



## Mind Games

WHEN IT COMES TO FOOTBALL,  
FANTASY IS HIS REALITY

**R**obert Zarzycki will never play in a Super Bowl, but he almost won what is considered its equal in the high-stakes game of fantasy football: the World Championship. In a contest where competitors build their

own NFL teams and win when the real-life players they've selected win—Zarzycki (ENG'96, RBS'98) came incredibly close to scooping up \$200,000, the prize for winning the three-day tournament in Las Vegas in 2002. "To think that I was leading that last night, ahead of 552 teams," he says, wistfully.

Zarzycki, who took home the \$20,000 second-place prize, entered the same tournament in 2003. This time he finished third out of 600 teams and won \$15,000. "I calculated the odds of finishing second and third in consecutive years to be 55,191:1," he says. "So I felt that I was really on to something."

That something inspired him to devote this past year writing and promoting *Drafting to Win: The Litimate Guide to Fantasy Football*, a self-published book on evaluating and picking the best players. Zarzycki developed a knack for the game while studying for his MBA and running Happy's Health Grille, a College Avenue campus eatery he owned with his sister, Cheryl Zarzycki (DC'98). "I was applying some of the principles I learned taking statistics courses in graduate school and beating all my college buddies," says Zarzycki, a West Milford resident and columnist for *Fantasy Football* magazine. "That first trip to Vegas was a bit of a financial gamble, but now I'm hoping I can turn my passion for fantasy football into a career."—BG