

Black Athletes, Career Change, and Entrepreneurship



Lessons for Pro Sports Hopefuls

Summary

Eye-opening facts

Athletes and career change

Q & A Exploration

Selected Famous Athletes & Career Change

Sources + Video Excerpts

Play to win at all cost and leave personal development on the blind side is often the game plan for many athletes until a crisis forces the issue.

Case in point: a segment back in October on Oprah's LifeClass: A suspended NFL football player revealed that his income dropped from \$2 million to \$12 hourly.

And when asked how he would get his life back on track if not reinstated, the player, a university graduate who majored in communication and rhetorical studies confessed to not knowing the answer.

Unfortunately, a typical response that many have experienced. The last thing on the mind of many pro athletes or hopefuls is Career Literacy. It's a term coined by the Ball Foundation. Too often, a little-known concept in and outside the sports world,

Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, Joe Montana, Andre Agassi, **Shark Tank** contestant, Al Baker of Bubba's Q are a few examples of athletes who have traded a sports career for various forms of entrepreneurship.

But, many other athletes don't fare as well when it comes to identifying the right career change strategy.

Ideally, career management experts point out that self-exploration should be a key part of everyone's game plan. And in the world of sports, that means exploration long before being benched, suspended, injured, or ready to retire in an industry known for short time spans. But pro athletes often overlook this crucial step and only when a job loss crisis looms is there a realization there is no backup plan.

Eye-Opening facts

The NFL evaluates potential players using the popular Wonderlic Intelligence test. Successful completion requires an answer to 50 questions in about 12 minutes.

Hardly likely to offer a complete picture of the full potential of the athlete as a human being with other talents.

Films such as *Money Ball* illustrate the focus of team owners on winning above all else... a sport is a business! And athletes often focus all their energy on winning the game. But in today's marketplace, the athlete must also take on the responsibility of learning how to win outside the arena.

Consider these statistics from Sports Illustrated in 2009

More than 75 percent of NFL players are in financial stress or are in bankruptcy five years after leaving pro sports. And 60 percent of NBA players are broke after reaching retirement. In 2015, one in six players in the NFL will file for bankruptcy, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Athletes and Career Change

Q & A Exploration

Instruction:

Choose a time when the ability to think is most sharp. Grab pen, pencil, and paper, or an app, video equipment, sketch pad, journal, audiotape, or other preferred media. And mull over, think, chew on, reflect, evaluate or meditate on how to answer the following questions.

- What led you to this sport?
- What motivates you to play sports?
- If you couldn't play anymore for whatever reason...injury...long-term suspension or permanent retirement. What would your next role be? For example, the sporting industry has a large number of roles, depending on the sport. Recruiting? Training? PR? Coaching? Legal? Business administration? Other? Would your choice be a good fit for my interests, motivation, and skill set or would the fit be poor?
- What sources will you use for self-awareness and exploration? Books? Videos?, Informational interviews? Mentorship? Apprenticeship? Other? How will you evaluate results?

- Does a need for security, prestige or status play a role in your choices?

*****Note:** A college major may provide important clues if the major was chosen wisely. But research shows that if the major is not compatible with learning style, interests, aptitudes, and motivation then the college dropout rate increases.

Selected Famous Athletes & Career Change

Arthur Ashe

Although the late tennis icon and humanitarian obtained a college degree in business administration, it was not his first choice for a college major.

Architecture was the original goal, but Arthur Ashe's coach pointed out that the demands of that major would have made it impossible to combine the academic demands and a tennis career, whereas a business major offered more flexibility.

Note: Many people are unaware of the tennis great's military service. According to Professor Eric Allen author of *Life and Legacy of Arthur Ashe* *Life on C-Span BookTV* <https://www.c-span.org/video/?327261-1/life-legacy-arthur-ashe>

James Braddock...Cinderella Man

After boxing, and having exercised skillful management of his prize winnings, Braddock entered the military and became an officer.

And he likely had structural visualization, an ability, and aptitude

so named by the Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation.

Chris Everett...Writes and publishes tennis information. Operates a tennis academy and is an ESPN commentator.

Pele

Sports Marketing, licensing, country ambassador

Joe Montana

According to Inside Sports Illustrated, Montana tried TV announcing but disliked it. He got involved in real estate and the corporate speaking circuit. Earned a degree in business administration and marketing before football fame. commentator.

Malcolm Mitchell...

From wide receiver to author and poet

<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/book-club-is-the-mvp-of-patriot-wide-receiver-malcolm-mitchells-career/#x>

Sugar Ray Leonard...

Event and media marketing

Source: Database: *Biography in Content... Notable Sports Figures, 2004*

Sources

Arthur Ashe.org Learning Center

<http://www.arthurashe.org/life-story.html>

James Braddock.com

<http://www.jamesjbraddock.com/theman/>

Career Vision.org

Job Satisfaction Survey

<https://careervision.org/job-satisfaction-its-about-fit/>

Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation <http://jocrf.org/>

Career vision.org Career Management tab: www.careervision.org

Bubba's Q Bonelessribs.com: <http://www.bubbasbonelessribs.com/>

Casey Crawford, CEO, Movement Mortgage, started flipping homes while still a pro athlete. National Business Report, August 7, 2015

<http://nbr.com/2015/08/07/nightly-business-report-august-7-2015>

5/

NY Daily News, Wayne Coffry, 2009. With a passion for soccer and food, Amos Zereoue is not your typical former NFL player.
<https://www.nydailynews.com/sports/football/passion-soccer-food-amos-zereoue-not-typical-nfl-player-article-1.433855>

Wall Street Journal.com/April 2015

One in Six NFL players

Goes Bankrupt within 12 Years of Retirement

<https://sports.cbslocal.com/2015/04/16/wall-street-journal-one-in-six-nfl-players-broke-within-12-years/>

Washington Post.com

Tanard Jackson

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/dc-sports-bog/wp/2014/09/11/tanard-jackson-went-on-oprah-to-get-advice-from-steve-harvey/>

Coachup.com <https://www.coachup.com>

Friday Night Lights

C-Span.org

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?328394-1/friday-night-lights>

Award-winning journalist Buzz Bissinger's memorable talk about high school football culture in small-town America. Blunt, honest, informative overview of the pitfalls of sports obsession and the impact on players' lives.