

Sportscasters

By Richard Deitsch

Richard Deitsch is a sports media writer and special projects editor for *Sports Illustrated*, and writes the Media Circus column for SI.com.

POSTHUMOUS VOICES

Red Barber, vivid, lyrical Southern radio voice of Reds, Dodgers, and Yankees

Red Barber

Don Dunphy, exciting boxing specialist who called over 2,000 bouts

Jack Buck, gravelly, distinctive voice of St. Louis Cardinals and CBS Radio

Jack Buck

Harry Caray, radio voice of Cardinals, White Sox, Cubs, renowned later for singing "Take Me Out to the Ballgame"

Mel Allen, Yankees' radio-TV voice who spoke of "Ballantine Blasts" and "How about that?" moments

Mel Allen

Lindsey Nelson, original Mets voice, also called college football game introducing instant replay

Howard Cosell (ABC), controversial, brilliant, verbose boxing commentator and MNF lightning rod

Howard Cosell

Marty Glickman, long-time New York voice of Knicks and football Giants

Chick Hearn, the phrasemaking radio voice of Lakers

Chick Hearn

Graham McNamee, called baseball on radio as early as 1923

Curt Gowdy (NBC, ABC), versatile do-anything announcer

Curt Gowdy

Al McGuire (NBC, CBS), Marquette coach turned loopy college basketball analyst

Chris Schenkel (ABC), mild-mannered all-purpose announcer who even did bowling

Chris Schenkel

Bob Prince, Pirates announcer with vivid phrases, a.k.a. "The Gunner"

Bill Stern, multi-sport radio voice, known for storytelling and embellishments

Jim McKay

Jim McKay, (ABC, CBS, NBC), Olympic host who chronicled the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat

Jack Buck vs. Harry Caray

Buck and Caray shared the same St. Louis Cardinals radio booth in 1954 before Caray was fired and left St. Louis for Chicago in 1970. Both were Midwest institutions: Buck the witty baseball classicist; Caray the outsized, increasingly beery, beloved warbler of Wrigley Field. The less-ostentatious Buck advances, not for baseball, but for his distinguished work as CBS Radio's NFL voice.

Red Barber



Red Barber vs. Howard Cosell

Cosell was the most outspoken sportscaster of his time, an idiosyncratic trailblazer and world-class egotist who spoke of everything from racism and antitrust law to *Monday Night Football* and the punitiveness of his detractors. But Barber, with a literate style flavored by his Southern cadences and argot, established nearly all the ground rules for calling baseball on radio – and for keeping one's objectivity.

Howard Cosell

Chick Hearn vs. Curt Gowdy

Hearn is, by most reckonings, the greatest basketball announcer ever, having coined the seminal hoop terms "baby hook," "charity stripe," and "no-look pass." But Gowdy's multi-sport versatility made "The Cowboy" the go-to big game voice of a generation: he broadcast 16 World Series, nine Super Bowls, eight Olympics, 12 Rose Bowls, and 24 NCAA Final Fours, and was the first sportscaster to win a Peabody Award.

Curt Gowdy

THE WINNER

Jim McKay

(ABC, CBS, NBC) Olympic host who chronicled the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat

VS.



