

# Michael Bivins

Contributed by Chris Yandek  
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In the 1980s, Michael Bivins took the music world by storm with the formation of the popular boy band New Edition that also featured the troubled Bobby Brown. His music influence and legendary vision has discovered many of the biggest musical acts including Boyz II Men, besides managing their careers and producing them. But away from the music scene, he has found his own style and niche in the sports broadcasting world joining other celebrities like Alyssa Milano. Bivins provided features and player interviews through the entire NBA regular season and playoffs for TNT and TNT Overtime on NBA.com.

Listen the Michael Bivins Interview

{audio}http://thesportsinterview.com/mp3/MichaelBivins.mp3{/audio}Chris Yandek: Congrats on the upcoming honoree of The Golden Note by ASCAP for New Edition at the upcoming Rhythm and Soul music awards next month. What does it still mean to be honored for New Edition 25 years later?

Michael Bivins: "It feels like 25 years in this music industry is a milestone, an accomplishment because the music has changed so much. For us to be able to stand the hands of time and still get to be considered an honoree is the best part because there is so many people that have done a great body of work that they could've honored. For them to pick us is so special."

CY: There has been an increase of actors, musicians, and other entertainers contributing to the sports media world. For example, actress Alyssa Milano is a big baseball fan and did features for TBS last year and now a musician like yourself is doing features for TNT and TNT Overtime on NBA.com. Is it the fact that being a fan is not enough for you guys or was there another reason why you wanted to do this?

MB: "Well, some of us have sports in our blood like myself. I always wanted to be an NBA ball player since I was eight years old. I kind of went on the road of sports and I ended up on the stage with the microphone. For me it's like a dream come full circle. I think some people do it because their agent tells them it's a good look to get some publicity. But myself, I eat, live, and breathe basketball. Having friends like Kenny Smith, who connected me in to TNT, is what helped me get in. I reached out to him because I saw a void. I didn't see me at TNT. I didn't see the musician, the cool cat that's from the music industry that knows balling. Everybody else has either been a retired ballplayer or they're just good at what they do. They're cool at what they do, but I didn't see my style in my background and I went for it. I am just trying to create a lane. Put the channel."

CY: It seems as though athletes wanted to be performers in acting and music and actors and musicians want to be athletes or at least be part of the sports world in some aspect. Was this your way to get close to that athletic dream you never had?

MB: "I had the dream. I played ball on every level you could do. Played high school All American games. I played against college ballplayers in celebrity basketball games. I've taken a few NBA players to the hoops. I have lived it on the court. I've just never lived it with a microphone in my hand interviewing a ballplayer. It's one to be on the opposite end of the microphone being interviewed and it's another thing to be the interviewer interviewing somebody else and to be off the cuff and not make an a-hole of yourself asking the wrong question and dead air time. It's a big thing and it's big shoes to step in so I am just learning."

CY: So is it really different being the one putting the final packages together where you get to show what the finished product is?

MB: "Well, for me, I try to look at a person's swagger and a little background on them if I already haven't liked them as a ballplayer. All you have to do in the way I am going at it is that I don't attack them like a typical commentator or a typical interview where I am trying to figure out what's your statistics or how you felt about last night? Those things. My things are more lifestyle oriented. When you're talking to a person about something they want to talk about then it takes that frown to a smile and then it makes the interview pleasant because hitting them where they want to be hit or hitting them where they normally don't have an opportunity to express."

CY: Many fans of the league and people in general are concerned about Charles Barkley's gambling problem. For someone who now works for TNT and probably has spent time around him, should people be concerned?

MB: "First of all, he's a grown man. Second of all, he's accomplished a great deal. Third of all, he has the money to gamble. Fourth of all, he's part of a very huge sports show Inside The NBA where the ratings are off the roof. What you see with Charles is what you get."

CY: Is there a downside to celebrity?

MB: "The downside to celebrity is when you make it a 24 hour thing. I think celebrity is about turning it on and turning it off. You notice some people don't know how to accept the fact that you can only get 15 minutes and somebody else get the 15 minutes. It's important as a celebrity to still maintain a certain reality in it. The ones that really don't have reality usually feel the downside more because they're looking at it from the wrong aspect and the wrong perspective. Once you

become somebody, that don't mean you distance yourself from people. There is no such thing as no one can walk the streets or go outside. That I will never believe. There might be some fanfare. There might be some paparazzi, but you can control that. All you have to do is maintain the person you were before that when you would tell someone to back up or get out of my way or just stop and address people. Give them what they want. Have a smile, kick a few lyrics, and be out. Take advantage and control the moment. Don't let the moment take control of you."

CY: Finally, what was it like shooting pool against Michael Jordan at the NBA All Star weekend this year? I know he's very competitive. What was that like?

MB: "It was one of the biggest wins in my life. It goes down in history. When you have an opportunity to share the stage with Mike and come out in victory, then I am out there with Karl Malone, Charles, and various other people from the Portland Trailblazers who couldn't get that win and I got that win. I feel good to be part of Mike's moment and the winning shot. It's a pool game. Mike's the best guy in the world. He's the most competitive. He put a nice win on my back. I feel like Mike branded me that weekend, and just gave me and the TNT family some great footage, and gave us a great jump off for the All Star weekend in New Orleans. Just being part of it and losing to the president of TNT sports, Turner Sports, and to a new work of Michael Bivins. He put the stamp on the whole movement."

You can check out Michael Bivins's TNT Overtime segments at the following link below:

<http://www.nba.com/tntovertime/> You can find more out about Michael Bivins at his official My Space page below:

<http://www.myspace.com/thesperty>