

Sean Landeta

By Ronald Sklar



Professional football player and two-time Philadelphia Eagle Sean Landeta is one kickin' punter. He has played twenty-one years for the NFL and for three years with the United States Football League, in the early eighties. Sean recently signed with the New York Giants in 2006 to bring his pro career total to 25 seasons.



In all, he punted for six different teams during his amazing and unique career. Although he played with the Eagles for a grand total of five seasons, his longest association was with the New York Giants, at ten years. He helped win two Super Bowl Championships, in 1986 and 1990, and he has the rings to prove it. Go ahead and ask him - he may let you try them on!

In addition, he played six seasons for the St. Louis Rams, and spent one year each with the Green Bay Packers and the Tampa Bay Bucs.

His staying power and talent have not gone unnoticed. He was named to the

NFL All Pro Team three times and was twice named Punter of the Decade, in the 1980s and 1990s. He has set team records with every club for which he has been associated.

Sean has been setting his sights on the goalpost since he played college football at Towson University in Maryland. During these years, he was an All-Conference punter and was also named First-Team All-American Punter. In 2005, Sean was inducted into the Towson University Hall of Fame. In 2006, he was elected to the Division II College Football Hall of Fame.

Sean currently divides his time between Long Island, NY and Bucks County, PA. He has a nine-year-old son, Joey, and a fiancé, Donna Bretzel, who is a native of Philadelphia. Donna has two daughters,

Amanda, 19 and Alexa, 14.

Of his local home, Sean says, "I love the Bucks County area and everything it has to offer, from the beautiful neighborhoods to the great restaurants to the wonderful friends we have made. This is such a convenient area to be in, so close to all the major roadways and always something to do."

We recently gave Sean something to do by asking him a series of questions about his life both on and off the field. We explore how he keeps in great shape after an adult lifetime in a profession that can take a harrowing toll on the body during the course of even one season, let alone over two decades. You've managed to survive over twenty years in the NFL. What is your secret to

achieving that incredible feat? No secret, just a combination of a lot of time and effort and some good fortune and breaks along the way.

Do you find your fitness routines to be different now that you're a bit older? Yes, I pay attention to little things more now than I did twenty years ago, like stretching and nutrition. I wish I would have done some of these things before, but maybe that was not the time for me to do it. It is now at this point in my career.

How has a career in professional football affected your body? I really do feel the same as when I was twenty-five years old. Even though I have had several major injuries, I have been fortunate to heal and still feel the same, or better.

Where do you keep your two Super Bowl rings? Do you wear them? I keep my rings at home. I hardly ever wear my rings, usually only when I do, it's an event where you know the people would like to see them and try them on. I let everyone wear them and take pictures with them.

Wow! What kind of reactions do you get to that? The adults react much more to it than the younger kids do because I guess they are more aware of what they mean and their history. However, the kids certainly enjoy them very much also.

What was it like to get to play in not one, but two Super Bowls? It was a great experience to be a part of the whole Super Bowl production: the week leading up to the game, everything that goes along with it, then getting to play in the game. Fortunately, we won both games.

What was your experience like in the United States Football League? Why did it not survive? The USFL was an outstanding league with a number of players and coaches that went on to have great success in the NFL. It did not survive because the owners didn't have the TV revenue to back up the money they were paying the players. For me, the USFL was a great experience and I developed friendships that have lasted to this day.

Can you share any secrets to being a good punter? There are no secrets. It takes a lot of practice and having the ability to be able to kick a ball.

What types of workouts are best for improving your punting? The best way to improve your punting is to punt. Stretching and strengthening your legs certainly will help, but actually punting the ball is the best way to get better.

What was it like to see yourself depicted in a videogame? At first it was pretty cool. I don't play videogames but I need to collect all the ones I have been in through the years for my son, Joey. My son's friends will let me know how I am doing when they play.



Lexi, Donna, Joey, Sean and Amanda

You've played with the Philadelphia Eagles two times in your career. Has the experience been much the same or rather different each time? The first time around with the Eagles, it was a new coaching crew and a big turnover in players, back in 1999. Then the second time around, in 2005, the team had established itself as an elite playoff contender, and everything was more in place. There were also many of the same people there from my first stint ('99,'00,'01,'02).

You've also played for a number of other teams in your long career. What are the challenges of starting all over again with a new team? When you go to a new team, it makes you feel like a rookie again in that you feel you have to prove yourself all over and everything is fresh and new. I don't think I would have played as many years if I would have stayed with one team the whole time.

In 1988, you appeared in a Sesame Street video called "Put Down The Duckie." Explanation, please! The day the NFL players went on strike, back in 1987, I was asked to take part in a kids' taping in New York City. I didn't realize it would be for Sesame Street and a video would be made and so much attention would be brought to that. Through the years I have gotten calls from friends who have seen the video.

In the ESPN 25 special, you appeared personally in blunder #25. What was that blunder? During the 1985 playoffs, on a cold and windy day in Chicago, I was playing for the Giants against the Bears. The wind blew the ball off the side of my foot and it looked like I actually swung and missed. I grazed the ball with the side of my foot and got credit for a - six yard punt.

You are active in many charitable organizations. Which ones, and what kind of feeling do you get from being associated with them? I have probably been involved with more charities than any other player out there, mainly because I have played for over twenty years (3 USFL, 21 NFL). I always leave feeling like I was the one enriched after being somewhere, to help all different kinds of people in all different kinds of situations. I continue to and will always be involved in [charities] for years to come.

How did you spend your off seasons? For a number of years, I would go home for about two weeks, then head to Florida from anywhere between 8-12 weeks. I did that for about seventeen years. Since my son, Joey, became school age I have not gone down there as often, so that I can be involved with him. Other than that, I just practice, work with charities, make appearances, and then, before you know it, it is time for training camp again.

What is your advice to young athletes who aspire to play football professionally? My advice would be to have great passion and desire to do the things necessary in order to give yourself the very best chance of reaching your goal.

Sidebar:

Birthplace:
Baltimore, MD

Favorite type of healthy food:
Egg whites

Favorite "guilty pleasure" food:
Cheese steak

Favorite way to exercise:
Cardio, because it helps me in so many ways.

Most dreaded exercise:
Cardio, because it is long, hard and tiring.

Favorite way to relax:
Lying in bed reading and watching the big-screen TV.

Favorite type of music:
Classic rock

Favorite movie:
The Godfather films: great life lessons to be learned.

Favorite TV show:
The news

Favorite season:
Summer

Any pets?
If so, what kind and what are their names? No pets

Favorite thing about the Delaware Valley:
The convenience of everything makes it such a great place and the Eagles fans' passions are unequalled.

Astrological sign:
Capricorn

Any words to live by, or motto that you find meaningful? Just always try your best to say and do the right things; be respectful, have passion for what you do, and live life each day because tomorrow is not promised to any of us.



Ron Sklar is a writer who was born and raised in Philadelphia and now lives in New York.