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New York Divorce and Family Law Blog

[Marriage Takes a Hit in NFL- Higher than Average Divorce Rates](#)

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With training camps open and the pre-season about to begin, the Times reports that [60 to 80% of NFL players' marriages will end in divorce.](#)

This statistic is really not all that surprising. Football players, at least during their playing careers, like other athletes and celebrities, enjoy a fantasy-like life of privilege and temptation.

The players, often drafted right out of college, are showered with attention, adoration, and big money contracts. They simply may not be prepared to make “life” decisions, including marriage.

[New York Jet](#) James Dearth explains:

What football players go through in their careers can affect their marriages. They endure more physical pain than most other professional athletes. They play an aggressive game with non-guaranteed contracts and have the shortest average career in sports.

He then spent four minutes listing reasons that football marriages fail: rampant infidelity, women who target athletes, trophy wives, lifestyles not conducive to marriage and players being surrounded by entourages, which can discourage intimacy.

The risks to marriage do not end with a player's career. In fact, two years after retirement, 78 percent of N.F.L. players are bankrupt, jobless or divorced.

When athletes retire, most face an identity crisis. Many do not retire on their own terms, and once they leave the game, they also leave behind the fame and fortune, the crowds and adoration. Their wives experience a similar loss of status. The dynamic players they married can become passive and withdrawn.

The post retirement disintegration of the marriage unfortunately occurs when the player's bank account is the fattest, but his income stalled.

It is encouraging that players have begun to form support groups, dispensing marriage advice and counseling, player to make mature life decisions. One benefit of taking a long term view of their lives is that the player may have a longer and more successful playing career.

Duncan Fletcher, the director and program manager of the Professional Athletes Transition Institute at Quinnipiac University, and Dale Jasinski, the executive director, have found that most athletes do not look beyond their playing careers, and those who do generally play more, play better and have longer careers than their teammates.