



The Economic Club of New York

113th Year
568th Meeting

Dana Hammonds Shuler
Senior Director of Player Affairs
NFL Players Association

Erik Coleman
Former NFL Football Player

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Moderator: Jason Kelly
New York Bureau Chief, Bloomberg
The Business of Sports Podcast

Introduction

Welcome everyone. Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us today. This is Barbara Van Allen, President of the Economic Club. And we'll get started in exactly two minutes.

Thank you.

Chairman John C. Williams

Good afternoon, and welcome to the 568th meeting of The Economic Club of New York in our 113th year. I'm John Williams. I'm the Chairman of the Club and I'm President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. With a distinguished history back to 1907, The Economic Club of New York is the premier, nonpartisan forum for timely discussions on a wide range of issues facing New York, the United States and the world. Our mission is as important today as ever as we continue to bring people together as a catalyst for sharing diverse points of view. And particularly during these challenging times, we proudly stand with all communities seeking inclusion and mutual understanding.

And to put these words into action, the Club kicked off its Focus on Racial Equity Series where we've been leveraging our platform to bring together prominent thought leaders to help us explore and better understand the various dimensions of racial inequity and highlight strategies, best practices, and resources that the business community can use

to be a force for change. We'll be cataloguing, publishing and sharing these insights broadly.

Now we are not doing this work alone and would like to give special thanks to our corporate partners – Bloomberg, Mastercard, PayPal, Taconic Capital and S&P Global as well as the many members, the speakers, and subject matter experts that are now and will be engaged in this work.

Before moving to our program, I'd like to take a moment to recognize those of our 312 members of the Centennial Society who are attending today as their contributions continue to be the financial backbone of support for the Club and help enable us to offer our wonderful, diverse programming both now and in the future. A special welcome to members of The Economic Club of New York 2020 Class of Fellows, a select group of rising next-gen business thought leaders, and a special note that applications for the 2021 Class are now open. Any member interested in nominating a fellow can visit our website for more details. I'd also like to welcome graduate students from Rutgers University and the Gabelli School of Business at Fordham University.

Now it's an honor for me to introduce our special guests today – Dana Hammonds Shuler and Erik Coleman. Dana is a Senior Director of Player Affairs for the National Football League Players Association. She's responsible for the strategic design and

management of programs and resources that help players transition into and throughout their playing careers. These programs include financial literacy and security, professional skill development, career counseling, continuing education and wellness initiatives.

A 31-year veteran of the NFLPA, Dana has served in numerous roles including Director of Financial Programs where she had direct oversight of the Financial Advisor Registration Program and legal manager where she administered a \$110 million settlement fund for over 2,000 recipients. It was during her tenure as a legal manager that she developed a passion for helping players preserve the wealth that they achieved during their playing careers. Her passion is serving players and ensuring that they maximize the opportunities and wealth they achieved to sustain a life of financial independence.

Erik Coleman is a nine-year NFL veteran, philanthropist and sports analyst. After a stellar collegiate career as the captain of the Washington State football team, Erik was drafted in the fifth round by the New York Jets in 2004. He played nine seasons in the NFL with the Jets, the Falcons, and the Lions. And since his retirement in 2013, he's become a TV analyst for "Jets Post Game Live", "Jets Extra Point", "Jets Nation", and the Jets Draft show.

Erik is currently pursuing his passion for health and wellness, an active philanthropist who supports a number of causes including sickle cell anemia, pediatric cancer and traumatic brain injury, and is a mentor for *My Brother's Keeper Mentorship Program*.

So the format today is a conversation and we're fortunate to have an Economic Club of New York member, New York Bureau Chief at Bloomberg and host of The Business of Sports Podcast, Jason Kelly, who will be doing the honors. Now we'll end promptly at 2:45 and any questions that were sent to the Club from members were shared with Jason in advance. As a reminder, this conversation is on the record as we have media on the line. So with that, I'll turn it over to Jason.

