

How Erie native Charlie Baumann turned football into his career

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Charlie Baumann, an Erie native, started his football career as a kicker for Cathedral Prep. This led to an athletic scholarship at West Virginia University where he continued to play football. Baumann was a kicker all four years for the Mountaineers and continued his football career after he graduated from college. He signed with the Buffalo Bills and also played for the Minnesota Vikings, Seattle Seahawks, and Miami Dolphins before landing with the New England Patriots in 1991.

Baumann played two seasons as the New England Patriots placekicker. In November of 1992, he kicked a game winning field goal that was one of his greatest achievements in the National Football League.

“I won the game with a long field goal against the Colts. I was happy to help the team, it was a big thrill” Baumann said, “and I also won the player of the week in Sports Illustrated.”

Baumann’s success as a kicker in the National Football League would not have been possible if it were not for his college coach at West Virginia. Baumann stated that his college football coach, Don Nehlen, was one of his biggest influences throughout his life on and off the field. “He cared about us, he wasn’t just concerned about the four years we spent playing football in college. He not only wanted us to succeed as football players, but he wanted us to succeed outside of football as well.” Baumann said.

Baumann stated that his university coach got to know each of his players as individuals on a personal level. The way Nehlen coached his team made Baumann want to work twice as hard in his playing because Nehlen cared about his players. “Nehlen wanted his players to be good citizens, obtain good careers, and be good husbands and fathers. It made me feel like I belonged to something special,” Baumann said.

One game that was very memorable to Baumann was in 1998 when West Virginia won against Syracuse with a score of 35-9. This brought the first undefeated 11-0 season for the university. The team celebrated by walking around the stadium and giving the fans high fives making it a memorable celebration, and one of Baumann’s best memories on the field. Baumann’s football team also made it to the National Championship game that year against Notre Dame, in which they did not pull out a win. Baumann stated that the accomplishments the team had was a reflection of how well they were being coached.

His career with the New England Patriots ended after he was released in 1993 due to a torn hamstring. After the injury, Baumann decided to leave his football career, “I had my time,” he said. Baumann felt that it was time to leave kicking in the NFL behind and pursue a career in business. He has a Bachelor's degree in business and a masters degree in accounting. He now works for a company and is in charge of nine businesses.

Don Nehlen had such inspiration on Baumann that he decided to coach both of his daughters' softball teams. He modeled himself as a coach after Nehlen. Coaching both of his daughters' softball teams was the right choice, and he enjoyed being there for them like Nehlen was for him.

Baumann stated there were many take-aways he had from Coach Don Nehlen and his experience in the National Football League. He said that sports can teach you a lot about life, such as how to handle disappointment and adversity. Throughout his life growing up playing football he was always focused and competitive which gave him the ability to play well. Charlie Baumann stated "you need to love what you do and hard work pays off." Charlie was dedicated all of his life starting with high school football, and because of that, he landed a career in the National Football League.