

2023-12-06 Joe Castiglione Media Availability

Jon Shestakofsky

All right, we are set to begin so I'll say hello everyone and welcome to the National Baseball Hall of Fame's conference call with Joe Castiglione. My name is Jon Shestakofsky. I'm Vice President of Communications and Content at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. And as you know, moments ago, it was announced by the Hall of Fame that Joe Castiglione was selected as the 2024 Ford C. Frick Award winner for baseball broadcasting excellence. On behalf of all of us at the Hall of Fame, we congratulate Joe and thank him for joining us on this call. Joe will formally be honored in Cooperstown at Hall of Fame Weekend's awards presentation on Saturday, July 20th, 2024, along with Gerry Fraley, the 2024 BBWAA Career Excellence Award winner for baseball writing. Please note that this session is being recorded and the video recording and transcript of this call will be available within the next 24 to 48 hours at the Hall of Fame's website, baseballhall.org. And now before we open for questions, I'll turn it over to Joe to make an opening statement. Joe, go right ahead.

Joe Castiglione

Well, Shesta thank you so much. It's so great to have a former Red Sox brother, call me with the announcement along with Josh Rawitch. And it was really a 'Can you believe it?' moment. You know, you never dream of these things when you're starting. My first goal was to do Major League Baseball. My second was to do a World Series, and to win a World Series. But this is nothing that was on the radar ever and it's just such a thrill to be honored by my peers, and especially with the Cooperstown connection because I spent so much time there. I mean, I went to college 50 miles away. And we always combined trips back to the alma mater at Colgate with a visit to the Hall of Fame and to have my name there in that broadcasters' section overlooking that gray window with the statues of Johnny Podres and Roy Campanella outside is just amazing. To share one quick story, most of you know that I'm a technical klutz and when Shesta and Josh (Rawitch) called me this morning, on my cell phone, I went to hit speaker instead I hit the red button and disconnected. So that was about two minutes of great suspense for me, but we got it going.

Jon Shestakofsky

But we got it going Joe, and we do congratulate you and we will now open up for questions from call participants. So if you'd like to ask a question of Joe, please click reactions at the bottom of your screen then click the raise hand button...and Pete has raised his hand Pete go right ahead.

Pete Abraham

Hey, Joe, congratulations. I'm here in Nashville with Sean McAdam. You know you had been up for this award several times. Can you kind of tell us, you know how emotional it was for you when you finally got the call?

Joe Castiglione

It was more stunning really than anything. You know it all of a sudden it was 11:21 I knew that call would come between 10:30 and 11:30. And it was nervous time. And it was just incredible. And you

know, Jan was here with me, my son Duke was here, a Channel 5 anchor, to record the call if it came through. And then when it did, of course as I said I messed it up the first time but we got it back two minutes later, but absolutely stunned I think is the word when that finally came through. And, you know, maybe having been on the ballot three times before has something to do with that. But it's still great and certainly worth the wait.

Pete Abraham

Joe, you know so many of the people who have won this award, what does it mean to you to be, you know, part of that brotherhood and on that list?

Joe Castiglione

Wow, it really is incredible. I mean, my first hero was Mel Allen and he was, along with Red Barber, the first two recipients, and then to see the likes of a great mentor in Ernie Harwell, Chuck Thompson of the Orioles and of course, more modern award winners Marty Brennaman, Cincinnati, Pat Hughes with the Cubs and my great friend Eric Nadel. I've already heard from some of the other finalists with their congratulations, which is very certainly welcome and heartwarming. And I think it's just wonderful. I you know, I guess Curt Gowdy is in I think Ken Coleman and Ned Martin deserve to be in someday you know, when they go back to the previous era and it's just so meaningful to be in with some of the greats. Not that I put myself in that category, but it just is a tremendous honor.

Pete Abraham

Thank you, Joe.

Joe Castiglione

Thanks, Pete. Thank you for your support.

Jon Shestakofsky

Next question, Ian Browne, go ahead in

Ian Browne

Joe you got there in 1983, seems like a million years ago. Could you have ever imagined you'd be here 41 years later calling four championships and all the other stuff that you called for the Red Sox?

Joe Castiglione

No, I had a one-year agreement, not even a contract until late in the season. So I was not counting on being there over 40 years later, I just wanted to get through to the next season. And of course, the first year was great, it was Yaz's last year, I'm so glad I had a chance to be with him. Especially for that final weekend, which was amazing. But no, I never thought this would culminate in this great award, which is so prestigious and such an honor. But there's been a lot of 6000-some games, I guess, over the years. I know my son has a count of the playoff games, I think it's 115 or something and four rings. I mean, after '86 you thought you get right back to the World Series the next year because it was such a strong team, it took 18 years to get back and to finally win it was one of the great thrills along with this.

Ian Browne

Joe, you seem to still have the same enthusiasm for the job as when you first came here. You know, how have you been able to kind of maintain that?

Joe Castiglione

Well, I love the game. I love the people in the game and the stories. The scouts, the managers, the coaches, and the players — I've already heard from a couple of players almost instantly and Mikey Lowell and Jackie Bradley Jr. and Roger Clemens. It's just been just my phone blowing up. It's really been amazing to be part of that. And I think more than anything, it's the love of the people in the game. And connecting with the great fans of Red Sox Nation. I mean, it's still a radio game and these fans are so loyal. I think that's a big part of it. But the people and the associations you make, the friendships, I think are really what sustains you.

