



# Zebra Your Edge Podcast

Hosts:

- **Adam Petrus, Business Development and Sales Lead, Sports & Entertainment, Zebra**
- **Hale Hentges, Former NFL Player and (Current) Vertical Account Manager, Sports & Entertainment, Zebra**

Guests:

- **Brandon (Cope) Copeland, Former NFL Linebacker and Current Entrepreneur, Philanthropist, Life Coach, Youth Mentor** (Learn more about Cope [here](#).)

## Transcript

**Adam**

And welcome back to Chalk Talk everyone. Zebra Nation...hello out there. I'm Adam Petrus...

**Hale**

And I'm Hale Hentges.

**Adam**

And we are excited to be back with you after a short hiatus. Hale, I can't believe that we're almost through the NFL season. It's as if we were just talking about the Super Bowl a few months back.

**Hale**

Yeah, man, it's gone by fast. What a season it's been. And we certainly have a lot of good football left to be played, but time does fly. You're right.

**Adam**

Yes, it certainly does. Time flies and certainly 2023 is gone. We've got ourselves a happy New Year. And so, yes, Happy New Year to you. Very excited for us to introduce our guests here today. But before I do that, you know, we've been on a little bit of a hiatus from the old Chalk Talk podcast with all of our listeners out there.

We do apologize, but one of the main reasons was is Hale and I have been grinding. We've got a day job. We were out there on planes, we're in hotels, we're in conferences, trade shows, meetings, dinners, breakfasts, you name it. And so just like many of the Zebra Nation, especially on the sales engineering, marketing, you name it, it's everybody's grinding.

It's just kind of what we do. But with that, Hale, this is a better time than any to say, "Congratulations!" I know you're just busy. You just wrapped up a very busy year in your focused channel account areas, but you are excited to announce that you've taken a new job. And I'm excited to welcome you to the sports and entertainment team.

So congratulations. And why don't you tell our listeners about your new role.

**Hale**

Yeah, thank you, Adam. I really appreciate that. And I'm fortunate to be another member of our North American sports and entertainment team, specifically on the retail team, very focused on hospitality, sports and entertainment accounts. So that's one thing along with Adam...I'm very focused on growing that sub vertical, and we have a lot of great momentum, great people on our team and just a lot of really great people who are focused on growing this fast growing vertical.

So with that being said, that's going to be my focus this year and it's something I'm really looking forward to...helping Adam continue to just grow our presence in sports and entertainment world.

**Adam**

Yes, indeed. And congratulations again, Hale. But let's get right into it. We have got ourselves a super duper guest today, and I guess it was about a year ago this time that we had the opportunity to catch up with Brandon Copeland. And Brandon is back with us and man, you retired from the NFL in August after 10 seasons and have since jumped into the league in at least four different businesses and philanthropic ventures. Brandon, how do you define retirement?

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**Brandon**

Yeah, man, getting bigger bags under the eyes and just chasing around after the kids. Yeah, no, retirement was short lived, so to speak. And it's been the ride of a lifetime. But as you mentioned, on August 21st, I officially announced my retirement from the NFL. And then two days later, I announced, you know we're building the players association for college athletes called Athletes.org.

So it's been a grind. It's been a hustle. But fortunately, the athletes have embraced us. They are running our organization, they're owners of our organization. And it's been a great, great transition from football.

**Adam**

That's awesome, man. We love what you're doing. Look forward to hearing more about it. And with that said, certainly, you know, two days later, after announcing the NFL retirement, I mean, you didn't waste any time rolling up your sleeves. But tell us, how has the adjustment been going from the playing field and team meetings, traveling, and watching the diet to now doing all the things that you're doing?

**Brandon**

Yeah, it's been tough like every other player that transitions from something that you've done - for me 23 years of my life - and you know I say "tough" and I'm a realistic optimist, I should say. And so as Jim Harbaugh and John Harbaugh say, you know, who's got it better than us? Nobody, right?

Like there's nobody that has it better than me. I'm extremely blessed. But the understanding and the evolution of like waking up and not having to go to work out, right, Like, dang, there is no fine if I'm 5 minutes late and understanding that, hey, you know, for the last year pretty much. I mean, I guess since school age, college sports, NFL, for the past 10 years, my life has been scheduled by somebody else, right?

