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NEW YORK POST, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2001

Rudy makes pitch to lure star to Yanks

By GEORGE KING and ANDY GELLER

Mayor Giuliani went to bat for his beloved Bombers, personally calling slugger Jason Giambi to urge him to don pinstripes.

The Big Apple's No. 1 Yankee fan made his pitch after manager Joe Torre and Yogi Berra called to encourage the free-agent first baseman to spurn the Oakland Athletics.

Giambi, 30, said last night that the mayor's call made a serious impression on him.

"It's a great process, and I am having a ton of fun," Giambi said on Fox Sports' "The Last Word."

"Yogi Berra and Joe Torre and the mayor called me ... Giuliani. So, it's a different spot in my life that I have never been in."

Yankee owner George Steinbrenner couldn't be reached for comment. But his spokesman, Howard Rubenstein, said, "The mayor is some great Yankees fan, and he's proving it."

Last spring, Giambi turned down a $91 million, six-year extension of his contract because the Athletics refused to include a no-trade clause.

The Yankees are expected to offer Giambi — the 2000 Most Valuable Player and the MVP runner-up this year — a $117 million seven-year deal next week.

Giambi said the call from Torre had a positive effect.

"He is probably one of the greatest managers in the history of the game," Giambi said. "I just asked him questions if I was going to sign there."

As for hearing from Yogi, Giambi certainly liked it.

"He is an incredible man," Giambi said. "And that's the thing I love about that, their history of the game, definitely."

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