

Tebow, McCoy Take Faith, Skills to NFL

What is left to write about Tim Tebow?

We all know his resume: a Heisman Trophy. Two Maxwell Awards. As a freshman backup quarterback, Tebow used his fullback-style runs and old school-style jump passes to be a complimentary part of Florida's 2006 national championship team.

Two years later, Tebow was a "part" of Florida's 2008 national champions the same way Michael Jordan was a "part" of the Chicago Bulls' six NBA titles.

Tebow led the entire nation in passing efficiency during his senior year. He graduates with over 9,200 passing yards, almost 3,000 rushing yards and 145 touchdowns via his arm or his feet.

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We all know that Tebow was the story of this year's NFL Draft. His mechanics- his quickening of his release, his working under center, his unveiling of "Tebow 2.0"- gave the Talking Heads plenty to gab about in the run up between this year's BCS National Championship and the April 22nd draft.

When the Denver Broncos traded up to select Tim Tebow late in the first round of the Draft, it sent some gasps through the National Football League. Many "experts" pegged Tebow as a second or third round pick. Denver's message to the world was that winning trumped "tools"; character trumped mechanics.

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We all know about Tebow's marketing power. When the lefty wore "John 3:16" on his eye black the night of the 2008 BCS National Championship Game, "John 3:16" was the next day's top Google hit.

"Actually, I wore Philippians 4:13 under my eyes the whole year because that is a very meaningful verse to me- 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'," offered Tebow. "It is a very good verse but then for the national championship I decided in my heart that I needed to switch because John 3:16 is the essence of Christianity. 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only son and whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.'

"That's the essence of Christianity and having that out there, having people see that and knowing what my faith is about and where I stand- (that) is great. And for that then to be the most Googled thing in the entire world- there were 93 million people who Googled what John

3:16 is- is pretty cool.”

There is no bigger media event than the Super Bowl and within the Super Bowl, there is no bigger media event than the commercials. Tebow and his mother Pam starred in a well done ad sponsored by Focus on the Family; the ad gently reminded America that Pam’s pregnancy with Tim was high-risk and many doctors advised Pam to abort her baby. Fortunately, Pam ignored them.

With hindsight, it can be safely said that Pam was right and the doctors were wrong.

The positive message and benign nature of the ad still didn’t stop many groups from protesting furiously and generating controversy. Even on the biggest stage of the professional sports world, collegian Tebow was unwillingly front and center of attention.

So really, what is left to write about Tim Tebow?

There is an old truism among preachers. “How many times does someone need to hear the Gospel message?” they ask. The answer is: One more time.

How many times do Christians need to see someone like Tebow, or his fellow drafted quarterback Colt McCoy, take a public stand for Jesus Christ? One more time.

It is appropriate that three of the 2010 NFL Draft’s first 85 picks were quarterbacks who have made such public stands. Tebow brings the gospel ministry as close as local prisons in Florida and as far to orphans in the Philippines.

Texas Longhorn- now Cleveland Brown- quarterback Colt McCoy has been recognized for his work with Fellowship of Christian Athletes and has spent spring breaks volunteering at a Christian sports camp in Peru. The Browns selected McCoy, the 2009 Maxwell Award winner for national player of the year, in the third round.

The Tuscola, TX native earned that Maxwell- in 2009, the Longhorns’ signal caller threw for 3,521 yards while completing almost 71% of his passes. In his final six regular season games, McCoy completed 74% of his attempts for almost 1,800 yards. 16 passes went for touchdowns while just two were intercepted.

McCoy fired 112 touchdown strikes in his four year career. His 13,253 career yards are the sixth best in NCAA history. His 45 wins as a starter: tops in NCAA history.

But the humble Texan- like Tebow- would also likely defer credit: to his teammates, to his coaches and to his Savior.

“One of my favorite Bible verses is Colossians 3:23 and it says “For whatever you do, work at it with all of your heart as if you were working at it for the Lord.” That verse has been the verse that has fueled me for a long time,” said McCoy in December.

“Whether that is through the classroom, whether that is doing community service, whether that is playing football or practicing or working out, I’m going to give my best effort to be the best I can be for the Lord. I think that that is something that everybody can relate to. They may not be the best athlete but they can definitely work their hardest and be their best for a bigger cause.”

McCoy doesn’t take his community service lightly. The grandson of missionaries, McCoy told the Maxwell Football Club, “My whole life, I’ve really been looking to go on and serve on a mission trip. I was teaching a bunch of kids (in Peru) how to play football, basketball and baseball.

He continued, “I always had the idea that I was going to give something back, but in reality they gave me so much more than I could ever have given them. From that experience I’ve really changed my attitude towards a lot of things: I’m so much more appreciative of the things I have. I’m so grateful for all of the blessings that we have.”

McCoy too has received a fair share of press. Not only was he a Heisman Trophy finalist but his Longhorns fought valiantly in January’s BCS National Championship game. Despite the hype around him, his story and his stand can always be told One More Time.

The 2010 draft opened with Sam Bradford’s selection by the St. Louis Rams. Bradford and McCoy- huge rivals on the field- teamed up to produce the powerful “I am Second” video series in which both gunslingers acknowledge their walk with the Lord.

All three quarterbacks now head to the NFL, where they will face improved competition, media scrutiny, new cities and fan pressure to perform at a world-class level.

Yet all three will have the chance to demonstrate to an even wider audience what it means to be a Competitor for Christ. They’ll have the chance to have their story told One More Time.

At the 2009 Maxwell Dinner, Tebow was asked what was the most difficult part of playing elite Division I football and being a Christian. The question takes on greater significance with his jump to the NFL.

“That’s a good question,” Tebow replied. “I think that through everything, there are a lot of temptations and a lot of people trying to get at you. For some people, it’s probably proclaiming their faith. I think my background has helped me be bold enough to do that.”

For Tebow, a key to responding to that challenge is “knowing what you want to accomplish with your faith and what you want to accomplish with your teammates as far as relationship building.”

As Tebow and McCoy close the books on their college careers and sharpen their pencils to start writing a new one, they will have a chance to accomplish things with their faith. Let’s hope that sports fans don’t get weary of hearing their stories, testimonies and accomplishments. When elite athletes proclaim Christ as Savior, it can always be heard One More Time.

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