

Chicago loses mental health champion Brandon Marshall to NY Jets



CHICAGO (FOX 32 News) -

A person familiar with the deal says the New York Jets have agreed to acquire star wide receiver Brandon Marshall from the Chicago Bears, pending a physical exam.

Marshall's [trade](#) from the Bears to the Jets means Chicago loses more than just an All-Pro receiver, it also loses a champion for the mental health community. And while Marshall often wore his emotions on his sleeve, he also wore his condition on his shoes, with the lime green representing the color of mental illness.

In 2011 Marshall was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, but instead of hiding his problem, he went public with it. He started a foundation, Project 375, and openly talked about his problem and his recovery.

“By me stepping up and saying something, other people got the strength to do the same and that's what it's all about,” Marshall said in a video posted on his foundation's website.

“People who are living with a mental health condition unfortunately are filled with shame, which they shouldn't be, of [course](#), and they often feel very much alone,” said Alexa James, the Executive Director of the Chicago office of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

She said Marshall has been a champion of the fight to raise awareness of the problem of mental illnesses, which she said affect 25 percent of people living in Chicago.

“I think that he's really sent a message to people that you're not alone, that there is help, recovery is possible,” James said.

Marshall and his [wife](#), Mishi, have been actively involved in many Chicago events to raise money and awareness about the mental health community using their Project375 Foundation as a platform for their cause.

State Representative Sara Feigenholtz has made mental health care an important issue during her 20 year career. She praised Marshall's work.

He is so passionate about the issue of stigma in mental health and he has added so much to the conversation, not just on the field, or around the field but also as a spokesperson for so many advocates around mental illness," Feigenholtz said.

She believes Marshall will continue with his work and even though he's leaving Chicago. Now in New York, he will have an even bigger stage.

"I'm confident that he will continue to be an ambassador and a spokesperson, not only on the national level, not only in Chicago and Illinois, but also more globally," Feigenholtz said.

The trade Friday, the first by new Jets general manager Mike Maccagnan, is for an unspecified draft pick, according to the person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because neither team had announced the deal.

The trade cannot become official until the NFL's new league year begins next Tuesday.

Marshall, who turns 31 on March 23, has played the last three seasons with the Bears. He had 61 catches last season, his lowest total since his rookie year with Denver in 2006 while dealing with injuries.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.