

the Chaldean News

Silver Lining for Jim Acho?



May 1, 2015

Jim Acho's campaign to become the new executive director of the NFL Players Association didn't end successfully. Or did it?

The outspoken 44-year-old Livonia labor attorney was one of nine candidates for the job. Vote totals weren't released, but Acho was a serious contender. "That number of candidates was unprecedented in the annals of sports union history," he said. Even more impressive is even though Acho didn't get the job in the March vote — the winner was incumbent DeMaurice Smith — some of his ideas apparently have gained

traction with the Washington, D.C.-based union.

"I got a call from union president Eric Winston after the vote and he told me that even though I didn't win and he was sure I was disappointed, he thought he could brighten my mood," Acho said. "He said a lot of my ideas resonated with the guys on the union's executive committee and the ideas will be discussed this summer. I don't understand why I wasn't elected if they liked my ideas, but what can you do?"

Winston was correct in his assumption. Acho was disappointed about not winning even though he was an acknowledged dark horse. Acho said time will tell if all the effort he devoted to running his campaign and dealing with the politics involved will pay off. "If some of my ideas involving long-term healthcare and providing healthcare for guys who played before 1993 are adopted, then I won't consider what I did a total loss," he said.

Acho is known for his tireless work improving health care and pensions for retired NFL players. He was nominated for the executive director position by the NFL Alumni Association. If his ideas don't become reality, Acho said, he'll still benefit from the eye-opening experience of spending hundreds of hours on the phone and talking face to face with past and present NFL players and learning about the inner workings of the league. "The amount of money the league makes is staggering," the Farmington Hills resident said. "With all the institutional controls that are in place, anyone could run the NFL."

Former University of Michigan football star LaMarr Woodley, a former Super Bowl champion with the Pittsburgh Steelers who is now an outside linebacker with the Arizona Cardinals, said he was disappointed about Acho's loss "not just for Jim, but as a player in the league." He added, "DeMaurice

does a good job, but Jim would have done a great job. He knows how to bring people together and he's a problem-solver. I hope he'll consider running next time. If he has more time to sit down with players beforehand and they get to know him, he'll definitely win."

Smith will serve a six-year term. Acho said he's not planning on throwing his hat into the ring again.

- *Steve Stein*