



Insightful Players Offer Their Personal Stories to Inspire Others

By TOM KING Staff Writer, Nashua Telegraph

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Chrissy Carew had a very candid conversation a year or two ago with an executive of a National Football League team she would rather not name.

"This is great, I love it," he told her after reviewing her proposal to improve morale and communication in his organization, in effect changing its entire culture. "But I can't pass this in, I won't have a job."

Another team stopped working with her last spring. "But what do you think of my vision?" she said, asking about her vision that is in part to enhance professional athletes as good role models for youths.

"Just all right," came the reply.

"I'll never forget that day as long as I live," Carew said. "I was devastated."

Lately, she got an unsolicited e-mail from the National Football League which addressed a book she's working on involving the obstacles some NFL players have had to overcome "Super Bowl of Your Life".

Rather than offer support for her efforts, the e-mail told her she couldn't use the title.

"That's all right," she said. "I'm OK with it."

Indeed, Chrissy Carew is forging on.

She's used to those kind of obstacles, but it appears she may be making progress in her vision – she has developed a website, insightfulplayer.com, that highlights the lives and also the charitable works of current and former NFLers.

"How Insightful Player came about, was going through the back door," she said. "Make them an offer they can't refuse. Do feature stories on their great players."

And then it dawned on her to contact teams' public relations departments instead and now she has 22 current and former players featured and many more will be added. All the work is done from her home and office here.



How did this all come about?

"I wanted to work with the NFL, but I was thinking 'What right do I have to do that, it's an all-boys club, etc.," she said. "It started to haunt me. I love football. Love football. And I know it had a lot to do with my upbringing."

Her father, Walter, was a football and baseball coach in Concord, Mass., so she was always around sports. And, as she developed her business coaching enterprise, she'd watch NFL games with a different eye.

"I was always listening to the players, I would watch the games every Sunday and say 'Oh, I would love to give them some PR (public relations) coaching,'" Carew said. "It's too bad. I felt frustrated they weren't representing themselves well enough. They could speak better, concerning the interviews."

Actually, the first team she reached out to was the Patriots, writing a letter to head coach Bill Belichick with some motivational ideas. She got a letter back thanking her, but no thanks. "But it was nicely done," she said.

And eventually, Carew's focus changed.

"I was really frustrated that we needed role models, it just affected me," she said. "I was starting to worry about the kids, that there weren't many role models, one disappointment after the other."

So then she "went back to the drawing board" two years ago. She met with an NFL attorney in New York who worked in the league's human resources department. It was suggested she reach out to all the executives, mainly player development people, for all 32 NFL teams.

"Little by little I started talking to them, but some were hard to reach, as you could imagine," she said. "I wanted to coach the players to become better role models for better results on and off the field."

There was an interest, and she did talk with some teams by phone. The most interest was showed by the Redskins, Browns and Seahawks, among others.

But finally, a breakthrough occurred on the player end once she talked to the PR people, as agents and agencies came flocking. Her first subject ended up being former Cowboy great Roger Staubach. Another Hall of Famer, current Patriots executive Andre Tippett is another. Some current players include the Saints' Usama Young, former Patriots Heath Evans, Ben Watson and Jarvis Green, the Giants' Danny Clark and the Bears' Rashied Davis. Again, the list is 22 and growing.



"I wanted really good guys," she told the teams. "If you have to talk them into it, they're not Insightful Players ... I want guys who would really love to inspire kids. Who do you have?"

Her first online feature postings were on April 1, when she launched the site. She's even more determined, looking to find the antithesis to, say, the Steelers' Ben Roethlisberger.

"They're all great guys," she says of the players she's talked about. "I feel that way about all of them."

What is Carew getting out of what is basically her own corporation now, Insightful Player LLC? Not money. She's looking for sponsorships, so there could be some profit down the road.

"But I haven't made five cents," she says. "I'm driven by my vision of what I really want – to have every teacher in America to have these stories in school curriculum to help kids to learn. ... I'm a catalyst for (the players') stories. I really focus on the obstacles they've overcome and the wisdom they've gained as a result of that."

For example, the Bears' Davis had his father murdered at 8 years old, and literally dodged bullets growing up. Green talked to her about his days of working just to support his mother while in high school. Former Eagle Kevin Reilly overcame cancer and subsequent amputation to continue leading a normal active life.

And she's in discussions with the National Education Association to incorporate her work. One might think the current bad-boy image NFL players are developing might cause many to flock to her. It's inspired Carew to try to see that the good gets as much if not more publicity than the bad.

Her ultimate goal? Get the players out to tell their stories to various youth venues. Perhaps increase this so that high school athletes are telling their stories. And eventually it will all come together in a book.

"The NFL may have the biggest stage in the world," she said. "And it's under-utilized."

"We talk about the negative stuff. Why can't we talk about these guys here? I think now, more than ever, the general public is craving these stories. Everyone's depressed. Where's my next job, where's my next paycheck. Well, these guys have some tips for you. They've been through the bowels of hell, some of them. And they want to encourage people not to give up."

Which is why Carew considers them insightful players.



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