

## Q & A with Patrick Peterson of the Arizona Cardinals

Written by Interview by Dexter Presley

Monday, 29 April 2013 10:28 - Last Updated Monday, 29 April 2013 10:40

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Aside from setting records his rookie season with most punt return yards, most punt returns, and making the All-Pro first team for defense, in just a short amount of time Patrick Peterson has become an impact player for the Cardinals defense. And his journey is just getting started.



*Plynn Photography*

**AFM:** Hey, how's this offseason be going?

**PP:** I'm playing a little golf. I'm back home, in Phoenix. Thus far, this off season has been interesting. Doing something different this year as far as getting a guy ready to pursue his dreams, going in the NFL. I've been working my body out hard, doing a little traveling, and it's been pretty fun and intriguing as well.

**AFM:** What type of things are you doing now to prepare for the season?

**PP:** It's all about being better than your previous year. I just try to maintain my conditioning, making sure my legs are always strong as a defensive back. I always have to make sure my legs are strong and healthy so that I can withstand and endure a whole game of relentless effort.

**AFM:** What do you think has been the reason for your success early on in your career? Is it just your work ethic or wanting to be better every single game and season?

**PP:** I think it's a combination of both. It's wanting to be great at my position, having that work ethic and knowing what it takes to be a success. It also with me being the oldest—I don't want to let my siblings down. By me being the big brother of five, I have to make sure that I'm the positive role model and I'm doing everything the right way that needs to be done, so that when my brothers and sisters get to this position or point in life they'll know how to handle it and there won't be any hiccups and it'll be smooth.

**AFM:** Is that from you being a family-type guy?

**PP:** Absolutely. Being a family-type guy and being around my grandfather and grandparents, living with both mom and dad in house. It taught me what it takes to be the best and what it takes to be a big brother.

**AFM:** What would be your advice for a player looking to pursue a football career after high school?

**PP:** First and foremost, academics are so important. The number one thing is getting your work done in the classroom. The next thing is believing in yourself. Believe within your ability that anything you set your mind to it can be done. And a final piece of advice is always have confidence within yourself. Because at the end of the day, if you don't have confidence that you can get the job done, who will? You have to feel better than each and every one that you're on the field, basketball court or professional field.

**AFM:** I've always heard from successful people, especially in sports, that it's more a mental thing than physical. If you have confidence in your position and skill that it's half the battle.

**PP:** Absolutely.

**AFM:** Last season had several ups and downs--that being said, the Cardinals still have potential and promise to return to a high level of play. What steps do you think need to be made to spark this return?

**PP:** We have the potential to be as good as we want to be. I think we have the coaching and personnel, the player personnel, and playoff personnel to make that dream come true and put all the pieces together to make a championship team. I think we have the formula to be a competitive team, but having played in a conference that plays at a high level, the last couple of years we haven't been near that level. But I believe that now, since we have new coaches around the physicality and new faces, that we have the opportunity to grow a new identity and get a new swagger about ourselves. I think gonna be great for us; it's always good for change and I think it's gonna be a great change--on the offensive, defensive side, and as an organization.

**AFM:** Have you been able to sit down with Coach Arians yet and talk?

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**PP:** As of yet, I haven't had the opportunity to talk to Coach Arians about football, it was more of a meet and greet; having an understand of each other, how it is in Arizona, how the team and locker room is before he got here, things like that. We haven't had a chance to talk football, but as the opportunity comes, I can't wait. I can talk football all day.

**AFM:** How difficult was it to go through all those hardships last season? As a fan, we get upset because we want to see our team win and their losing. But is it just as hard for players?

**PP:** That can be tough. Like you said the game, it's 60 percent mental and 30 percent physical, but as a football team it can be tough. But at the end of the day, we're professionals, our job is to go out there and win football games no matter how many games were lost. [But] we have a fresh start and new opportunity to get a "W" that following Sunday...that's the best thing the NFL. I understand how frustrating it is for the Arizona Cardinals fans, not having that winning mentality around, but we definitely hope to turn that around this year.

**AFM:** I spoke to Eason about how players are expected to perform at a high level, regardless of if you're winning or losing. I like to bring it up anytime there's an opportunity to talk to players to see if it's as hard on the players as it is for fans.

**PP:** I think it's harder on us because the fans don't see the work we put in; the fans only see the outcome. So, they don't know how hard we work and how early we are up in the morning. It's our job, but at the same time, I think we feel the losing a little bit more, but like you said it's our profession and we have to go out there and perform to our best ability. You never know when it's going to be the last time stepping on the field doing something you love.

**AFM:** What are you most looking forward to with the new season approaching in a few months?

**PP:** I'm looking forward to first and foremost meeting my new teammates. We have a lot of changes around here, not only coach but a lot of new players. I'm definitely looking forward to meeting those guys and building chemistry and that new bond with a new pack of guys. I'm just ready for the season to get started, not being able to make the playoffs and not being able to enjoy a winning football season, I'm just ready to win. Hopefully I can do everything in my power to help my team get there and get to the Super Bowl. Our first goal is to get to the playoffs, and after that, the ultimate goal is to get to the Super Bowl.

**AFM:** What are some of your favorite things to do in the Valley?

**PP:** We gave out some turkeys for Thanksgiving. I did the shopping drive for Christmas last year. I do a lot of stuff back home. I do back to school supplies for the kids, and get boys haircuts. And next year, hopefully, I can have a football camp. I want to get a football camp started in the Valley, and help share my professional knowledge with the young kids that are trying to get where I'm at today.

**AFM:** Do you guys really enjoy getting out in the community and meeting fans?

**PP:** Oh, yeah. We definitely love doing community work because at the end of the day if we're not supporting our fans, our fans aren't going to support us. If we want to be a championship-caliber football team, and we definitely have to have a strong fan base so when we have games to the bird nest, they'll be screaming and shouting making it tough for the opposing team to make things happen.

**AFM:** Do you have a foundation that you do your own charity work with?

**PP:** Yeah, I have a foundation, and I'm having a football camp this year in Florida. It's Patrick Peterson Foundation for Success.

**AFM:** Do you have a favorite restaurant?

**PP:** I like two restaurants. I like [Mastro's] City Hall, and when my family or friends come in from out of town I like ATL wings.

**AFM:** Have a hidden gem?

**PP:** I also love BJ's Brewery...but I wouldn't necessarily call it a hidden spot. A lot of people like going there.