

her seminar by passing out bananas and teaching these men—grown men—how to put condoms on bananas. Some snicker, but she brings them back to reality when she talks about Magic Johnson, and shows them close-up shots of herpes sores and gonorrhea and syphilis. They ask her things such as whether or not they can get AIDS from oral sex? Or if a woman uses KY jelly, will it burn a hole in a condom? According to the article, sometimes Sandra also has to hit them over the head with the obvious. Like telling them that you can't always tell if a beautiful woman has AIDS by looking at her.

Next, it's time for skits. It's a challenge to present this information in a professional manner that won't get ridiculed, and in a useful manner that will actually resonate with these guys. For this tricky undertaking, the NFL (as well as the NBA and NHL) turns to ZINC Sports Consulting. This troupe of actors and experts specialize in skits, role-play and interactive Q&A sessions—many of which are consistently ranked the most popular and helpful by the players.

Heidi Durrow is a writer/actress and former lawyer who has worked for ZINC for eight years. Her unique background helps her not only act in the skits, but also facilitate the Q&A sessions afterwards. "I've played the girl at the club, the girlfriend with a child that the athlete's no longer with," Durrow says, "And I'm so old now that I often play the mother!" She emphasizes that the ZINC troupe is not there to tell these guys how to behave, but to reinforce that life is all about choices, decisions and consequences. (This is ZINC's oft-repeated mantra that the players will have embedded deep into their brains by the end of the symposium.)

"We are not Dr. Phil, handing out answers," Durrow says. "We present situations they might find themselves in and give them a chance to think about how they would handle it." In one scenario they affectionately call "the Barbecue Scene," the actors portray family members at a gathering, where everyone at the party is asking the player for something—one needs money for school, another has an investment idea, and then the player's mama has a few ideas about how junior should spend his money. "Usually what we do is perform a scene and have

it end terribly," Durrow continues. "Then we let the players discuss answers among themselves. One of the players will then come on stage and re-do the same scene to come up with a better ending."

In another skit, Durrow plays the role of the common-law wife. The player in the scene decides to kick his live-in girlfriend out, and Durrow's character tells him that he better reconsider because she's already seen a lawyer and knows she's entitled to half his worth. The players collectively boo at Durrow. Overall, despite a few jeers here and there, Durrow says the players are very respectful, and that ZINC workshops provide a professional environment to discuss these tricky topics. "We allow them to speak like professionals about women in a way that they probably are not used to in a macho male environment," she says. "They don't have to just do the locker room talk."

Collectively, the group shares ideas on how to talk to family members and how to choose friends and lady-friends wisely—and what the consequences are of not making the right choices. Sometimes, through the group dynamic, the decisions they come up with are not great, Durrow concedes. According to the *Times* article, some players suggest that having two cell phones—one for their wife and one for their girlfriends—is a good solution to some issues that arise. Others recommend lying about being professional athletes to women they meet at clubs. (One player mentioned that he tells women that he is a garbage collector until he gets to know her better. P.S. When's the last time you met a hot, muscular garbage man wearing lots of bling and buying you drinks in the VIP section of a club? Are these chicks really that dumb? Don't answer that.)

Now, time-out please. Here's where it's hard not to jump on a soap box and scream that these men should not be sharing tips on having two phones and lying to women! Rather, these guys should be learning to respect women and to never beat up their wives/girlfriends or lock them out of the house half-nude or throw cookies in their wives' faces like Frisbees (shout-outs to Allen Iverson and Jason Kidd, respectively).

Is it hard, as a woman, to hear these types of responses? "If we get smart-ass answers like keeping two phones, we ask them questions and

interrogate them," Durrow says. "We say, 'That's a choice. You made the decision. And what are the consequences?' It's important to have them think about it and not accept easy answers and take the easy way out."

Yes! Go, Heidi! Go, women! But then Heidi describes her very first NBA session and it's clear that things are not that simple.

"The first time I did the NBA session, we were at a really isolated hotel, far away from a big city," she said. "The first night, it was kind of a weird feeling to be one of two women at the end of the day, down at the hotel bar. But then on Tuesday, there were a couple more women. And the next day, a couple more. By Thursday, there were more and more women at the bar. I realized that somehow the word was getting out, and they were here to meet these players. In the middle of nowhere . . . It's upsetting for me as a woman to see other women responding in that way."

Combine the presence of predatory women with the pressure to be fierce, brutal competitors—do you have a toxic combination?

"We did one of the sessions at an NFL training facility and I thought to myself, this is like when you visit a prison if you're a woman," Durrow says. "There is a lot of aggressive energy there. That's their sport, being a competitive aggressor is really important to their jobs. And then they are supposed to turn that off and go change diapers and not respond to whatever it is that's not good for them. It's not that I'm giving them an out, but it is a challenge. And this is why they need a forum to talk to each other sensibly, and regularly."

This is exactly what the NFL is proposing. In 2007, NFL commissioner Roger Goodell ramped up these training sessions, requiring yearlong rookie training and an expanded annual life-skills program for all players. So maybe there's hope for better choices, decisions and consequences for all players.

After watching Durrow play the role of Gold Digger, Baby Mama, Common-Law Wife and even overbearing Big Mama, none of these players would actually ask her out or hit on her when the sessions were over and they were hanging down at the hotel bar, right? "Well, people have approached me. But I tell them that I'm married and in my work

capacity. I really try not to appear socially around them unless I'm with other actors in the troupe. It's just inappropriate," she said. "I do think that being married was a plus when I was hired, though!" Good thing someone's acting appropriately around here.

So beyond these Sex Training programs, what can really be done about athletes and sex scandals? Isn't it just human nature? You can try to teach these guys to stay out of trouble. Some will listen, some won't. You can hope that women will start respecting themselves and not throw themselves at men just because they are famous and have money. Perhaps Oprah can start a self-esteem camp for celebrity and athlete groupies after she's done building schools in Africa?

For now, all we can do is sit back and wait for the next scintillating scandal to unfold, so we can decide who was at fault, secretly judge them, decide that we're better than them and announce that we'd never do anything like that.

MOST FERTILE ATHLETES: THE BABY DADDY HALL OF FAME (OR SHAME?)

If you're looking to become an athlete's baby mama yourself (who isn't?) you should cut out this list of our Fertile Five and keep it in your wallet. But beware—not all of these stories have happy endings and not all of these ladies got "half." Read and proceed with caution . . .

1. CALVIN MURPHY: NBA Hall of Famer & Accused (But Acquitted) Child Molester

Okay, this guy is fertile—it is reported that he has 14 illegitimate kids by nine different women—but he's also been accused of sexually abusing children. Murphy has three daughters with his wife Vernetta, none of whom ever accused him of abuse. But then five of his daughters from three different women claimed that Murphy sexually abused them as children. He denied these charges, stating that they were banding together in an effort to get money from him—and one of the daughters did admit she was lying. A jury took less than two hours to acquit Murphy, but he lost