

PROTECTING YOUR POSSIBILITIES PODCAST WITH LUKE FEDLAM

Episode 60: Giving thanks | Dec. 1, 2021

The following is a transcription of the audio podcast recording. It is largely accurate but in some cases it is incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages or transcription errors.

Luke: I'm sports attorney Luke Fedlam, and welcome to the Protecting Your Possibilities podcast. Each conversation we focus on sharing information and having conversations around how athletes can best educate and protect themselves or their life outside of their sports.

Thank you so much for tuning into the Protecting Your Possibilities podcast. I'm your host, Luke Fedlam. And I'm excited for this episode. I know I always say that I know, I know. I say it all the time. But this one I'm really excited about because it's just about giving thanks.

This past week, we celebrated Thanksgiving, and we're going into this holiday season. And oftentimes during the holiday season, we can get caught up in the hustle and bustle of life, of year end, of work, and trying to get everything done that we possibly can before the holidays, and holidays oftentimes can be a stressful time for so many people. But one of my favorite holidays is Thanksgiving. Now, in my house, it's really about food, family, fellowship, and just having fun. I know that's a lot of F's. But that's really what it is, and in homes across the country, that's really what Thanksgiving is. But it's also a moment of reflection for us. And we talk about the things that we are thankful for. And I thought that this would be a great episode to really talk about what I'm thankful for, and more from a professional perspective.

Obviously, it goes without saying, personally, I'm thankful for my friends and my family and all that comes with that. But I think professionally, it's important sometimes to acknowledge the things that we're thankful for. And I say this all the time, I truly believe that I have one of the best jobs on the planet. I get to protect and educate athletes. And to me, that is everything to be able to help athletes at all levels, to be set up for success outside of their sport. That's a big deal. And I don't take it for granted, I am thankful.

So three things that I want to share with you today that I'm thankful about. And I think that this episode can serve as a bit of a reset. If you're familiar with Clubhouse, the social app that was kind of taken the world by storm in the early part of 2021 - Clubhouse, it's an app where you can get on and you can have conversation about various topics, enter different rooms about various topics, and it's just the audio of people talking live about different topics. And one of the things that they always say is it's important to reset the room. Right? Which is, so if someone comes in, and they haven't been listening from the beginning, every so often you need to reset so that they can understand kind of what the conversation is, who the speakers are, and what what's really going on with the discussion. And I think as it relates to my podcast, especially as we're starting to come into years end, I think it's important to take a bit of a reset of this podcast and why we have it. And I think that we can do that in the context of the things that I'm thankful for.

So the first thing that I'm thankful for, is the fact that I get to work with athletes at all levels. My job as a non-agent, sports attorney, allows me to focus on really two things that are so critically

important to me. Education and protection. Oftentimes, protection comes through education. The opportunity that I have every single day, to work with athletes at all levels, to educate them on the business of sports that's happening around them, so that ultimately they can be protected and have a positive impact on themselves, their families and their communities. To me, that's everything. I'm so incredibly thankful.

Now, I know that I work hard. I know that I have years of experience and putting in effort to do this work. But I don't take it for granted. I am thankful for the opportunity that I have, whether it's through Porter Wright in the legal practice that we have of working with athletes, or whether it's through Anomaly Sports, and the education work that we get to do with athletes across the country. It's meaningful, it's impactful. I have the opportunity to work with so many different companies, especially because of name, image and likeness and the changes that we've seen here in college sports. But I've gotten to work with so many different companies in this space. And I'm so happy to be one of the few and to really to partner with Team Altemus out of Philly, you've heard me [mention them](#) on here a few times, to be able to partner with them as really, maybe one of the only firms or companies that solely, solely focused on education. The education of athletes at all levels. That's incredible. That's powerful. That's how we see a positive impact in this space.

So often there are many people who have thought about the challenges of name, image and likeness, the hurdles that may come with it. The ways in which athletes might be taken advantage of, right? And we're working against that every single day. We're working to educate athletes on topics like taxes, understanding contracts, managing money through name, image and likeness. Understanding how do I make decisions in life? Due diligence? What is it and why is that important to me?

But at the pro level to being able to work with both teams, and we get to, you know, have the opportunity to work with numerous NFL teams this year talking about things like decision making, talking around topics of due diligence and understanding how to select advisors and manage the advisors around you. But being able to work with athletes at all levels, to me is just truly a gift. It's a joy in my life.

