OFFICIAL SPEAKING PRESENTATION

BEYOND MAD MAX

The Mental Game Behind the Championship

VERNON MAXWELL | Two-Time NBA Champion | Mental Health Awareness Advocate



A champion’s story. A conversation that matters.

Speaking engagements and youth-focused mental wellness awareness experiences available nationwide.

01 / THE STORY

THE MAN BEHIND THE NICKNAME

The world knew him as “Mad Max.” Today, Vernon Maxwell wants young people to know the man—and the lessons—behind that name.

As a Houston Rockets guard, Maxwell helped build a championship legacy through fierce competitiveness, unforgettable moments, and a willingness to perform under pressure. His career also brought public conflict and personal challenges. Looking back, he has spoken candidly about emotional struggles he did not fully understand or address while he was playing.

Maxwell now uses his experience to challenge the idea that strength means staying silent. His message is particularly resonant for young athletes who may feel they must manage every expectation, setback, and personal struggle alone.

His perspective is not a clinical lecture. It is an honest, firsthand conversation about identity, pressure, stigma, seeking support, and the importance of caring for mental well-being alongside physical performance.

“The person matters more than the performance.”

THE CREDENTIALS

Two-time NBA champion with the Houston Rockets (1994 and 1995) • Former University of Florida standout • Longtime professional basketball player • Mental health awareness advocate

Maxwell’s advocacy has included public mental health events and outreach to young athletes. His story has been featured in news coverage and in an in-depth WQLN interview.

02 / THE SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE

THE MENTAL GAME BEHIND THE CHAMPIONSHIP

A candid, sports-centered conversation about the pressures young athletes face—and why mental wellness deserves the same attention as physical preparation.

THE CONVERSATION

Through personal stories from professional basketball and his life beyond the game, Vernon explores the weight of expectations, emotional challenges, the stigma that can surround counseling, and the courage it takes to ask for help.

WHAT AUDIENCES TAKE AWAY

• Mental wellness is part of the complete athlete—not an afterthought.

• Identity and self-worth must extend beyond wins, losses, scholarships, and playing time.

• Seeking trusted support is a practical expression of strength.

• Coaches, families, and institutions can help create environments where young people feel safe speaking up.

IDEAL AUDIENCES

High school and collegiate athletes • Coaches and athletic staff • Student leadership groups • Youth development organizations • Mental health awareness events • Community and corporate audiences

AVAILABLE FORMATS

Moderated fireside conversation • Featured speaker appearance • Audience Q&A • Athlete-focused panel • Community awareness event

Program scope, format, and audience suitability are confirmed during booking. Vernon speaks from lived experience; this presentation is not clinical care or mental health treatment.

03 / THE BROADER MISSION

THE INNER WORK: BUILDING MENTAL WELLNESS FROM WITHIN

Helping young athletes discover themselves, navigate life’s pressures, and pursue emotional balance on and off the field.

Through the Vernon Maxwell Experience, Vernon’s firsthand message is complemented by the youth-focused mental wellness awareness work of **Carlea Atkinson of The Inner Work Collective**.

Together, their approaches invite students to look beyond athletic identity, develop self-awareness, recognize emotional challenges, and understand the value of asking for support. The emphasis is on awareness, honest conversation, and connection—not on replacing professional mental health services.

TWO WAYS TO ENGAGE

Book Vernon to Speak. Invite him for a focused appearance, moderated discussion, athletic department event, or community awareness gathering.

Explore the Vernon Maxwell Experience. Discuss a broader student-centered awareness initiative that may include additional programming and collaboration with appropriate wellness professionals.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

VMAX East hosted a Charlotte fundraiser with Erie Insurance sponsorship to support a local high school pilot. The Charlotte pilot is planned to begin in the latter part of the 2026–27 school year; it should not yet be represented as completed or evaluated.

The initiative’s objective is simple: help young people recognize that their lives, identities, and futures are bigger than the game.

LET’S CREATE AN EXPERIENCE THAT MATTERS

Whether you are planning an athletics conference, school assembly, university event, mental health awareness program, or community gathering, Vernon Maxwell brings the perspective of a champion—and the candor of someone who has reflected on the cost of carrying everything alone.

ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS

- Featured speaking appearance or moderated conversation
- Student-athlete mental wellness awareness event
- Coach, parent, or community conversation
- Panel discussion with qualified mental health professionals
- Expanded Vernon Maxwell Experience program inquiry

WATCH & EXPLORE

WQLN interview: Vernon Maxwell’s personal story

Independent coverage of Vernon’s mental health advocacy

The Vernon Maxwell Experience — VMAX East

BOOKING INQUIRIES

Marcus S. Atkinson

M. Atkinson and Associates Consulting

Authorized Speaking Representative | Vernon Maxwell

Booking inquiries: vmaxeast@email.com

For availability, event formats, travel, and tailored proposals, please email directly.

BEYOND MAD MAX. BEYOND THE SCOREBOARD.