Conversation with Dana Hammonds Shuler and Erik Coleman

JASON KELLY: John, thank you so much. Really nice to be with you virtually. Soon we will all be together again, especially with the big news – the world knocking on wood about the very effective vaccine. So obviously putting on my Bloomberg hat, that is driving the market higher. It's also Monday, the day after a big Sunday of NFL football, and I'm just delighted to have Erik and Dana with me for this conversation. It's going to be wide-ranging. We're going to talk about financial literacy. We're going to talk about a lot of the things that they've been personally working on. What an incredible year it's been for these types of conversations around equality, around financial literacy, especially given all the crises that this country is facing.

But I have to say we've got to start by talking about football, guys. I mean after all we are in the middle of the season. I have a senior person from the Players Association and a former player and analyst. So Dana, I'm going to start with you, if I can, tell me how you feel like the season is going so far from where you sit?

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: Well, Jason, I'm going to talk about this more from a business perspective. I'll keep it a bit neutral. I'm not going to complain or even talk about the team that I would generally root for.

JASON KELLY: She's joining us from Washington, I should point out.

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: But, you know, again from a business perspective I think that, I think we're doing a great job. I mean we're halfway through the season. We are very excited about that. And I mean we have worked tirelessly to get to this point. So, you know, I kind of feel like now while I'm watching the games, I'm like they're playing, I really don't care who is winning or losing right now. They're playing and I'm just happy for that.

JASON KELLY: What do you think, before I move to Erik, what do you think were some of the most critical decisions that you guys made from a Players Association

perspective, from a business perspective to ensure we could get to this point?

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: Yes, you know, our goal is to really ensure the players' safety and we convened a group of medical experts along with, you know, players and we've been working with the league to make sure that we have the best practices and protocols in place to ensure that there is a safe environment for players. Now admittedly, you know, there have been a couple of outbreaks and breaches in protocol, but, you know, again we're still moving forward. I am hopefully optimistic that we will make it through the entire season. And, you know, I really have just give thanks to our medical experts for all of the advice and counseling and to the players for adhering to the protocols as well.

JAMES KELLY: So Erik, talk to me about what you've seen because you come at this from a number of different perspectives – as a businessperson, as an analyst, as John rightly pointed out, as a former player, as someone who I'm sure is talking to people in the league all the time. What has your thought process been and what are the observations that you would make about the season so far?

ERIK COLEMAN: Well, you know, so far I think the season has been a great success. You know I think that we all expected to have a few hiccups down the line, you know, with some cases around. There's a lot of people, there's a lot of players and staff that

are involved in making this game go. But, you know, just like Dana said, you know I have to give a lot of credit to the medical experts, the coaching staff, the players, everyone involved in keeping this game going. Because it is an important game for our country, it's great for the morale of our country, and it's great to see the players out there playing. You know they may not have a lot of fans at the stadiums but I think if you watch it on television, it's been quite the success. You know we've had some great games. I think it's just healthy to keep this thing going.

There's a lot of players that opted out of playing but there's a lot of players that also committed, made that commitment that they're going to think, not just about themselves but about their teammates and the rest of the players around the league. And everyone's made a lot of sacrifices to keep this game going and I think it's been a great success so far.

JASON KELLY: Yes, it's been interesting, Erik, because as you say, you know there aren't as many fans in the stands. There's no tailgating. There's none of that stuff going on. There's almost more pressure on someone like you, I feel like, to make sure that, you know, you're telling us everything that's happening. How has it changed your perspective, your job as it were? Or has it?

ERIK COLEMAN: Well, it really has. You know I think the role of the analyst has really

changed with the Covid situation. There's no fans that are at the game so they're relying on our analysis, our opinion, and the background stories on what's going on in practice, because they can't be there. So I think it's even more important for sports analysts, broadcasters to create that picture for the fans, to give them that inside scoop, that perspective from a former player, from a person in the locker room that the fans won't be able to get this year. But, you know, overall I think the NFL has done a fantastic job. The PA the NFL, the broadcast teams, everyone has really done a great job of making this intimate situation and able to still give the fans that great perspective.

