

Pro Bowl players will score financially at off-the-field events

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Some National Football League all-stars will be making big plays off the field in Honolulu next week. They will command up to \$10,000 for appearances at corporate parties leading up to the Feb. 12 Pro Bowl at Aloha Stadium, said Robert Tuchman, founder of TSE Sports & Entertainment, a New York-based marketer.

Tuchman, who will be in Hawaii for the game, is cutting deals for three to five players. They include Kansas City Chiefs running back Tony Richardson and New York Jets linebacker Jonathan Vilma, who are getting paid for appearances at celebrity brunches at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa and the Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach.

Tuchman said other deals involve "private meet-and-greet" gigs between players and corporate figures after practices.

"The majority of the players are getting \$7,500 for these appearances," Tuchman said. "But typically, the range is \$2,500 to \$10,000."

Top-dollar attractions include all-stars such as Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning and San Diego Chargers running back LaDainian Tomlinson, he said.

"They'll get that much just to stop by one of these events to say, 'hi,'" Tuchman said. "These guys love it because they are getting paid for the appearances."

That's on top of the \$20,000 to \$40,000 each player will earn, depending on whether his team wins or loses the game.

Rob Lefko, president of athlete marketing for Chicago-based Priority Sports & Entertainment, said some NFL players with Hawaii ties will cash in on corporate appearances.

"People are offering \$4,000 to \$5,000 for them to come out to private corporate events to meet and greet," he said.

Lefko said Seattle Seahawks offensive lineman Wayne Hunter, who played for the University of Hawaii, will be among the busiest players during game week. He will be paid for about five appearances that will each last one to two hours.

Detroit Lions center Dominic Raiola, who played for St. Louis High School and the University of Nebraska, has appearances for companies like Pepsi. But he has limited them to one or two because of a desire to spend time with friends and family, **Lefko** said.

The most stratospheric prices **Lefko** has gotten involve clients like Carolina Panthers quarterback Jake Delhomme, who he said can command more than \$25,000 to help companies entertain key clients during Pro Bowl week.

"There are a few pretty high-end opportunities out there," **Lefko** said. "But there are only a few in that category."

Last year, the game contributed an estimated \$39.4 million to the local economy, including spending on hotel rooms, meals, transportation and other attractions by an estimated 33,330 visitors, according to the Hawaii Tourism Authority.