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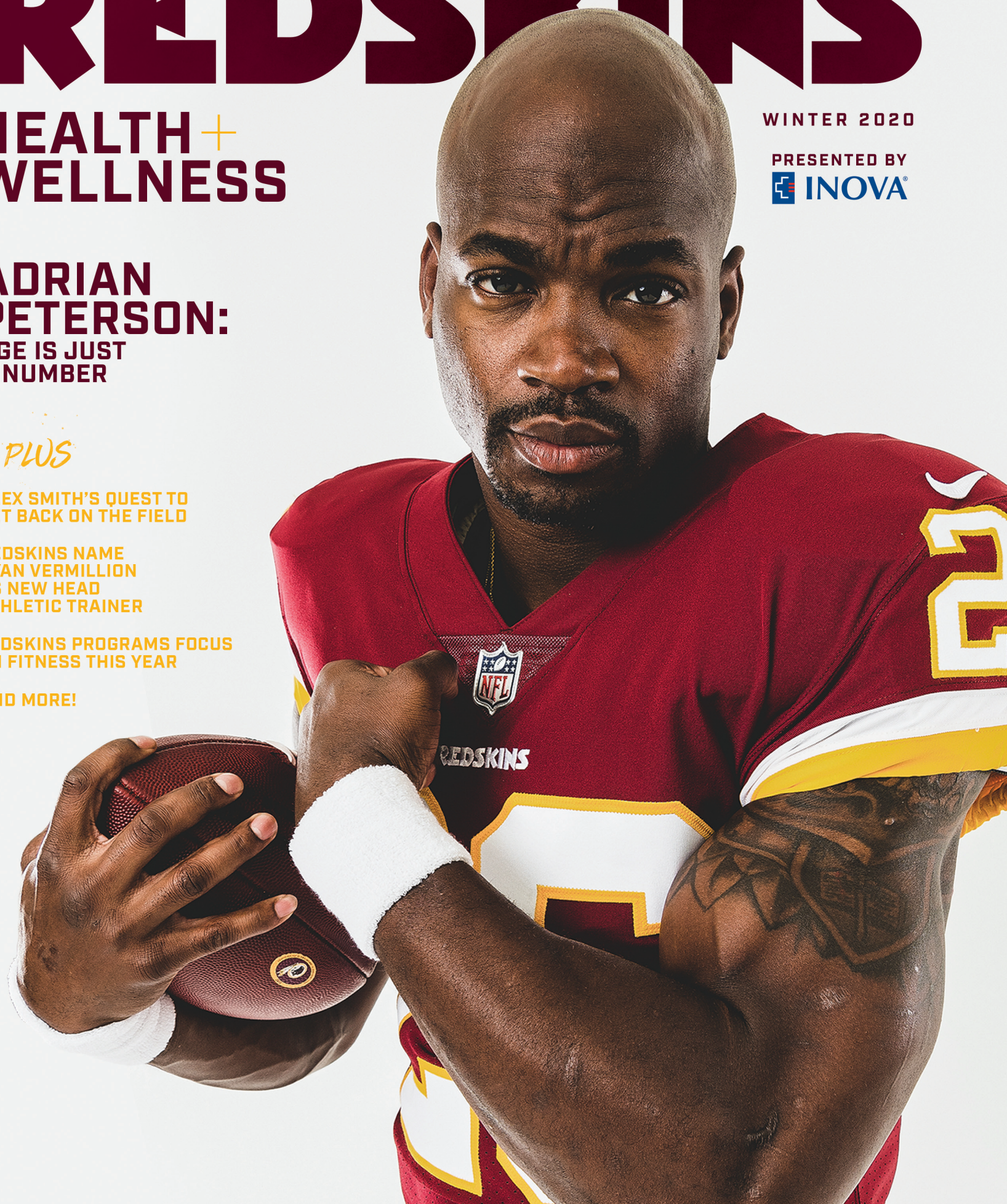
*+ PLUS*

ALEX SMITH'S QUEST TO  
GET BACK ON THE FIELD

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RYAN VERMILLION  
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# For Running Back Adrian Peterson, Age Is Just A Number

*Peterson is in his mid-30s, yet the future Hall of Famer has shown no signs of slowing down with the Redskins.*

By Kyle Stackpole

It was August of 2018, and Adrian Peterson was out of work. The veteran running back was coming off an underwhelming season that began in New Orleans and ended in Arizona, but he wanted to keep playing. Even after 11 NFL seasons, he knew he could still perform at a high level. He just needed another chance.