Jon Shestakofsky

Next question, Mac Cerullo. Mac, you can go ahead.

Mac Cerullo

Hey, Joe, congratulations. Yeah, hey, so it's like you said you've had a chance to cover four World Series, no-hitter's, you know, the 20-strikeout game. You know, looking back, is there any in particular that stand out, and maybe not even one of the things I just mentioned, that is a highlight or a memory that you look back at particularly fondly?

Joe Castiglione

Swing and a ground ball, stabbed by Foulke. He has it, he underhands to first. And the Red Sox are the World Champions. Can you believe it? And there were many moments that were not that you didn't mentioned, like, Morgan Magic was one of the greatest periods winning 12 in a row 19 out of 20 a couple of walkoffs one by Kevin Romine, one by Todd Benzinger and Joe is still a very close friend of my back. We're having lunch tomorrow, together and I think all of those great moments were, other than winning the World Series, the most magical times. Of course, some of the work with the Jimmy Fund with patients. You think of things like Daniel Nava's homerun. We kiddingly told him on the pregame show, 'Hit the first pitch out kid because you only get one chance,' and he hit the grand slam on the very first pitch of his career. Little moments like that, big moments, and I think another great thing is that I've had in my career, the opportunity to have my family share in this with my kids are going to Fenway Park with me, sitting in the booth, working concessions and security and that type of thing and now my grandchildren have had the same opportunities they want me to go forever because they love the perks.

Jon Shestakofsky

Next question Bill Ballou, hold on. Let's see if we can unmute you.

Bill Ballou

I'm worse technology than Joe is so yeah. Yeah. So Joe, what was this morning like knowing that call was going to come? Or you're going to find out one way though, did you have the usual breakfast? Did you sleep well?

Joe Castiglione

Well, no, I didn't sleep too well. We had a refrigerator delivered this morning. So it was a little bit of a hectic time. Fortunately, that was early though, at 8:30. But I rode the exercise bike, and I did my stretching and then sat here and looked at the phone.

Bill Ballou

You had a scheduled refrigerated delivery on this day?

Joe Castiglione

Yes. Well, they said between eight and 11. Fortunately, they came early.

Jon Shestakofsky

We have time for a few more questions. So if you would like to ask a question, please hit the raise hand button on your screen. And next up, we'll go to Robert Grayson, go right ahead. Robert.

Robert Grayson

Robert, congratulations. I you know, you mentioned some of the greats that you heard. Could you talk a little bit about your developing a style when you went on the air? I mean, did it take you a little while to do that, put things in, take things out? That kind of thing?

Joe Castiglione

I think it happens naturally. Robert, it may be by osmosis. We always copy somebody to be the greatest broadcasters. The toughest job anyway was what to be the first and not have anyone to model themselves after. Fortunately, I had some great mentors: Mel Allen, who I watched and listened to as a kid for so many years. Ken Coleman, my mentor who brought me to Boston. Ernie Harwell, a guy that was a very close friend who we always relied on for advice. Bill O'Donnell, who was a mentor to me, longtime Orioles broadcaster. And I think you take things from different individuals. But I think your style develops naturally. And if I had to describe my style, well, I think it's one more of passion. I had a partner Bob Starr was also a great influence on me. He had a saying: 'It's not my life, and it's not my wife,' because he saw how emotional I was with each Red Sox win or loss. And I think I never lost that. But I think that has added to my style. Because people tell me they can tell if the Red Sox are winning and losing by the tone of my voice. That would certainly be a criticism if you are a network broadcaster. But I think most people in Red Sox Nation are rooting for the Red Sox to win. So it passes the test.

Robert Grayson

And one other thing I just wondered, you talked about getting the rings. Was there ever a thought that maybe it wouldn't happen?

Joe Castiglione

Oh yes. After 18 years, from '86. I thought as I said, it would happen a year or two later, had to wait 18 years to get back there. '03, you know, the Red Sox had the lead in Game 7 against the Yankees. And you know what Aaron Boone did. He's a good friend, by the way. And, you know, I didn't think it would happen, especially down 3-0 to the Yankees in the ALCS in '04, but I had no idea that Red Sox could

rally to win it, or the greatest comeback of all time, so and then to happen four times in a 15-year period. It's just amazing. Red Sox are still the only franchise with four in this century.

Robert Grayson

Thank you.

Jon Shestakofsky

And if there are no further questions then we will say once again, congratulations, Joe. So happy for you. And really appreciate you joining us on this special day as the selection as the 2024 Ford C Frick Award winner for baseball broadcasting excellence. And we look forward to celebrating your career and your legacy during Hall of Fame weekend this July.

Joe Castiglione

Well, thank you so much, Shesta and, you know, the Hall of Fame has always had a special place in my heart. One of my first entrees to baseball was the great public relations director of the Hall of Fame at the time with the Pittsburgh Pirates, the late Bill Guilfoyle who introduced me to Major League Baseball as a reporter, and Jeff Idelson, of course, who was our intern and the longtime president in Cooperstown. We've had so many connections, and to be there will be even a greater thrill because of the wonderful relationships we've had. Thanks to all of the media for your support. And thank you for joining us.