



After the Buzzer

Transcript: Bob Wallace's interview with Mike Tannenbaum of the Miami Dolphins

Episode posted: September 18, 2018

Bob Wallace: Welcome to After The Buzzer. I'm Bob Wallace, the chair of the Sports Law Practice at Thompson Coburn, a nation-wide law firm of 380 attorneys with offices across the country. I'm again here at our headquarters in St. Louis where before I came to Thompson Coburn, I served as executive vice-president and general counsel to St. Louis Rams and worked in the front offices of the Philadelphia Eagles and St. Louis football Cardinals. Altogether, I have spent 35 years in a national sports arena.

Today my practice focuses on representing teams, respective buyers of sports teams, companies interested in sports marketing and civic and government entities facing relocation or facility issues. I arbitrate and mediate sports and business disputes and have assisted coaches and executives with their contract negotiations and separations.

As I have said before, over the years I have met some great people who are smart and interesting with a lot of great experiences. As we developed this podcast series, it was with the hope of sharing our guest's thoughts on those topics that sports impacts and impacts sports. We want to talk about the hows, the whys, the whens and the becausees.

My guest this week is Mike Tannenbaum, Executive Vice President of Football Operations of the Miami Dolphins. Mike epitomizes what After The Buzzer attempts to do. He is smart, curious and innovative. He is not afraid to be aggressive, whether it's trading for an impact player, signing a difference maker or negotiating smart contracts.

He started as an intern with the New Orleans Saints and after graduating from the Tulane Law School, went to work for the Cleveland Browns. He joined Hall of Fame coach Bill Parcells with the New York Jets, rising to become their general manager. While GM of the Jets, they went to the play-offs three times and the AFC championship games twice. After spending a year in priority sports, representing coaches, he joined the Dolphins as a consultant and in 2016 was named executive vice-president. He hired highly regarded Chris Grier as GM and equally highly regarded Adam Gase as head coach. In 2016, the Dolphins went 10 and 6 and made the play-offs for the first time in 8 years.

Injuries, hurricane and some off the field distractions made 2017 a tough year. But after a retooling, the Dolphins believe 2018 will be much better. Before we begin, I must disclose that Mike is very special to me. We served together on the board of the Sports Lawyers Association and been friends for over 20 years. Most importantly however, he hired my son Grant to be a scout with the Dolphins. Consequently, I'll go easy on him. Mike, welcome to After The Buzzer.

Mike Tannenbaum: Thanks Bob {laughs}. I appreciate that and first and foremost, greatly appreciate our friendship as well. I have a lot of respect and admiration for you and your career.

Bob Wallace: So Mike, tell us a little bit about your kind of path to – I mean, I briefly touched upon it, but I remember you as a young man coming to the Sports Lawyers Association's meetings back then and just sort of tell the audience about your path to get to where you are now.

Mike Tannenbaum: Sure Bob and just a couple of lessons I would pass along. First of all I was incredibly lucky. For the first 75 years of pro football, more or less players were with their original club if their club wanted to keep them. And then in '82 and '87 there was litigation, there were strikes. There was a lot of issues with labor. And then finally in '93 there was a comprehensive settlement that took care of

literally a decade of fighting between the league and the union. And there was two big things that came out of the '93 CBA. There was cost (inaudible) for the owners in the form of a salary cap, and the players were able to achieve what they were looking for, which was free agency.

And literally I would tell you, as you know Bob, the population of what front offices looked like changed. Where traditionally it was a lot of former coaches and the league was looking for people with JDs and MBAs. And I just happened to be at the right place at the right time. I was in law school at Tulane. They had a great program for sports law, and I was able to intern for a gentleman named Bill Kuharich who was a GM and Chet Franklin the assistant GM and did everything, drive people to the airport, research contracts.

And then when I graduated in 1995, I sent out all my thoughts about what pro football looked like in the first year of having a salary cap. And I was fortunate that Cleveland Browns, Mike Lombardi and Bill Belichick read my thoughts. I was hired. I spent the '95 season with the Browns. And then as we know, the Browns became the Ravens and I went back to the Saints for the '96 season. And then my big break was in '97 when Coach Belichick and Coach Parcells left the Patriots after losing the Super Bowl to the Packers and hired me at the Jets.

