

Has Pennsylvania Found Its Arnold?

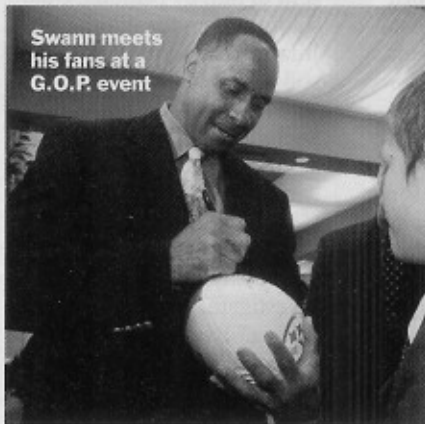
Incumbent Governors are hard to unseat in Pennsylvania. In fact, one has never been defeated in a re-election bid. So, faced with a popular Democratic incumbent, Governor Ed Rendell, state Republicans are considering a Hail Mary pass for next year's election. They're paying serious attention to Lynn Swann, a Hall of Fame wide receiver for the championship Pittsburgh Steelers teams of the 1970s and now a commentator for ABC Sports. Swann has begun testing the political waters, launching an exploratory committee and making appearances at grass-roots gatherings. At 53, Swann doesn't have any electoral experience, and so far he's been mum on his agenda except to say he is antiabortion and pro-gun rights. He has enlisted members of the team that helped vault Tom Ridge from obscure Congressman to Governor in 1995. Some think Swann could have the same appeal as another charismatic political

neophyte—California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Swann is chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, a job Schwarzenegger once held. And he seems to have a similar rock-star aura. "You see him in a crowd, there are people swarming around him," said political analyst Terry Madonna.

Swann's candidacy, Republicans say, could not only pose a threat to Rendell but also help Senator Rick Santorum, who faces a tough re-election battle in 2006, by boosting G.O.P. turnout and diverting Democratic resources. For a party trying

to reach out to minorities, it doesn't hurt that Swann is an African American. The timing seems right: with both of the state's NFL teams legitimate Super Bowl contenders, football mania is high. Even Eagles fans might give the cross-state hero a break. At least he never played for the Dallas Cowboys.

—By Sean Scully



Swann meets his fans at a G.O.P. event

JOHN HELLER/AP