

STARS, STRIPES, & TOUCHDOWNS!

WINGMAN
MAGAZINE

With A Country Divided,
Football Greats

RASHAD JENNINGS

And

TRENT DILFER

Remind Us Why America Fell
In Love With Football

&

How The Sport Truly CAN
Bring People Together

Photos Taken At The Avalon Hotel Beverly Hills
9400 W Olympic Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA 90212
310.277.5221

Photos by Trevor Pikhart
Assisted by Ryan Meichtry
Grooming by Madison Blue using
American English Hair Products,
Enzo Milano Pro Tools, Skincare Algenist,
and Make Up Forever
Forward & Styling by Andrew Cristi
Assisted by Carlos Leon

On Rashad:
Shirt by Baynes And Baker;
www.baynesandbaker.com,
Jeans by 34 Heritage;
Courage Rinse Vintage;
\$190, www.34heritage.com,

On Trent:
T shirt by Dvereux;
www.dvrxtheads.com,
Vest Courtesy of Pinto Ranch;
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Reversible Vest;
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Photo taken at The Avalon Hotel
Beverly Hills By Tevor Pikhart
On Rashad:
Jacket by Baynes And Baker;
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On Trent:
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It's no secret that everyone has had a lot to say regarding football recently- in fact, it seems like you can't toss a pigskin without hitting somebody out there who has a bold opinion on the sport, and so, with that topic already discussed to exhaust, all we can do is offer up another conversation.

See, the thing is that so many of the people in the world currently dissecting the beloved game aren't even *fans* to begin with- because while this particular dialogue might be causing controversy and reminding Americans why there is such a major divide in the country, lifelong lovers of the adored sport will easily think back to how football opened their eyes, expanded their horizons, and brought them closer together with people they might never have expected to befriend. Used as a way of bonding, football brings diverse people from all walks of life to gather around the living room, the bar, or the stadium. When fans support their team, they don't see color, gender, or creed- they see a comrade who loves and roots for the same players that they do, and that connection provides an instant understanding between them, and possibly even a greater friendship.

In fact, sports in general have been used as one of the greatest tools to teach people about those who might be different from them, and offer them unexpected heroes they might otherwise never have celebrated. Muhammed Ali, Lionel Messi, Babe Ruth, Jackie Robinson, Wayne Gretzky, Michael Jordan, Michelle Kwan, Tom Daley, Serena Williams- all these incredible athletes offer different genders, races, religions, sexual orientations, body types, ideologies, and beliefs- and yet, the one thing they have in common is their undeniable excellence at their sport, which is precisely the same reason why their fans love them- fans that maybe would have never been exposed to someone like them, or admired them had they not made such an impact in our culture- and that fandom should not be taken for granted. The idea that prejudices can be diminished and that people's eyes can be opened toward the unfamiliar through these unpredicted heroes, that is a *gift*, and it has done just as much for the progression of our society as The Civil Rights movement had.

Having become one of America's favorite past times, football is more than a game- it's a culture, and a powerful one at that as it has brought families together, connected fathers with sons, helped athletes in underprivileged communities gain an education and a future, given the world hours upon hours of entertainment, and helped form lifelong friendships between people who might otherwise have very little in common. In truth, the amount football has done to unite America and teach people the power of standing in solidarity is so much more than what the sport has done to divide the country. Invented in 1920, football has almost a *hundred years* under its belt of acting as a peace-maker for The United States, and those efforts are beautiful, historic, and should never be forgotten or forsaken.

With the impending season, we knew the recent discussion of how the sport has been dividing our nation would be quite covered, so instead, we here at Wingman wanted to take two very beloved and very *different* heroes, shine a spotlight on them and what makes them the same beneath the skin, and remind people why they fell in love with the game to begin with, celebrating all it has done, and all it can do. While on the surface perhaps former 49ers' Quarterback Trent Dilfer and former Giants' Gunning Back Rashad Jennings might seem quite different, but, they both share the same ideals of football and it's brotherhood, support for the other players, and love and passion for the sport that made them superstars- and turned an entire nation into devoted fans. Recognizing the power that has, Wingman got these greats to open up, share their stories, recall their fondest memories, and discuss the incredible ability that the game possesses to help people put *aside* their differences, and bring them together, and when the country unites, that is the best touchdown fans can ever ask for.



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 Watch by Nokturnal Watches;
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 On Trent:
 Jacket Courtesy of Pinto Ranch,
 Durango Jungle Suede Jacket;
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avalon hotel

BEVERLY HILLS

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THE "HA" IN RASHAD

*Overcoming Every Obstacle As
An Athlete, An Author, & Exemplary American,
RASHAD JENNINGS
Gets The Last Laugh*

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Whenever a person thinks that they can't overcome an obstacle due to size, GPA, or potential health issues, it helps to keep football hero Rashad Jennings in mind. The former NFL running back overcame each and every one of these hurdles to become a starter in one of the most competitive leagues in the world, dominating everything around him as he made his mark in history. Starting out as an overweight kid with a GPA of .6 gave the celebrated star two strikes when it came to being an athlete, but the perseverant player never let these deterrents hold him back. Instead, he saw it as a stepping stone to push himself forward into professionalism, making him much admired by fans and peers everywhere. Having already achieved so much over his storied career, it's incredible to think the inspiring Giant is only in his 30's- and his life after football is only just beginning.

Raised in the small town of Forest, Virginia, Jennings went on to the small school of Liberty University where he was drafted in the 7th round. While at Liberty, the amazing athlete set Big South Conference records with 3,633 yards and 42 touchdowns- the type of numbers that most players could only dream of seeing. That said, it's even more impressive for the 6'1 powerhouse to go from being a fifth string running back in high school to become one of the best running backs in the country- a testament to commitment as he proved just how much determination conquers all. Being drafted by an NFL team is the goal of every college football player, and while Jennings may have been drafted in the seventh round it was a hardly a setback or disappointment, instead for the gifted player, it was an *opportunity*.

