

# From Athlete to Owner

The Business Acquisition Playbook for Pros in Transition

CoreyParchman.com | Don't Build It — Buy It

**Your competitive edge doesn't retire when you do. The question is where you deploy it next.**

You spent years — maybe decades — mastering your craft. You learned to perform under pressure, execute a game plan, absorb coaching, and compete with everything you have. Those skills don't disappear when your playing career ends.

What most athletes get wrong in the transition is the vehicle. They try to start businesses from scratch, get handed bad investment opportunities, or take jobs that underuse what they built. There's a better path: acquiring an existing, profitable business and running it.

## Why Athletes Are Built for Acquisition

The skill set that made you elite on the field maps almost perfectly to what makes a great business owner:

ATHLETIC SKILL	HOW IT TRANSLATES
Executing a game plan	Running business systems and processes
Performing under pressure	Managing cash flow and high-stakes decisions
Receiving and applying coaching	Working with advisors, lenders, and mentors
Reading opponents and adjusting	Competitive analysis and market positioning
Building team chemistry	Hiring, managing, and retaining employees
Committing to the process	Executing a long-term business strategy

## The Problem with Startups for Athletes

Post-career athletes are frequently pitched startup investments: apps, consumer brands, fitness concepts, tech ventures. The pitch always sounds exciting. The math almost never works.

- 90% of startups fail within 10 years. Athletes don't have years to rebuild lost capital.
- Startups require skills most athletes don't have yet: product development, marketing infrastructure, brand-building from zero.
- The launch phase has nothing to do with operations — the thing athletes are actually great at.

Buying a business puts you in the operator seat on Day 1, running something that already works.

## The Acquisition Playbook for Pros

### Step 1: Define Your Buy Box

Your Buy Box is your acquisition criteria — the specific type of business you're targeting. Industry, revenue range, cash flow requirements, geography, and seller profile. Getting this right before you search saves months of wasted time.

### Step 2: Build Your Deal Team

You need three people before you make an offer: an M&A; attorney, a CPA who understands acquisitions, and ideally an acquisition advisor who has done this before. This is your coaching staff.

### Step 3: Source Deals

The best deals don't list publicly. Business brokers, direct outreach, your personal network, and deal platforms like BizBuySell are all channels. Most serious buyers are working 3–5 sources simultaneously.

### Step 4: Evaluate and Offer

Valuation in small business acquisition is based primarily on SDE (Seller's Discretionary Earnings) — the total financial benefit to an owner. Businesses typically sell for 2–5x SDE depending on industry, growth, and risk. You can offer below ask — and often should.

### Step 5: Due Diligence

Before you sign anything, you verify everything. Financials, customer concentration, legal history, employee agreements, operational dependencies. This is film study. The more thorough you are, the fewer surprises after close.

### Step 6: Close and Take the Field

Closing day is the beginning, not the end. The first 90 days as a new owner set the tone. Keep the key employees. Honor the seller's commitments. Improve systematically rather than dramatically.

*Corey Parchman is a former NFL wide receiver who built a real estate and business acquisition firm after his playing career. He knows the transition — and he built a playbook to navigate it.*

## Resources Built for Your Transition

- NFLPA Business Ventures — programs designed specifically for player transitions
- NFL Alumni Association — peer networks and business education for retired players
- SBA Preferred Lenders — acquisition financing with as little as 10% down
- Don't Build It — Buy It — Corey Parchman's complete acquisition playbook

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playbook.**