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## CoSIDA Continuing Education Session: Hot Topics in Sports PR: An NFL Perspective

Interview with:

**PETER JOHN-BAPTISTE, New York Giants  
Vice President of Communications**

**PATRICK SMYTH, Denver Broncos Executive  
Director of Media Relations**

**Moderator: PETE MORIS, University of  
Oklahoma Assistant AD/Communications**

PETE MORIS: Good morning, everybody. Thanks for joining us today. Corry Rush from the National Football League got called away on league matters and can't be joining us. But we are pleased to have Patrick Smyth from the Denver Broncos and Peter John-Baptiste from the New York Giants joining us.

We'll kick it off, maybe just start with Peter in New York. Just give us a little quick snippet of your background, where you went to school, how you got to the Giants.

PETER JOHN-BAPTISTE: Happy to do that. First off, thanks for joining us on this call. It's always great to have the opportunity to talk to people who deal with the same issues as us. We can learn from each other.

I've been with the New York football Giants since 1977. Man, it feels like yesterday. But I

joined the organization as an intern coming from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, majored there in sports management. We know the only way to get into this business is to start as an intern.

I worked with community and media relations, did some good things, improved myself early on in my career when my boss went out on maternity leave. That's how I got in. I moved around within the organization a little bit, starting off in CR and PR, and now I'm solely responsible for communications.

PETE MORIS: And, Patrick, why don't you do the same.

PATRICK SMYTH: Sure thing. Again, I thank everyone for participating on this call. It's a pleasure to be part of it. I want to take a moment to thank all the sports information contacts throughout collegiate athletics for all the hard work you do with players and student help, developing them. It really shows. Probably on behalf of everyone in the NFL, I want to take a moment to let you know how much we appreciate that.

In terms of my background, I was fortunate to learn four years in the University of Florida sports information office working with John Humenik, as well as Steve McClain working on a variety of sports as a student volunteer in Gainesville.

I also worked with Jeff Kamis with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers during their Super Bowl season. I had the opportunity to work with the Philadelphia Flyers as an intern. Did some various opportunities to prepare myself as best as possible.

I've been with the Broncos, this is going on my 10th season. I came to Denver a month after graduating college in May 2004, started as a graduate assist and have been able to learn from some of the best in the business, like Jim Saccomano, been generous with the trust they've shown in me.

PETE MORIS: Just to give everybody a



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sense of my background, I'm a Division III guy. I also worked at the University of Florida with John Humenik. Did an internship with the Indianapolis Colts. Was 17 years with the Kansas City Chiefs before coming to the University of Oklahoma last year.

I think one of the things on today's call that we definitely wanted to hit is social media. I may defer to Patrick a little bit in terms of getting your leadership engaged. John Elway is certainly a high-profile football individual, but is active on Twitter as an executive with the Broncos.

Patrick, maybe give us a snapshot of how you've helped John get on Twitter and be relevant on Twitter, walking that fine line between being overly zealous in breaking news, but also maybe throwing a nice bone to your fans every once in a while.

PATRICK SMYTH: Sure. I think in terms of John Elway, I think you hear the phrase, It starts at the top often. But in John's case, it truly does start at the top. The commitment he has shown for us to reconnect with our fans, and I think the understanding that he has of the emotional investment even more so in the financial and monetary type investment, the emotional connection they have with the team is something he understood. He spent 16 years as a player, so he completely comprehended the culture of the Denver Broncos and the standing in the community.

Really, when he was named to his position prior to the start of 2011 season, we were at a lower point for us in terms of our relationship with our fans. In talking with John, we really just sat down with him and explained the values of being where our fans are.

The reality is, I think the way we consume news has changed a little. We don't search for news anymore; news finds us. We wanted to be where our fans are, that's on social media. It's a mobile-friendly platform. It's great for sports in the immediacy of it and you're able to reach out to your fans.

We started John on Twitter. It's been terrific. It's enabled us to connect with our fans directly in such a personal way without any sort of filter whatsoever. Whether that's breaking news, which we've done. We've used his Twitter feed in times of crisis to communicate with our fans instantly.