Like a season/off season, when I have to report, you know, planning vacations with the missus now, like six months from now, just knowing, "Hey, we all will be free. We can do that, right?" Like, so there's just a number of different things. When I say tough, it's like, you know, also just kind of evolving and giving yourself permission to put yourself first to say no to people, to put guardrails on your life.

It's been very, very interesting. And again, I've evolved a lot over the past year and I'm learning from folks like yourselves and learning from Zebra and how you guys have built an amazing business and of scaling and operating and putting customer service first. And so again, it's been a whirlwind. It's been a whirlwind but a beautiful one.

**Hale**

Yeah, absolutely. Brandon And you know, I could certainly, you know, think about that as well from a retirement standpoint, you know, much like yourself, right? I had to adjust and find something new after many, many years of playing football. And it's something that's never easy. I always explain to people who ask, you know, it's kind of like you had your dream job, right?

Like what you always dreamed of was playing football from a very young age and taking that as far as you could. And you did. And many people don't get to do that. And so I always relate it to what's my next dream job, right? What is that going to look like? I got to find that.

And certainly you've done a great job of that and pouring your efforts and your time and your different philanthropic organizations and consulting programs and all the great things that you do. You certainly put in the energy and I think a lot of us ex-players will relate with that. And that's why so many of us, I think, have been our wheels a little bit and trying to figure out what is what that's going to be.

So it's great to hear that you're doing well and that you're paving that path and I know we've all struggled with that in our own way, so that's really great to hear.

**Brandon**

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate it. And I think, you know, one of the best things, you know, a lot of players have asked me and also a lot of people have assumed that, you know, because I was doing a lot of things off the field while playing, that it would just be smooth, easy transition. But again, you know, somebody asked you, "Hey, did you play football?" You know, I didn't shrink when I retired.

They're like "You play football?" And I'm like, "Nah man, not anymore." Right. It opens up a wound. And we ended up actually having a couple teams call during the year and I told them no. And that was its own process as well, too. But what I will say is waking up every morning, you know, the thing that football gives you, gives us, for some of us, is purpose, right?

Like it gives you something to wake up and chase after whether you were a kid chasing the bright lights and being up on that stage in that platform one day. And I think for all athletes and just people out there in general, the quicker you can identify your purpose, the quicker you can wake up and feel comfortable that you're chasing after something that matters to you.

And with all the different businesses and things that I go after, I am extremely blessed because I am. These are passions that I've found a way to monetize and these are passions that I've found a way to help other people with. And so again, find your self purpose as quickly as possible, and a lot of the other things will become easier or simpler.

### **Hale**

Awesome. Yeah. And it's great that you were able to, you know, kind of start doing a lot of these things while you were still playing and, you know, building your brand, like you said, as a life coach, a financial advisor, all these things that you do. I mean, thankfully, like they always preach to us whenever you're playing, it's like you got to get something set up.

You know, you really got to focus on what life is going to look like. You know, the next 40 years and what that's going to be like for you. So basically, you were able to do that. And I know it's a lifelong process, but that is great to hear you talk a little bit just about what some of the most passionate things that you do. That, you know, you really think that maybe...why were you able to find that niche for yourself while you were playing?

Who made that obvious to you or who put that in your head? Had you just always done that? Or I know whenever we were playing, you had talked a lot about that. And so I had to kind of think about, okay, I got to figure out like what I'm going to do after that. What made you think of that?

What motivated you?

### **Brandon**

Yeah, I'll give you a couple of things. So first, there's this guy right here. I'm not sure of folks can view it or not. So that's my grandfather. His name was Roy Helton. He played for 11 years in the NFL, 1965 to 1976. We just passed the anniversary of his death two days ago in 2019.

So two days and four years ago, January, 2019. But, you know, growing up where your hero happens to be an NFL player, happens to not really care about you as an NFL player, cares about you as a grandson - as his DNA - again, that just gave me a cheat code to a lot of things in life, really.

