

WHERE TO

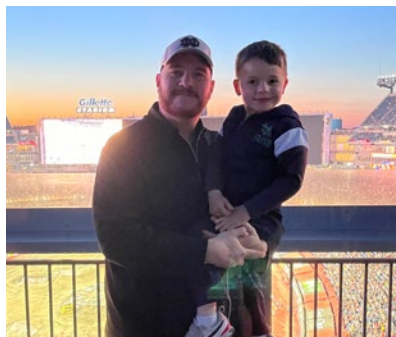
A resource dedicated to student-athletes
and their Life after Notre Dame.



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A MESSAGE FOR FORMER STUDENT-ATHLETES: KNOW THYSELF

By Dan Stevenson (ND '05)



In preparation for your life after sports, it's vital to perform due diligence on yourself: as you refine your résumé and practice interview techniques, you have to consider who you are. As athletes, we curate habits that allow us to chase a championship and break records and, inadvertently, also create the foundation for success on the field or in the boardroom with skills like resilience, determination, team-focus, and coach-ability. The skills are yours alone to put forward as you seize the opportunities coming your way and are the secret to finding your success.

AN INDEPENDENT SPIRIT

I've always had a strong sense of self and independence. I'm from the suburbs of Chicago, the third of six boys raised by a single mom, which I'm certain shapes a fair amount of my story. I'm fourteen years older than my youngest brother and saw that my mother had a lot to juggle and so I tried to develop a sense of independence early in life.

As you can imagine with six boys in the mix, competition ruled all. Interestingly, even though I played football at Notre Dame and was drafted by the Patriots, I wasn't a huge sports person. I simply wanted to be the best, whether at school or in the skate park. I call it a *Seabiscuit mentality*. If I saw someone next to me doing more reps, I needed to outwork them.

My father was also an offensive lineman who suffered his own career-ending injuries trying to chase the dream. He knew football wouldn't last forever but a great education and strong network does. I chose Notre Dame on his advice and guidance. Once I got there, I felt at home around like-minded people. Notre Dame had much to offer off the field - as an intellectually curious person, I took advantage of extra classes that fostered my love for learning and opportunities to be involved in the Irish community.

Notre Dame was a transformational experience learning and competing, which prepared me for the NFL. During my fourth year I had my second shoulder surgery which my doctor told me was essential for simple quality-of-life. I knew it was time to hang up my cleats and build a career outside the NFL.

A COMPETITIVE NATURE

What skills did I build from years of education, training, and competing? I've played for more than 10 coaches throughout my football career, so I learned how to adapt - I could pick up on people's motivations and goals and apply my strengths. I also had a leg up because during off-seasons, I focused on building my network and it would later open doors for me. This is how I met Jack Shields, Sr., and when he was starting Shields Health Solutions, he had me in mind. I knew I was a great fit for his innovative, high-tech health care company. I've been there since day one, and a bonus is my connection to Project LAND.

Determination, hard work, and commitment to my education allowed me to succeed at Notre Dame and then reach the NFL. When my football career ended, I channeled my competitive nature and applied my skills to my new role at Shields. Originally enrolling at Notre Dame as a pre-med student, I never thought I'd build a software solution or pursue a path in Information Technology, but the qualities instilled in me as an athlete and in my life have seen me through this off-the-field success, and I am very proud.

This is me. Now, I'll ask you: Who are you? Project LAND can help reveal the answer. You've built the skills and qualities from sports that empower you to accomplish so much. It may be an opportunity that's never crossed your mind, but be open - there's something out there for you. When you find it, go for it with all your being.

**“We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”**

- Aristotle

Dan Stevenson (ND '05), seen with son Whitt at Gillette Stadium, serves as a Project LAND Class Representative. Born in Barrington, Illinois, Dan played offensive line at the University of Notre Dame, where he earned a Guardian of the Year Award as a top lineman; was a four-time selection to the Leadership Committee and a two-time All-Independent selection; and in high school was named a Parade Magazine All-American and a Tom Lemming ESPN All-American. Dan was an NFL lineman for three years, selected in the 6th round by the Patriots, and played for the Dolphins and Texans before suffering a career-ending shoulder injury. Dan was recently promoted to Senior Vice President of Enterprise Technology at Shields Health Solutions, where he developed a transformative patient CRM software platform recognized as the leading solution for specialty pharmacy and care coordination.

Newsletter image courtesy of Hunters Race on Unsplash.