The thing that John really understands is what we're trying to do is continue to build a

platform for him when an opportunity arises we're truly able to use it, we're able to meet 750,000 fans with the click of a button. You have to be ready for that and we wanted to continue to build that platform.

For us, the most important thing is the commitment from the top from John Elway to be successful not only with the social media, but also to have a synergy among every platform, including the traditional press outlets for our credibility and our reach.

PETE MORIS: That's great.

Pete, in terms of what you guys do in New York, I think it's something pretty common in the NFL, but maybe not so much in the collegiate ranks. Talk about how you go about messaging with your organizations. Now with OTAs starting, give us a snapshot of what some important messages are that you're sharing with your players and coaches and how you go about getting an entire football team hopefully on the same page as much as possible.

PETER JOHN-BAPTISTE: I can try to do that, Pete. That's pretty good.

It's tough with what we all deal with right now because there's so much out there. It seems like there's just more and more media starving for content on the National Football League, really football all together.

It's real interesting how things have changed so rapidly in the last couple years. It's like everything we do is an event. I remember not too long ago when none of our media really cared about OTAs or even like a rookie mini camp. There wasn't a lot of coverage.

Now the public is thirsty for information. It's so important to make sure that everyone in your organization is coordinated and knows exactly what's going on in the news, knows exactly what they may be asked about.

Obviously our off-season, the theme of our off-season has kind of been Victor Cruz and the fact that we're negotiating a contract with him. We know any time media comes into our locker room or our players make appearances, in the old days you only had to worry about the media coming into the locker room. Now every time one of our players makes an appearance at a charity event, our beat writers are waiting outside for them to see if they can find out to see what they are thinking



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about Victor Cruz not being around, about his contract.

What we try to do internally to manage all that is we keep this document that everyone in our department can update. Whenever there's something in the newspapers, something in the media anywhere that relates to our players, we're all updating this document.

This document is ready at a moment's notice for when anyone in our organization, player or management, are going to make any kind of public appearance. We have information right there updated on what they may be asked, but also how other people in our organization have responded to those different questions.

We do that in a number of ways. We'll break that document down by position group or by player, whether it relates to our general manager, head coach, or even a position coach.

Any time they're going to interact with the media, we have this document. We either sit down or email, go through pretty much anything that they could face so we know everyone is on the same page and not be caught off guard with what they might be asked.

PETE MORIS: That's an excellent idea. I think particularly in New York, definitely everything you do is scrutinized. I don't think that's necessarily different than every time an individual, whether they're on a campus at the University of Oklahoma, Alabama, any high-profile institution faces.

One thing you mentioned, your head coach or your GM, I'll throw it out to both of you guys, how important is it and how do you prepare your head coach to maybe set the tone? My experience has been the head coach in a lot of instances can set the tone he wants with the media. A lot of times the players will follow suit with that. I'll open it up to you guys on how instrumental it is to get your head coach prepared so he can set the tone for the players.

PATRICK SMYTH: I think it's important to have a consistent message. As a general rule, we believe here at the Broncos, you're more effective with multiple messengers carrying a consistent theme. With that said, there's got to be a lot of flexibility with it. For us, there's issues, John Elway, he'll set the tone on free agency, a contract situation, maybe our needs heading into the draft. John will set the tone for that and others will follow his lead.

There's other topics, maybe playing time of a particular player, depth chart issue, where John Fox is the one out in front and John Elway follows up.

There's also situations with Peyton Manning, his recovery, his rehabilitation progress, where he'll set the tone on that, and it's John Elway and John Fox that follow his lead and defer to him on those kinds of things.

Then on global-type issues, you'll have your owner or president set the tone for everyone. As Peter mentioned in the situation with the Giants, there's a lot of situations, even at the university level, where it's our responsibility in PR to communicate internally among those areas to make sure that everyone is on the same page, that there are no surprises.

Quite frankly, if we're doing our job, that should never happen.

PETER JOHN-BAPTISTE: Patrick, you kind of hit the nail on the head when you're talking about what we think our jobs are specifically. To me there's nothing more important than making sure everyone within your organization has a communicated message. That's what our job really is as PR folks are communication folks.