JASON KELLY: And so, Dana, as you think about not just the season but this year, I mean 2020, good grief, I mean it has just been something that none of us ever expected in our lifetimes. And not just around this global health crisis, but obviously everything we saw this summer, you know, really guided in many ways by the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, and what came after that.

Frame that for me through the lens of player empowerment because we are – and the three of us were talking about this as we prepped for this – we're so far beyond – to use a phrase that is attributed to another sport – we're well beyond shut up and dribble at this point. I mean there is an expectation, there is an understanding that players are going to speak out. How do you manage that? And what does it mean that players do feel more empowered, from the Players Association perspective, and then we'll get it from a former player?

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: I am excited about this. I'm very excited to see players actually leverage their platform and to be courageous and to step out with, you know, with such passion around the various events that have occurred. You know George Floyd, you know, being just one but obviously, you know, just so many different things that have occurred over the course of this year. And to see them to really come together and obviously, quite frankly, to be selfless, you know, in this respect. You know this is something that it just, it really, really gets me excited. We have, we launched a campaign last year. It's called AthleteAnd. And we did this because we wanted players to be able to showcase who they are underneath the helmet. And to have players really taking advantage of this movement and showing that, you know, they are an athlete and an advocate, I mean that to me is huge. And it just gives them such a greater stage to really, really help their communities.

JASON KELLY: And do you feel like the league itself has come along with you and the teams have come along with you in this journey, maybe in a more accelerate way this year? Is that fair to say?

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: I think so. I really do. I mean, you know, change may be difficult, but it's necessary. And, you know, I think we were all forced to really just sit back, take a step back, listen to what the players were actually saying to us and not just

give it lip service. I mean, you know, it's okay to say, okay, yeah, yeah, you know, we'll let you go ahead, talk or protest, but now let's get together and put together some actionable items so that we can support them in these endeavors so that we can begin to make change. And I, you know, I applaud them. I look at them as the heroes that are going out here and they are true change makers.

JASON KELLY: So, Erik, tell me about that from your perspective as someone who was in the league, as someone – as I alluded to earlier – I know you're talking to your former teammates and current players and current coaches and team officials all the time. This was a big moment for the NFL, I mean especially if we think about the last four or five years and this rapid evolution as it were. Are we right to be positive at this point? What have you seen, especially based on your own experience?

ERIK COLEMAN: Well, you know, I do think we are right to be positive in this situation. I think that we've come a long way from players just kind of worrying about their own careers and staying in their lane, as people say, and come out and help some people who are in less fortunate situations than them. You know I think athletes are realizing that they have a voice, they have a platform. People listen to what they have to say and they can make an impact in the community.

You know I think that we've come a long way from, you know, I remember when I was a

rookie in the NFL, you know we used to have these fitness initiatives where I'd go to different elementary schools and tell them to eat right and work out. And, you know, it's kind of progressed from that to education, you know, financial awareness, social, you know, recognizing social injustice and things of that order. But I think it's important to get these athletes out there for us to speak on things that we believe in, things that we are passionate about because are more than athletes.

You know we come from communities that, you know, my mother was a social worker and my father was a truck driver. You know everyone has their own story and I think it's important for players to get out and tell that story. I think it's important for players who have made it to the NFL to bring others up with them. You know, I know that in my life I've had a tough upbringing and the *My Brother's Keeper Program* was one of those things where I was able to go back and talk to kids who were affected by drug addiction, by violence in their lives. And for me to be an NFL player and to go talk to them and understand and tell them that I've been through what they're going through, it really did a lot for those kids and it made an impact and so they can see and touch a person whose been through what they've been through and come out successful. So, you know, I think it's important for athletes, for entertainers, for everyone to come out and help those who don't have a voice that they do.

