

KATY MAGAZINE TALKS TO

ANDY DALTON

Catching up with the NFL quarterback and former Katy Tiger to find out how he makes it work as a first-time dad, devoted husband, and fearless leader of the Cincinnati Bengals

Written by Ashley Lancaster | Select photography courtesy of the Cincinnati Bengals

During the last interview with Andy Dalton, he was a young athlete from Katy on the brink of a promising future in professional football. Now, he is a seasoned pro quarterback, family man, and philanthropist ready to reflect on the last four years of life, love, and football.

FORGING AHEAD

Straight out of college at Texas Christian University, Dalton was thrown into a scenario he'd never faced, in the form of the 2011 NFL lockout. "It was rough, but I didn't really know what I was missing. We just forged ahead and did the best we could with the resources we had to prepare for the upcoming season," he says. In his rookie year, Dalton led the Bengals to a 9-7 season, their best outing since 2009, and got them a wild card spot in the 2011 to 2012 NFL playoffs.

Still, even among the excitement of playing for the big leagues, there have been a few personal thrills that he will never forget. "Growing up, I went to Texans games at Reliant Stadium, and I played there as a Katy Tiger and as quarterback for TCU; but the coolest feeling ever was playing at NRG (formerly Reliant Stadium) for the Bengals and getting the win on my dad's birthday."

FAMILY OVER EVERYTHING

Dalton credits his firm family foundation for his success in life. He recalls the sacrifices made on the part of others that helped him get to where he is. "I was able to get a chance to play in college because I had talent but also because my parents sacrificed their time to take me to 15 football camps to get ready for college. My mom made my scouting tapes," he says. Now, when he comes home, Dalton gets to experience his entire extended family - cousins, siblings, aunts, and uncles - showing enthusiasm and getting involved, something he says has been amazing to witness.

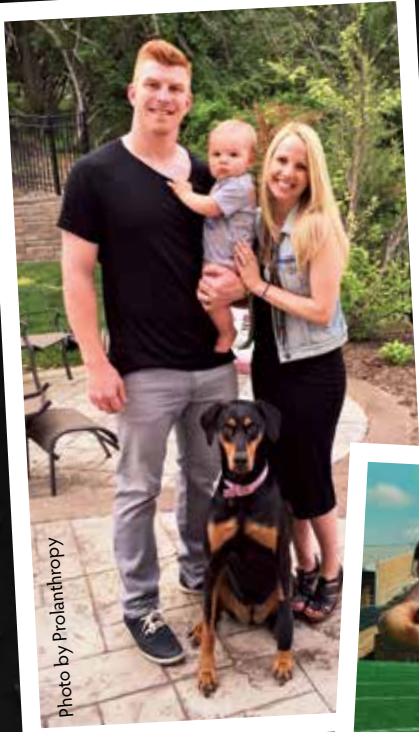
With their son Noah to care for, family time is now more important than ever, and he and his wife Jordan enjoy the hours they get to spend together. "Jordan has been so amazing and supportive. I feel blessed to have her on this journey with me."

During the off season, the Daltons do the best they can to cherish time with friends and family. "We don't get to see them as much as we like, but we make it work. We'll fly them out for games or visit during the off season. But without a doubt, every time I come home to Katy, I have to go to Los Cucos at least once," he says.

After his time as a Katy Tiger, Dalton went on to secure two Sugar Bowl victories for the TCU Horned Frogs in 2005 and 2009, and a Rose Bowl championship as a senior in 2011. As an NFL quarterback, he led Cincinnati to four playoff appearances in four seasons.

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- Andy Dalton,
QB, Cincinnati Bengals



Dalton with his wife Jordan and son Noah

Photo by Proanthropy



Dalton follows the Katy Tiger football team on Twitter while he's on the road with the Bengals

CULTURE OF WINNING

Forever a Katy Tigers fan, Dalton admits to watching the football games from his iPad while he's on the road. When asked what he thinks is the secret ingredient behind the athletes that emerge from Katy's football program, he says, "Gary Joseph and the coaching staff get guys to buy in to the belief that you're going to win a championship. The way they run the program just makes it fun to be there. The success of the program, winning so many state championships, the whole culture is winning. The hard work they put into it carries over into life, and the kids carry that with them later on."

It's that mindset that Dalton carried with him throughout his college career and into the NFL. It is part of the reason he has been such a success, both on and off the field. Dalton advises young athletes pursuing a professional career to put their education at the forefront.