And when all of us come into the NFL, we're young. We are the strongest we've ever been. We're the best shape we've ever been. We are super humans in our minds. And we have to be to go out there and compete on Sunday. But when you can see your grandfather, who you can see life goes on after football, and you're going to have to figure out what you want to do beyond it, it's always sort of a natural reminder that there's something bigger to be done with your platform or there's more to life than just how many tackles you can make and how many sacks

you can have in a season. Not taking away from the experience on the football field, but he was huge and monumental in a lot of the major decisions I made from the college I decided to go to. He's the one who made me feel comfortable going to Penn. He always said, you know, Brandon, they can never take that away from you.

So, you know, go get the great education and if you're good enough, they'll come find you. And I think you're good enough. And I wouldn't lie to you, he always said. I wouldn't lie to you. Lying to you will be like lying to myself. And what good does that do for any of us? And so that was huge.

Having that perspective has been amazing for me. And then I think, you know, we talk about the different things that I chase or the passions I remember in high school or really getting recruited to go to high school and a coach talking to me about the great players that had come before me, these guys, Ambrose Wooden, Victor Abiamiri, ended up playing in the league.

These guys, they were greats. They came out of my high school, phenomenal players and phenomenal men. You know, they were great mentors of mine, and I remember being - I had never met them at the time, and I've considered myself a humble kid, but at that moment I was like - "Man, I'm going to be so good, you're going to forget about them."

I didn't say that to the coach, but that's what my mind did as just an athlete and a competitor. And I'm like, "Dang, if that's how I think, how long is my legacy gonna last for some tackles?" All right, well, but I'm going to play football. I love it. I love going out there and hitting people. But if I really want to be remembered, then I'm going to have to do something with a little more ripple effect, more impact, than just tackling people.

How awful would it be if people showed up for my funeral talking about highlights from games as opposed to what I really meant to them? And so that literally was seventh grade for me and mentally it was always like I got to use this platform as a means to an end. And what we really chase after is two things.

One is youth empowerment, youth development, and that's my family foundation: "Beyond the Basics." I don't think that I'm special. My wife, she's amazing. I love her to death. We don't think that we're special, right? You see, I framed that one up differently. I'm not going to say I don't think she's special. I'll be hurt out here. This will be the last podcast I do.

But we don't think we're special. We think that we are extremely ambitious. We work hard, but we've had amazing people in our lives who've showed us things. They've exposed us to great opportunities, great career paths, etc. And then we were able to put the work ethic in behind it to make it happen. We want to do that for as many people as possible.

Like I am just fortunate to be in the right place, right time. When my head coach walked past at Penn, walked past the the conference room, and I'm sitting in there just studying and he said, "Hey, man, would you be interested in a Wall Street internship?" Well, I never really thought about it. Right. Let's learn some more.

And how can I do that for other young people who deserve that opportunity? And then second, you know, obviously being an athlete and now chasing after this amazing opportunity to change lives with athletes, that all I just want to see...more athletes walk away from their sport with more to show for it than the memories.

Like if you can walk away from your sport with some money saved up and a bunch of great memories and some friends and some real lessons that that you can draw with you through the rest of your life, that's a beautiful thing. And what athletes.org is doing is helping the next generation of athletes maximize their income, amplify their voice.

And we've built a whole platform to give them on-demand support so that we can get the bad actors out of the space. We have free contract review, free background checks for college athletes, free second medical opinions. So we're trying to get rid of the excuse of, I didn't know. I didn't know what perpetuity meant. I didn't know I shouldn't sign

over 15 years of my net worth for this advance. We have firms who literally represent the NCAA and represent universities who are giving all of our college athletes through our platform free contract reviews.

#### **Adam**

Man, fantastic. You know, it's awesome to hear a person living with purpose. And certainly all that you're doing is a bigger, greater purpose not only for yourself and your family, but for our next generation. And thanks for going back and highlighting the influence that your grandfather had and his story and certainly our condolences after two years.

But it's great that you can continue to talk about him and the influence that he's had on you. And so I want to get into some of the here and now and some of the yesterday and all of us had the opportunity to see you on Netflix last year with the Buy My House. So we're curious to see how did some of those real estate endeavors turn out.

#### **Brandon**

Yeah, one, shout out to Buy My House. Shout out to the cast and crew of Buy My House. All of those are great friends and mentors of mine to this day. Yeah, that that was an amazing experience. And the follow ups with the different homeowners afterwards, I can't remember what we called them on the show. I can't remember.

