

# Get a sports-themed man cave with a designer's touch

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett  
 Special to The Washington Examiner

It is Super Bowl Sunday, an unofficial national holiday, and for one night millions will transform their basements and family rooms into football dens. But for those who want to celebrate their fanaticism all year long, a sports theme can tastefully be incorporated into any room. Accountant Brad Mendleson turned a rarely used formal living room in his Gaithersburg home into a home office decked with a lifetime of sports memorabilia.

"He had all these bins full of sports stuff and I sorted it out and had everything professionally framed, archived and preserved so he could enjoy it," said interior designer Lynni Megginson.

It was Holly Mendleson, Brad's wife, who told Megginson about the collectibles in the basement, including ticket stubs from Orioles games, and Wheaties boxes and newspaper clippings featuring Major League Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken.

"It was a stroke of brilliance on her part," Holly Mendleson said. "She took things that were meaningful to him and created a great room."

"Rarely do men have an emotional reaction to decorating, especially an office," she continued. "But he loves that room."

Lynn Madyson designed a cycling-inspired basement for Michele and Steve Friedman, of Chevy Chase. "Steve Friedman is an avid cyclist and has even ridden with Lance Armstrong across the United States," Madyson said. "A coffee table was custom made using bicycle tires, rims and an acrylic top for safety."

To strike a balance between fandom and sophistication, Madyson suggested picking a primary focus. "Edit, edit, edit," she said. "Focus on high-quality items. A few comedic relief items, such as the Yankees bobble head in the Friedman design, are fine, but keep it to a minimum."

That is unless you are going for the ultimate sports room, like the one designed for Ryan and Jessica Donaldson, of Eldersburg, Md. The couple won a contest sponsored by the National Football League and DIY television's "Man Caves."

The networks outfitted the Donaldson's 1,200-square-foot basement with artificial turf flooring, seats from M&T Bank and RFK stadiums, multiple high-definition televisions,

a custom-built bar with faux pigskin and six stools, a Kegerator for beer, a foosball table and burgundy pool table.

The North Carolina Tar Heels were the inspiration for a 13-year-old Springfield boy's bedroom. "Dad is a UNC Chapel Hill alumnus, and this project was as much for him as for his son," said the designer, Niki VanEch. "Everything from the tile selections, rug, custom bedding and paint were selected with Tar Heels mania."

Debbie Wiener of Designing Solutions created a vintage sports room for the Washington Design Center 2009 Design House. Asked to tie the room to the historic Navy Yard, Wiener ordered vintage leather football helmets, bats, balls and gloves. She also found photos taken of men playing football aboard aircraft carriers and old pictures from Army versus Navy football games. The pictures were framed in antiqued wood.

When it comes to displaying sports art, "throw away the Scotch tape," Wiener said. Instead of sticking Flathead posters to the wall, Wiener dry-mounted them on fiberboard and suspended the posters from clear piano wire. "It looks better, and players change teams all the time. This makes it easier to change them out," she said.

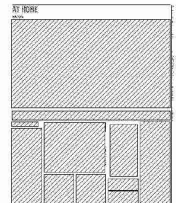
Wiener added that even in a sophisticated sports room, it is OK to add that swivel recliner with the cup holder. "In what other room in the house can you get away with [it]?" she quipped.

## Resources

- » [lynni.net](http://lynni.net)
- » [VanEchStudio.com](http://VanEchStudio.com)
- » [mydesigningsolutions.com](http://mydesigningsolutions.com)
- » [fatheads.com](http://fatheads.com)
- » [lynnmadysondesigns.com](http://lynnmadysondesigns.com)



COURTESY NIKI VANECH





This ultimate sports room was designed for Ryan and Jessica Donaldson, of Eldersburg, Md., after the couple won a contest sponsored by the National Football League and the DIY television show "Man Caves." COURTESY DIY NETWORK



COURTESY GREG POWERS

Debbie Wiener of Designing Solutions created this vintage sports room for the Washington Design Center 2009 Design House.