
General Information

Please see the following questions that we recommend you ask your agent. There are some questions that have obvious yes or no answers. Most of the questions below have red text floating underneath. The additional text further explains what kind of information you should hope to collect, what you should consider while listening to the answer and some examples of details you should receive.

1. Provide the name of your firm and its address.

Is geographic location important to you? Do you want your agent to be where you spend the offseason? With today's technology, physical location becomes less important to some players.

Is there more than one location? If so, where are the others located?

2. How long have you been certified? How long has your current staff been in place?

The agents experience is important to understand. If you will be working with others within the firm, you want to know their experience as well.

3. Have there been any grievances or complaints filed against you or any parties within your firm? (Yes or No) If yes, please list and explain.

You need to know of any infractions and resulting discipline, from NFLPA, State Bar Associations, etc. If the answer is yes, it is up to you to decide if it is a deal breaker.

Contract Information

4. Who will be my lead contract negotiator(s)? Who will I be involved with day to day?

Some agencies have agents who specialize in contract negotiations but are less involved with the clients' daily lives. Personal interaction is left to your "lead" agent. There is no right or wrong answer, just get clear guidelines regarding the responsibilities of the team you decide to hire.

5. How many NFL contracts have you negotiated? At my position?

This can be a good measure of an agents negotiating experience and it will also reveal an agents past history with players at your position. Are you comfortable with an agent who has not represented a player at your position? Are you comfortable with an agent who represents only your position?

6. What is the total number of clients you, or your firm, have/has on active NFL rosters?

There is no right or wrong answer. It's a personal choice if you want to be part of a big group with a huge industry presence or a small group where you won't get lost or blend of the two. Big usually means lots of relationships with NFL personnel. Small can mean lots of personal attention. Figure out which combination best suits you.

7. Considering the past three years, respond to the following:

Make sure the agent is used to dealing with clients in your projected draft range when asking the following questions.

- a. Who were your or your firm's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd round draft picks in the past three years?
- b. Who were your or your firm's late round (4th-7th) draft picks in the past three years?
- c. How many of those players are currently on active NFL rosters?

Does the agent's track record match with his client's success? Ask about the players who didn't make it. The NFL is a short term business and not everyone makes it. It is not the agents fault if a player gets cut, but you want to know how they deal with players in that situation.

8. Has your firm represented an undrafted free agent rookie? If yes, how do you or your firm identify which NFL team offers the best opportunity to be on an active roster?

This can be a key difference maker between a player making the roster, practice squad or being cut. Right place, right time or wrong place and no chance- talk these things over with prospective agents.

9. How many players do you intend to sign heading into the NFL Draft?

What is your magic number? 2 or 3 might be fine. Is 15 too many? Successful agents often represent multiple players going into the draft and often represent multiplayers at the same position. The point here is to understand the agent's perspective on this topic.

About Me

10. From NFL personnel, what have you heard are my best attributes?

Agents often have NFL relationships that allow them to get information that is pertinent to a player's "draft status". Although it is early in the process, see what they know about you. Do not pick or not pick an agent because you do/don't like what they tell you. Information is key in the business of football.

11. How can you maximize these characteristics? Have you dealt with this before?

Having a plan is essential. Do you like the agents plan? Does it make sense to you?

12. Based on your thoughts and conversations with NFL personnel, what are the three areas I need to improve upon to be better positioned for the NFL Draft?

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13. How will you help me improve these areas of weakness?

Having a plan is essential. Do you like the agents plan? Does it make sense to you?

14. What is the breakdown of the training opportunities your firm would recommend I attend following my college season and prior to the NFL combine? Please include the location of facility, professionals involved, skills addressed and tentative schedule of training activities.

This aspect is a crucial part of your pre-draft experience. You have a great deal of options, one of which is to stay at school and train there. Discuss in detail where you will train, who will train you, how long the training will last and what is included in the training program (food, housing, supplements, etc). Most important talk about cost. Do they pay the bill, will you have to pay the bill after you sign your contract?

