My name is Liz Vitai, and I am currently enrolled in the Falk College Sports Analytics Program, pursuing a Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS). I have over 20 years of experience as a bond trader on Wall Street and a robust background in statistics, mathematics, and decision-making under pressure. My true passion lies in sports, and I am excited to merge my expertise in quantitative analysis with my sports analytics degree.

I grew up in San Diego and attended undergraduate and graduate school at UCLA. Southern California holds a special place in my heart. The opportunity to connect with employers in Los Angeles excites me because it aligns perfectly with my desire to work in the sports analytics field in my hometown region. I have been a lifelong fan of the San Diego Padres, LA Lakers, and LA Chargers, and I am genuinely passionate about the sports teams in the area. Meeting with industry leaders in Southern California would provide invaluable insights into how analytics are applied at the highest levels of sports. It would also allow me to showcase my unique skill set, cultivated through years of working in a fast-paced, data-driven environment. This trip would bring me closer to achieving my career goal of combining my professional expertise with my passion for sports while reconnecting with my hometown roots.

When reviewing the list of participating employers, I found the NFL Network to be the ideal choice. Football has always been my favorite sport, and the NFL does a great job of integrating data and strategy into its broadcasts and operations. I am particularly drawn to the idea of working as a data analyst for Scott Hanson’s Red Zone, where I would have the ability to interpret and present real-time data, which could enhance the viewing experience for fans. As a current student at Syracuse University, I find it inspiring that Scott Hanson, a Syracuse alumnus and former football player, has achieved such a prominent role in sports broadcasting. My background on the trading floor has prepared me to thrive in a high-pressure, fast-paced environment where quick thinking and impactful decision-making are essential. My dream job would be to contribute my skills to the NFL Network in a real-time capacity.

My first question for the NFL Network would be: Why are most analytics currently focused on the offensive side of the ball? What initiatives are being developed to expand analytics into areas like defensive strategies (e.g., when to blitz) or special teams plays (e.g., when to attempt a fake punt)?

My second question would be: How much do analysts and commentators rely on real-time analytics during broadcasts, and are there plans to integrate further these tools, such as a live ticker showing win probabilities for a team, which could enhance the audience's understanding of the game?