So one of the lessons I would pass along is, for people looking to get into sports Bob would be, you know, where are the barriers to entry low? And again, for me, I felt like I was very fortunate that I happened to be in school at Tulane when this transformational event happened with the new CBA in 1993. And that kind of changed the population of what front offices look like. So if I was looking to get into sports today, for the young people that may be listening to this, I would say in 2018, what landscape is changing, because sometimes a change in landscape creates opportunity.

Bob Wallace: Now you went to University of Mass undergrad, right? Were you a football player there?

Mike Tannenbaum: I was not. I played in high school. I thought about playing at smaller schools, Division 3 most notably, and I sat down with my parents, and I wasn't good enough to play at UMass. And that was the best school that I got into and made the decision, for any hope to ever be in pro football would have to be the academic way and not as a player. When you're 18 years old, that's when you realize that hey, you're not good enough as an athlete and it's time to pursue a career.

Bob Wallace: Right, it's very interesting Mike because I was a back-up running back at Yale University. And I always say, if you're a back-up running back in the Ivy Leagues, you're not going to play at the next level. So like you, I decided that I had to find a way to get involved in something that I really loved. And so I went to law school too. When you went to Tulane, did you go there with the hopes that you would be involved in pro sports? Or did you just decide to go be a lawyer and whatever happened, happened?

Mike Tannenbaum: No, it was my dream and they have a very good program for sports law that was initially started by a fellow named Gary Roberts and continues to this day with a gentleman named Gabe Feldman. And they do a great job working with the Sports Lawyers Association and helping young people try to achieve their dreams. One of the tenets I try to live my life by is, choose a job you love and you'll never work a day in your life. And I've been able to attend UMass, which has a great sports business program and the people there were very helpful to me.

I then transitioned to Tulane Law School and likewise there were people there that did so much for me early in my career. And I'm very thankful and appreciative and if it wasn't for a lot of kind people who were incredibly generous with their time with me, at both UMass and Tulane, I wouldn't have been able to take the steps that I was able to take.

Bob Wallace: Yes, you know, and I've observed you Mike at sports lawyer's conferences, and I always see you spending time with students from Tulane or UMass or something. And it seems to me that you're very willing to give back the time and sort of open that door, like it was for you for others.

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, I think that's a responsibility we all have Bob. And we're all very lucky to work in a field like sports, which is, as you know, a very competitive field. So I try to give back in any way possible. Sometimes it's a quick conversation. Sometimes it may just be an informational interview. But I think we have a responsibility to give back, and we have a robust internship program, which is how I started, which is really important to me. And again, I think when we've all been able to achieve where we want to go, we have a responsibility to help others get to where they want to go as well.

Bob Wallace: So you mentioned earlier that you joined Coach Parcells and Coach Belichick back at the New York Jets. Was it the Jets or the Patriots that you – the Jets?

Mike Tannenbaum: That was in 1997 at the New York Jets.

Bob Wallace: So talk about Coach Parcells, who has a reputation of being pretty tough. A young man coming in, how was it working for Coach Parcells, and what did you learn from him, and how do you take that on to what you're doing now?

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, I couldn't have been more appreciative or lucky to work for a Hall of Fame coach. And specifically the way we were set up there, he was our head coach and GM. So my relationship with him was one of extreme, like, intimacy because I just had to deal with him quite a bit. And the life lessons he taught me, well beyond a football team, I'll take for the rest of my life. So obviously I never could have become a GM without just being around him every day and lessons of evaluating players, building a roster, who to pay, how much to pay. All the things that you talk about running a team. How to manage people, how to give people feedback. How to tell people things they don't want to hear.

It was really much more about life with Coach Parcells, and just to be around him every day for four years is something that I'll cherish forever. And he certainly had standards, and it wasn't always easy. But it was always meaningful. One minute he could be yelling at you deservedly, and the next minute he could be praising you. He did a lot of things for me that I'll never be able to thank or repay him enough. It was a special time in my life.

Bob Wallace: So if you could share one or two lessons that he imparted to you, what would they be?

