



via Sports Agent Blog
Connecting Athletes With Each Other + Businesses
By: Darren Heitner

Jason Kyle has little to complain about. The 6'3, 242 lb, 37-year-old long-snapper is in his 15th season in the NFL and is currently playing for his 6th team since entering the league. That team, the New Orleans Saints, is 12-0, and Jason has played in all 12 games. He works hard on and off the field and is not waiting until retirement to begin building his own business. The business that he has created is well on its way to being a very successful endeavor. On Monday, I chatted with Jason about Pro Player Connect, his company that aims to connect professional athletes with other professional athletes and businesses.

Jason has been building Pro Player Connect for roughly two years. He has branded it as a place where professional athletes can network with one another and receive offers from national, regional, and local businesses. Companies have also used the database to offer jobs to retired athletes, and over 30 such retired athletes have already been given work through those leads. There are also many additional features planned for the future that involves interaction with fans. Eventually, players will be able to create video chats and appearances, provide downloads, deliver athletic tips, and conduct various types of interviews. It should not be a problem to build as the company just received its second round of funding.

At this point, most of the 1,000+ athletes using Pro Player Connect are professional football players. Most likely, that number will increase tremendously since the NFL Players' Association recently put its support behind Jason Kyle's company. On October 20, the NFLPA was proud and pleased to announce its support of Pro Player Connect. With the NFLPA behind this project, Jason has already been able to roll out a new feature that helps athletes with their Workers' Comp forms.

Athletes are not charged to use the service. Instead, companies are charged a small fee per lead. They pay to get an offer out to the players on the website and the offer is only released to the athletes targeted if the Pro Player Connect employees deem the offer to have value. Speaking of employees, Jason told me that there are 3-full time employees and Jason puts roughly 3 hours per day into the company, which is a big time commitment for an active NFL player.

Should this service scare sports agents? After all, doesn't it make agents less needed? Jason says no. And he encourages agents to bring their clients to the website. If the agent is involved, Pro Player Connect will copy the agent on all offers. If the player signs up without the assistance of his agent, the agent will lose the opportunity to be involved in all offers that the player receives through Pro Player Connect. Jason says that the offers can be anything from \$500 for a local Monday Night Football appearance at a bar to \$10,000 for an autograph appearance.

I told Jason that I am very impressed with his drive and passion concerning his product. It really says a lot about a player who is able to put so much energy into a company while taking snaps in the NFL. I wish him the best and continued success with Pro Player Connect.