

Andy Dalton recently signed on to play with the Cincinnati Bengals during the second round of the 2011 NFL Draft

Pro Quarterback

Andy Dalton

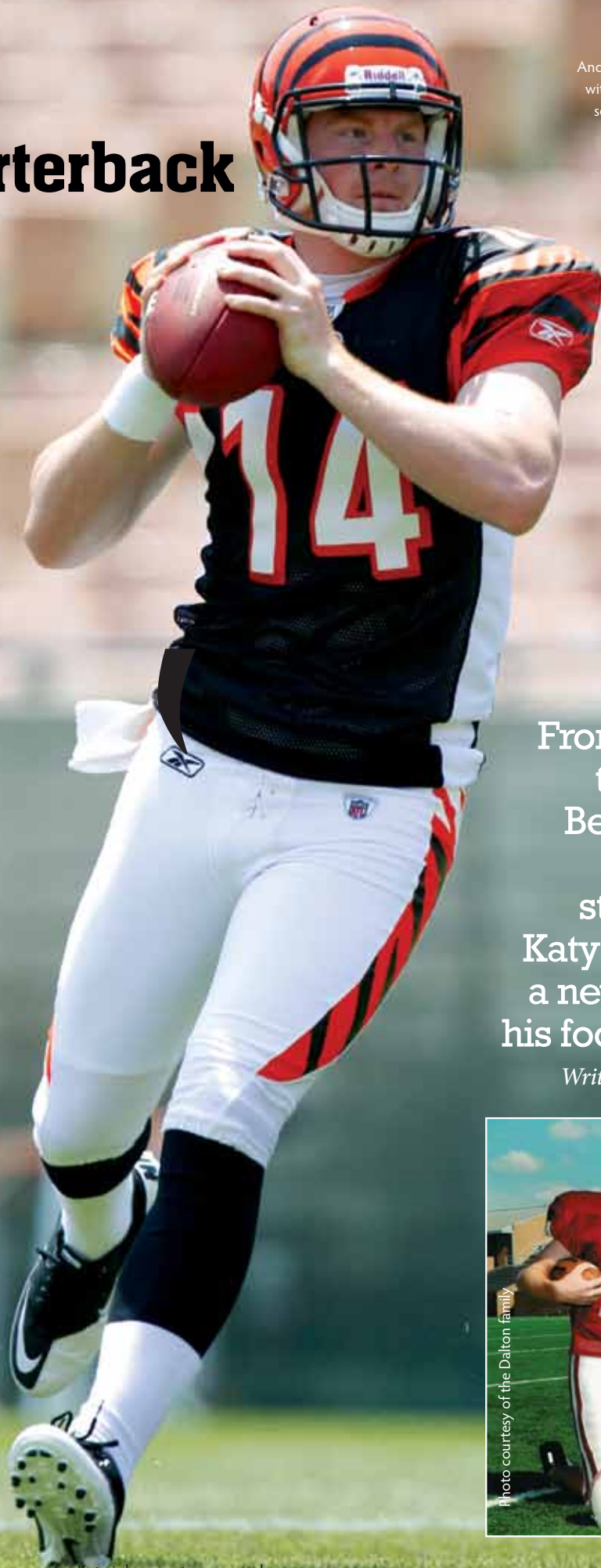


Photo courtesy of Panini America

From Katy Tiger to Cincinnati Bengal, Dalton recounts his strong start in Katy as he opens a new chapter in his football career

Written by Kenzie Stanfield

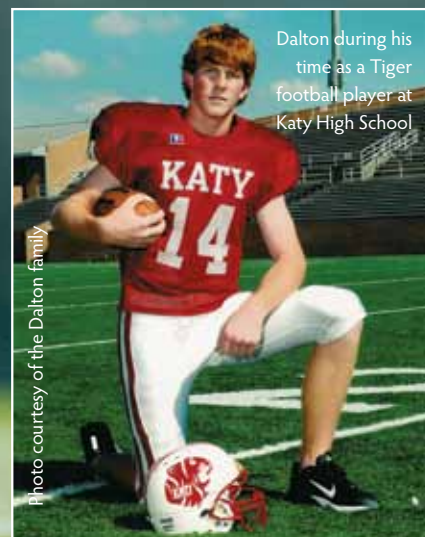


Photo courtesy of the Dalton family

Dalton during his time as a Tiger football player at Katy High School

All children dream about what they want to become one day, from firefighters and veterinarians to pilots and movie stars. While many boys say they want to become a professional football player, the path to getting there requires much talent, hard work, and dedication. Enter quarterback Andy Dalton of Katy, who tackled his childhood dream, first playing for the Texas Christian University (TCU) Horned Frogs and now for the Cincinnati Bengals in the NFL after being drafted earlier this year.