It's funny, I feel like every year, you know, I continue to get older, but because of the athletes that we work with, they continue to stay relatively the same age, right? I mean, there's always a new class of athletes that are entering the professional sports realm, that are entering the college sports realm. And they stay within that same kind of age range, and I feel like every day I look in the mirror, and my gray hairs are getting brighter and brighter. But that's the joy, right? The joy is being able to bring my experience, bring our expertise to athletes, so that they can not be taken advantage of and truly be set up for success.

When I look at how much college sports and professional sports have changed over the last decade, it's incredible. I mean, think about this, I mean, honestly think about this about 15 years ago, we didn't have social media, right? 15 years ago, we didn't really have social media as we know it today, being able to, you know, just get on your phone and share your story with the world. So much has changed. The empowerment of athletes has become so acute in that they are able to instantly without filters share exactly how they feel; be able to make a positive impact directly on the communities and constituencies that follow them and then engage with them. So to be able to focus on educating and protecting athletes, I'm thankful for the work that I get to do every single day with athletes at all levels.

I'm also thankful for the work that I get to do with parents of athletes. And this comes in a couple different forms. And the reason that this is so important to me, and the reason that I'm thankful for it, is number one, I'm a parent. Now, my kids are, they're still in elementary school, so I don't I am not dealing with some of the sports issues that my clients and their parents are facing. But I have the opportunity to really understand how deeply a parent wants to have their son or daughter protected, and not taken advantage of, but yet not always know where they can go to get unbiased, unfiltered, independent, objective and qualified information about various topics.

So often parents talk about and they share with me stories about how the only people that have been quote unquote, educating them have been people that have a direct or vested impact in the outcome of the decision that the parents or family is making. Man, think about that. Right? So if you're, if you're the parent of a college student athlete, then you know, you have a lot of engagement with the coaching staff, with the university during the recruiting process. And then once your son or daughter is recruited, then it's up to the individual school and whether or not they're engaging actively with the parents of their student athletes.

And to be fair, their obligation, their duty is to prepare the student athlete, right. But we know when we think about the numerous changes that are happening in college sports, from, you know, the growth and emergence of eSports, to name, image and likeness and those changes, the transfer portal. And the one time transfer exemption, right? Potential sports, gambling and betting in college sports. I mean, there's so many changes coming, that parents are, are thirsty for information. They want knowledge; they want education; they want to know more. And so to be able to work with parents on so many levels, it just it really warms my heart to be able to do it every day.

So sometimes I'm working with our legal clients and their parents, because that particular professional athlete may be in the middle of their season. And so, I'm working with that parent or the parents of a college student athlete, and I'm working and engaging with them, to help them navigate this this brave new world, if you will, but also have the joy and the honor to be a co-Executive Director along with Courtney Scott out of Kontent Incubator in Atlanta, Georgia, to be able to work with the College Basketball Parents Association. And we've done an episode in the past, feel free to go back and [check it out](#), but the whole reason that we started it, again, was to try to help parents who have a lot of questions who really want access to that unbiased qualified information.

So we've been able to bring together some experts and leaders in the college basketball space, from medical professionals, to leaders from the NCAA, to leaders from coaching associations, to mental health and wellness experts. Because those are the things that that parents of college basketball players want to hear about. And those are the people that they want to hear from. And so if we can use our network, and we can use our platform to be able to create audience with those individuals and those experts, to be able to educate these parents, it's great. And just as this little secret, little side note, we're called the College Basketball Parents Association, but there's such good information. I've talked to parents who are parents of football players and others who have joined because there's no cost to join, who have joined, because they just want access to the information in the conversation. So you know, you can learn more about it at thecbpa.org. That's thecbpa.org, you can check it out. But again, the point of me bringing this up is because I am thankful for the opportunity to work with parents at all levels. I just last week had conversations with parents of elite high school basketball players. And we know the name, image and likeness changes that are coming at the high school level. New York is a state that just authorized high school students in New York to be able to earn compensation off of name, image and likeness. We're going to see this continue to spread throughout the country at

different high school athletic associations over time, and parents are going to need education. They're going to need information on how to help their son or daughter navigate this new space. So the for the work that I get to do every single day with parents of athletes, I'm thankful.

And then finally, I have to share the fact that I'm thankful to be able to work with colleges and universities across the country. As I mentioned earlier, through Anomaly Sports Group, and oftentimes in partnership with Team Altemus, we're able to work with colleges and universities, of all different sizes, in different divisions, in different conferences, in different parts of the country, to help educate their student athletes, their coaching staff, and their athletic administrative staff.