JASON KELLY: That's really interesting. We're going to come back to some of your

background and some of the choices you made, especially in your post-playing life and while you were a player, Erik. But before we do that, Dana, I do want to ask you, to Erik's point about sort of taking a broader view, how do you put some structure around that? How do you institutionalize? You talked about, you know, one of the programs but how do you ensure that, you know, this movement, this moment that we've all kind of coalesced around doesn't sort of fade away because we've got someone new in the White House or the health crisis abates or whatever that may be that changes people's perspective? How do you ensure that it sticks, for lack of a better term?

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: Yes, we've really tried to sort of help players galvanize their efforts and it's not been easy. You know we sort of talked a little bit about this earlier today and, you know, as we were looking at some of the social justice initiatives and then we were looking at some of our community initiatives, we saw a lot of crossover. And we've begun to think, you know, it's probably not in our best interest to separate the two but to bring them together. And so we've, you know, convened a group of individuals to go through and research the absolute best way to be impactful and resourceful to players so that we can continue to help them and to keep this movement going.

I'm not at liberty to disclose what those, what we are going to do because they've not told me yet. There will be a big reveal – I'm being told – within the next couple of weeks.

But I'm really excited because this team has really put a lot of time and energy into this. And I'm just very passionate about making sure that we don't lose sight of the big picture. And as the NFLPA, we want to be a part of that. We want to actually support players in these endeavors. And I always tell them, I tell my staff all the time, look, you know, we're going to make an impact, you know, this is never ever about lip service. It has to be impactful. I'm excited to see what comes next.

JASON KELLY: Well, and it's interesting too because you're touching on something that I think is really important, you know, which is this notion that we can't sort of separate the crisis from each other to some extent, right? I mean in the sense that, yes, it is a health crisis. Yes, there is a crisis of injustice and inequality, and keeping in mind that we are speaking to The Economic Club of New York, all of these are economic and financial crises in many ways and so much of what we've learned this year – regardless of whether it's the health pandemic or a long overdue reckoning around inequality and racial injustice – these are economic crises in many ways. And so sort of taking a little bit of a turn into that, how do you view that lens, that financial, that economic lens? And how do you build it in a way that's ultimately effective for players?

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: Great question. We've been through this a little bit before, in 2008, when the stock market crashed as a result of the housing crisis. And that was really, it was a pivotal point I believe for many of the players that we were

working with. Once we sort of got here, you know, in the midst of a pandemic, you know, I began to take the same viewpoint that everyone is paying attention, now is a great time and it's a great opportunity to do that gut check and to really begin to help players understand and prepare for the fallout or the impact from a pandemic.

And, you know, how do we do that? We do that by providing them with a litany of resources that they can trust and that they can go to. But, you know, instead of shying away from, you know, what is really is at stake, you know, we just went straight to it. I mean, quite honestly, we didn't think we were going to have a season. And we did not know what that meant, without a season. I mean, you know, lots of lost jobs and it extends further from the players. So we were looking at all of that and we were really trying to figure out how do we make this thing work? But my job was, great, how do we make it work but in the meantime if it doesn't, what do we do to help the guys to plan and to prepare?

And we've been working with the players and their family members since the first week of April hosting all types of webinars and offering all kinds of one-on-one sessions to just really help them navigate this pandemic, if you will, or this crisis. But I don't think that the work stops, it doesn't stop there. You know we continue to do this. If anything, it just heightens your awareness and it just lets you know that, okay, you know, it shouldn't take a crisis for me to understand where I am financially and how to prepare

so that, you know, these services don't go away when a crisis goes away. They're always there. So hopefully it is a lesson, one that will spur positive change across the board.

JASON KELLY: We're going to talk a little bit more in a few minutes about sort of the financial literacy piece of this, not only for the players but in the broader community. But, Erik, I do want to go back to your background because I think your story is an interesting one. You shared a little bit of it with us just a few minutes ago but walk us through briefly sort of your journey as it were, you know, from a high school kid on, you know, playing college football, getting to the league. You obviously are a very savvy businessman at this point. Was that something that was always in your mind or was that something that you learned along the way? Help us understand that.