Dream Come True

Andy wowed the nation on News Years Day in 2011, with a commanding performance that allowed the TCU Horned Frogs to capture the Rose Bowl Championship over the Wisconsin Badgers in a 21-19 game. For a young boy whose family tradition included watching Katy High School football, playing for a state championship with those same Tigers, dominating at a Division I college, and now getting selected in the NFL draft is a dream come true. "I'm excited for this opportunity to get to play," he shares. "I'm living out my dream of playing ball in the NFL."

A Firm Foundation

With faith in Christ as his solid foundation, Andy, who began playing Katy Youth Football in sixth grade and only made the freshman B team his first year in high school, has already attained a level of success few others can claim. "My faith is always number one," he says. "I know God has plans for me, and I just keep trusting Him." With 1 Peter 5:6 as somewhat of a life verse, it seems that God has indeed blessed him at the proper time. Andy's dad, Greg Dalton shares, "So many things would have to line up just right for all this to be possible. He has always been surrounded by great coaches, parents, and players." He adds, "We are so blessed to see how God has shown up and worked all this out."

Victories on the Field

Counting the Rose Bowl victory as his crowning career achievement to date, Andy knows that as he advances to the next level, life is just beginning, in more ways than one. On July 9, he married his college sweetheart Jordan Jones, of Richardson, in a large ceremony surrounded by the couples' friends and family. "It was the best day of our lives," says Jordan. "It was the greatest feeling to celebrate our marriage and the fact that we are going to spend the rest of our lives together." Andy completely agrees. "I can't wait to begin my new life with Jordan. A new city, the Bengals culture - it's exciting."

At the top of the second round, with the 35th pick overall in the 2011 NFL Draft, the Cincinnati Bengals selected Andy as their franchise quarterback. It was an exciting April day for everyone involved, especially for those in the Dalton household. "We were sitting there on draft day, just waiting for the phone call, and I couldn't help but see Andy and think back to all we have been blessed with to get to this point," recalls Tina Dalton, Andy's mom. "From meeting with people after high school to determine him pursuing football in college to meeting with agents to determine him playing in the NFL, I was just totally amazed. I kept thinking 'Wow, so few people get to live their dream, and here is my son doing it.'"

First Taste of Fame

Since draft day, Andy has been awarded a few unique honors that most players in the NFL don't get. One major highlight has been participating in the NFL Rookie Premiere, an opportunity exclusive to top picks in the draft. The event, held in Los Angeles, provides rookie players with many of their firsts, including their first chance to suit up in their new NFL uniforms and participate in professional photo shoots to produce their rookie trading cards.

"The Rookie Premiere is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for these newly drafted players to get an inside look into the life they are about to enter," says Andy's marketing agent and 10 Sports Marketing Director Dusty Stanfield. Andy shares, "It was great to be around other top picks, [suing up] in my uniform for the first time, [and] getting to see my trading cards. It was eye-opening to realize that this was the start of what life as an NFL player is like."

Starting an Exciting New Chapter

Another exciting - and maybe a little bit daunting - expectation has been Andy's participation and leadership in player-directed workouts with the team. Due to the



Dalton recently participated in the NFL Rookie Premiere, an event exclusive to top draft picks

Get To Know Andy Dalton

- Born on Oct. 29, 1987.
- Played two years under current Katy Tigers coach Gary Joseph.
- Named the Greater Houston Area Offensive Player of the Year.
- Four-year starter for the TCU Horned Frogs.
- Co-founded Ignite, a campus ministry at TCU.
- Drafted 35th overall to the Cincinnati Bengals.
- First official NFL endorser is Nike.
- First NFL-licensed trading card was published by Panini America.
- Predicts a state title for this year's Katy Tigers. "That's what I would expect of them, because I know that's what they expect of themselves."

