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Jason Kyle: From Start-Up CEO To Super Bowl Snapper

Do not disturb [ProPlayerConnect Inc.](#)'s CEO this week. He's busy with another project.

See, Jason Kyle not only runs an Internet start-up that links professional athletes with endorsements, free products and opportunities for celebrity appearances, he also plays in the National Football League.

And on Sunday, he'll be long-snapping for the New Orleans Saints as they face off against the Indianapolis Colts.

Venture Capital Dispatch reached Kyle in Miami this week as he was preparing for the big game.

"I didn't know it would be this involved when I kicked this off," Kyle said of his company, with no pun intended. "During the season I spend quite a bit of time working on it, probably two or three hours a day after practice. And I keep with email."

ProPlayerConnect is backed by venture capital firm Arizona Bay, former NFL quarterback Vinny Testaverde and Daytona 500 winner Michael Waltrip.

Arizona Bay Managing Partner Dave Graham said it's a bit odd having a portfolio company CEO playing in the NFL.

"We like to have Jason full time, but we realize he can't be full time," Graham said. "But there's a cost benefit because when he's playing we are put in contact with great individuals. It's good for business."

Kyle has spent 15 years in the NFL with such teams as the Carolina Panthers, Seattle Seahawks, Cleveland Browns, St. Louis Rams and San Francisco 49ers. This isn't his first trip to the Super Bowl, as he was part of the Panthers squad that lost a close battle to the New England Patriots in 2004.

After being traded from the Panthers to the Saints this year, Kyle has had an exciting season. He literally had his hand on the ball in the play that sent the Saints to the Super Bowl, hiking to backup quarterback Mark Brunell who held the ball in place for kicker Garrett Hartley's 40-yard boot in an overtime win over the Minnesota Vikings.

"It was one of the most important snaps I've had," Kyle said. "I was just hoping everything went well. I didn't get a chance to see it, but the roar of the crowd told me it was good. It was a pretty exciting play."



ProPlayerConnect Inc.

Jason Kyle, long snapper for the New Orleans Saints and CEO of ProPlayerConnect.

The NFL is a job Kyle will do as long as possible, but he's very serious about ProPlayerConnect, which is beginning to receive calls from other venture firms wanting to participate in its next round of funding. Kyle said the site has grown quickly, attracting nearly 1,100 athletes who have received more than 78,000 offers. More features will soon be added to provide athletes a way to create an interactive online fan club.

"I think with the type of content we have, it's going to be pretty interesting entering the fan market," Kyle said.

But all that can wait until next week. Kyle has another big job he has to finish on Sunday.

Oh, the life of a start-up CEO...

(See our previous story on NFL kicker Billy Cundiff, who also works at venture capital firm Pacific Southwest Ventures. Since we wrote that story on June 4, Cundiff left the Cleveland Browns and signed mid-season with the Baltimore Ravens, which made the playoffs.)

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