ERIK COLEMAN: Okay, well, you know, just a little bit about me. In high school, you know growing up in Spokane, Washington is where I was raised, single parent. My mother raised my brother and I; my sister was a little older than us. She struggled with drug addiction and, you know, that was always tough, growing up and not having things that you wanted. And as I started to get recruited to different colleges to play football, my mother was taken to prison. My mother went to prison for a year and a half, I believe it was. And so I had to go on all these college trips by myself. I lived with some friends.

And, you know, I lived with a family, friends, and they were Mormon. The father was an attorney and he really started to instill just a, I guess a structure in my life. You know I never had to come home and answer to someone and say, you know, do you have homework, what is your grade on this test? And, you know, I started to be held accountable. I had to get a job. I had to have responsibilities, chores around the house. These are all things that I never really had and it kind of gave me something to shoot for. You know I always said to myself I wanted to be like this. I wanted to have structure in my family.

And so I went to Washington State University, wanted to become a police officer or an FBI agent. Football kind of took off. And, you know, I was fortunate to be drafted by the New York Jets and have the opportunity to play in the NFL. And through playing in the NFL I met a lot of great people. I met my Player Development Director, Kevin Winston, when I was at New York. I became a union rep for my football team. And that's when I started to learn more about the education, the post-football situations that we had afforded to us.

When I met my wife, my wife grew up in the restaurant industry. Her family owns a lot of restaurants in New York City and on Long Island. And, you know, she started asking me questions like what are you doing after you're done playing football? And at first I was like, what are you talking about? I'm in the NFL, I'm making this money. You know, why

do I have to worry about after football? And then, you know, she kept asking me like what's going on? What's next? This isn't going to last forever. And along with me going to all these union meetings and learning about the financial literacy programs, learning about the internship, the externship programs that they had in the NFLPA, all these things made me take notice of, okay, I know that I'm more than a football player, but what am I? What am I going to do after I'm done with this?

So the NFLPA had a program where we went and sat down with this headhunter for corporations and we were going to get set up with different executives from different companies and learn about them. And I always said to myself, you know, I know that I'm playing in the NFL and I'm making good money, but the people who are buying these suites, the people who live in my neighborhood and drive the same cars as me, they didn't have the skills to play in the NFL. What are they doing to make money? And I was always a curious person and I always asked them, you know, I asked how did you get here? Why did you go the path that you did? Can you tell me a little bit about your business?

And that interest kind of just sparked something in me that I know this is going to end. I need to learn about life after football, learn about business life because when I'm done playing football, you know, I've been playing nine years, I've been playing a game for nine years and these people have a nine-year head start on me. I have some catching up to do. So, you know, it was a combination of seeing what I wanted out of life, have

an answer to my wife, and have an educated answer of what I want to do. You know I'm 31 years old when I'm done playing football, I have a lot of life to live. And along with the tools from NFLPA, you know all those things kind of collaborated in one thing and forced me to come out of my shell as an athlete and learn more about life.

JASON KELLY: So we're going to come back to what you've done post-NFL. But Dana, I have to ask you, I have to imagine, I mean everybody's story is unique and Erik did such a nice job of telling us his, but that attitude presumably that he had of, listen, I'm in the league, I made it to the show, like what do I need to worry about, I have to think that even today that's pretty pervasive. Tell me about that.

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: It is unfortunately. And quite honestly I believe that sometimes players have to have a certain amount of bravado. I cannot even imagine going out on the field and running full speed into someone and in the back of my mind thinking, you know I should be thinking about what's next? It's like, no, I have a job to accomplish right now, I'll think about that later.

And so, you know, our job is really to try to help guys have the ability to compartmentalize as much as possible. And, you know, again we see that, we see that a lot, but we're really just trying to tap into that, you know, what's next? What else? And, you know, how can we be of assistance here. I mean some of the stories...