It wasn't sharks. I have no idea. But the homeowners, afterwards, it's been amazing. It's been different iterations for the different businesses. I mean, excuse me, for the different couples and families and stuff like that. But some of them have been great stories, to be blunt... like sales and everything was easy...and others have been, hey, there's a little more behind the veil that we had to uncover, unfortunately.

So every home and process was different. But again, that was definitely a special time in my life and career.

#### **Adam**

Man, no doubt. It was fun to watch. It was. They did a great job. You're right. You had great castmates on the show. But it's interesting to hear kind of behind the scenes what it was like. And then also the fact, like any of us who are buying a house and doing the inspections and the walkthroughs and then figuring out, well, maybe there's a little more to the story here on this house.

#### **Brandon**

Yeah, yeah. No, it was I mean, you got the height of the real estate market, then you got people coming and pitching homes to, you know, a bunch of folks that they put on this pedestal. Right. And so that naturally had its own, you know, the negotiations were set up to be, "Whoa, these are some tough negotiations," right.

And so anyway, it was a it was a great time. It was a great conversation. And with a lot of folks, you know, when we shot that, it was maybe 15 days before training camp with the Falcons. So for me personally, like when we finished up shooting in New Mexico, we ended up where I had like four days to report the Falcons training camp.

So I was up at 4 a.m. training and then I'd go on set for 12 hours, then train afterwards and stuff like that. So my mind was just like all in a jumble. But what I learned in New Mexico is a lot of UFC fighters and stuff were out there, so I did a lot of UFC training that year, which was awesome.

I was trying not to get my tail whooped. I can't be coming to camp with a black eye. But again, just amazing experience all around and again, learning from some amazing, some of the great, cast members on there.

#### **Adam**

That's awesome.

**Hale**

Yeah. And I would definitely encourage everyone to go out and watch that if they haven't seen it. That's really an awesome program. I love some of the things that were highlighted during that and it's always good. It's very binge worthy. So kudos to you on that. And you know, let's talk a little bit and talk about Beyond the Basics. That was your first foundation, correct?

**Brandon**

Yes, it was my wife and I's family foundation.

**Hale**

Awesome. Awesome. Good deal. Would you just talk a little bit about what's growing and changing with that? I think there was a holiday shopping spree that you all did, so maybe fill in our listeners about that.

**Brandon**

Yeah, we just ended 2023 with what we call "A December to Remember." And this is an event that we started in 2018, so a little over five years ago now, I was a football player with the Jets at the time. Took 60 kids shopping for the holidays, got our teammates involved and you know, the competitive nature in me wanted to figure out, How do we grow this and how do we expand this?"

And what we did was the one positive thing about being a NFL journeyman, as they say, - you know, they put that journeyman tag on you like it's a negative thing, like you're not in the NFL - but being on all those different teams. I have friends from all over the league, so I decided to just reach out to these different friends and see, "Hey, would you be willing to do this in your city that same day?"

Would you be willing to do this? And since then, we've grown. We've almost given away over a million bucks over the last five years for the holidays for underprivileged and underserved kids. This past year, we just did 11 cities, 10 different states, over 20 NFL players involved along with their teams, and over \$100,000 given away to over 500 kids this year.

And again, it's been incredible. It's one of the best things that we do because every time you get there, why I got hooked, was the first year there was a young man who put on a jacket. This was in Jersey City, New Jersey. He put on a jacket. He was with the Covenant House, a homeless shelter for teenagers, and he was like, "Man, I don't have to be cold anymore." And I'm like, "Whoa." And all of the kids show up because they believe they're completing community service. So like, all these folks come here thinking they're doing community service for somebody else, and then we give them all a \$200 shopping spree each. And so this year we took some young people who had just lost parents with an organization down in Texas.

And we've taken single parents, we've taken in number of different types of categories of people. Again, it's just phenomenal. And to route this back to your original question...with Beyond the Basics, what we want to do is we want to help maximize young people's potential by introducing them to experiences and people and opportunities that can help change their trajectory and their exposure.

And so the December to Remember event doesn't necessarily fit that mold per se, but what it does do is it's a once in a lifetime experience and it makes a lot of young people say, "Hey, man, I would love to do this for somebody else one day." And the only ask that we have from all the people involved and the kids is like, "We don't want anything else from you, but just try to go put a smile on somebody else's face."