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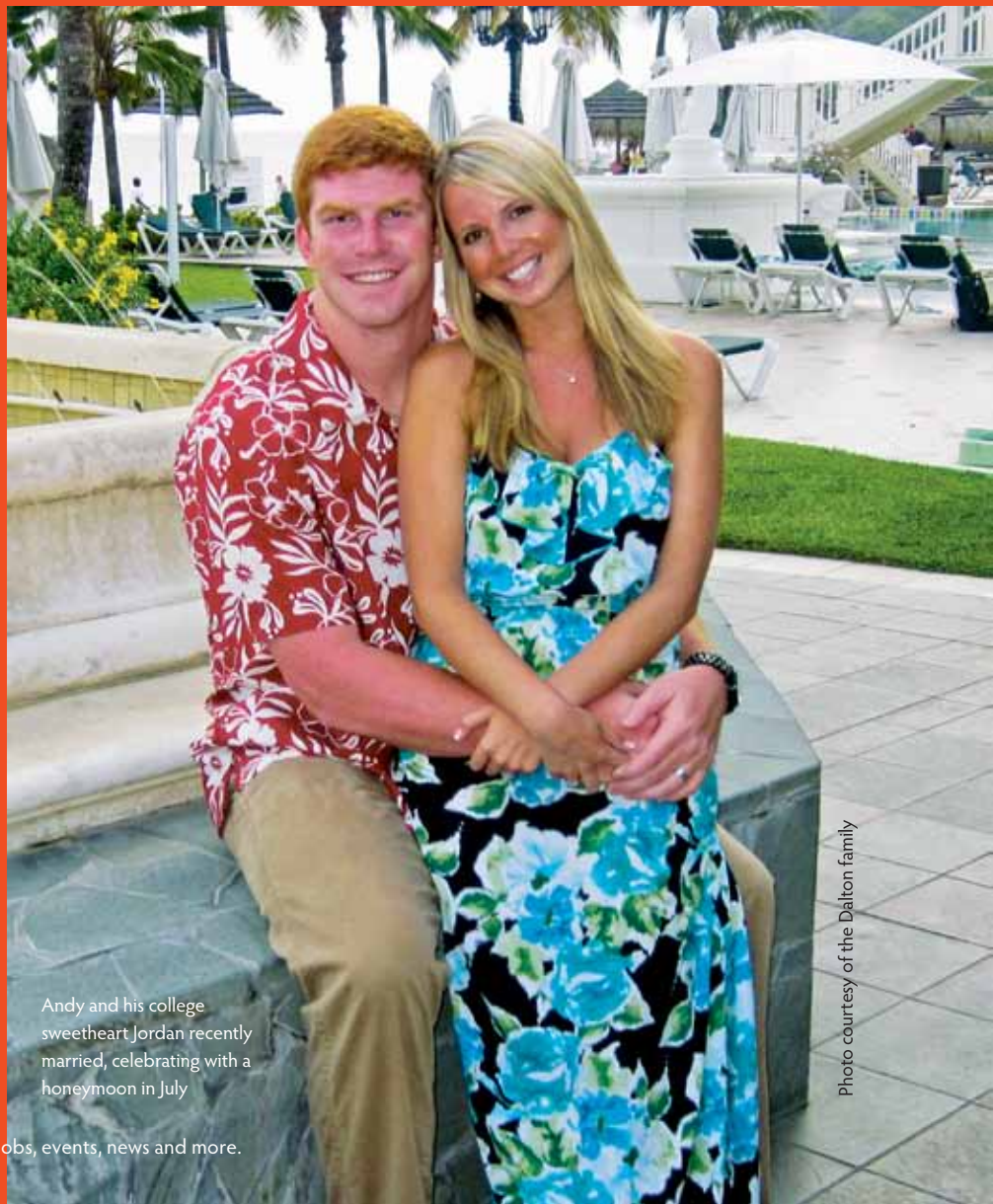
four-month NFL lockout, players were unable to train at team facilities and were instructed to have no interaction with coaching staff or team management. Because of the ongoing lockout and the season quickly approaching, once the summer arrived, players began organizing their own workouts, led by rookies and veterans alike. Andy participated in several practices with his Bengals teammates in Cincinnati, and that time made a major impact.

"I got to practice with the team, throwing around with rookies and vets," he says. "It was interesting to see all the different personalities of the guys. It gave me a little time to sit back and see where we are." That time with the team is going to prove to be critical, regardless of whether Andy starts the first game of the season or he patiently backs up current starter quarterback Carson Palmer. "Andy has a big task ahead of him, but he is confident in what he has to bring to the table to take his team to the next level," says Stanfield.

Supported by a Football Community

Having grown from a young football fan in Katy to a potential game-changer on one of the world's biggest stages, Andy is prepared and excited for what is to come. He won't soon forget where he came from, though. "Katy football has given me such a good foundation for all I have been able to achieve in my career," he says. "All I have accomplished started right there with hard work and discipline." His parents echo that same sentiment. Greg Dalton says, "We are thankful for the opportunity to play in such a great football community. It is part of who Andy is; he is a product of this community." KM

KENZIE STANFIELD is a mother of four and wife to her high school sweetheart, Dusty. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends and documenting life through her family blog.



Andy and his college sweetheart Jordan recently married, celebrating with a honeymoon in July

Photo courtesy of the Dalton family