JASON KELLY: Well, I mean, and to that point, Dana, I mean it feels like the Players Association and the league to a certain extent and probably even individual teams and owners, they have gotten more sophisticated along the lines, along these lines. And was pointed out earlier, you know, you've had a long career there at the NFLPA. What were sort of, you know you mentioned the financial crisis, but what were some of the other moments that you really felt like, oh, okay, we should be doing this? Were there programs, were there things along the way where you found out, you know I'm thinking of a program that I believe I read about where you guys did externships. And Erik mentioned sort of mentors outside. It feels like creating that connectivity must be a critical part of this, right?

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: It really is. And we rely on players, you know we get a lot of our insights from players. We get a lot of insights from what some of the other sports leagues are doing across the world. The externship is a program that we've operated, I believe we're going into our tenth year. And it's been phenomenal to expose players to careers outside of sports. And last year we actually took a couple of guys to London and gave them a view of what it's like to work in sports marketing abroad, just, I mean to really open up someone's eyes and to provide them with a network of individuals that can help them once they do decide to move on to that second career.

But, you know, more often than not we're getting a lot of our insights from the players themselves. You know we do this thing; it's called the Five Whys. It's like, well, why, why, you know, why do you want this? And so we're just really trying to drill down to figure out what is it that you want. And then once we get our insights we design around that. And I truly believe that's why we've had so much success with all of the programs that we have. We branched out from the externship to do more, we call them career conversations which is, you know, a take on informational interviews and our Global Job Shadow. And all of these really with the intent of providing the players with as much experience and exposure as possible to allow them to make these decisions about what's next. And it's been a great journey to see guys really embrace this and take advantage of all of these programs. I mean look at Erik, a stunning example here of someone. I wish we could take full credit for it but I mean, you know...

JASON KELLY: Give his wife a lot of credit on this one based on what he said.

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: And his wife, absolutely.

JASON KELLY: So, Erik, let's talk about that if we can because, you know, you do make that decision at some point to retire and you have to figure out what's next. I believe you had a degree in Communications from Washington State. So maybe that provided at least a window into what you might do, but how do you end up as an

analyst?

ERIK COLEMAN: Well, that was a long fight that I actually had with my wife because when I was done, when I was done playing football, you know, I don't know if you realize this but a lot of NFL players, basketball players, a lot of us don't get to retire. You know you end up, we call it getting fired, you know, when you're released from your team and there's no longer an opportunity for you to play. And, you know, of course, having the bravado that you have to have as an NFL player, I'm like, you know, I can still play, I'm not out there playing. And so my wife is like, Erik, you should be an analyst. You should talk about football. You were a safety. You were the communicator on defense. You know a lot about this game.

And at the time when I was done, I said, you know what, I'm done with football. I don't want anything to do with football. I'm going to go and have success in the business world and make football jealous of what I did in the business world. And as I got into the business world, some of the relationships that I made with the Jets as a rookie came back full circle when I moved to Long Island and they told me there was an opportunity to go on a show, talk about football, analyze the Jets. And I said, okay, I'll give it a try. And I went and did one show. I came back and my face was just like gleaming. And my wife said, you liked it, didn't you? I said, yeah, I did like it. So I went back the next week and then they offered me the job for the season and it's kind of taken off from there.

But, you know, it's great for me because I get to stay attached to a game that I love, that has done so much for me. I get to talk about it, educate people with that game. And, you know, it keeps my name out there, it keeps me relative in the business world and it helps with relationships. So, you know, it's kind of been a win-win for me and my family. You know football is that gift that just continues to give.

JASON KELLY: And so, Dana, I want to shift the conversation if we can to something that Erik also mentioned earlier which is sort of the community aspect, the broader community aspect. You know, how do you, you know once players, it's one thing if they've sort of moved on to another successful career as Erik has, but even when they're playing and after they're playing, there is increasingly an expectation just in the same way that we talked about, you know, player empowerment of speaking out on certain issues, of being an important part of the community. How do you ensure that they're doing that in the right way?