Fees and Expenses

The NFLPA strongly urges players to not incur unnecessary debt. Make sure you understand exactly what is paid for by your agent and what your is responsibility

15. What percentage commission do you charge?

The NFLPA has set the maximum fee at 3%. Some agents are willing to negotiate the amount of their fee. The fee is payable only when you start receiving compensation from an NFL team pertaining to a contract that the agent has negotiated.

16. Can you provide me a detailed list of all your services?

Know what the agent has promised he/she would do and hold your agent to it. If he/she is not meeting their end of the bargain, they may be in breach. Please see the document, "Agent Services", that is on the NFLPA website.

17. Do you handle your clients' appeals for fines, injury grievance, personal conduct violations, etc?

This should be discussed when the question about services is answered. However, if not make sure you address it.

18. What, if any expenses, will be incurred during the draft period?

- a. Training?
- b. Housing?
- c. Transportation?
- d. Food?

19. If expenses are incurred leading up to and immediately following the NFL Draft, am I obligated to refund those moneys to you and your firm?

Make sure the terms of this agreement and all other agreements are in writing. All agreements need to clearly state what you, the player, will owe your agent in regards to the pre-draft time period. It is important to protect yourself from unscrupulous agents who are not clear about expense reimbursement.

20. What happens if I fire you before you negotiate my contract?

If a Standard Representation Agreement (SRA) is terminated before an NFL contract is signed, the SRA stipulates that an agent can recoup communication expenses, travel expenses and a reasonable hourly fee for time spent working for a client in connection with the negotiation of the player's NFL contract.

21. When negotiating a rookie's contract, how do you balance the value of GUARANTEED MONEY vs. TOTAL MONEY? (Please provide explanation using a current contract that your firm has negotiated)

Depending on the round you are drafted, this question can be very educational. Regardless, it is a good time to see how well the agent can explain the economics of football to you.

22. What is the best way to structure a rookie contract in terms of signing bonus, roster bonus and paragraph 5 compensation (salary)?

This is another opportunity to see how well the agent can relate to you in terms of the financial workings of the NFL.

23. How do you guide players in financial decisions?

a. As an active player

b. Upon retirement

Is the agent a financial planner? Does he make referrals to financial planners? Is there a financial agreement between the agent and the referred financial planners? Agents may only refer players to financial advisors that are registered with the NFLPA.

Post Career

Agents will typically say they help players transition in and out of the NFL. This is no easy task. Find out how they propose to live out their promise.

24. Give an example of a couple of retired players that your firm represented who are now professionals in other activities?

25. What relationships, if any, do you still have with these players?

26. What role did you play in aiding them following their football careers?

27. What are the most important aspects of helping a player transition into the business world upon retirement from the NFL?

28. What is your role in the process?

Agents should be well versed in the many programs the NFLPA and the NFL have to help players work on transition while they are playing and upon retirement.

29. What are the biggest mistakes you think players make in selecting an agent?

30. What are the biggest mistakes players make to derail their careers? How do you help them avoid making them?

Agents are also mentors. If the agent doesn't recognize the problems players face how can he/she help them avoid the problems? A plan is key. No one plans to fail, they just fail to plan.

31. Define what you feel your roll is as an agent.

32. Are there any issues or problems within your agency that would affect your ability to represent me to the best of your ability? (Pending Discipline, Mergers, Dissolutions)

33. List relevant references with telephone numbers and appropriate times to call.

34. Current clients (3)

35. former clients (3)

Players should speak to at least one person from each category. Parents should ask for a parent reference list (3).

36. Will you be asking me to sign any agreements other than the Standard Representation Agreement (SRA)?

Know what you are being asked to sign. If you sign it, it's a binding contract. Contact the NFLPA if you have a question about an additional contract an agent is asking you to sign.

37. Please provide any additional information which you feel is relevant and will aid in the decision making process.