That opportunity came with the Washington Redskins, who were scrambling for another running back after presumed starter Derrius Guice tore his ACL in the first preseason game. The Redskins signed Peterson on Aug. 20, and about three weeks later he exploded for 166 total yards in a win over the Cardinals in the regular season opener.

That game kick-started what's been a mutually beneficial relationship between Peterson and the Redskins over the past two seasons. He's started all but one game during that stretch, rushing for 1,940 yards on 462 attempts -- good for 4.2 yards per carry -- and scoring 12 touchdowns.

He's been reliable and professional, a formidable lead back and an invaluable mentor who, even in his mid-30s, just keeps producing.

"I'm going to keep going," Peterson told reporters towards the end of this season. "My body is feeling good. I'm still loving the game. Obviously I can still play and perform at a high level. Why walk away from it now? So, I'm going to keep going."

Statistically speaking, Peterson turned in a historic 2018 campaign. After replacing Guice as the workhorse in the backfield, Peterson carried the ball more than he had since 2015 and racked up 1,042 yards to go along with seven rushing touchdowns. In doing so, he became the oldest 1,000-yard rusher since the 1980s, when former Redskins great John Riggins accomplished the feat in 1984.

But in talking with Redskins.com back in March, shortly after re-signing a multi-year deal with the team, Peterson downplayed those gaudy totals.

"I feel like [that] was just a decent season, like for me in my mind," Peterson said. "People were like, 'Wow, you did incredible, you had 1,000 yards.' And I'm like, 'Man, I should have had 15, 16 hundred yards.'"

That's sort of how Peterson felt following the 2019 campaign, which was defined by record-breaking moments.



By rushing for 898 yards over 15 games, he passed Pro Football Hall of Famers Jerome Bettis, LaDainian Tomlinson and Curtis Martin for fifth on the NFL's all-time rushing list (14,216). By rushing for five touchdowns, he passed Jim Brown and Walter Payton for fourth on the league all-time rushing touchdowns list (111).

Even though Peterson was inactive

Week 1 and split carries with Guice during four other games, he fully expected to surpass 1,000 yards rushing for the ninth time in his 13-year career.

"Personally, I feel like it was a decent season," Peterson said. "Personally, I would've wished to accomplish a lot more, but it was a rocky season. I think it shows the grit of our team, us as individuals just to continue to push through

the season, just continue to fight and that's what I've always been about: making the best of whatever circumstance or situation you're in and just making the best of it. I feel like, personally, that's what I did."

A lot will have changed when Peterson returns to the field. New head coach Ron Rivera will lead the Redskins into a new era, while first-year offensive coordinator Scott Turner will oversee Peterson's side of the ball. Guice will also be back, as will 2019 fourth-round running back Bryce Love, who missed his entire rookie campaign with a knee injury.

Despite these variables, Peterson fully expects to be back and better than ever with the Redskins in 2020.

"People say, 'Well, you looked pretty decent this year and this could've happened, that could've happened,' Peterson said. "Individually, when you look at yourself, no one knows you like you. For me, it was just a good eye-opener for me to go into this offseason and come back and have the best season of my career. I know that might sound crazy to some people, but if you were in my shoes, you would definitely understand where I'm coming from."



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# Alex Smith Gives An Update On His Recovery, Which Now Includes Running And Making Dropback Passes

*It's been a long path for Alex Smith as he tries to make a full recovery from a broken tibia and fibula, but he's optimistic as he's moved onto "quarterback stuff."*

By Zach Selby

Quarterback Alex Smith is running -- as in literally running -- into the next phase of his road to recovery and playing in the NFL again. Smith's injury against the Houston Texans last November is not one Redskins fans will soon forget. His broken fibula and tibia in his right leg resurrected memories of Joe Theismann, who suffered the same injury more than 30 years earlier, and since then Smith has fought through 17 surgeries and infections on the arduous climb towards making a comeback.

