

## Athletes, business owners share similar investing strategies

BY JOHN VOMHOF JR.  
STAFF WRITER

Former University of Minnesota football coach Glen Mason recalls



Mason

a time when one of his star players was on the verge of being drafted in the first round, putting him in line for a large signing bonus. He pulled the player aside and reminded him to be smart with his money when he received his first NFL paycheck. "Save, save, save," Mason told him.

"Don't worry, Coach," the player replied, "the only thing I've bought so far is a \$50,000 car for my mom."

Mason was dumbfounded. After all, the player hadn't even been drafted yet.

Turns out the player had received a \$100,000 advance on his trading-card contract. "I still have \$50,000 left," the player told Mason.

Mason tried to explain that most of the \$50,000 in the bank would

go toward taxes, but the player just looked at him like he was crazy. "You don't know what you're talking about, Coach," he said. "That's not how it works."

For Mason, now Senior Vice President of Business Development for Marquette Asset Management Inc. in Minneapolis, that exchange serves as a chilling example of the pitfalls young athletes can fall into if they aren't careful.

"When they're making \$2 million or \$3 million a year, they think they're going to make that forever, when really the course of their ability to make that type of money is very short-lived for most of them," Mason said.

That's why it's important for professional athletes to hire financial advisers they can trust to ensure their money lasts, said John Fabie, Marquette's Managing Director and Senior Client Relationship Officer.

Athletes should seek transparency in all of their financial dealings, selecting financial advisers who work on fees, not commissions, he added.

For an adviser, the first step is to teach players the value of their money. Advisers should evaluate cash flow and the players' long-term

financial needs to build a conservative investment plan, Fabie said.

"The professional athlete who signs a large contract is no different than the small-business man who sells his company for \$5 million," Fabie said. "The process we use is identical."

Fabie recommends that athletes put their money in bonds and other low-risk investments. Of the \$800 million Marquette administers, more than 40 percent of it is in bonds.

Players also should live within their means and avoid taking on debt, he said. "The risks for professional athletes are not always market risks, they're personal and professional risks, because until the end of their career they're never going to know what their earning potential is."

Of course, the key is for athletes to listen to the people they hire, even when they don't like what they hear, Mason said.

"Some of these guys have never had much money and they really don't want anyone telling them they can't buy three Mercedes or this or that. They're living in Disneyland."



Fabie

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