We need to make sure when Tom Coughlin goes out there and is talking at the combine about our draft, our season, anything, we want to make sure when Jerry Reese, our GM, goes out there the next day, he knows exactly what Tom has said so the message is coordinated and our fans are looking at this organization as, Okay, we know the GM and head coach are on the same page so good things are going to happen, these two people can work together well.

PETE MORIS: Let me take another topic here, media training. I know in the NFL that's something that is mandatory for not only your rookies, but your entire squad, heading into training camp. That's something I brought with me here to Oklahoma. I made sure before we started football season last year that I gave a similar presentation to what we did in the NFL. Basically half an hour to kind of run through some issues that would come up, some kind of dos and don'ts, particularly with social media.

In our particular situation, our rule is you can tweet until you abuse it or you do something detrimental to the team or you talk about team

business. I'm kind of interested from your perspective how you guys handle media training and what maybe some of the things that you've done that resonate with players.

PETER JOHN-BAPTISTE: I'll tell you this, media training never ends for us. Yeah, we work with our rookies and we'll do group presentations with them twice in spring, then we do a media presentation with the entire team during training camp that probably takes 45 minutes to an hour.

We've done it ourselves. We've also hired professional media trainers that have come in and done a great job.

All that stuff is good. But to me the real work and training comes in season when you're working with your guys one-on-one. I think for us, I think our players probably learn better when they're not in that room in a big group during training camp where maybe they're more focused on making the team, learning their playbook, than they are about how to deal with the media.

I always say this media training for us, it goes on all year long, really every day. Anytime you have an interaction with your guys, you're training them because you don't want them to make mistakes and you want to gain their trust because you want them to come to you and ask you when they have a question about a certain situation.

PATRICK SMYTH: To follow up on what Peter said, it's fascinating for all of us how the changing media landscape has affected our job, something as simple as our yearly presentations, daily counsel with players on media training.

We tell our players that right now there's a perfect storm out there with the way the landscape has changed. You have the traditional media declining, they're fighting to compete and survive and thrive. They need to drive traffic. They're going to do whatever they can to get headlines and page clicks.

Then you have the introduction of social media, which you have great opportunity and great risk with that for players. And then in addition you also have the fact that now these Smartphones that everyone has are loaded weapons. It no longer takes a journalist to break news, it could be anyone who snaps an incriminating photo and forwards that on and it goes viral.

We hit on all of those areas. To be honest, I believe here in Denver, we're to the point where we spend more time training our players on social

media and the ongoing daily education than we do in the traditional media.

I think it's a different message we have. When we talk to our team about the traditional media, the reality is maybe out of the 90 guys in the room, there's maybe 30 to 40 that truly need strategic-type counsel and messaging where they're out front every day, your starters, key players. Whereas with social media, every single person in that room, from the first guy on the roster, to the 90th guy, executive, coach, everyone in the organization, has to know how to handle those issues. It's almost a different message that you take.

To follow up on what Peter said, we do a similar setup as the New York Giants where we have several presentations. We did an hour talk with our rookies on the first day they were here, which we kind of felt like it was important for them their very first day as a professional to hit them with this while they're paying attention and they're engaged, to overstate the importance of it. We also have other talks. We've never brought in a professional media trainer here. I always felt like we're better off bringing a prominent player in and reinforce the message so they can connect with our guys.

It's every single day, ongoing interaction, some players multiple times a day, it's the positive reinforcement, it's the negative correction, bringing examples of current news topics where you're talking to your players and they may not know you're educating them, but you're talking about what a guy on another team said, the reaction, the fact that the team has had to issue a statement, the young player has had to apologize. It's the daily maintenance.

Really no different than a coach on the football field. I believe that if your players can trust you, they believe you can make them better, they will respond.

PETE MORIS: That's good.  
Peter, I did have one question come in.