You don't have to pay for their toys. Just go ask them how they're doing. And we feel like if we can create this flywheel of good in the world that, hey, good things are going on, then, you know, we've got it good.

**Hale**

Absolutely amazing and really special time of year to do that. And, you know, I think a lot of companies, you know, kind of focus during this season of giving, too...to pour into their communities, invest in people, you know, give back. Do all these things that are really important. And, you know, it does seem like from time to time that we forget the need is year round. It's not seasona.

So talk a little bit about what you do all throughout the rest of the year to invest in the kids...to give back. You know, like you said, how do you sustain that year round?

**Brandon**

Absolutely. So what we typically do is we have our football camp, which is in the summer and A December to Remember is the way we end the year. And we show up in different places throughout the year. I'll talk about our football camp first, and also I'd be remiss if I didn't shout out Zebra for always just supporting us, rocking with us. You guys have been a partner of ours for, I want to say, almost four years now doing this and consistently supported through the pandemic and everything, always finding a way to support because you guys make it a priority to give back to the communities that you guys are in as well too. So again, we don't do this without collaboration.

So again, thank you to Zebra. We do our football camp and our name is Beyond the Basics. We don't want to do anything very, very simple at all. Right? And so with our football camp, really the last thing we care about is football. It's really a career exposure and development day we have here in Baltimore, Maryland, which is my hometown. We have things like every kid shows up and they have to submit their transcript before they show up and the prizes are awarded at the end of the day, based off the character that they showed throughout the day. You help a teammate up, you cheer people on, as well as your grades. And so now, it sounds like, "Man, it's a lot, right?"

But now, what would happen this year, is some little man pulled on my hoodie - well it wasn't a hoodie, it was a shirt. You know, it's a little hot in Baltimore in June. And he's like, "Hey, Mr. Copeland, like, I got all A's and B's this year. Can I get a prize?" To be honest with you, I don't know, kid. You know, we only have so many prizes. But I know that I've won because you come to me thinking that by getting A's and B's, you're going to get a potential prize. And so whether that's a little motivating factor to you throughout the year, I've done my job, our camp has done its job.

And so that means a lot to me. When the kids show up, they also have to submit what career path they're interested in. We have 120 volunteers at our camp alone, 300 participants plus. So now all the volunteers, whether they're in legal, whether they're in marketing, whether they're in education, they have a certain color wristband that matches up with the young people there. So now you have natural interactions and networking, and we create time throughout the camp at rest breaks, get the kids tired. Then you want to sit down, you want to take some water, and now allow those volunteers to actually start talking to the kids about what they actually do. Final thing that we've done is we have undercover police officers there.

Baltimore and police have had a long history of, let's call it what it is, "beef." Like it is what it is. And one of the things we started doing years ago was having Baltimore City police officers come there plain clothed, and they're just volunteers at the camp. At the end of the camp, you know, I do a little my little soapbox moment. I'm like, hey, if you're a police officer, why don't you stand up, raise your hand? And, you know, every single year kids are like, "Ohhh...you the whole time?!". But they have a new bond and new relationship because throughout the day, that was the person who was cheering you on, that's the person who was giving you water when you were tired, who congratulated you when you made a big catch.

And now our kids can go from our camp and hopefully start to spur good conversation and new relationships in their communities. And so, again, I love our football camp. I love our shop is free for the youth. We do other things throughout the year like feeding people around not only the holidays, but also just in emergency situations. We've given coats to people. We do that for schools. And now what we're focused on in 2024, now that I have a little more focus, we're working on building out our mentorship program and some scholarship programs for some of our participants.

### **Adam**

Man, that's fantastic. And it's really cool the fact that, Brandon, you're creating these opportunities for the next generation of boys and girls coming up. And certainly I love the example in Baltimore and the "Be More" there and with the undercover police officers and kind of putting that perspective in the mindset that we're all humans, right? We're doing different things and it's about treating people appropriately and not having misconceptions.

But also one of the things, you know, I've talked about in other times around fundraising and charities is that, you know, you need folks that are able to give some monetary money. You need folks that have the ability to donate toys or used goods, and then you need volunteers and then you need people that can want to be mentors. And it's like you're creating this subset in this culture where you get a little bit of everything. And so you've just developed a great team. And can you just kind of tell us about what how you and your wife and your team, how do you bring in and how do you raise that awareness to build a foundation like that?

