

# REACHING OUT



Jesse Rosenfeld  
Executive VP, to  
Mitchell at his firm.



Ron Mitchell, (right) is founder and CEO of the AlumniAthlete Network.



## Ex-college hoopsters help athletes chart their careers

By ROBERTA C. YAFIE

**D**espite the hoopla and big money thrown into U.S. college sports, most of the players will never see multi-million-dollar pro contracts and be left to develop new careers and contacts.

That's where AlumniAthlete Network founder and CEO Ronald Mitchell, and top deputy Jesse Rosenfeld step in.

Under the aegis of Alumni Sports LLC, they've teamed up with corporate partners, colleges and universities across the country to offer a Wall Street internship program and career development workshops; create the Women's AlumniAthlete Network and its first Financial Boot Camp last summer in Manhattan; launch a mentoring

program; develop turnkey technology solutions for athletic departments to increase donations as well as mobilize alumni and a career center for former and current student athletes.

The corporate combine invites top-scholar athletes to New York City to interview with Fortune 500 companies. The Minority Scholars program is aimed at high-achieving undergraduates. Next on the agenda: a headhunting service.

"Instead of representing companies, we're representing people. It's very personal," Rosenfeld says of the 15,000 active members.

"We want to be the defining resource for corporations to reach this target market," adds Mitchell. "We also want to be a

life-long support network. Our strategy is not to be Monster."

Mitchell said he tapped into his Wall Street contacts — pitching all the banks telling them that his team can find the people "with a 3.7 GPA without the cronyism."

So far, the Wall Street internship program has a 90 percent success rate and has been especially effective placing women on the trading floor.

Many executives involved in the programs were student athletes, lending considerable leverage for growth. The mentoring program allows companies to sponsor mentors.

This summer, 75 alumni will be working on Wall Street, and Mitchell knows them all by name. "Ours is a niche business. It's not about owning the world," he says. After the boot camp, 54 of the 55 women said they were likely to go into investment banking. "That's what Wall Street wants to hear."

Alumni Sports makes its

money from fees paid by its 15 core corporate partners — led by UBS and including Target, Morgan Stanley and Merrill Lynch — and this year Mitchell expects to crack seven figures.

A two-time captain and All-Ivy selection from Harvard, Mitchell was a principal at Provender Capital Group LLC, a \$150 million private equity group. The 1999 Ivy League Alumni Challenge, a charity game at Chelsea Piers' Basketball City, was his launching pad. That's where he met Rosenfeld, whose Princeton team lost to Brown in the finals. They started talking and started a business.

Now the duo is creating on-campus summer programs and seeking university and corporate sponsors. It's a tough sell, they agree, especially to Division I schools that expect their athletes to be training for the coming season.

"We bring our own program," Rosenfeld explains. "It makes branding more meaningful."