Mike Tannenbaum: He had an incredible way with people. So he had this innate ability Bob to walk into a room and look at different people and understand, you know, certain people you'd have to praise and certain people that you could approach them differently. I think that's what the great coaches do. They have more than one pitch in their bag, and he was certainly that way. And he was very hard to please, but he made you better. And he also was demanding, but in a way that was fair and reasonable, and he brought out the best in me and a lot of people. He was dynamic in terms of being able to compartmentalize, like, dealing with the media or dealing with the players, dealing with the staff, dealing with the medical department. And he was our CEO. I mean, he ran the whole organization, and it was – just to be able to sit where I sat to take lessons from him was incredible.

Bob Wallace: And what was his leadership style, and how would you compare it to your leadership style now?

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, I would say his was – he had a huge presence about him, and he was also incredibly smart. So his was very outgoing. He was very sarcastic at times. But he also had a very caring side to him. Like, he could be very nurturing, and in this day and age Bob, what's hard is, we live in an era where it's all about the sound bite or a quick clip on social media. But there was a warm and nurturing side to him that no one will ever see.

In terms of myself, I try to be a lead by example guy. I started off as an intern. I tried to work really hard and never ask anybody to do something I wouldn't do myself. I think that's really important. I believe in servanthood leadership. If the people that work for you believe that you have their best interests, you're going to get the most out of them. So we're in a tough, competitive environment, but there's a lot of people in our organization that have goals and dreams. And my responsibility is to help them get there as well.

Bob Wallace: Is there anybody else in that sort of – building Mike Tannenbaum to his style right now that you would point out, other than Coach Parcells?

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, I'd say there was a lot of people that shaped me over the course of my career. Coach Belichick, you talk about preparation. He was unbelievable how he prepared for every meeting, every day. And then Terry Bradway was a GM that I worked for, for five years, and he had a passion for (sounds like: scaling) that is to this day unmatched. And again, very prepared, very thorough, but very kind. So I think people along the way, different people have impacted me, and I've been fortunate for that.

Bob Wallace: So you're a lawyer now, and you don't practice much law anymore do you?

Mike Tannenbaum: I don't.

Bob Wallace: No, so your legal training as a football executive, how has it helped you?

Mike Tannenbaum: I think the discipline of the thought process, being organized with your thoughts, being able to substantiate your position, not being whimsical in any approach and having sound logic. I think those are all attributes that I picked up while I was in law school. And I thought the training was rigorous, demanding, tough, but really glad and appreciative of going through it.

Bob Wallace: You've mentioned hard work. You've mentioned preparation a number of times. Is there something in particular that when you look at a problem,

something comes across Mike Tannenbaum's desk at the Dolphins, how do you go about analyzing those problems?

Mike Tannenbaum: I would say a couple of different ways. You try to look – I think when you're in the front office you've got to be also proactive Bob, look around the next corner. So what's this going to look like in three months, six months, twelve months? And then I frequently say Bob, like, we're – in these positions we're the point guard of information. So Chris Grier, Steve Ross our owner, Adam Gase our head coach, if we're going to make a transaction, if we do this guys, here's what we can't do. Now let's put all the information on the board, and what's the best decision for us?

And sometimes it's hard, and in this day and age candidly, you make decisions on players and it's not always easy because you have to win for today and develop for tomorrow. And sometimes you make decisions and it's hard to get your side of the story out, and we have to be beholden to the standard of what's best for us and make those decisions. So we try to be practical. We take a lot of people's input. Chris Grier's an excellent listener. And depending on what the decision is, what area it is, we have Brandon Shore, who's a young lawyer who does a great job negotiating contracts. We have a gentleman named Dennis Locke who runs our analytic department. So we have really an interesting and disparate group of people that have a lot of input into the decisions.

Bob Wallace: So one of the conversations that you always hear on talk radio or in the media is, well, who makes the final decision? And I've always kind of argued that if you have a good organization, then it really doesn't have to be that – you're going to reach a consensus decision because you've discussed all this before. And it's not like Mike Tannenbaum says, "We're going to do it this way." Or Adam Gase says, "We're going to do it this way." How do you deal with that dynamic so that everybody can kind of reach the same decision? And when they walk out of the room, they're not going behind somebody's back saying, "That was their decision. That was a bad decision."

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, I totally agree Bob. So much more of that is made in the media. So we're trying to make these decisions by consensus. And again, I think people would be surprised if they looked under the hood when you make these decisions that, you have all the information. If you're doing your homework, it's pretty – sometimes these decisions will reveal themselves more quickly than others. And I always feel like if there are disagreements, either let's watch more film or, let's look at this again or, what's the goal here? And we have goals and objectives and what we want this organization to look like and the types of players. And when we do that, invariably that decision will bubble to the top and we can get to consensus pretty quick.