### **Brandon**

Well, yeah, One, thank you for shouting out the team. We've been extremely blessed. I think one of the lessons that I've learned years ago, somebody said, "Hey, man, a lot of people want to do great things. They just need like a vessel to do it through or to do it with. So if you create the blueprint, people are going to show up, especially when they have a great time." And so that's the mindset that we take. We've done a lot of these things with just our friends, like our board for Beyond the Basics are a lot of my friends from college and teammates from college and some of my wife's friends, but they just happen to be doctors. And one just got sworn in as a Senator recently. And, you know, lawyers, etc. So it's really been a collaborative process and collaborative approach. What I would say is what we try to do is we try to make an event. It's actually a company value at athletes.org to call it "Win, win win." Everybody wins. Like if you come to our event, I want the participants to win. I want you as a volunteer to win and I want the organization to win. And when we do that, you have beautiful things come out of it. Like we've had folks leave our camp and get job opportunities because of just the natural networking there.

We recently had our first couple from our camp get married. They agreed to get married a couple weeks ago. They met at our camp on the football field. I'm like, "Hold up, what were ya'll doing? Ya'll were supposed to be watching kids, now." But all power to them. And we now have had kids who participated in our camp who now come back to volunteer at our camp as well, too. And what I'll say, Adam, is what we started doing years ago, not our first year we weren't ready.

Our second year though...what we've tried to do is implement a community service event at the camp, which sounds like this community service event within a community service event. So the way that worked the first few years was we had - we started this year too - with 250 book bags, 250 toiletry kits that were dispersed to homeless folks throughout the city of Baltimore and book bags to young families and people who needed the book bags.

We made all of the campers. When you came in, the first thing you did was split up into your groups. You get drafted when you come to our camp and you compete for time. Who gets it done first, the quickest, and that's the first prize given away. What this teaches - what we've eventually got to is a thousand book bags, a thousand toiletry kits, big piles at the end of it that just get distributed in their own city - with this teaches young people like you just mentioned is that it's not always about money. Sometimes it's about time. Okay. I can spend my time organizing these things. There is no excuse not to give back then. So that's really what the emphasis is. And I think that that's why people come back and love it, love it, love it. Now, one of the challenges I'm working on this year, full disclosure, is I'm trying to figure out how I can get the parents more involved and engaged.

So we're working with trying to put together some financial literacy workshops and business workshops just for the parents. And the other caveat we have, what we do...I went to a private high school called Gilman. So we have the admissions officers there and we've had some campers who's now gotten introduced to Gilman and decided to go as a result of it.

Right? We're trying to set it up so that other schools can have that opportunity and access as well to not the private versus public is any there's any weight in it. Again, it's just exposure. How can we use this 4 to 6 hours of your life as a way that can create a monumental change in the way you think, way you operate with people, and hopefully bring good energy to those conversations as a result of seeing the way we operate with each other. And then also really in the framework of your life, whether that be career exposure to schools and other things.

### **Adam**

Wow. Now it's impressive what you have built, what your team is doing and of course the impact that you're having on your campers and the people attending your seminars. It's very impressive. And, you know, Zebra's been is very proud to be a small part in what we can do to help you and get the word out Thrilled that you're on the show today and you've given our listeners a lot to think about as they go into the New Year with some New Year resolutions to be better people, how they can have an impact, starting with themselves to their family, to their community, to the next generation.

So thanks for sharing all those things. We've got to get to the tail end of our show here, but we need talks of football. You know, we can't not have a little bit of conversation about some football right now. So we're we're through the regular season. We're into the playoffs. So just, you know, being a former NFL player, first year kind of first year out and you had an opportunity to come back. But you're a busy guy. You got family life, you got foundations, you got balls in the air. How much football do you watch during the course of the year? And then what I've got to hear is, do you have any comments you want to give us about the officiating this year?

### **Brandon**

I always got some comments about officiating and well, they can't fine me this year. So in terms of watching football, that's something that we always watch. And even if we're keeping it on in the background, it's really important. I have two boys, a four year old and a two year old. It's really important that that I introduce them to the game in a way that that they can love and respect. And to be quite honest with you - all right, like again, Baltimore kid - I started with the Baltimore Ravens as an undrafted free agent in 2013. I ended with the Baltimore Ravens 2023. I have lived my dream 10 times over. It doesn't really get too much better than that. If I wouldn't have done that, I probably would be a little more salty, right?

