

Ball Boy Consigns Michael Jordan's 1997 "Flu Game" Sneakers to Grey Flannel Auctions

Written by Australian Business

WESTHAMPTON, NY, September 27, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- The already impressive lineup of Major League sports treasures consigned from the upcoming auction, which closes for bidding on December 11th: Michael Jordan's sneakers from the fabled fifth game of the 1997 NBA Finals.

The game pitted the Chicago Bulls against the Utah Jazz - an automatic recipe for excitement. It also set the stage for one of the signature moments in Michael Jordan's second act with the Bulls. In basketball lore, it has become known as the "Flu Game."

Jordan's long-time trainer Tim Grover says it was really more of a "Food Poisoning Game," but regardless of what spurred it, Jordan fought off a 103-degree fever on June 11, 1997 to pour in 38 points, grab seven rebounds, dish five assists and hit a game-sealing 3-pointer in his 44th minute of play. This feat stands as one of the truly legendary performances in the career of the greatest basketball player of all-time. ESPN just ranked the "Flu Game" #2 on the list of Michael Jordan's 50 Greatest Moments.

Over the past 16 years, fans of the Chicago Bulls and the NBA have had a million different ways to relive M.J.'s iconic performance that put the Bulls one win away from the fifth NBA title of his career. And as soon as Grey Flannel's Holiday Auction commences, they'll have another. Bidding on the shoes begins on November 18th.

"We were approached by the Utah Jazz ball boy [from the Flu Game] because of our affiliation with the Basketball Hall of Fame," said GFA's Director of Operations Michael Russek. "He never thought about selling them before now. Recently he realized that he was getting a little older and was more curious than anything to see if people still cared about the story."

Russek and Grey Flannel are betting that prospective bidders will care quite a bit, which is why they pursued the shoes for consignment and inclusion in their December 11 auction. "The shoes are accompanied by a letter from the ball boy as well as an incredible photo of Jordan signing the shoes and handing them over after the game. The consignor wants someone else to have them who can display them better, as they've sat in a safety deposit box for the last fifteen-plus years."

"Also, I suspect that he probably wants to see just how much he can get for them. We [Grey Flannel] have rung up some pretty impressive prices on past items, including Boston Celtics great Dave Cowens' 1972-73 NBA Most Valuable Player Award (\$156K), Julius Erving's 1976

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game-worn ABA All-Star jersey (\$188K) and the official scorer's sheet from Wilt Chamberlain's 100-point game, fetching more than \$108,000."

Russek doesn't figure the Flu Game kicks will net anything near those numbers, but he does predict the bidding on them will be competitive. Other highlights of the December auction include game-used jerseys worn by the likes of LeBron James, George Gervin, Miami Dolphins running back Larry Csonka, New York Yankees closer Mariano Rivera, Detroit Tigers outfielder Rocky Colavito and Pittsburgh Penguins center Mario Lemieux. Also included in the sale is a baseball autographed by members of the world champion 1928 Yankees, Elgin Baylor's 1974 NBA All-Star Game trophy, the boxing gloves Sugar Ray Leonard wore in his 1984 win over Kevin Howard, and a 1932 NY Yankees World Championship player's ring. Russek figures the Flu Game shoes will wind up at or near the top of that heap. "We do not assign estimates, but I expect the Jordan sneakers to be one of the highest-priced items in the sale, and other consignors will benefit from being in their good company."

Grey Flannel's consignment deadline for the Holiday Catalog Auction is October 7. For more information, log on to <http://www.GreyFlannelAuctions.com>.

Grey Flannel was founded in 1989 in New York by Richard Russek and Andy Imperato. Grey Flannel, with their experience and expertise, has developed into the world's foremost authenticators and dealers of game-used jerseys. GF entered the auction arena in the early fall of 1999.

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