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## **THE TRUTH ABOUT “THE BOO”** *Philadelphia Clears The Record On The 49-Year-Old Santa & Snowball Incident*

**PHILADELPHIA, December 20, 2017** – As the Christmas evening home game between the (12-2) Philadelphia Eagles and the (6-8) Oakland Raiders approaches, Philly braces itself for more references to the city’s infamous, 49-year-old, snowballs-at-Santa incident. VISIT PHILADELPHIA® would like to clear the record: The unfortunate debacle misrepresents Philadelphia’s place in history and present outlook. Here’s what really happened—and what Eagles fans are focusing on as 2017 turns to 2018. It’s time the rest of the country let this snowballed story melt.

- On December 15, 1968, the Eagles met the Vikings at home at Franklin Field. It had been a tough season—the Birds were 2-11, nearly the exact opposite of their current record—and the team had just lost its first-round draft pick. The game’s first half ended with a Vikings interception and a 57-yard touchdown run. When the “real” Santa Claus didn’t show for the halftime show, a spectator wearing a red corduroy suit was pulled from the stands to replace him. Philadelphia’s passionate yet downtrodden fans—54,535 of them had braved temperatures in the low 20s and a snowstorm to make it to the game—weren’t having it. They booed. They pelted Santa’s sub with snowballs. It wasn’t right. But it wasn’t that big of a deal—until sportscaster Howard Cosell broadcast the incident on his weekend report.
- Fun fact: Even the substitute Santa, the late Frank Olivo, understood his fellow Philadelphians’ bad behavior. In a December 15, 2008 ESPN interview, he said, “I understood what was going on. I knew what it was all about. ... The Philadelphia fans are the best fans in the world. I don’t care what anybody says, they live and die with their teams.”
- And that’s the point: Eagles fans are proud, loud, passionate and loyal. They’ll boo when it’s deserved, but they also claim to “bleed green,” no matter what the score. This season, they’ve been absolutely blissed out over the Birds’ performance, and, more recently, bummed out by star quarterback Carson Wentz’s season-ending injury. Regardless, they’ve got heart—and courage. A look into the stands at any away game where a Philly team is playing consistently reveals a sea of Philly fans.
- Philadelphia—site of the nation’s founding in 1776, where the *Declaration of Independence* and the *U.S. Constitution* were drafted and signed and where the first U.S. flag was sewn—is also where the first NFL Draft was held, in 1936. Philly is home to a shining and expanding skyline, three 2017 James Beard Award winners, the best young players in the NBA, some of the world’s top art collections (the Barnes Foundation, the Philadelphia Museum of Art), the first-ever museum dedicated to the American Revolution (the new Museum of the American Revolution)—and the 2017 NFL Draft, which inspired a record 250,000 football fans to fall in love with the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection.

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