I'll probably be like, maybe not watching football. They should have signed me, right? Now I can root for them. I'm going to be happy for them, all of that stuff. So again, it's been great. I'm excited. One: healthy Lamar Jackson. I know you didn't ask this, for the predictions, but healthy Lamar. Come on. I mean. Hale, you know me. Missing Andrews. Missing Mark, right? But again, the Baltimore Ravens, I mean, well-coached team, amazing organization as well, too. From top to bottom. There's no detail, no stone left unturned in that organization. So I'm extremely excited to see what they do, that byweek, I believe they're number one. So they got the bye. That's that's the scary thing. That byweek sometimes can be the little Catch 22 for some teams.

And hopefully, I mean, Harbaugh knows how to keep them working to avoid any lulls. So I hope they come out on top in terms of officiating. Man, I'll tell you, the Lions, you know, I played three games with the Lions. For those who don't know, \the year before I got there, there was another controversial call between the Cowboys and Lions. Brandon Pettigrew was playing tight end at that point, had a controversial call against him. And it hurt to see. It definitely hurts to see. It's a part of the game, though. That type of call, though, makes it a little more frustrating. It's a little easier to deal with like a holding, an in-game type of penalty, a bad PI call or something like that. But like, you know, an ineligible call, that hurts. And you got to feel it for Detroit. I mean, Detroit, that fanbase is phenomenal. That is literally one of the most amazing fan bases in the world, and they deserve a winner. I'm so happy for them right now. And to have that happen, I'm like, man, that's tough.

### **Hale**

So that was tough.

### **Brandon**

Yeah, Yeah, absolutely.

### **Hale**

Absolutely awesome. Well, I certainly Adam, I don't know about you, but I certainly like the Ravens-49ers matchup potentially in the Super Bowl. I think that could be a very realistic one. And certainly I think the Ravens get the the secret sauce to go all the way and Lamar truly elevated his game and the defense is playing lights out so those two teams look hot to me right now and I think they're the frontrunners not just because they're the number one seeds, but they've played well all year.

### **Adam**

I would only say, and just because, you know, he's a former teammate of yours, but "if you Flacco around you find out." Yeah.

### **Hale**

There you go.

### **Adam**

It should be exciting. It's going to be an exciting playoffs. And you know, it's funny to you like the officiating, you know Brandon, because we do the Next Gen Stats technology through our RFID program, we got the tag inside the ball and people are always like, "Hey, you know how can you guys help make the game, the officiating, you know, enhanced or improved?"

And certainly there's some things that are happening, whereas like on punts, we can see the ball when it crosses the out of bounds line instead of the arbitrary referee kind of going like, "This is where I saw it go out." But we can actually say, well, actually it did go out at the 37th and a half yard line versus the 37 yard line.

But yeah, the human element is always going to be there in the game. I think that's also what makes football "football for us. Instant replay is great and when it's blatant, should be corrected. But that's Troy Vincent and his team who will continue to make some evolution there in the game. But Brandon can't thank you enough for being on the show today, giving us your time.

This was phenomenal. Again, you gave our listeners a lot to listen to and to reflect upon, but also I think guys like Hale and I, looking at all that you're doing for the next generation, the busy calendar that you keep, the family man that you are, keep going, man, Keep doing it.

**Brandon**

Yes. Thank you again. Thank you both for having me. It's always a pleasure to get a chance to sit down and have a conversation with you both. Again, truly, truly appreciate you not only taking the time to highlight good, but also for you and Zebra for backing good as well, too, because that does not go unnoticed by me and especially the kids that we're able to help as a result of it as well.

**Hale**

Awesome. Good to hear that.

**Adam**

Thank you for that. All right. Well, I think it's time for us to sign off. Brandon, thanks again for being on. Zebra Nation, keep working hard, keep grinding, delivering a performance edge. Hale, I'll see you in a meeting real soon.

**Hale**

Sounds good, Adam. Thanks, Brandon. We appreciate the time.

**Adam**

Thank you. Cheers. Take care.



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