



PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/MARCUS MILLO



Sue Randall and Danny Harris

**P**ICTURE THIS: YOU'RE AT HOME on a cold winter weekend day, feet up on an ottoman, maybe a blanket over you, a cold beverage in your hand, and football on the TV. My business partner is also my son-in-law, Danny Harris, who is a huge football fan. After playing football in high school and college, he is in three fantasy football leagues and coach of a Barrington Youth Football team. That might explain this issue's real estate article.

### PREGAME!

Not so fast! It's a 5-yard penalty for off-sides. There's a lot of work to be done in the "pregaming" phase; this is the point when you contact a Realtor. We recommend interviewing several to get a feel for personalities and how your Realtor will market your home. Choose a Realtor who will advise you on how to get your house ready to be listed.

Potential buyers will see pictures of your home online and decide whether to come and see it. Your Realtor will advise you on cleaning, de-cluttering, and organizing. Recommending changes isn't about decorating style—it's all about the photography. Use a professional photographer. We cannot believe that in this competitive environment there are still Realtors snapping pictures with their phone and catching themselves in the mirror or pictures of rooms with empty water bottles and laundry on the floor. Also, we utilize the services of a professional stager. A little investment upfront can pay huge dividends in the form of an early offer.

And now pricing. When you're pricing your home, your Realtor will show you comps of

what has recently closed near you. Pay attention to these! Even if you think your house is worth way more "because I put in over \$200,000 back in 1998" that doesn't mean it is. It's worth what someone is willing to pay. Period. You're wasting valuable time if you overprice it. Look at the comps and price accordingly and you'll be in good shape for the appraiser in the fourth quarter. Time to cue the National Anthem!

### FIRST QUARTER

Game time! Kick off! We're going "live" on the MLS! It's all about getting the word out on your house. You should be on the Broker Tour in your town; in Barrington it's every Tuesday and is very popular. We routinely get 20 agents or so when we have a new listing on Broker Tour. OK, we usually serve lunch and we think that helps. In other towns Broker Tour may not so popular; your Realtor can advise you.

Another tool is the Open House. Realtors differ on their opinions regarding the value of Open Houses. We believe in Open Houses and have sold houses this way. We also think a postcard advertising the Open House and sent out to targeted neighborhoods via direct mail is the trick play in our playbook.

### SECOND QUARTER

Showings, showings, showings. You'll have to keep your home as "showing ready" as possible. We get it. That can be hard, especially with small children. Our goal in the second quarter is to score a touchdown in the form of an offer. Once the offer is received, negotiated and agreed upon, we can get to work in the third quarter.

### THIRD QUARTER

This is the time you can be assessed penalties in the form of an inspection report. Let's back up to the 1st quarter for a minute. In addition to the cleaning, this might be the time that you get a "pre-market" inspection to take care of any issues that you knew about or didn't. Avoid any major surprises. As a seller, the inspection can be nerve-racking. Preparing for it can help mitigate issues that are sure to arise. Consider an estate or garage sale to get rid of those items you no longer want that are costly to move.

### FOURTH QUARTER

So you've sold your home online and you've sold it to the buyer. Now is the time to sell it to the appraiser. Don't underestimate this process. It requires some "home work". Your Realtor will provide comps to back up your sale price to show the appraiser. We want to keep the ball moving forward and not incur a "delay of game" penalty. Price it right from the start and you won't get sacked!

### POST GAME CELEBRATION

You did it! Your house is sold! Celebrate on a job well done because we know how much time and effort our sellers put into accommodating Open Houses and showings, negotiating, and the inspection, and appraisal process. When you're ready to make a move we'll draw up a successful game plan that will score a victory in the housing market.

*The Randall & Harris Home Team can be reached at 847-902-0642 (for Sue) or 847-902-3889 (for Danny). Visit [randallharrishometeam.bairdwarner.com](http://randallharrishometeam.bairdwarner.com).* 