Bob Wallace: So talk about a typical Mike Tannenbaum day. I mean, I'm sure that when you wake up in the morning you may have a "to do" list or you say, today is cut down today or, today is preparation day. But every day can be different. What is a typical day for the executive vice-president of Football Operations for the Miami Dolphins?

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, Bob, as you very well know, being part of running teams for as many years as you did, no two days are alike. And again, for us, I think what we try to do is try to get on the front end of things and it's really chronologically based. We're at the time of year now where we're going through final cuts. We're signing practice squad players. We're trying to tweak the bottom end of the roster. Actually during the regular season, it's as routine as it's going to be where Monday and Tuesday, you're looking at the roster. You're trying to formalize things. And then Tuesday at 4:00 is payday in the NFL. Meaning if you're on the roster at 4:00 on Tuesday you get paid for the week.

And then Wednesday through Friday the coaches and players are getting ready for the upcoming game. And that's where we're either starting our draft preparation, we're doing a lot of work. Again, three, four, five months out in terms of which players are going to be free agents come March of 2019. So again, I think we try to take care of the immediacy earlier in the week during the regular season in terms of injuries, roster movements. And then later in the

week our tendency is hey, let's look big picture. Where is our roster a few months down the road?

Bob Wallace: You talked about trimming the roster, looking at the (inaudible). I worked with Dick Vermeil for a number of years, and Dick had this sort of loyalty thing. So he kind of told the players, although it wasn't 100% true, that if you made the team, that was who he was going to war with. What's your guys' philosophy? Are you always looking to sort of move guys up, move guys down? Sort of the bottom five guys on your team are kind of – they could be replaced?

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, no, that's a really good question, and we talk about that all the time because look, you want to show deference to the guys that are here obviously because they've worked hard, and they deserve to be here. But with that said, if there's opportunities, we also owe it to the team and the organization to do what's best for us. So sometimes even in season, we'll make a move. We've done that before. Sometimes – last year we added Jay Cutler. That was obviously for an injury. But when there are opportunities that present themselves, you have to take advantage of those. So we don't go into the season thinking there's going to be a lot of moves, but invariably a player will get cut that you never thought of or a trade will happen. So we're heading into the first week of the season right now Bob, and we're still making a move or two. So you do want to lean towards loyalty, but you also have to be opportunistic as well.

Bob Wallace: Really good answer Mike. Thanks for kind of explaining you guys' philosophy on that. When I was doing this way back when, it was the beginning of salary cap era. And I used to always kind of explain it as, well, it's just a pie. We've decided how to divide the pie up. I think, and I haven't done contracts in 15 years, it's a lot more complicated now. How do you manage the salary cap? What are you looking to do?

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, no, I still think that's a fair assessment which is, everyone's given the same amount of money and how do you want to divide it up? And I'd say where

it's probably become more complex is, there's a few more variables in terms of what counts to the cap and how you can guarantee money. So there's obviously a couple of benchmarks to look at. What's the cash the first three years of the deal, because traditionally that's the number of years a player will receive a contract. And then what's the guaranteed money? Because in our system there's guaranteed and non-guaranteed money.

So oftentimes there could be two negotiations in terms of total dollars and then what's guaranteed. And again, we try to come up with plans and budgets and I know this drives the staff crazy because I say it so much. But in this day and age your plan has to be firmly etched in pencil because things are going to happen. And you think things are going to go one way and then, for whatever reason, they change. So I think you have to have flexibility in your plans. You have to have guidelines. You have to stand for something and have a good sense of where you want to go. But you also have to be realistic because life gets in the way and things change and players get more in some situations and less in others. And again, I think you just have to be open minded.

Bob Wallace: You know, in pro football, the guaranteed contract has not been that prevalent. You hear the players every year after the NBA finals end and they start signing new contracts in the NBA, NFL players always say, "Why don't we have that?" What is the trend on guaranteed contracts in the NFL these days?