And you talked a little bit about this earlier and it sounds like we're going to hear even more about this in the next couple of weeks. But tell us a little bit more about how you sort of walk that line of saying, listen, to whom much is given, much is expected, and you guys need to give back to either the team and the community or the community of the team in which you're playing, or maybe even where you grew up. How do you sort

of institutionalize that?

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: Yes, again, you know, we are really a player-led union – very unique in terms of what we do. So our role or our involvement in this is really more about what our members wanted versus us going out and telling them what they should do. Although, you know, because we are really huge proponents of financial literacy, being great stewards, being philanthropists, you know, it just, we talk about financial literacy and wellness, it does all types of things in terms of how you feel. And it just, you know they say it's almost like a drug and it just, you know, really makes you feel great. But aside from that, you know, we were really taking our marching orders from players and then also listening and paying attention to all of the different things that they were getting involved in. We're using our expertise to really help them to build out some of the initiatives that, you know, that they have.

I'll use Brandon Copeland as an example. Brandon was running a football camp, as many players often do, and we wanted to give Brandon an award for being a champion of financial literacy. And we were trying to figure out, well, how do you do this, you know, to celebrate him but not necessarily for the community efforts, but for him being a champion of financial literacy. And so we talked a lot about what he does at his camps and decided, well, what if you added a component to your camp that included financial education workshops for the parents. And he's like, oh, you know, great idea! This is

awesome!

And so, you know, we were really just trying to help amplify the guys' platforms and their messages and really helping them to make an impact in the community. And so whether we are offering them access to our partners that will provide them with additional goods or services or just having these conversations with them to kind of steer or point them in the right direction to help them make the right connections in order to be impactful, you know that's where we are and it's just really a matter of really coordinating this so that more players are aware of the services that we provide.

JASON KELLY: So, Erik, tell us a little bit about how you sort of expand your role to the community. You talked about *My Brother's Keeper*. You and I also had a chance to visit a little bit ahead of this about your experience in Atlanta, my hometown, and we both have the great fortune – you more than I – of knowing Arthur Blank and sort of his community focus. I think about him. I think about Robert Kraft. I can't believe I'm talking about Robert Kraft and Arthur Blank at the same time. And if anybody says 28-3, I'm going to be very upset. But Erik, you know, these are two owners who have really made this kind of part of the deal if you played for them. Tell us about what you learned from Arthur Blank and sort of how that has helped you sort of define how you want to help the community.

ERIK COLEMAN: Well, you know, playing for Mr. Blank and the Atlanta Falcons, you

know, coming into the organization, you know typically during a week in football, Tuesday is your day off. And, you know, it was kind of, on other teams and other systems that I've played in, that's just your day off, that's your time to recoup, handle what you have to handle during the week. But when I got to the Falcons, Mr. Blank said, you know, we all have enough time in each day to handle our personal affairs. Let's pick a day to give back to your community. And we had these days where on Tuesdays we'd go out in the community and we'd come back on Wednesday at the meeting and you would see the board of players, what they had done in the community. You know this player went to this community center. This player went and read to kids. And it was kind of encouraging and it made you feel good as a player, as a person, to go out and help others and to help your community.

But, you know, taking it a step forward, after I'm done playing football I get a call from the NFLPA asking if can come down to an event. And this is just one of the organizations that I'm a part of now. I went to the Children's Brain Tumor Foundation, their gala, down in Manhattan. I was asked to go and participate. I met some people there and just created great relationships. I had a passion. I met a lot of the kids. And, you know, about a year and a half later, now I'm on the board for that foundation. And it just helps with getting opportunities to get out there in the community, seeing other causes and what they're involved in. And, you know, it's really just become a culture around the league of helping and giving back and it's something that we're all proud of,

you know, being players.

JASON KELLY: So, Erik, talk a little bit, if you can, about this notion of financial literacy and ultimately what it means for communities like the one where you came from and communities that you've been a part of. You know, as Dana rightly pointed out, it is this critical, critical element that sometimes is overlooked. What are some things that you've picked up along the way and then I'll ask the same to Dana in terms of, you know, things that we all can think about in terms of promoting financial literacy, which obviously is critical to broader society?