"I think that it's important to complete your education no matter what. In college and in sports, you have to weigh where you're at and where you're going to end up. Education is extremely important, and the NFL has so many programs like tuition reimbursement that make it possible to get your degree. There are people here on staff saying, 'Hey, we want you to have an education.' The NFL has always been very supportive of that," says Dalton.

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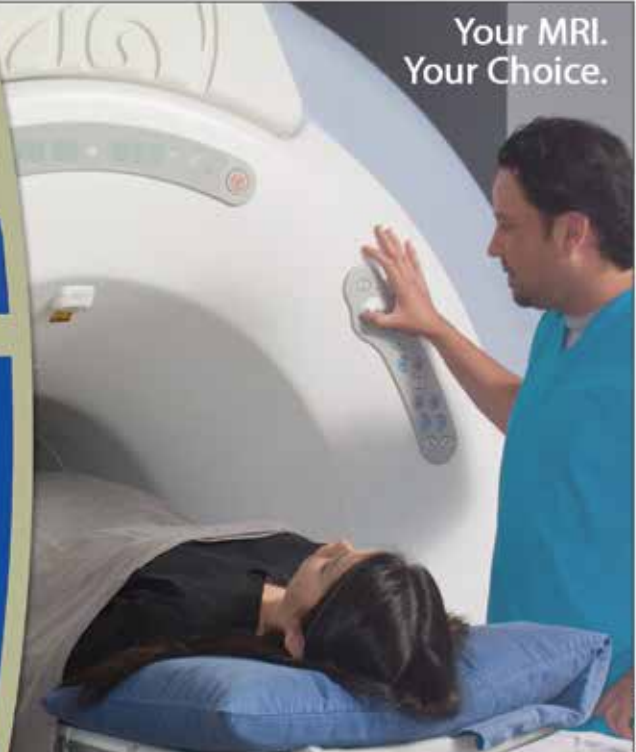
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A FOUNDATION OF KINDNESS

From the start, Dalton has been determined not to be known only for his athletic ability, but also for those whom he has helped. And in Cincinnati, he's as famous for his generous heart as he is for his talent on the football field. When the Daltons were presented with the opportunity to start a foundation in 2011, they were thrilled but intimidated. "We knew we wanted to help, but we didn't know where our focus should be. We started talking and felt it led toward children who were seriously ill or had physical impairments."

Through the Andy and Jordan Dalton Foundation, they have been able to provide children in need with amazing resources in both Cincinnati and Fort Worth. Not long ago, they attended opening ceremonies at hospitals in both cities for a facility called the Hub, a place where pediatric patients receiving care can hang out and play on iPads, laptops, watch movies on flat screens, play video games, and relax.

The Daltons love taking patients who are well enough to amusement parks and museums. They also host fun activities and events at the hospital complete with Bengals appearances, autographs, photo ops, and lots of laughs.

Dalton recalls a favorite event hosted by the foundation. "We actually just had an event for the parents that was pretty cool. Twenty-five couples of seriously ill kids got to just relax and enjoy a night to themselves while we hung out with the kids and played games, watched movies, and popped popcorn. It was great. We all had a lot of fun."

In the future, Dalton says that they intend to create a "pass it on" fund, which will provide funds for families with children being treated for a serious illness or injury to buy the medical supplies they need through charitable events and donations, etc.

HOMEGROWN HUMILITY

With so much success, it's refreshing to see a professional athlete so dedicated to upholding a high moral standard and who has a passion for giving back to his community and helping those in need. Dalton clings to his favorite Bible verse, 1 Peter 5:6, which states, "Humble yourselves therefore under God's mighty hand, and He will exalt you at the proper time."

"I have been given so much, but I know I'm not here because of what I've done; I'm here because of what God has done through me, and all this is about giving Him the glory." KM



ASHLEY LANCASTER is an editorial coordinator for Katy Magazine who loves highlighting people like Andy Dalton that give Katy a great name.

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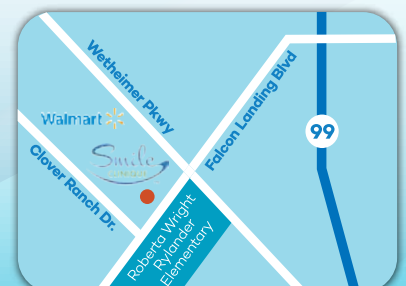


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