

Harold Reynolds First Interview Since ESPN Firing

Written by XM Radio

Monday, 11 September 2006 20:00



Today on *Baseball Beat* with Charley Steiner, Harold Reynolds made his first radio or TV appearance since being fired by ESPN. He discussed the situation, his wife and family, getting his name back, and the upcoming mediation with ESPN. He also debunked some previous reports on the situation including Outback, AROD, and agent brother.

Transcript courtesy of XM175, and Baseball Beat with Charley Steiner

Charley Steiner: Back for the second hour of the Beat. Here on XM 175. I'm Charley Steiner in Chicago . It is Tuesday, the September 12th. Over the weekend we're in New York . The Dodgers and the Mets were playing. Steve Lyons and I were doing the games back to Los Angeles on television. And, uh, who walks into the booth. We should say this right up front a friend. A friend of ours for I guess almost ten years now. A colleague with whom I have worked on television, on the radio, doing play by play, and doing studio stuff. Our friend, Harold Reynolds, whom I have not seen in quite some time. And, of course, about six weeks ago there were these headlines that Harold was suddenly out at ESPN. And, like anybody who knows Harold, we were just shocked. 'What is this all about?' So, when we saw Harold on Friday it was great to see him. On Saturday, we spoke a little more. And, Harold said, "Hey, you know, I'd like to come on and I would like to talk about what has happened over the last six weeks." And, I said "Harold you are my friend and you have the door that is always open. And, Harold, Hello. How are you? How are you?"

Harold Reynolds: I'm doing great, man. Thanks. Good to hear from you. Good to hear from you. It's good times.

Charley Steiner: Alright. Good. Let's begin at the beginning. And, what happened?

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Harold Reynolds: Well, I'd love to get into a lot of stuff. Honestly, I've had to figure this out and go through the legal system on this. What I can tell you is number one that my conscious is clear on this whole issue. I feel like I was wrongfully terminated. I just think that they had to rest the decision on this. I don't think my side was heard very well. And, you know the great part about where we live at. You can go ahead and press the charges to get her and that's exactly what I'm doing. We've got a date set toward the end of the month here to sit down in front of a mediator and get a chance to talk to ESPN and exactly find out. Cause they never gave me. They gave me such a broad sentence in my contract that I was never directly told exactly why I was fired. And, I know I've heard all the rumors and I've even read headlines and all the different things out there. But, they've never said that. Those came out of leaks from ESPN. There are a lot of things we have to deal with and a lot of things we've got to discuss.

Charley Steiner: This mediation session will take place when?

Harold Reynolds: In a couple weeks here at the end of September. And, uh, we've got a date set. And, honestly, I'm looking forward to it. I mean, I'm looking forward to sitting down and honestly being able to talk about what happened. I've heard all kinds of rumors. You know, I've heard their wild and crazy man. It's unbelievable the stuff I've heard. I was walking in New York the other day. You were talking about the game and all that. And, a guy came up to me and said, "Yeah, I heard it was over AROD." I said, "No." The Sunday before I get fired. We're on the show. Myself, John Kruk, and Steve Phillips. We're talking like we usual do on Baseball Tonight about different topics. Alex Rodriguez was that topic. The question was should he be traded out of New York. That's been a big thing all year. Steve Phillips and I said, "You gotta trade him." He's getting booed everyday and I felt like it was best for him to move on. I'm glad to see he's come around. He's starting to play a lot better. And, John Kruk said, "You don't trade the best player in baseball." You know so that's not why I got fired, because Steve Phillips just got a five year contract so I don't think that was the reason. [Laughs]

Charley Steiner: [Laughs]

Harold Reynolds: You know, so I've heard that my brother Larry, who's a sports agent, I was soliciting players for him. There's no truth to any of this craziness. And, as far as this incident is concerned, I've heard Outback Steakhouse and I was groping a young lady and stuff like that. That stuff never happened. I never even went to Outback. Outback doesn't even play into this whole story. So, I'm looking forward to getting the real story told and getting a chance to deal with it.

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Charley Steiner: There was a Secretary of Labor in the Reagan Administration named Raymond Donovan, who was accused and tried for racketeering. And, the accusations were he was in cahoots with organized crime and all of this other stuff. And, then he was acquitted. And, after he was acquitted, I'll never forget, he had a press conference on the steps of the Federal courthouse. And, he said, "Now where do I go to get my name back?" Where do you go to get your name back and how do you go about doing it, Harold.

Harold Reynolds: Well, one is talking to you like I am right now. I think anybody who knows me whether it's growing up in Oregon or working at ESPN can validate for the type of person that I am. I think that over time that is going to show true. I'm a people person. I'm very approachable and I think people that get to know me understand that. It's been a crazy situation. You know, I've heard about prior problems there. The thing about the prior problems were such a joke that if they were that serious; I've done four major contracts at ESPN. They've never been mentioned. I did a three year contract from '96 to '99. I did a three year contract from 2000 to 2001. In 2002, I did a four year deal and I just signed a six year deal in March. So, I can't see that being a problem. I just have to get the true answers and once we get all of those things and we're able to sit down. It will be interesting to see what happens when we cross that bridge.