**Q. Can you expand on the internal document you referenced earlier? Would that be message points, comments on a particular topic your GM or coach has made?**

PETER JOHN-BAPTISTE: The document, it's a combination of all that. We want to have the

hot-button issues on this document. It could be something related to, like I was talking about earlier, the Victor Cruz contract, what our owners have said when they've been asked about Victor, what our GM has said, what our coach and players have said when asked about him.

There's other stuff that goes on this document, as well, whether we're talking about same sex marriages. Obviously this off-season, a gay player coming out on a football team. All that stuff is on that document.

It really just serves as like a reminder, so everyone in our department kind of keeps up on what the issues are. Even when we're coming in contact with our players, we can refer to this document, refresh them on anything that might be up and out there.

PETE MORIS: I did like Patrick's suggestion about having a former player maybe serve as a role model. My next question would be, in a college or pro locker room, there's always going to be a handful of players in the locker room who can influence their teammates. My question is, certainly, Patrick, Peyton Manning is a guy who you can depend onto deliver a message. How do you go about cultivating an atmosphere in a locker room where maybe some of your younger players can follow the example or follow the message of a veteran player without them feeling like you're putting words in my mouth? Talk about that dynamic a little.

PATRICK SMYTH: Sure. It's one of those things we'll never tell our players what to say. I believe a lot of players, in particular those who are younger, they want to be prepared. They want to know what topics they're going to face. We talk about PR all the time. I think the most important PR is the internal PR. The one thing we tell our players is, Anytime you tweet or Facebook or do an interview, think about every single person in the building, your teammates, position coaches, the general manager, the head coach, the owner, think of them and the line accordingly.

With some of our younger players, I've found they like to know, whether it's a rookie draft choice at quarterback who is meeting the press, we'll tell him some questions the media may ask of him, and we'll also say, This is what Peyton has said on the topic, this is what your offensive coordinator has said on the topic. You're putting them in a situation where they're comfortable.

The one thing we try to tell our players is we work for the team with the media, not for the media with the team. We're here with our best interests in mind, and we're going to put you in a position no different than your coach on the football field. We want you to have success off the field, and part of that is handling it the right way.

It's no different than our players would have a scouting report and maybe even a game plan in terms of some key messages they want to communicate where it takes a little bit of discipline and consistency and savvy to communicate those things where you can become very good at it if you educate them and they're empowered and prepared to succeed in those settings.

PETER JOHN-BAPTISTE: That's good stuff. To echo what you've been saying, our thoughts are exactly the same, especially when it comes to having our rookies look up to our veterans. Our media presentation to them was a week ago. The slides consisted of what does Justin Tuck think about the media, what does Eli think about the media, deal with these type of questions.

Our second media presentation to our rookies will be in a week. We'll have some of our veteran players come in and talk about the importance of acting like a professional when they're dealing with the media. Also they'll tell some stories about some mistakes they've made so these rookie players can learn from their mistakes.

I mean, it's important to have a good group of veterans that you can rely on to help convey the message and show the rookies the way when it comes to dealing with the media or social media.

One of our slides during our rookie presentation was, These are the veteran Twitter accounts you need to follow so you can learn how these guys conduct themselves on social media. It serves as a great example to them. They're new to the team. They're looking for guidance, just like Patrick said, and they want to know veterans that can lead them in the right direction, so we try to provide that for all of them. We've had great assistance by our veterans to help in that as well.

To me the key in developing relationships with any of our players, you got to show them and let them understand that you're looking out for their best interests, and their best interests is in the team's best interests. Once you get them to figure

that out and understand that, like Patrick said, we're working for them, but we work with the media, you can gain their respect and they understand we're all in this together.

PETE MORIS: That's a great point. Nice segue on social media. I have a question on the blog. How do you monitor your players on social media? I know here in Oklahoma we have an outside vendor we use, I'll get a report every day, they monitor, football, men's and women's basketball, some of our other marquee student-athletes in some other sports. Just curious what you guys do. Is there any sort of formal media monitoring program that you institute?

PATRICK SMYTH: In terms of the monitoring on social media for the Broncos, we've always approached that, that it's our responsibility, our staff's responsibility to be as vigilant as possible.