That to me is outstanding. That excites me every single time to be able to share information. And I've talked about student athletes, but let's take it to the level of coaches and athletic administrators. Coaches and athletic administrators are often the first people, if not for parents, they're usually the first people that student athletes will go and talk to when they have a question. Sometimes they'll go to the athletic administrators and coaches before their parents, sometimes after, but they're one of the top two places that athletes will go for information. So to be able to help coaches and athletic administrators understand the business side of what we're experiencing now in college sports is awesome. It's incredible.

You know, good friend, and partner in all of this, Courtney Altemus, oftentimes shares with student athletes that this is your name, your image and your likeness, and you want to protect it. And I've spoken with so many coaches, who care deeply about protecting their student athletes from being taken advantage of. And so many individuals in athletic departments across the country who want to make sure that their student athletes successfully navigate name, image and likeness. You know, I've already talked about the student athlete aspect. But anytime we're able to go in and talk with coaches and talk with athletic administrators, and see when coaches come in and sit in on these sessions with their student athletes, so that they can learn so that they can be a more effective or more educated advisor, when student athletes have questions. That's awesome.

Because here's, here's what we know, we know that coaches and athletic administrators, school officials are not able to tell a student athlete in college, whether or not they should do a deal or not do a deal when it comes to name, image and likeness. But what they can do is help answer questions. Help athletes understand how to make decisions. Reinforce processes, that we teach student athletes, so that they can remember them in those moments. So that they can understand and be that resource that if a student athlete has a question about how something particularly works, or what should they be looking out for, that a coach or an athletic administrator can help them just understand. Because ultimately, what are we trying to do here? You've heard me get fired up and get on my soapbox talking about the importance of education and how I truly believe that real-world, practical education is an ethical imperative for athletes at all levels. So students, student athletes in particular, are at school so that they can get an education but that education can't be limited solely to the academic education but how has to also be that real world education.

And I share with student athletes so frequently that even if you're not going to participate in name, image and likeness, the education that you're going to receive around decision making, around due diligence, and understanding money, and taxes, and contracts, these things are going to help you in life, regardless of whether you're getting involved in name, image and likeness. That is real-world, practical education. And when we can impart that in coaches, and

athletic departments, and the institutions themselves so that they can be an additional, more a better equipped educator for their student athletes. For that, I am thankful.

So for all of those of you who know me, and those who just happen to listen to the podcast, and kind of know me through the podcast, you know that I get fired up. You know, that I am energetic, and I really am truly passionate about this work that I get to do. And I don't use that word passion lightly. I mean it very deeply. I am passionate about this work. I'm thankful that I get to do this work. So in this period of giving thanks, in this holiday season, I just thought it was important to kind of reset the conversation. So that as you're listening to these podcast episodes, as you're sharing these episodes, in this podcast with others in your network, they have the opportunity to understand why every other week, we release an episode that is focused on protecting the possibilities of athletes.

This is why we do it. We do it because we care so deeply for this work, and want to protect the possibilities that athletes have, that entrepreneurs have, that business owners have. That's why we do this work. And that's why we use this medium to share this information with you.

Finally, my last final thought in this period of Thanksgiving, I have to give thanks to our entire marketing team, who helps make sure that this podcast actually happens. Special shout out - Christina Miller for always staying on top of me to make sure that I meet my deadline, so that we can post this information and get it out to all of you. So again, Christina, entire marketing team here at Porter Wright, thank you so much for all that you do to make this podcast a reality.

And finally, to you my listeners - thank you. Thank you for taking the time to listen, thank you for your feedback. Thank you for sharing this podcast with others. And thank you for just reaching out and giving me your comments and your feedback and the things that you want to hear. Again, my heart is full during this period of Thanksgiving. I encourage you to take a moment and reflect on those things in your life both personally and professionally, that you're thankful for. And let's just enjoy this moment. And let's go into this new year of 2022. Excited with all the possibilities that we have. Until the next time. Thank you so much, and have a great day.

Disclaimer: Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP offers this content for informational purposes only, as a service for our clients and friends. The content of this publication is not intended as legal advice for any purpose, and you should not consider it as such. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the firm as to any particular matter, or those of its clients, please consult an attorney for specific advice regarding your particular situation.