

THE SPEED ISSUE

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- KEMBA WALKER CUTS TO THE QUICK
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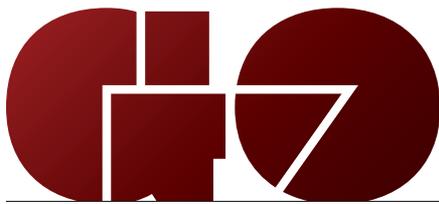


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ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE COOL IF THEY DID, PLAYERS DON'T LIVE AT THE STADIUM. SO WHEN JOCKS NEED A PLACE TO HANG A HAT, DARREN WEINER STEPS UP. THE FORMER AGENT GOT INTO REAL ESTATE TO SHIELD PLAYERS FROM SCAMS. NOW HIS COMPANY, ANTIGEN, SERVES THEIR RELOCATING NEEDS.

6 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ATHLETE RELOS

BY DARREN WEINER,
REAL ESTATE BROKER
AS TOLD TO
ANGEL NAVEDO

1. FAMILY GOES FIRST. "My clients are busy, so most leave the housing search to their wives or mothers. Anyway, they're the ones who will be in the house year-round. I'd say about 60% of the time, the wives weed out the rejects, but the final decision is a joint one."

2. MY CLIENTS ARE PREDICTABLE. "Older guys like gated communities near good schools. Younger guys want beaches and nightlife. But they all ask for a home theater, space for entertaining and a big garage. In general, we try to house players in the same developments and neighborhoods, so when they're on the road, the families have each other nearby."

3. LACK OF FOCUS HAS A PRICE. "Schedules can keep players from paying close attention to deals, and that can lead to rip-offs. One guy with a luxury condo got traded and wanted to sell. His broker bought the place himself, then flipped it for nearly a \$400,000 profit."

4. JOCKS MAKE GOOD LANDLORDS. "Last year, a client in a gated community left as a free agent. We talked about selling, but because many of the surrounding homes were already listed, he ended up renting to the guy who took his place on the team. Players buy or rent from each other a lot because the amenities, locations and prices fit."

5. WE KEEP HIGH PROFILES ON THE DOWN LOW. "One client once used a team-recommended realtor. When he showed up at a house, the kids who lived there had skipped school and had balls and cards for him to sign. The realtor had tipped them off. I won't let that happen. I release a client's name only if we feel it will expedite the sale of their home, and prospective buyers need to show proof of funds or preapproved financing before getting a tour."

6. TAX BREAKS BEAT CURB APPEAL. "Some states, like Florida and Nevada, don't charge income tax, so guys try to keep primary residences there. I've seen situations in which a house essentially cost a player nothing because of all the money he was saving."