There are a lot of great firms out there. Unless there's a firm that's going to call me at 10:00 in the evening with regard to an issue, tell me the resulting tone out there, how to handle it, other situations like it, I believe that our staff is better off, our organization is better off being thorough in that area internally.

It requires a little more heavy lifting. But I think in so many of these examples out there, we've had our own here, so many issues on social media start as a little spark that isn't handled the right way immediately or in the appropriate manner. It wasn't caught in time or you didn't act fast enough.

We've had occasions here where it could be 10:00, 11:00 at night, I see something that's bad, I will contact the player immediately. I'll call them and tell them how to handle it. We've avoided several self-inflicted wounds by being as aggressive as we've been.

I think there was a time you could wait a day to handle something. You see a guy post something inappropriate. I'll deal with that in the morning. In the world we live in now, if you wait till the morning, when you pull into that parking spot, there's a CNN truck waiting for commentary.

You have to be very thorough. Good and bad, our players know we're always watching them. We positively reinforce, we work on correcting some of their issues. It does require a little more work.

The thing that I really like to do, it's helped us in particular through crises, is taking advantage

of not only the search function on Twitter, where regularly throughout the day I'm typing in Elway, Manning, our owner Pat Bowlen, Broncos, media, key topics, I'm able to see all the chatter.

We had a situation with a contract issue with a player where I was able to see doing that, that a national writer had talked to an agent involved in this matter, and that affected our whole strategy in terms of John Elway's aggressiveness in dealing with it.

There's also several apps out there that monitor every social media platform available, Twitter, Facebook, all the blogs, where you're able to type in key phrases. It requires a little bit more legwork on our end, but I would never want to feel like I'm asleep at the wheel and relying on someone else in the event of an issue.

PETER JOHN-BAPTISTE: Here at the Giants, we're pretty much in the same boat. We monitor everything within our department. You're so right about the fact you got to be so vigilant. You got to be aggressive to clean things up. To me, it's a negative, but it's also a positive with social media.

Yeah, something can get out there and be bad, put the organization or put the player in a bad light. But you can clean that thing up so quickly when there's a mistake that's made that sometimes the impact just isn't that great because you've worked fast and cleaned it up so quickly.

PATRICK SMYTH: To follow up on what Peter said, I absolutely agree. As any of us at the college level or NFL, if 10 years ago we would stand up in front of our team and hold up a little device and say, Gentlemen, I'd like you to be on this device 24/7, I want you to connect with our fans daily, not only on football issues, but maybe you went to a nice restaurant, saw a movie, I want you to have a personal relationship with our fans. Many would ask, What are you going to pay us to do it?

There's a lot of chatter out there on colleges, whether some universities, coaches banning teams from using social media. I couldn't disagree more, just my opinion, at the college level. Part of the development is to teach these individuals to prepare them for their professional careers, whether it's in athletics or other areas.

The reality is they're going to have to know how to use this. I feel you're better off empowering

them and educating them because the good far outweighs the negative. Sure, you'll have an issue every now and again, but if you address those very aggressively, work with your players, they become the most valuable part of your PR organization and become the face of or organization.

PETE MORIS: That's a great point. To me, I've had head coaches at various levels ask me, Hey, would you allow your guys to tweet, would you shut it down? To me the message is, if you shut it down, that means you don't trust your student-athletes or players. To me that's definitely the wrong signal. So I definitely think you're spot on about that.

The other thing that I'm kind of always putting out there. I don't care if it's our marketing guy, I don't care if it's somebody in our department, I don't care if it's a member of the media, we've got a pretty good system here as well that if somebody sees something on social media or something out there, let me know. I may not see it myself, but let me know so we can go ahead and, as Peter said, nip it in the bud as soon as possible. Make me aware of it now when you see it as opposed to the next morning when we can't fix it.

We have a good question here on the blog.

**Q. What sort of cooling-off period, or is there any in the NFL, in terms of postgame guys on social media?**

PETE MORIS: We had a situation in Kansas City where after a game a guy wasn't happy with how many times he touched the ball, may have not been in the greatest state of mind, started tweeting out some stuff that he later deleted, but the next day had to answer to. What sort of counsel or policies do you have in terms of a cooling-off period?