And as it turns out, the admirable athlete is equally as inspiring off the field as he is on. A huge advocate for the sport and how it brings people together, Jennings is staunch in his stance on how football can not only help form unbreakable bonds between players, fans, and everyone in between, but, it also can teach the most valuable lessons worth learning in life. Not just a player, the beloved pigskin hero is also a vehement cheerleader for the game, the fans, his colleagues, and his team, considering them all an unbreakable brotherhood that he is happy to be a part of.

And while the life of an NFL running back is notoriously short due to the pounding that they take during their career, Jennings has parlayed that success into an even greater empire that is sure to have longevity. Usually when players leave the NFL, a common practice is to go into some sort of coaching, however, he decided to go and dance his way into a whole nother championship with "*Dancing With The Stars*," making the pro-footballer part of an elite club of athletes who have gone on to win the dancing competition and impress fans everywhere with his samba and two-step choreography.

Now that he has moved on from the NFL and has *no* interest in ever going back, Jennings has taken some personal time and put the pen to the paper, writing as *New York Times* bestseller; "*The IF in Life: How to Get off of Life's Sidelines and Become Your Best Self*." An athlete, author, dance champion, and now television star, the unstoppable multi-talent is proving there truly is life after the game and that he can very much do it all. Now making his presence known around the world of entertainment by not only promoting his book, but by giving us insight into the world of football, Jennings continues to be a force to be reckoned with.

A Giant in every meaning of the word, the former player bleeds blue and white along with the regular red for his team, the New York Giants, and there is no other current quarterback that he would rather take one more touchdown hand off from than Eli Manning. Inspired by his former team members like Manning and our former cover star, Michael Strahan, Jennings continues to support his NFL brothers, while always motivating us to be the best we can be. A man that inspires all of those around him with everything that he has overcome in his past, everything he has done on the field, and everything he continues to do post football, the superstar continues to break more and more barriers. After a dancing trophy and a hot new book, what Jennings will do next is up to him, but one thing is for sure- it is destined to be *great*. Keep reading to see what the famed athlete has to say about football, writing, and his next big moves.

WINGMAN MAGAZINE: You just released your first book a few months ago titled; *“The IF In Life: How To Get Off Of Life’s Sidelines And Become Your Best Self.”* Talk about that a little bit and what made you want to write?

RASHAD JENNINGS: I have always wanted to write a book, and it’s been humbling- even more so to be part of the *New York Times* bestselling authors list. As a play on words, when you spell out the word “life,” *if* is in the middle, and I go through fifteen chapters detailing how that little itty bitty word has been so pivotal in my life. I grew up as an overweight chubby kid with glasses, asthma, and .6 GPA, and at one time was merely the fifth string running back saying that I wanted to play in the NFL [chuckles.] Obviously I had a lot of adversity to overcome to make it to this point and I get to authentically give back and teach some of my secrets- which I do throughout my book.

WINGMAN: The foreword for your book was written by another football great; Michael Strahan- a man we greatly admire here at *Wingman* who has also been on our cover. How did that friendship come about?

JENNINGS: Coming into the league, he was somebody that I always admired from a distance not simply because of everything he was able to do on the field, but off of it as well. We befriended each other at one point. He is a former retired Giant, I’m a Giant, so, that organic relationship was definitely there. Having a long conversation about life and what I wanted to do inspired him, so I asked if he would be interested in writing the foreword and he said *“absolutely.”* So, it really fell into place organically.

WINGMAN: You are two years removed from the NFL now. Do you still get the bug to strap on the pads as the season draws near?

JENNINGS: [Laughs] I have no desire to put on any pads! There is no energy in me to go out in this hot sun and practice. I love going training and working out- and that will continue, but, as far as putting on them pads, *I’m good.*

“There is no other sport that teaches you more life lessons than football.”

WINGMAN: You were drafted out of Liberty University in the 7th round by the Jags. Some great players like yourself have also been drafted in the late rounds. What was it like waiting for that call to come in? What were the thoughts going through your head?

JENNINGS: My thoughts were what they would be whether I went in the first round or if I went undrafted. If a team picked me then the only thing they were giving me was an opportunity. I would earn my right, earn my keep, earn respect from the team and organization, and fight for my position on the field. I had that mentality in high school since I was a fifth string running back,

continued with that mentality going into college, and really, I never stopped working.

WINGMAN: Who is one current Quarterback that you would love to get that one last touch-down hand off from, and why?

JENNINGS: Eli [Manning,] definitely! He’s my guy- and it’s good because I would be back in Giant blue.

WINGMAN: The NFL has surpassed Major League Baseball as “America’s Pastime” and American football definitely brings people together every Saturday and Sunday in the fall- whether it’s pro or amateur. What are your thoughts on the camaraderie that is achieved when it comes football and it’s fans?

JENNINGS: There is nothing like it! Whether you become a fan from the sport or now from fantasy football now [chuckles again,] whether you watch teams to boo them or cheer them, you got cookouts, grills, and people from all ethnicities- football brings *everyone* together. It’s an awesome sport and it’s the most watched sport. I have played every other sport there is to offer, and I personally feel there is no other sport that teaches you more life lessons than football.

WINGMAN: When you take that first step out of the locker room onto the field in the first game of the season, you are going to battle with 52 other guys- some of which you have only known for a couple of weeks. Touch on how when it comes to football, it’s not about the name on the back of the jersey, but really the one on the front.

JENNINGS: Oh, *absolutely!* The



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