's most fun about it is that Chuckleball's a long-range show," Goldstein said. "It's not something that's going to play for a few months and then you're done. We're constantly evolving, we're changing the material. And because of that, we can use an entire catalog of music, which is great. We don't get sick of any one song."

"The Mitchell Report came out. And we said, 'We have to. The audience is going to expect that.'"

Indeed, just days after the report's release, Chuckleball's team of four performers and a piano player were already doing a tune about Mitchell's list, sung to the music of Hall & Oates' "Kiss On My List."

The song features a Paul LoDuca character, dressed in a Mets uniform, singing, "I always smile when I lie, now the world knows why. It's Mitchell's list, his list, I'm on his list. And now I'm pissed, I'm pissed I'm on this list. I'm really pissed I'm on this list. It'll ruin my life."

Two songs address Michael Vick's dog fighting, one to the tune of Baha Men's "Who Let The Dogs Out?" NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and a group of sign-wielding PETA protesters cry, "Who let the dogs fight? Vick, Vick, Vick, Vick!"

Actor Noah DiBiase sings as LoDuca and Goodell, among his many other roles in Chuckleball. He says he loves the variety the show affords him as a performer.

"Getting to do all these different people and different physicality's, and just embodying different personas, so many of them so quick," he said. "It's just absolutely a blast."

The many well-known figures represented in Chuckleball, many from New York teams, get a rise from the audience.

"When we come out and portray them, the audience has immediate recognition and just [gives] that extra boost to the performance," DiBiase said.

One song is sung by Vick himself, played by Mike Mitchell, Jr., in which he swears he's given up dog fighting, but reveals his new interest, breaking into Tom Jones' "What's New Pussycat?" The new words include, "Pussycat, pussycat, don't you fret, I won't bet, 'cause I'll be locked up in jail."

With about 30 scenes/songs and just four performers, the cast has a demanding -- but rewarding -- job.

"It's tough," said Mitchell, Jr. "But it's challenging, it's fun. It definitely doesn't get old doing this show. Nothing's stale. It's always fresh. The order of the show changes, the numbers get moved around."

Chuckleball's energetic leadoff song is sung by Tiger Woods, portrayed by Justin Senese, to the tune of Survivor's "Eye of the Tiger." It takes shots at Woods'

endless list of commercial endorsements.

Woods sings, "I am Tiger and I shoot under par, have a hundred commercials from Nike. Just in case you were wondering, Buick makes a great car. I'm the most endorsed athlete, yes I am Tiger."

"Sports guys, they're role models," Senense said. "And when they do something wrong, we want to tell them, 'Hey, come on -- my kids look up to you.' So I guess this is a great outlet for parents, for kids."

"We know this is a great family show. A bunch of kids come. And I know that they can use it as like a lesson. It can be a children's show, and it's a great way for parents to be like, 'OK, Michael Vick did this. Don't do this.'"

"You can turn it into kind of a children's lesson for your family. And that's entertaining as well."

Later, Senense's Woods character is joined by endorsement queen Michelle Wie, played by Katey Daniel, as the pair dance with a golf club and Wheaties box, respectively.

To the melody of Madonna's "Material Girl," Wie sings, "'Cause we are living in a cereal world, and I am a cereal girl. You know that we are living in a cereal world, and I am a cereal girl."

So far, none of the sports figures portrayed in Chuckleball have attended the show, but Daniel says they should.

"I wish that the sports players would come and see themselves be roasted," she said. "I think that they would get a kick out of it. It's a lot of fun. And we wouldn't do anything that would, I think, personally offend them to the point where they would write a letter and complain or anything."

Chuckleball does toe the chalk line of controversy, however. One number features a James Dolan character, complete with a moustache and goatee, and a Nobody Beats The Wiz pullover, joining an Isiah Thomas character for a duet about Anucha Browne Sanders.

Dolan and Thomas laugh about how the former Madison Square Garden employee got rich by suing them, during a song called, "Anucha's Ta Ta's."

One key to Chuckleball's success is matching each parody with the right song. Take "525,600 Pitchers," the show's ode to the ever-changing Yankee starting rotation, done to the music of Rent's "525,600 Minutes."

The number has frustrated Bomber fans crooning, "Igawa, Contreras, Jeff Weaver and Sidney Ponson. Big Unit,

Nomo, Loaiza no more. 525,600 pitchers. How can we win with Carl Pavano?"

The show's limited cast necessitates quick backstage changes between scenes, often requiring a new costume and hair to be donned in just seconds. Laughing, DiBiase admitted that recently after the scene where he plays Dolan, he didn't realize he went back out for his next scene still wearing the moustache and goatee. Fortunately, the audience didn't notice.

Such unexpected fun keeps Chuckleball music director Meg Zervoulis laughing while providing the show's one-woman band -- on the piano. As the play quickly changes subjects and characters, Zervoulis' work on the ivory's must reflect that.

"We go from R&B, to jazz, to pop, to swing," she said. "So it's different to change into that character, even though I don't have to change costumes. It's exciting, but also very challenging to play a score like this."

"The cast has a really high energy together, and it's really nice to just come to a place where there's so much positive stuff going on, and a lot of energy every night. So that's another facet of the show that's really exciting for me."

Chuckleball production manager Brad Resnick serves many roles, pitching in wherever needed -- from technical expertise to publicity -- just like everyone else involved in the show. That includes Goldstein, the producer, who greets the arriving audience and hands out programs.

"It's a small company, but it's a very collaborative show," Resnick said. "And we like to have everyone give their own input, and kind of put their own piece into the puzzle."

And Chuckleball's puzzle wouldn't be complete without a number done by Barry Bonds. Dressed in a San Francisco Giants uniform, wielding a bat with a huge crucifix earring dangling, Mitchell, Jr. really does look like the juicing -- er -- home run king.

To the sounds of "I Left My Heart In San Francisco," he sings, "When I come home to you, San Francisco, no perjury, I'll be spot free. My golden pee will shine drug free."

Coming from Bonds, those words certainly drew many audience chuckles indeed.

Chuckleball has added extra performances for its final week off-Broadway, ending Sun. Dec. 30. For ticket information, log onto Chuckleball.com.

Joey Wahler is a contributor to SNY.tv.

# DAILY NEWS

---

*December 24, 2007*

---

from **Suddenly Single at the Holidays**  
by Dr. Judy Kuriansky

For the other holiday theatre experience, treat yourself to gaiety at "Chuckleball: Jailhouse Jocks," a Forbidden-Broadway-inspired musical revue that lampoons sports figures, their endorsements, and fans, with constantly updated news and scandals. Even if you're not a sports fanatic, you'll recognize O.J.'s recent robbery, Michael Vick's dogfighting, baseball steroids, legendary George Forman hawking his outdoor grill ("talking about My Grill" to the Smokey Robinson tune), and a young man's crush on tennis stunner Anna Kournikova (to the tune of the 1979 hit song "My Sharona"). You'll adore the familiar songs, zany comedy, and witty pop culture parody and impersonations by the troupe of talented and energetic young performers. If you suffer from any low energy from being alone during this holiday, this off-Broadway gem will definitely fire you up and put a smile on your face and in your heart. For tickets, see [www.chuckleball.com](http://www.chuckleball.com).