Now, more than a year after the injury, Smith has entered the next phase of his recovery: working on football motions.

"I've really tried to transition into working on some football stuff," Smith told Voice of the Redskins Larry Michael on the Redskins' podcast, "The Alex Smith Report" towards the end of the 2019 campaign. "Like into some quarterback stuff."

Smith isn't talking about throwing the football; he's been doing that for some time now, and in October he was seen working with coaches on the team's practice field while throwing passes.

Smith is talking about making dropbacks, moving around, throwing live routes to receivers and "getting some kind of real work in."

"I'm working on my own, doing some

of that stuff, so it's kind of the next phase in this," Smith said. "It was always lurking to kind of graduate out of everyday stuff and try to get into some athletic stuff and try to push that."

The thing that Smith is most excited about is running.

"I'm out of the AlterG (a treadmill that is designed to "unweight" the user through the use of differential air pressure)," Smith said with a smile. "It just feels good to be able to run and drop and throw."

Little has been revealed about Smith's recovery since his injury, but his coaches and teammates have been astounded with his dedication and progress towards making a full recovery. He was limited to a wheelchair in the months after his surgery and had to wear an external fixator, which stabilized the broken bones in his lower leg.

Smith remained in the hospital for almost a month before he was released, and it was even longer before his first public appearance, which came during a Washington Wizards game in January.

The months after the injury were difficult for Smith and his family, he said, but they adjusted well to his recovery process.

"My family, we're in a great place," Smith said. "It was hard there for a few months when I was really incapacitated and couldn't help, and in fact, I was almost another child for my wife to take care of. She had to drive me everywhere, take care of me in a lot of ways, almost

like a nurse."

Smith said in June that an NFL comeback was "the plan," and he's been working every day to get back onto the field. Smith eventually didn't require a wheelchair to get around, and after eight months he shed the external fixator for good. (He now wears a black compression sleeve on his right leg.) As the Redskins were preparing for their Monday Night Football game against the Chicago Bears on Sept. 23, he walked onto FedExField without assistance and no noticeable limp.

In December, Smith was named as the Redskins' Ed Block Courage Award recipient for his extraordinary courage in the face of adversity.

Smith still has a ways to go before suiting up and trying to win football games. He's still working on getting his strength back, and he's constantly monitoring how his leg feels from a medical standpoint.

He's optimistic there will come a time where he doesn't have to worry about that anymore.

"Without a doubt, yeah," Smith said when asked about his plans to get back into the field in 2020. "Still continue to push this as far as it goes. I still have dreams of getting back to where I was and getting back out there. This has been, obviously, a crazy ride with a lot of unforeseen turns, but without a doubt that's still my goal."



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# Redskins Announce Ryan Vermillion As New Head Athletic Trainer

*Vermillion brings more than three decades of NFL experience to the Redskins.*

By Redskins Public Relations

**T**he Washington Redskins announced that they have named Ryan Vermillion to the role of head athletic trainer on Jan. 6, 2020.

“Ryan Vermillion is one of the most respected and seasoned head athletic trainers in the NFL,” said Washington Redskins owner Dan Snyder. “His 25-plus years of NFL experience and his familiarity with Coach Rivera made him a perfect fit for our organization.”

“For many years, I’ve seen firsthand the positive impact Ryan has on a team,” said Washington Redskins head coach Ron Rivera. “His primary focus has always been the health of the players and he is going to be a tremendous addition to the Redskins.”

“The Washington Redskins are very fortunate to be able to add Ryan Vermillion to our training staff. He is one of the most valued and senior athletic trainers in the NFL,” said Redskins Team Doctor James Andrews. “His experience in the field brings our medical team to the highest level and furthers our goal of being the best in the NFL.”