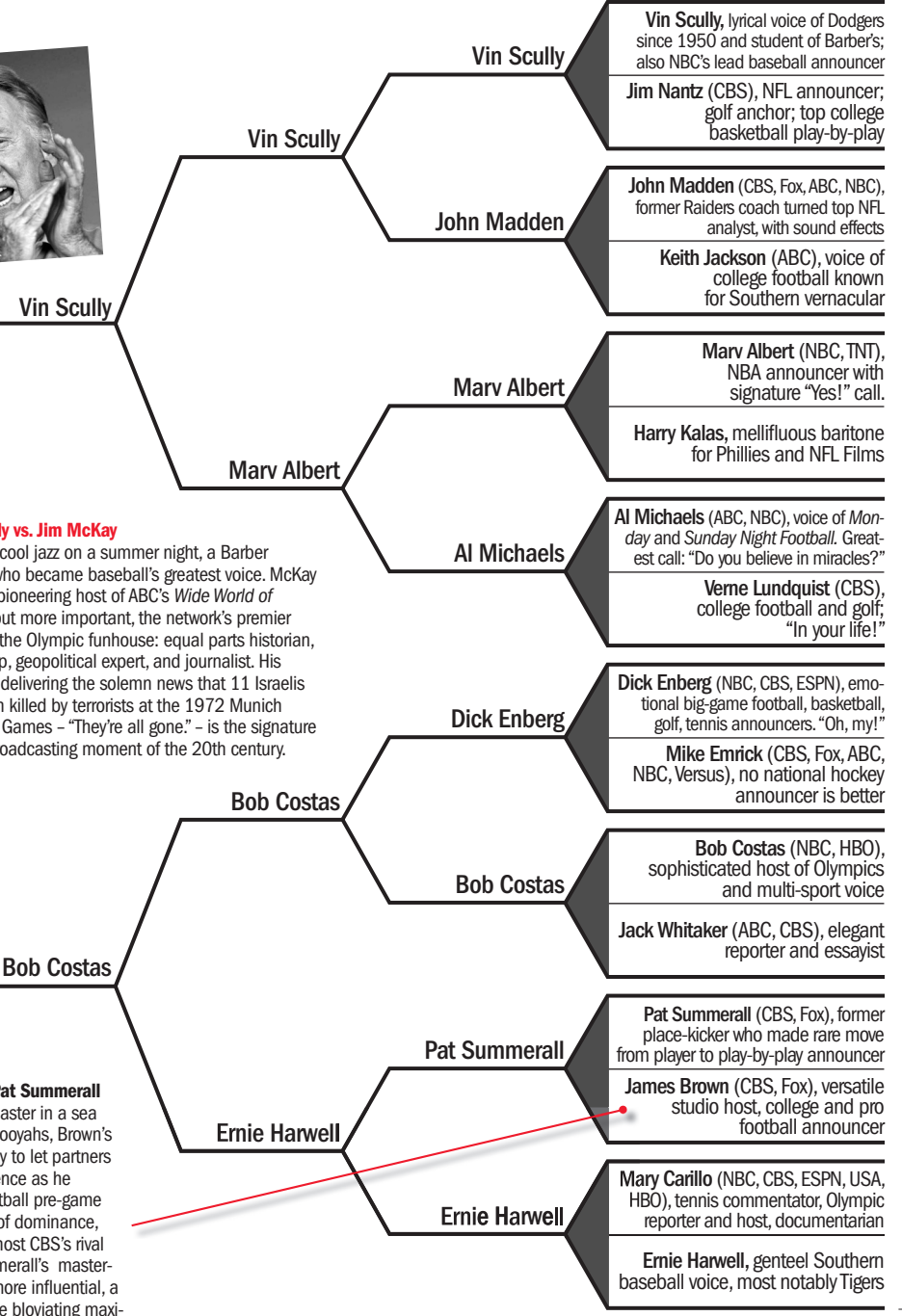
COMPETENCE, EGO, HONESTY, intellect, showmanship, storytelling, and voice are commonplace traits with every great sportscaster. But most of all it is the underlying professionalism and an instinctive sense of what to say – and what not to say – that defines this small community.



Vin Scully

Vin Scully vs. Jim McKay
 Scully is cool jazz on a summer night, a Barber acolyte who became baseball's greatest voice. McKay was the pioneering host of ABC's *Wide World of Sports*, but more important, the network's premier guide to the Olympic funhouse: equal parts historian, traffic cop, geopolitical expert, and journalist. His words in delivering the solemn news that 11 Israelis had been killed by terrorists at the 1972 Munich Summer Games – "They're all gone." – is the signature sports broadcasting moment of the 20th century.

James Brown vs. Pat Summerall
 An ego-free broadcaster in a sea of self-promoting booyahs, Brown's style (and his ability to let partners shine) was in evidence as he anchored Fox's football pre-game show to a decade of dominance, then moved on to host CBS's rival program. But Summerall's masterful minimalism is more influential, a tonic to some of the bloviating maximalism that is now commonplace.



LIVING VOICES