Charley Steiner: I don't expect you to tell me the specifics and nor should you, but on the day you were summoned in to talk to whomever you were going to talk to, did you have any idea what they were going to talk to you about?

Harold Reynolds: No idea at all. I really had no idea. I had an inclination about what they were trying to bring up. I had no idea I was going to be fired. I had no idea the people I was going to be sitting in front of how they would be armed and the questions I would be asked. Those are all different things. We'll deal with it when that time comes. Again, I want to set the record straight. I got a clear conscious about this thing. I know when I've done wrong and in this situation I haven't. And, it's all going to come out and eventually we'll get to sit down and talk about it.

Charley Steiner: How are you feeling now as compared with a month or five or six weeks ago?

Harold Reynolds: Well, now...

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Charley Steiner: Alright, let me ask you this.

Harold Reynolds: Okay.

Charley Steiner: Take me through this rollercoaster that you have gone through which I wouldn't wish on anybody much less a friend of mine like you are.

Harold Reynolds: One thing that's been great is my wife's been, she's awesome. She's been very supportive. She knows me well. And, that's been a big difference. You know, really making sure that her and the family were secure and understood what all is going on here. And, that's been great. And, then we got away. We went up to Omaha . We've been hanging out there. Really just spent a lot of time with high school football. Her nephew is a quarterback there. Been doing passing drills with him. Just kind of got away. This is the first time in 26 years that I've been away from baseball. You see things from a whole different perspective and it's been interesting. I miss baseball. I miss being around it. I miss talking. I miss arguing. This is what water coolers are for. You sit around, you talk about who's the MVP? Who's going to win the batting title? You know, I miss that kind of stuff.

Charley Steiner: When you think of going away and getting away, I think of going to Bora Bora or Pego Pego or some place. Some place you know, some place nice. I mean Omaha doesn't exactly jump out at me first. I think I'm going to go to Maui or Omaha to get away from the world.

Harold Reynolds: Well, we thought about going down. Buck Showalter had a great, he has a great beach house in Pensacola , Florida . So, we were headed there. And, the morning we started to head that way, we went "you know what we're just going to sit there and look at each other." So, we went to her parents and they could watch the baby and we could be able to go out on dates and catch movies and be around family. And, I'll tell you, it's been a great time of spending time together.

Charley Steiner: When you hear stuff like that, the first thing is oh my God the family. But they have rallied around you, huh?

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Harold Reynolds: Oh, yeah, friends have rallied. I think, honestly, when this whole news hit, so were friends and family and everybody kind of wondering what in the world was going on. I never received a negative word from anybody. I think everybody that knows me, you know figured there has to be more to the story. I look forward to that when that more to the story gets to come back.

Charley Steiner: And, that's a couple of weeks from now. And, so you're initially shocked. It's like a flash knockdown. Then suddenly now the count is seven, the count is eight, you have to get up. How difficult was that for you, getting up after being knocked down.

Harold Reynolds: Well, you know I think, after you go through the shock. Obviously, I'm stunned. I still sit back and go 'I can't believe I'm not working.' This is kind of crazy. I don't know if you ever get beyond the shock of the situation. I love being there. You know, for ten years, I've got great relationships. It is a great show. I love working. And, so that's obviously a shock and that's something you go through. You go through all different kinds of different emotions. I can't even really express it, but the one thing I did, I got a solid foundation family. I got a solid foundation with my faith. And, I just, you know, carried on and did the things I need to do and that's what we've been doing.

Charley Steiner: How was it being away from baseball for those, these few weeks now for the first time, as you say, in 26 years? And, there's a big world out there?

Harold Reynolds: Well, there is. The crazy thing is we get so immersed in what were doing and I know for years I did the Little League World Series and people would ask me 'Harold, man how do you deal with the parents?' And, so here I am now, I get a chance to go to high school football games and spend time around the parents. Parents are crazy.

Charley Steiner: [Laughs]

Harold Reynolds: There's nuts, man.

Charley Steiner: [Laughs] This just in...

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Harold Reynolds: I was like holy smokes, you know. You don't see that side of it, because were so, you're still a distance away from everything. You know, parents are crazy and they'll do anything for their kids and that's great but I think sometimes we lose reality ad perspective about what athletics is all about. It's about building character and it's about allowing a young man or young woman to develop as a person and I think sometimes parents are vicariously living through their kids a little too much.

Charley Steiner: We've gotta couple minutes left and let you get back on the baseball horse a little bit... [Charley and Harold discuss the last month of the baseball season for the next 3:28]

Charley Steiner: Alright, hey Harold. Thanks, pal. Love to have you come on as the season heads to the finish line. I'm glad you had a chance to get as much off your chest as legally you could under the circumstances. You know that you've got an awful lot of friends out there.

Harold Reynolds: Well, I appreciate it man. I look forward to talking to you. We'll do this next week. I'd love to. We'll come on and talk straight baseball. Forget all the garbage. And, give us some time to talk baseball.

Charley Steiner: My man. Thanks Harold.