



**BY JOE FAVORITO**  
NEWJERSEYNEWSROOM.COM  
**ON N.J. SPORTS MARKETING**

Princeton University has given us the athletic success of a Senator (Bill Bradley) and a Superman (Dean Cain) and counts scores of business professionals, ranging from President Woodrow Wilson and Malcolm Forbes, from every field among its alumni. However only one event, set up by a Princeton alumnus, turns the focus of the sports business world to Old Nassau every first Friday of December.

The event is the Princeton Sports Symposium, sponsored by the Leverage Agency, and run by Tigers alumnus Chris Chaney. This past Friday, for the fourth straight year, the event brought a unique mix of industry veterans from around the globe with students from over 25 universities for a day of discussion about best practices and experiences from the new (social media) to the traditional (The Olympics).

Yes, there are many quality events where industry veterans gather from time to time, run by groups like The Sports Business Journal or the National Sports Marketing Network. However, this symposium is one of the few that is run by peers who have a feel for what young people entering the business would want to hear about in a setting that is a bit nontraditional — and thus lures many established names from around the world to the campus for this one-day of discussions on best practices, job hunting, rising stars and brand development.

Within the jam-packed schedule, attendees heard from people like the UFL's (16W Marketing head and Princeton alum) Frank Vuono on how the new league can actually grow as a business, former head of Anheuser Busch sports marketing (now running the successful consulting Ponturo Management Group) Tony Ponturo on what works for a brand, and former World Series of Poker Commissioner Jeffrey Pollack on what made that sport into a global

phenomenon.

For those looking to figure out how to make sense of social media and digital sports, there was Chris Russo, the head of Fantasy Sports Ventures, or Chris Lencheski, the owner of the Quad City Mallards talking about how his team uses twitter to aggregate people for events with sponsors.

Those interested in TV heard from VERSUS' Mark Fein or those with a law interest got to listen to Nets General Counsel Jeff Gewertz.

The panel moderators included the host of the popular blog The Big Lead, Jason McIntyre, and Forbes.com's Tom VanRiper, who were able to bring a media perspective into the discussions, which ranged from how cricket could be a viable sport in the United States to why green initiatives and sports philanthropy are proper ways to get a return on investment for brands.

Whether you were in an established business or looking to transition into the field from other areas, the day was a solid mix of discussion and networking in a geographic location that made it accessible to the entire Northeast corridor. The event also brought to light the large amount of businesses, from the pharma industry to technology firms, all based in New Jersey that have a hand in making sports into a growing, global business.

Now Princeton has never embraced sports marketing as a curriculum either on the undergraduate or graduate level, as many schools have. In New Jersey alone, FDU, Rutgers and Montclair State all offer some form of sports management programs, but among the Ivies only Columbia has taken the step to embrace the business as an education platform. Will that change in the future? There are no indications that it will, but for one day a year, the hallowed halls of Princeton became the centerpiece for sports discussion and development.

**Joe Favorito** has over 23 years of strategic communications/marketing, business development and public relations expertise in sports, entertainment, brand building, media training, television, athletic administration and business. Visit him at [JoeFavorito.com](http://JoeFavorito.com).

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