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, there are some obviously, most notably Kirk Cousins with Minnesota. And again, like, every negotiation is different. I know a lot is made of that in the media, but our players do very well in the system. There's a lot of trade-offs in our CBA, and I think it's made our sport better and healthier. And I think both sides are doing well. I mean, obviously any agreement could always be tweaked. And at the appropriate time, I'm sure those issues that are out there that are disagreements between the league and the union will be addressed. But by and large I think everyone has done well with this agreement. And as it relates to guaranteed money Bob, sometimes players will want the chance to

make more money and, quote, unquote, risk total dollars for less guarantees. So every situation could be a little bit different.

Bob Wallace: Right, I used to always argue that NFL had a sense of a guaranteed contract because in baseball, now the money's a lot different, they're not giving a signing bonus. Where you're giving a guy a signing bonus, and that's his guaranteed sort of money. So he's getting some money upfront. He's not getting it over the length of a contract. It could be a little different, especially in football with the injuries. They may not get all the money that they originally thought they were going to do. You mentioned the labor peace and the CBA. It seems to me as I kind of watch it that you have more of a labor détente than you have labor peace. There always seems to be a lot of fighting going on between the union and the league. If you had a magic wand Mike, is there something that you would fix to sort of eliminate that? Or do you think that needs to be improved?

Mike Tannenbaum: Like, no agreement's perfect, but this CBA has done really well for the whole sport as a whole. And one thing I give our commissioner a lot of credit for that he's constantly talking about is making the game safer. I'm the father of a son who plays football, and I want him to play in a safe sport. And as the leader – it's not only in pro football, we've got a lot of responsibilities, but one of them is the colleges, high school and youth football are going to look at what we're doing. We're thought leaders.

And I think our commissioner has done a great job of talking about player safety, player health. Some of the rule changes that have been added are all for that, to make the game, which is a great game, better and safer. So I think there's been a lot of improvements in our game. And again, that's not to say that the CBA is perfect. But again, I think by and large it's been working.

Bob Wallace: Yes, I feel the same way you do. When I look at a football game and somebody's penalized for targeting, although I do think throwing a guy out of a game on the first targeting or when it's a bang, bang play and it's not a

malicious thought, I think that's a little harsh. But having watched my son play football, I have no problem protecting a defensive receiver or a defensive player in a position.

Talk about – Mike, what keeps you up at night? What makes Mike Tannenbaum wake up in the middle of the night, sit up in the bed and say, “Oh, god, I got to do that. Or what about this decision?”

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, as you know Bob, it's the things that come up unexpectedly. Unfortunately last year we had an injury to our starting quarterback on a non-contact play at practice. That was tough. In a sport where things are going to happen, that was a tough one. So those are the things that keep you up at night, the unforeseen things you can't predict that are going to happen. You take every reasonable precaution, and in a salary cap era, you try to have the best plan B you can have. But knowing that it's never going to be perfect.

And over the course of the season Bob, as we are just about to embark on 2018 regular season, a whole bunch of things are going to happen to a whole bunch of teams. It looks like the defending Super Bowl champs are going to start their back-up, which is probably not ideal for them. But they've done a great job of having the right depth of quarterback, and I think that's what makes our sport also so fun. Not only does it keep you up at night, but it just adds to the intrigue of what's going to happen next. And that's I think what adds to an incredibly interesting narrative throughout the season.

Bob Wallace: Right, I mean, I would imagine last year you could not have anticipated that you were going to have a hurricane that was going to cancel your first game or postpone your first game and then you'd play 16 on the road. Those are things that you can't really plan for, but they happen, and you just have to find a way to deal with them. What kind of tone did you try to set for your organization when those kind of unexpected things happened?

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, you really have to, again, lead by example and we had a great operations guy that handled a lot of the logistics Bob. And we just tried to be over communicative and make sure – obviously the health and well being and safety of our organization was paramount. And once we were able to get everybody stabilized and where they could be, then we got to turn our attention to football. And to have the game cancelled and go out to California, it was a very unusual dynamic. But every team is going to deal with certain things, but dealing with Hurricane Irma was pretty unique.

Bob Wallace: So Mike, a lot of people in your position, a lot of coaches always say, “I don’t read the media. I don’t read what’s in the newspapers.” I’m not going to ask you whether you read the newspapers or not. But you’re living life in a bubble. Every decision that you make is – especially in a big city like Miami, is being analyzed by two or three papers, sports talk radio. How do you deal with life in the bubble and making decisions? And do you think about what the reaction’s going to be to your fans when you’re doing these kind of things?