PATRICK SMYTH: The NFL policy that they've implemented is players are unable to tweet until after their traditional media responsibilities are met postgame.

As you mentioned, the cooling-off period, sometimes in social media there is no period. We had a situation this past year where we played the Cleveland Browns, we beat them at home late in the year. One of their prominent players who has an incredible image, the first thing he did, he went to his locker, pull out your phone, see your messages, there was a lot of really angry

comments from some Browns fans. He ends up lashing out at the fans. The Cleveland paper writes a big deal on it. He's forced to apologize.

But the flipside I guess of social media, there's a slide we show our players, Blake Griffin, the NBA player, he sent out a tweet. He said, The good thing about social media is you can say whatever you want. The bad thing about social media is you can say whatever you want.

On those kinds of situations, we tell them to really ignore the noise. Obviously take care of all your press responsibilities. Understand, if you're going to be on social media, it's terrific, but you have to handle all of that outside chatter.

You use the phrase 'social media.' The reality is it's almost anti-social media because you have some fans, 15 years ago, if they wanted to voice their opinion on something, they would have to take the time to write a letter, ship it to the team, maybe they'd have to call into a sports talk radio station, wait on hold for 15 minutes, talk to a producer, have their question screened, maybe have the opportunity to go on the air.

Now anyone from the comfort of their home can fire a missile at our players.

If you're going to give attention to anyone, give attention to those that are positive. Sometimes guys will retweet a negative comment, engage with fans. All you are doing is elevating them to a level they don't need to be at and giving them a platform they don't deserve.

PETE MORIS: One thing I'm curious about is what sort of counsel, we've talked a little bit about Twitter, but what sort of counsel do you give on Facebook? We had an instance in Kansas City where we were getting ready for a big game against the other team that plays in New York, and we had a third-string quarterback who suddenly got pressed into the lineup. The media in New York found some pictures on his Facebook page from college that weren't particularly flattering. The counsel that we've given guys over the years is you don't have to be a friend to everybody on Facebook. Make sure you know what's on your Facebook page, make sure you know how to use your privacy settings.

PETER JOHN-BAPTISTE: It's pretty much what you've just said. Twitter and Facebook, we pretty much tell our players, understand who you're representing. You're a professional now.



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You're representing a lot more people than just yourself.

Like Patrick was saying earlier, think about your audience and think about who you're speaking to. Really, if you wouldn't be comfortable saying what you're saying on Facebook in the middle of a locker room with all of your teammates surrounding you, your coaches surrounding you, then don't say it. If you wouldn't be comfortable with your mom or your sister seeing a picture of you on Facebook, then really don't post it.

We also tell them, if there's stuff you got to get off your Facebook page that you had when you were younger, go ahead and delete it. Really, you're a professional now. The media up here, they're going to find that stuff. They're going to be looking for that stuff. Who knows what can happen with you in a certain situation in the future.

So you really just got to be really careful about anything you post. Instagram is the same thing. I talked to them about Instagram, too. Photos, there's more evidence to a photo than something you may say. We always stress being very careful with all those social media platforms.

**PATRICK SMYTH:** We also tell our players, the only privacy setting you ever need to know about social media is nothing is private on social media. You can have a private account. We saw a fellow on the Knicks last year tweet out a direct message to a fan that was an inappropriate slur. He was fined \$50,000 by the NBA. This was just a private-type exchange.

As Peter said, the one thing we tell our rookies the first time we visit with them, Gentlemen, if you have anything on your social media feeds that you have the slightest question about, I encourage you audit and clean the account, we are available to help you do that. A few of our players listened to us. The thing we also stress to them, it's not only your comments you're being judged on, it's who you follow.

Sometimes our players, with Twitter if you click on the 'discover' tab, you can see those who are on your timeline. We have fans watching who they follow making sure it's an appropriate alignment for the right image you want to place. Your Avatar, your biography description, who you retweet, reply to. There was an English Premiere League soccer player who was fined for replying to a racist-type comment.