ERIK COLEMAN: Well, you know, I think we all have seen the stories of athletes who have gone broke after they're done playing. And it comes up with, you know, coming into the league, you know, you don't want to be broke. I don't want to end up like this. And I remember having players in the locker room like, you know, my rookie year, Curtis Martin, you know as soon as I got into the locker room, I started talking to him about what does he do off the field. And at first I was scared, you know, as a player, to think about doing things outside of football. But as you start talking to different players in your organization and through the union, through the players' union, you hear from players from other teams who've had a lot of success, now it becomes, you know, what can I do with my money? How can I enhance my career?

Just a quick story. I got my first paycheck. John Abraham, his locker was next to mine. And I remember seeing my check and it was like \$30,000 or something. And I remember being like, man, this is a lot of money, the most money I've ever had. And then John Abraham slaps his check in my chest and it's like \$450,000 for the same pay period. And I said, oh, my goodness, I can't believe this. And he said, you know what that tells you, you know, rookie. That tells you that you can't buy the same things that I can buy. You don't buy the same house. You make sure you stay in your lane. This money has to last you through your retirement so you have to educate yourself, take care of your money, and treat it as if this is the last dollars that you're ever going to make. So I think that the financial literacy that you learn from players through the NFLPA with all these programs, it just helps you just realize how important your money is. You know, you put your body on the line for this money. You worked so hard to get to this position, why not make it last and live that great life throughout, after you're done playing?

JASON KELLY: So, Dana, I'm going to give the last word to you. What's the best advice that you give players or maybe what's the most interesting thing you hear back from players in terms of this financial literacy question? Like how do we all sort of get better based on what you've learned?

DANA HAMMONDS SHULER: So one of the things that I feel has really helped, I had to

sort of change the way that I thought and approached financial literacy with players because it's boring, it's not sexy. And I approached it in terms of the business of me. And I talked to players, like I want you to think about yourself as this, whether it's a small business or a big business, and I want you to develop a relationship with people across all spectrums that serve as advisors, practice or establish best practices of running your business, whether that's from your brand to managing your money, because you want your business to thrive. You want to develop multiple streams of income so that if – for whatever reason – something happens and your income from one portion of your business diminishes, that you're okay otherwise. I want you to think about credit and how you use it and how you leverage it to continue to build your business.

And then, more importantly, think about generational wealth and how do you take all of this, how do you establish the business of Erik Coleman to pass this on to the little Eriks that come behind you. And so it's really tapping into that entrepreneurial spirit and getting people to just embrace the fact that, okay, I am a business. I can run this. It's okay to seek advice. That's what most businesses do. It's totally fine. And if I want my business to thrive there are certain things that I need to do in order to be responsible and accountable. And so that's been my approach for the past ten years.

JASON KELLY: Well, that's a great approach, and we're really grateful to you both for

spending some time with us. Erik and Dana, thank you so much. Here's to the second half of your very successful NFL season and we'll be looking for great news from both you down the line. I'm going to hit back over to John. Thank you both.

CHAIRMAN JOHN C. WILLIAMS: Well, thank you Jason. And thank you Dana and Erik. It's been a fascinating conversation. Thanks for sharing your perspectives, your time with us today. I really appreciate that. So looking ahead, I'm pleased to report that we have got a lot of great speakers lined up in the coming weeks. As always, we encourage you to not only attend yourselves but invite guests to our events. This Thursday, we got James Gorman, CEO of Morgan Stanley. We've got, looking ahead to the following weeks, we've got Mark Zandi of Moody's. We got Jay Clayton, Chairman of the SEC, LL Cool J, Chief Executive Officer of Rock the Bells, and Mellody Hobson, the co-CEO and President of Ariel Investments. As you can see, we've got a great lineup of speakers coming up and we'll be adding more as that becomes available. So please keep checking our website and we'll obviously communicate with members with updates. So thanks again for joining us today and have a terrific rest of your day.