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, and I certainly probably feel it more from my kids, having a son and daughter. They’re going to hear about it. And again, I think a key thing is to go back to the process. Did we do our homework? Did we talk it out? Did we think about all the different permeations of it? Knowing that some of these decisions aren’t going to be popular and look, no one’s going to bat 1000. But we got to fall back on what we feel is a very strong, pragmatic approach to, here’s what we’re doing and here’s why we’re doing it. And as long as we do that and don’t cut corners, then you have to be convicted in your decisions. Knowing that no one’s going to get them all right, we’re going to make some mistakes and too, they’re not going to always be popular. But we’re not trying to win the popularity contest, and sometimes to get our message out on certain decisions when you’re moving on from popular players is not easy. But it’s part of our responsibility.

Bob Wallace: And you guys made some changes this year that were – you lost some popular players or lost some high paid players. Were those tough decisions for you to make? Or does it make it easier in the salary cap era?

Mike Tannenbaum: Absolutely, they were not always easy decisions Bob. But again, that comes with the territory, and we did what we thought was best for us. And we lost good players. We lost talented players. We lost players that had been here for a while. But we also felt really good about the players we replaced them with. And over the next 16 weeks that will all play out. And sometimes when you move on from one player, you're going to use the resources to extend a younger player that you don't want to lose. And there's a lot of different factors that may go into moving on from a player. And sometimes you can get that message out; other times it's going to take several months for your plan to unfold.

Bob Wallace: Mike, probably one of your most important jobs are managing those people below you, with your head coach and your general manager. Is there a philosophy that you have in managing those people to make sure that the personnel guy and the guy who's trying to win now are communicating, getting along, on the same page? We just saw in Oakland when they traded Khalil Mack, there seemed to be a little bit of a split in the front – the personnel guy or the GM and the head coach who's winning now.

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, the three of us get along great. They do a great job. They're hard workers. They're good people. So we spend a lot of time together. And again, I think it's just talking it out Bob and understanding, hey, this is what we said we want to be as an organization. These are the types of players we wanted. So as long as that's the target, let's stick to a good process. We know our process will yield more good results than bad. So talking that out, we just spend a lot of time doing that. And we really feel good about the people in the building. We feel the direction we're going as an organization and we're really excited to get the season started.

Bob Wallace: Amy Trask and I had a conversation about this. Amy, long time member of the Raiders front office. And we both said that three keys that we believed, were the three Cs, communicate, collaborate and cooperate, and that's the way a successful organization can get along. So talk about the 2018 season in a second. You guys are unfortunately in the same division as the latest, greatest dynasty, the New England Patriots. How is that?

Mike Tannenbaum: Yes, you know, it's a challenge. I've been competing with those guys for a number of years. They do a great job, Coach Belichick, Tom Brady, obviously an all time great. The standard and the bar is high, but if you get into this business, you're a competitor, and you want to compete against the best. So it's a challenge, but looking forward to it. And we play them in four weeks up there, and we'll be ready to go for that. Last year we played them one on one, they beat us up there. We beat them down here. But they've obviously done a great job for a long time Bob, and we have a lot of respect for them.

Bob Wallace: What will be a successful season for the Miami Dolphins?

Mike Tannenbaum: I never put a number on it except to say, we set a really high standard for ourselves here. We got to the play-offs two years ago, and we want to have a good year, a successful year. We'll just take it one game at a time.

Bob Wallace: So Mike, I didn't ask you about concussions. I didn't ask you about kneeling. You got to give me a number, twelve and four, ten and six?

Mike Tannenbaum: {Laughs}. I'll just say this. We just want to win a whole bunch of games so you and your son can go out in St. Louis and wear your Dolphin gear real proudly. How about that?

Bob Wallace: Okay, I'll take that. And let me tell you, I do wear my Dolphin gear. He keeps bringing me his shirts, which I don't fit in, but {laughs} I appreciate it. So Mike, thank you very much for taking the time. As I said at the introduction, you're

one of the smart guys in the league. You've done a great job. You've never been afraid to do something innovative or take a chance on something or make a statement. Don't really care what other people say, and I appreciate that, and I thank you for coming on After The Buzzer and wish you good luck this year.

Mike Tannenbaum: Thanks a lot Bob. Really appreciate it.

THE END