

Nicole says 'I will' before Joel Madden can ask her

Happy couple plans fall wedding

MOM-TO-BE Nicole Richie has been so anxious to get engaged to rocker boyfriend Joel Madden she jumped the gun and did the proposing herself, say insiders.

But she had some help from an unlikely source: Regis Philbin!

WHEN JOEL AND HIS BAND Good Charlotte appeared on "Live with



Regis put Joel in the hot seat when he appeared on "Live" Aug. 16

Regis and Kelly" on Aug. 16, an excited Regis asked Joel if he was going to present Nicole with "a little ring...or something."

Caught off guard, Joel sheepishly answered: "I was hoping it was going to be a surprise, but now..."

And that was enough for Nicole to take the next step, says an insider. After Good Charlotte played Madison Square Garden that night, Nicole caught Joel by surprise in their limousine when she said: "Yes, I will marry you."

And although he had been planning a more traditional, romantic proposal, "he quickly kissed her in acceptance," said the insider.

"Joel and Nicole were always going to have a wedding before the baby, but Regis forced the engagement issue."



Joel and Nicole hit the streets of Soho in early August

According to sources, the wedding will take place sometime this fall, and the baby is due in January.

Nicole, 25, and Joel, 28, have been hesitant to announce the engagement, but their news was leaked the following day by a radio DJ to a crowd of Good Charlotte fans following the band's show in Arlington, Va.

"There's no ring and no official statement, but they are engaged and Nicole did the asking," confirmed the insider. "She wanted to take care of business before she was separated from Joel for a few days while he did some shows in Canada."

Nicole can't accompany Joel on this portion of the Good Charlotte tour because she's prohibited to leave the country due to her DUI arrest and upcoming jail sentence.

Added the insider: "She wanted everything in her life in order before she headed back to L.A. on her own."

by ROBIN MIZRAHI

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