

LEARNING TO SURF
SOUTH OF THE BORDER

BACK-TO-SCHOOL FASHION:
SNEAKERS FOR GROWN-UPS

KEITH RICHARDS
ON HIS NEWEST SONGS

AMERICAN WAY

"If you tell me to do something and I want to know why and you don't want to tell me why — no."

SEPTEMBER 2015

INSIDE OUR FULLY INFLATED
NFL
KICKOFF
MARSHAWN TALKS!
PLUS GOURMET
GRUB AT SIX
NFL STADIUMS

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

BEASTMODE

Prepare yourselves, football fans — Marshawn Lynch has some unfinished business



Smashmouth Sustenance

Let's forgo the standard are-you-ready-for-some-football? speak and start off by agreeing that yes, we are. Most likely because the high-drama 2014 season ended with the professional-sports equivalent of a hanging chad. (Sorry for that dated reference. #GetCurrent.)

The big "What if?" question still looms large. In my opinion, had Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson handed off the ball to running back Marshawn Lynch for a mere one-yard run from the New England Patriots' goal line, the Seahawks would have been back-to-back world champions. (Marshawn averages 4.3 yards per carry.)

But that's not what has me so excited for kickoff. For me, it's the twin hearts of smashmouth action on the field, and the food I put in my own smashed-up, chipped-tooth mouth off it.

Let's start with the former: an unbridled, up-the-gut, downhill running style.

My sister has lived in Seattle for close to a decade, so I've become a Seahawks fan. I love CenturyLink Field; I love that their fans are bleeding-ear loud; I love that their uniforms are unconventional; and I love the team's history. Growing up, their Steve Largent was locked in a fierce battle with my Ozzie Newsome of the Cleveland Browns for most consecutive regular-season games with a reception. (Largent won.)

Mostly, I love Marshawn Lynch. There's something to be said about someone who, especially in this day and age, does his trash-talking on the field, and whose prowess is determined solely

by his body of work (unlike Seahawks teammate Richard Sherman, who is amazing, but who runs his mouth as much as his feet).

Marshawn has no use for guys like me — guys who make their livings and ply their trades by analyzing and scrutinizing his every word and move. He's not alone, mind you. Plenty of NFL superstars have shied away from the media over time. Look no further than Sweetness himself.

Walter Payton of the Chicago Bears talked to reporters when he had to, but he was the quiet type. The media gave him

a pass because he held almost every rushing record there was by the time he retired in 1987 (he averaged 4.4 yards per carry in his career).

Marshawn, on the other hand, is openly contemptuous — even hostile — when it comes to the media. But in this day and age, I like it. Just look at my shirt for proof.

Only an athlete as talented and storied — and philanthropic — as Beast Mode himself could get away with such chutzpah. His confidence transcends professional boundaries. For instance, if I were to walk into my boss' office, and were he to ask me to go speak to the media, and if I were to tell him, "Hey, I'm just here so I won't get fined," you could bet safe money that you would not be reading my smashmouth prose ever again. Then again, I may be a good writer, but I'm not Marshawn-good. Truth be

told, when it comes to writing, I'm not Jan Hubbard-good either (read his exclusive interview with Marshawn on page 44 to find out why).

Which brings me back to the latter of my twin hearts: stuff-my-face Sunday eating.

Time was when I'd go to Cleveland Municipal Stadium with my old man and eat three or four hot dogs and a bag of peanuts. If we were winning and my old man was feeling generous, I'd get a Polish sausage for a bank-breaking \$4 (1980s confectionary inflation: #BigSpender).

These days at FirstEnergy Stadium

(the new Cleveland stadium built on the site of the old Municipal Stadium), native son Michael Symon is serving up foodstuff that used to be reserved for exclusive five-star

restaurants (page 54). He's not alone. Our writer rounds up the six best stadiums in the country vis-à-vis gourmet offerings.

Place your bets and get ready for what promises to be one of the best NFL seasons in recent memory. This issue is a good primer. And don't get fined.

#GoBrowns!

THERE'S SOMETHING TO BE SAID ABOUT SOMEONE WHO, ESPECIALLY IN THIS DAY AND AGE, DOES HIS TRASH-TALKING ON THE FIELD.



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