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CORRECTION TO THIS ARTICLE

The article on Washington Redskins tickets contained an incorrect Web address for a ticket reseller's site; the correct address is [www.ascicket.com](#). The article also misspelled the last name of Ticket Network chief executive Don Vaccaro.

THE TOUGHEST TICKET IN TOWN Selling the Redskins on the Secondary Market Redskins Fans Waited While Brokers Got Tickets

By [James V. Grimaldi](#)
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, September 2, 2009



Nov. 3, 2008 FedEx Field For the Steelers game last season, the Redskins sold at least 443 tickets directly to a ticket broker, contributing to a sea of Pittsburgh fans. The Redskins sold 5,000 tickets to the same broker over the past two seasons, but team officials said the amount sold to the broker was insignificant. (By John McDonnell -- The Washington Post)

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One night last fall, thousands of fans walked into FedEx Field carrying gold towels. From the opening kickoff, it was clear that they were not part of the Washington Redskins burgundy-and-gold. The towel-waving throng cheered for the Pittsburgh Steelers, so loudly that on some downs the Redskins couldn't hear quarterback Jason Campbell call the signals.

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Redskins players and many others were puzzled that Steelers fans were able to get their hands on so many coveted tickets. For more than 70 years, the Washington Redskins have boasted that they have sold out every game. Seats are so scarce, the team says, that the waiting list for general admission season tickets has 160,000 names on it.

But the reality is that those who want tickets can often find them online through ticket resellers such as StubHub. And in recent years, the Redskins ticket office itself has sold tickets into this secondary market, making it easier for fans of opposing teams to invade FedEx.

Thousands of general admission tickets were sold to brokers, who resold them on the secondary market, often at higher-than-retail prices, according to interviews and internal Redskin documents. These were often tickets to the very seats that Redskins fans have waited years to get.

The Redskins acknowledged that the sales were made but said they were against team policy.

Redskins General Counsel David Donovan said the prohibited sales were discovered in the spring during an internal audit of last season's ticket contracts and involved about 15 ticket brokering companies. He said the ticket sales employees involved were disciplined. He declined to name the employees or specify the discipline because it was a personnel matter.

"Somebody in the ticket office was doing something they shouldn't have been doing, and when it was discovered, it was all dealt with," Redskins Senior Vice President Karl Swanson said. "If the story is, this is a scandal, uncovered by Redskins, verified by The Post, or whatever, yeah, we're telling you: People got tickets who shouldn't have gotten tickets, and they were dealt with."

INTERACTIVE GRAPHIC

Selling to Brokers, Suing Fans

View the lawsuits filed against Redskins ticket-holders, and see the locations of tickets Redskins sold to an online ticket broker.

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Donovan said Redskins owner Daniel M. Snyder was unaware of sales to brokers. When he found out, Donovan said, "he was livid" and tried to have the accounts canceled immediately.

"When Mr. Snyder found out about it," Donovan said, "he made it clear to me that that was priority number one."

Snyder declined an interview request from The Post.

The Washington Post was able to document the sales by one ticket broker, [ASC Ticket](#) of Gaithersburg, which bought at least 5,000 tickets for nearly \$600,000 during the 2007 and 2008 seasons, team records show. The tickets included 1,690 for general admission seats in the 100 sections of FedEx Field's lower bowl, among the most coveted seats in the stadium.

"We canceled at least a dozen accounts that collectively had hundreds and hundreds of tickets," Donovan said. He added that the numbers amount to a relatively small portion of the roughly 910,000 tickets that the team sells each year. "You do realize that there's 91,000 seats in the stadium," he said. "These are insignificant amounts."

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