It's the full picture, that global awareness that really you're wearing your jersey 24/7 now. It's not just for those three hours every Sunday.

**PETE MORIS:** Great stuff, guys.

Let me wrap with this final question, then we'll get you back to your grind. Both of you have quarterbacks by the name of Manning. I'm curious for the folks out there, with individuals like that who have a volume of requests every day that you cannot possibly accommodate from the media, how do you go about prioritizing those requests? Maybe in a situation where there's something that they don't really want to do, but it's one they really need to do, walk us through that process of how you handle the media for the Manning brothers.

**PETER JOHN-BAPTISTE:** I bet it's different between me and Patrick because the brothers are a little bit different. I'll tell you about Eli first.

Obviously we get a ton of requests for him. Eli and I have been working together so long, we have a pretty good relationship. I have a good idea of what's important to him, what he wants to do, what he needs to do.

For the most part, anything I get I pretty much want to let him know about because I wouldn't want someone to somehow catch up with him or catch up with his agent and then maybe like, Yeah, I brought this request to PR, they said no. I wouldn't want Eli to be questioned about it and it not even go past his desk. I try to get pretty much everything in front of him.

A lot of times I'll say, E, just so you know, I've gotten these requests, we're going to say no to them. He'll say, Fine.

It's about knowing him, developing a rapport with him, like you would with any of your star players.

When there's something that really needs to get done, you just got to convince him and explain why it's important for him, why it's important for the league. For the most part he'll pretty much say, Yes.

What's funny, sometimes Patrick and I, we'll get Manning family requests. It's weird, sometimes they go to Patrick first, sometimes to me first. The media outlet, whoever it may be, they're trying to get one of the brothers to say yes first so they can go to the other and say Eli or Peyton has agreed to this.

**PATRICK SMYTH:** Exactly. Like Peter said, every player's different, every market is different, every season is different. Everyone is at

different stages in their career. There's no one size fits all with any player.

In terms of Peyton, the way we've approached his media requests, because the volume of requests are so enormous, he would love to do every single request, but this is a situation where truly there are not enough hours in the day.

In terms of his regular press schedule, the first priority is our partnership obligations. No different than the college level, the network, anything from a network that is doing our game, whether it's a pregame sit-down interview on CBS with Shannon Sharpe, a production interview when he's going to spend 30 minutes with Jim Nantz and Phil Simms, beyond that, Peyton will do a once-a-week group availability every Wednesday, then spend some time with our beat writer, maybe some national visitors.

We try to schedule everything on the same day. There are some days, we had a day with Peyton two days ago where he did three separate 15-plus-minute interviews that we did back-to-back-to-back. That's how he prefers it.

As Peter said with Eli, it's similar with Peyton, is he does like to know the majority of the requests. You form a relationship with a player, you understand what he likes, what he doesn't like. There's some requests that you decline without even visiting with him as to not take away from his preparation. There's other ones where you're going to sit with him, present him a list of 10 different requests, and you decide to do two or three of them.

In terms of convincing Peyton, he's such a pro, he's such a savvy and refined, this has seldom happened. On occasion with players, one thing that I will emphasize to them with any request, is the fact that it gives the media any benefit whatsoever is a coincidence. It's great they're going to say we're great for providing this key player, but the reality is we're doing it because it benefits us, and that's the most important thing.

The last thing I'd say on Peyton in terms of how he handles the media, the example he sets for our players, we'll tell our team, we've all heard the phrase that you should never point fingers. We'll tell our team that it's okay to point fingers. When things are good, you point them out. When they're bad, you use the word 'I' and take the responsibility. He epitomizes that. That's a great example for the rest of our team and organization.

PETE MORIS: Excellent. Gentlemen, I appreciate very much. Couldn't agree more with the many points you've made today. Thank you for joining us. Again, Patrick and Peter, thanks so much for sharing your insight with us today and best of luck this season.

PETER JOHN-BAPTISTE: Thank you, Pete.

PATRICK SMYTH: Thanks, Pete.

PETE MORIS: Thank you, everybody. Take care.

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