

# Talk

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school students in Hampden several years ago.

"We just loved it so much it snowballed from there," he said.

When students arrived at Guiski Gymnasium on Thursday to hear the 30-minute presentation set up by the sports management class at Dexter Regional High School, the message of hard work and hope resonated.

"One thing I took out of this was Matt describing how he grew up in a small town," said Dexter junior Zach White. "I live in Exeter, which is probably even smaller, and I've been told my entire life — not specifically by family members but by the public — that it's too small, Maine's too small, you can't go where you want to go. I bought into that idea."

"It's just been recently that I've been trying to realize I might be able to make a career in sports broadcasting if I put my mind to it and the message they had today just gives me so much more confidence. The confidence they've given me to keep going because you can do it and it's not where you come from but it's what you have inside you, that's the big message I got."

## Profiles in perseverance

That DeVito is approaching his 10th season as an NFL defensive lineman while Mulligan is pursuing his ninth season at tight end is the professional foundation on which their presentations are based.

Neither was drafted after completing his college career at the University of Maine, though DeVito was a two-time all-conference honoree.

Mulligan, meanwhile, grew up in West Enfield and

graduated from Penobscot Valley High School in Howland, where he starred in basketball during the winter and played soccer in the fall — the school has no football team.

Mulligan then went to Husson University of Bangor with an eye toward basketball, but he also played football for the first time before transferring to the University of Maine, where he made 23 pass receptions for 268 yards in two seasons.

The 6-foot-3, 305-pound DeVito signed a free agent contract with the New York Jets in 2007 and played there for six seasons before spending the last three years with the Kansas City Chiefs. The 2015 campaign was one of his best, with 19 tackles and three quarterback sacks after DeVito missed nearly the entire 2014 season due to a torn Achilles tendon.

Mulligan's NFL resume, like his introduction to the sport, has been more circuitous. Since signing his first contract with the Miami Dolphins in 2008, he also has spent time with the Tennessee Titans (twice), New York Jets, St. Louis Rams, Green Bay Packers, New England Patriots, Chicago Bears, Arizona Cardinals and last season the Buffalo Bills.

Known as a blocking tight end, the 6-foot-4, 270-pound tight end has 17 catches — two for touchdowns — during his career to date.

Both now are free agents in their early 30s, their immediate football futures unclear until they sign their next contracts. They are using some of the same principles they share with their student audiences to cope with their uncertain job status.

"The most important thing is creating certainty in your life," said DeVito. "My faith, my wife, my son, they're always going to be there, that's the certainty I focus on, and then you let

football play itself out. Football is secondary to those other things, so my priorities and intentions are set on those other three things and whatever happens with football is obviously important but it's not the ultimate thing."

Mulligan is even more accustomed to the uncertainty, but has displayed considerable staying power while amassing one of the NFL's larger jersey collections.

He finds the opportunity to use his own professional perseverance as encouragement for the next generation to be a productive and satisfying way to ameliorate any job-related stress — as well as a chance to give back.

"There is a responsibility, I think, when you're in the limelight and have an opportunity to affect someone's life to take that very seriously," said Mulligan. "I was brought up here and the state of Maine formed and shaped me, and now for me to give back in whatever capacity I can is extremely important. It's something you should want to do, but at the same time I'm indebted and it's something I should be doing."

The audiences in Dexter appreciated the message under the gesture.

"It's great to know that they go way back and know each other from college and still stay friends and that you can have somebody like that in your entire life," said Dexter senior Kolby Kain. "I really liked how they didn't talk just about football but about applying this with all of your life and family and your career and not just sports."

"Right now I'm hearing it from my parents that you're going on to college and your life is starting, and I kind of blow it off because it's from my parents and I hear it all the time. To hear it from somebody else really hits home."

blind tee shot into a short par 4.

Preston hopes it remains a golf course.

"We hope to keep it as a business in town," said Preston. "It's good for the town."

# Golf

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Poole also made significant alterations to the course that he completed in 2012.

That included a new third green, which created a short par 4; a long par 4, which combined the rest of the par-5 third hole with the short, par-3 fourth and a new tee box on No. 8, which transformed a par 3 with a

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