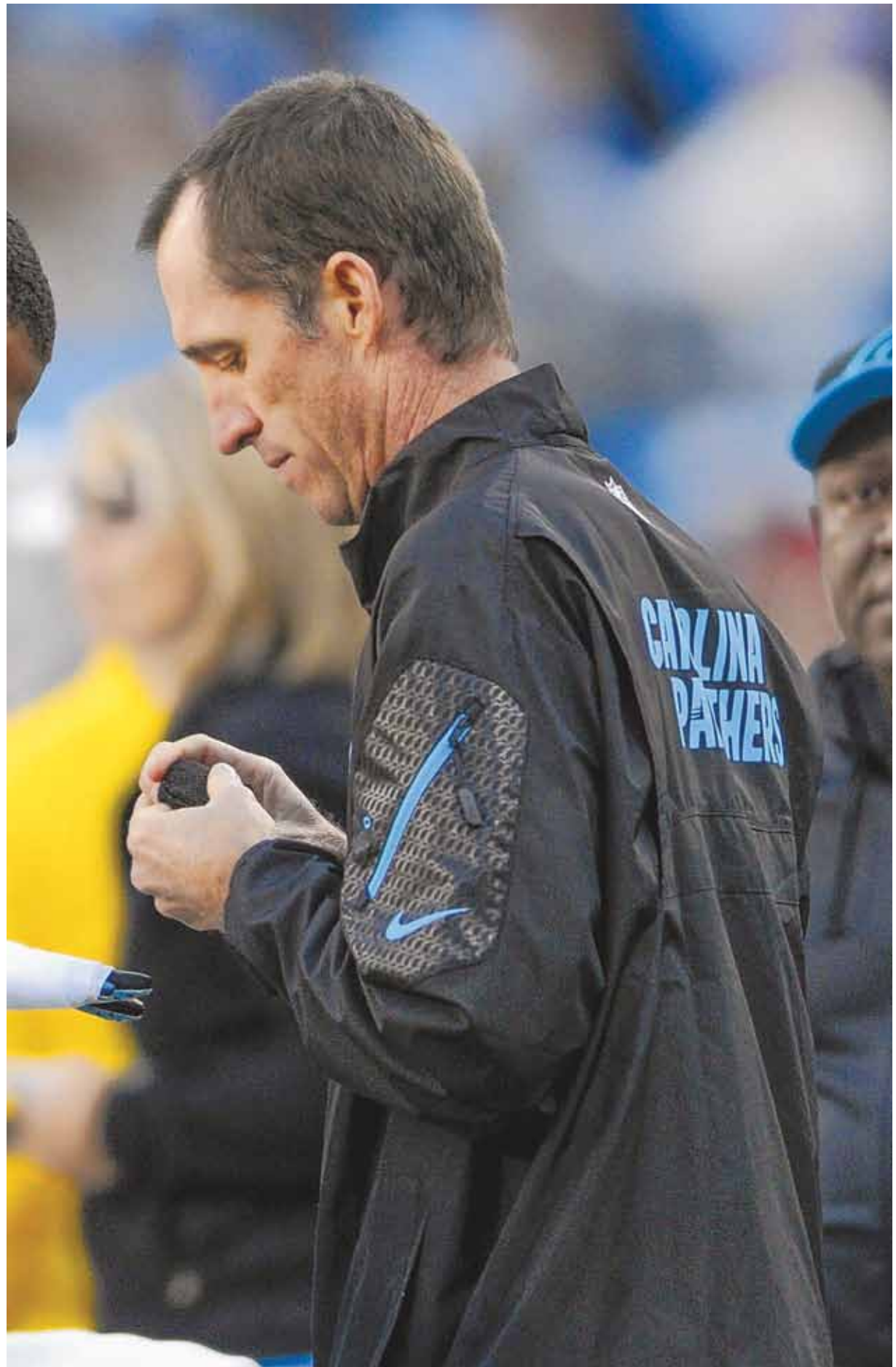
Vermillion spent 18 seasons as the head athletic trainer for the Carolina Panthers, nine of which he

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worked under Rivera. During his tenure with Carolina, Vermillion was responsible for the coordination of all aspects of health care for the Panthers. He managed the athletic training room, including all full-time and season-long trainers and is experienced in risk management and injury prevention along with pathology of injuries and illnesses and rehabilitation. Vermillion is also well versed in the nutritional aspects of injury and illness. He was given the Fain-Cain Memorial Award for Outstanding NFL Trainer of the Year in 2016, and in 2003 he led the training staff of the year as voted on by his fellow NFL colleagues.

