

Wells Fargo to turn into veterans stadium

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PROMINENT AREA businessman Marty Judge has been the driving force behind a unique Army-Navy indoor football game for veterans that will be played June 22 after the Soul's game at the Wells Fargo Center.

The purpose of the game is to bring attention to the difficulties members of the armed services have trying to re-enter the workforce. Judge also is a part owner of the Soul.

Former Navy quarterback Ricky Dobbs already has promised his support. There will be tryouts leading up to the game, including this Saturday at the Wells Fargo Center. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. and all military members, past and present, are invited. Details are available at PhiladelphiaSoul.com/heroes.

"I think it's a national disgrace that we ask these people to put their lives on the line in places like Iraq and Afghanistan and then they come home and we don't do anything to employ them," said former Philadelphia Mayor and Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell.

Rendell wrote to the president and Congress, pitching his idea. "They say it's expensive," he

said. "Put them to work doing the things they've been doing in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ironically, we've rebuilt the infrastructure in those two countries and we aren't doing it in America."

Soul defensive lineman Morkeith Brown played at Temple following tours in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2004-05. He has firsthand experience with the difficulty veterans face.



Brown

"They kept telling me that I was overqualified or underqualified," Brown said. "If they say you are overqualified, they just don't want to pay you according to your level of education. If you are underqualified, then it's a job we can't

get. It was real frustrating."

Officials estimate the unemployment rate to be 23 percent among newly returning veterans and another 11 percent for their older counterparts.

"If we get a couple of hundred vets employed out of this program — with the 40 to 50 companies that are participating — that will be a game-changer for those vets and those families," Rendell said.

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