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By being frugal financially, Ryan Broyles believes he has set up future

By Michael Rothstein
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ALLEN PARK, Mich. -- Ryan Broyles grabs his cell phone every morning over breakfast and pores over the latest transactions. What the Detroit Lions wide receiver is looking at, though, has nothing to do with football.

In the past three-plus years, Broyles has become immersed in the financial world. His planning throughout his career allowed him to make a lot of investments. So when he laments the S&P 500 has "been sideways" most of the year, he has good reason.

It all started after a meeting with a financial adviser soon after being drafted in 2012. The adviser gave Broyles some advice he used to shape his life: Spend as you would like over the next few months. Figure out your means. Then set a budget, live within it and invest the rest.

Broyles signed a contract worth more than \$3.6 million after being taken in the second round. More than \$1.422 million was guaranteed. But Broyles knew the other statistics -- ones reinforced when he went to the rookie symposium.

He knew NFL players, and athletes in general, go bankrupt. He saw athletes blow through millions. He was determined not to have that happen to him.

He came up with a budget. Broyles said he and his wife, Mary Beth, have lived on \$60,000 a year, "give or take," throughout his career. Everything else has gone to investments, retirement savings and securing Broyles' post-football monetary future.

Broyles wanted to make sure his NFL career, however long it lasts, really did set him up for life.

"Then you know how much you can invest, how risky you can be," Broyles said, as he enters the last year of his rookie contract with no guarantee he'll make the Lions' roster. "Then, when I was hitting the same budget over three, four, five months, it was all right, this is what your budget is and I had some spending money."

"I didn't hold myself back at all on those terms. That's what I tell people when they want to start to invest, I tell them to live your life and see where you stand and then pull back. Don't pull back without even knowing."

He has no problem driving a red Ford Focus rental car during training camp this year. It's why he and his wife drive Mazdas -- he recently bought a new one -- and he still has his 2005 Chevrolet Trailblazer from college.

Broyles wouldn't go into specifics about his investments -- just smiling wide when asked. Despite some big changes in his life this offseason -- the couple bought their first home in Texas and had their first child, Sebastian -- he doesn't feel any more pressure to succeed on the field because he has an extra mouth to feed.

"The pressure I put on myself is just being the best player I am," Broyles said. "I would never play [just] for money, you know what I mean, that's not my intentions whatsoever."

"Whatever comes, it's just a blessing. But I got the mindset of a businessman off the field, I'll tell you that."

Broyles immersed himself in the financial world. In March, he went to Washington, D.C., with New Orleans running back [Mark Ingram](#) to speak to students about financial planning. Broyles worked with VISA and the NFL on promoting a Financial Football video game in classrooms to help teach financial security and planning in both D.C. and his home state of Oklahoma.

"I studied as much as I could," Broyles said. "Talked to people wealthier than me, smarter than me. So that definitely helps."

He checks his investments daily on that cell phone app and has taken advantage of every possibility to increase his savings and earnings, including the NFL's matching 401K plan.

He's doing all of this to make sure that whatever happens in football, he can be secure in his own future and focus only on how to improve himself on the field.

"When I come to work, I don't think about the money, man," Broyles said. "I can tell you that, without a doubt. There might be some guys that do but I put myself in a position where I come out here and have fun."

"I don't have that pressure, you know what I mean. My wife has no worries. My child has no worries. For the most part, I can help my family, you know."

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