

**Michael Brian Tannenbaum**

*Assistant General Manager/  
Director of Personnel, New York Jets  
Class of 1987*



Michael Brian Tannenbaum remembers Needham High School in the mid 1980s as having a vibrant and active student body which takes pride in the school. Receiving two varsity letters in Basketball and two varsity letters in Football, Michael was certainly part of that great activity. He remembers the invaluable lessons of the importance of teamwork and overcoming adversity he learned from his coaches (Mr. Evers, Mr. Dennett, Mr. Welch, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Freitas, and Mr. Johan) and credits his experience in athletics at Needham High as the inspiration for pursuing his greatly successful career in Sports. Moreover, Michael remembers Bob Evers in particular as a Basketball coach who demanded discipline without raising his voice or changing his demeanor--a trait Michael admires to this day.

One thing Michael regrets about his time spent here at Needham High is that he may have taken his education for granted, not realizing how special this school is until after he was off to college. Michael credits his time at NHS as a tremendous factor in his success in the National Football League because the NFL is comprised of people from all different walks of life. Michael believes that he got his foundation here in Needham on how to work with people from varied backgrounds.

While here at Needham High School, Mark Beane, one of Michael's football teammates and friends passed away. From this terrible loss Michael learned how precious life is and not to take anything, including health, for granted. Michael credits this experience as the most important life experience he has had.

Dedicated to a career in sports, Michael became the youngest Assistant General Manager in the NFL at 32 years old. His success has come with the kind of hard work and dedication one might expect from an NFL quarterback. Michael graduated from the University of Massachusetts with a B.B.A. in 1991. Four years later he graduated from Tulane Law School with his J.D.. Within two years from graduating law school, Michael became the Assistant G.M. of the Jets, negotiating and budgeting a \$71,000,000 salary cap.

Michael rose from his work as a Player Personnel Assistant and Contract Researcher for the Cleveland Browns in 1995. The following year he had the same position for the New Orleans Saints and also

assisted in contract negotiations. The very next year he began working for the Jets which shows a rocketing ascent in his career, something he would have never thought possible when he was in high school.

Though the amazing trajectory of his career is relatively recent and he is quite young in his career, Michael believes wholeheartedly in the benefits of giving back to the community. He volunteered for the Salvation Army after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. He is a volunteer player for the Harlem Chess Club, a nice combination of philanthropy and personal interests. He has also recently volunteered to help emotionally challenged adults for the Boltwood projects. These acts of giving back do not include all the things he does for the New York Jets philanthropic endeavors. For example, Michael is on the Board of Directors of the CFM foundation, a regional nonprofit that enables lower income youths to become more involved in sports as a way of improving all-around performance. Michael is an extraordinary example of what it means to be a good citizen.

NHS is not the only one to recognize his remarkable career; The University of Massachusetts awarded Michael the Distinguished Young Alumnus Award in 1998. Michael is often asked to travel to schools and speak to youth groups about his job and his career path. Needham High School is honored to welcome him home to receive this Distinguished Career Award. Michael was not only the youngest Assistant G.M. in NFL history, he is also the youngest person to receive the Distinguished Career Award. Michael says humbly that nothing gives him greater pleasure than to come home to Needham to speak to students about his experience living his American dream. Needham High School is honored to have him back.

M.H.