Prior to working in Carolina, Vermillion was the Director of Rehabilitation for the Washington Redskins and will now return to the team after 18 seasons. Prior to his one season in Washington, he spent nine seasons working under Hall of Fame Head Coach Don Shula with the Miami Dolphins. In Miami, he spent four seasons as the head athletic trainer and five seasons as the director of rehabilitation and associate athletic trainer. Vermillion was a 1987 graduate of the University of Miami (Fla.) and spent four years as a student athletic trainer.



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YE's Redskins Ambassador







# Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation Makes Strides With FITT Health & Wellness Program

*In its fourth year, Redskins FITT continues to help middle school students stay active and healthy.*

**By Sayer Paige and Caroline Palmer**

**T**his fall, seventh-grade students at Greenbelt Middle School in Maryland participated in a Redskins FITT (Frequency, Intensity, Time & Type) Special Event hosted by the Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation.

FITT, a young health and wellness initiative that began during the 2016-17 school year, encourages a healthy lifestyle through conditioning sessions and by assisting children to develop personalized two-week fitness plans. Currently, the Redskins and the FITT program work together with 51 schools across three counties (Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince George's) and Washington D.C. The gathering at Greenbelt Middle School was the first to occur in one of the public schools in Prince George's County.

Following a group-wide dynamic warm up, students engaged in various activities that centered around physical



exercise. The stations included a speed and agility relay, slide tag, 4-star, a 20-yard dash and flag tag.

Among those in attendance was Redskins cornerback Danny Johnson, who said events like these hold a lot of value.

"I have a son myself," Johnson said. "Watching him run and around and play sports and stay in shape. I like to see the other kids do the same thing as well."

Meghan Higgenbotham, a physical education teacher at Greenbelt, agrees and recognized that the FITT program can set an important precedent in child development.

"If you start young, then [you will] follow it through life," Higgenbotham said. "I try to instill those same things into my students."

The Redskins FITT program has already impacted 1,591 student during the 2019 - 2020 school year alone through workshops, and over 12,000 seventh-grade students participate in the program overall.





# HUT! HUT! HYDRATE!



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# WOW Focuses On Health And Wellness In 2019

**W**OW focused on meaningful events during the 2019 season that helped fuel the body, mind and spirit. There were two large group fitness events held at FedExField in June and October that were run by fitness guru Deanna Robinson. October's workout also integrated a kid's element with Halloween activities around the stadium.

September's cooking class with Chef Wendi James of CulinAerie DC was educational and tasty. Not only was the food amazing, but special guests Santana Moss and Julie Donaldson helped provide entertainment as they cooked alongside everyone.

In November, a month-long fit series featured a HITT workout every Saturday in Arlington, Virginia. These classes provided women with a fun network each week to help motivate each other, as well as speakers to kick off each workout and healthy snack giveaways.

Also in November was WOW's Inaugural Women's Leadership Brunch. Three female industry professionals, along with motivational speaker Jackie Bob Pearson, helped make the event meaningful and inspiring. Below is what Tiffany Johnson -- DCPS

Principal of Whittier "STEM" Education Campus -- said about the event:

"Every attendee put their pen to use as they captured quotes, and aha moments that will for sure enhance their leadership ability. This group of women was not your traditional

group of NFL stakeholders. They embodied the ideal of sisterhood. My sisters made sure I not only had the strategies to care for myself and to lead my school and family but most importantly to serve my community. Did I mention this was my first-time

attending? For sure, I will be back again, as this has been stamped, as a self-care must do! I am eternally grateful for the privilege to surround myself with such forward-thinking and like-minded women.



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