



Marques Tuiasosopo

third
string?
it's OK

By Gail Wood

He's heard the roar of the crowd celebrating the unlikely comeback win. He's the only college quarterback to throw for more than 300 yards and run for more than 200 yards in a game. He's a Rose Bowl MVP, throwing for a touchdown and running for another in the University of Washington's remarkable comeback win against Purdue in 2001. And now, Marques Tuiasosopo, once a Heisman Trophy finalist and still considered to be one of college's best quarterbacks ever, is a seldom used backup, a third-stringer for the Oakland Raiders. He's a forgotten star.

AP photos

The quarterback with yesterday's headlines is now in his eighth season in the NFL and still waiting for his chance. He's the patient apprentice.

"It's tough at times. I'm still working hard. I'm still waiting for my chance," Tuiasosopo says. "It's hard not going out and helping your team win when you feel you have the ability. I definitely have the confidence."

Tuiasosopo's motivation comes in part from his dad, Manu Tuiasosopo, a former NFL defensive lineman. He's also motivated by his coaches and teammates. But a Bible verse, a comment from the apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:5 about doing your best for God in whatever you do, is his motivational foundation.

"I have that verse written down," Tuiasosopo says. "My wife reminds me of that verse all the time. That's really where it's at. If you do that, you will be prepared for what you need to do."

That's classic Tuiasosopo, the ultimate team player. In a jubilant post-game locker room after Tuiasosopo threw for 307 yards and ran for 207 yards in Washington's 35-30 win against Stanford in 1999, he was presented a game ball. He then flipped it to Rock Nelson, an offensive tackle.

"He's the type of guy you love to sell out for," Nelson said that day.

Tuiasosopo wasn't even expected to finish that game after getting hurt on the second play from scrimmage. Tackled on an option play, he was knocked backwards, landing hard on his seat. He slowly got up and limped back to the huddle.

Then Huskies head coach Rick Neuheisel yelled from the sideline, "Are you OK?"

Tuiasosopo pointed to his posterior. At halftime, he was in so much pain coaches and teammates worried he couldn't finish the game.

A Bible verse, a comment from the apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:5 about doing your best for God in whatever you do, is his motivational foundation.

But on a day Tuiasosopo wasn't expected to play, he set a record.

The next season, Tuiasosopo led Washington to a dramatic win in the 2001 Rose Bowl.

Then in 2003, the year after the Raiders lost to Tampa Bay in the Super Bowl, Tuiasosopo unexpectedly got his first NFL start when Rich Gannon, the reigning NFL MVP, was sidelined with a torn labrum in his throwing shoulder. It was Tuiasosopo's third season in the NFL.

Up to that point, he had attempted just 10 passes in his first two seasons.

And in Tuiasosopo's only start of his pro career, he injured his knee scrambling from a Detroit Lions linebacker and was forced from the game. He had surgery and was sidelined for the season. It's not been a storybook pro career for the quarterback with the remarkable college career.

"It was extremely frustrating," Tuiasosopo says about his injury. "I had an opportunity and I got hurt. I remember thinking, *Why me, God?* But I've learned from that. I've grown from that. God cares about the heart. Am I truly living for Him? Am I rooted in my faith?"

Hard times have tested Tuiasosopo's faith. He says his Christian testimony wasn't the loudest when he raised the Rose Bowl trophy above his head, in a moment when he was a winner and everything was going well. Instead, it was while he was recovering from knee surgery and during his long road back.

"When times are good, it's easy for us to be on the up and up," he says, "easy to be the people we say we're supposed to be. But when times are hard, that's when your true character and your faith are tested. I just want to pass all those

continued on page 22

Marques Tuiasosopo is hoisted by teammates after scoring Washington's winning touchdown against Arizona on Nov. 4, 2000. (Right) He scrambles for yardage against UCLA one week later.



JAMES RIVER LEADERSHIP COLLEGE

- FULLY ACCREDITED
- FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID AVAILABLE
- ALL FIRST YEAR STUDENTS RECEIVE A MACBOOK
- JAMESRIVERLEADERSHIPCOLLEGE.ORG

In 2006 Tuiasosopo (right) watches his Raiders play the Seahawks with fellow backup quarterback Jeff George.



“When you have that joy, that’s way better,” Tuiasosopo says. “Happiness comes and goes. The long-lasting joy that’s not affected by your circumstances comes from knowing Jesus is your Savior and you’re going to spend eternity with Him. That changes your life. That’s awesome. It doesn’t matter what happens. That’s always with you.”

In 2005 with the Raiders struggling, Tuiasosopo was told he’d start the remaining five games. He played in one.

“It’s so hard sometimes to be thankful and not to stick up for myself,” he says. “Or I need to be brash, or say something outrageous. Or to make a stink in the newspaper.”

But Tuiasosopo kept quiet and

kept working. Teammates noticed.

“There were times where I’m thinking, *OK, God, I don’t feel like working hard anymore after they pulled the rug out on me,*” Tuiasosopo says. “I felt betrayed. But I said, *Well, God, what do You want me to be?* That didn’t happen right away. But I did it. After that, people came up to me and said they really appreciated what I was doing.”

Tuiasosopo understands God never promised Christians a life without trials.

“There are going to be bumps in the road,” he says. “But through the bumps in the road, if you go through those times with a biblical outlook, a Christ-centered outlook, you’ll get through those times the way God wants you to. You’ll grow more and more.” **tpe**

GAIL WOOD is a sportswriter in Washington state and freelance writer for *Today’s Pentecostal Evangel*.

E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

tests. When I focus on Jesus and don’t rely on my strength, I’m able to do that.”

Accomplishments, Tuiasosopo has found, are fleeting. The Rose Bowl victory where he completed 16 of 22 passes for 138 yards and rushed for another 75 yards is one of his highlights. But he says there’s a hollowness to victory, to achievement in sports.

“The feeling we had after that game was great,” he remembers. But he also remembers the next day, when it was back to school, back to tests and back to life’s challenges. The win didn’t take all that away and it didn’t fill an inner need.

“There’s nothing more satisfying than knowing you’re saved and you’re on a journey,” Tuiasosopo says. “You’re not perfect, but you’re on a journey where you allow God and Jesus to work in your heart, in your life. Becoming the person God created you to be is an awesome feeling. It doesn’t matter what your circumstances are.”

Whether you’re a Rose Bowl champ or a third-string quarterback, Tuiasosopo says, a Christian’s joy is the same. God’s grace doesn’t hinge on a passing percentage, a quarterback rating or a win-loss record.

ABCs OF SALVATION

To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:

A. Admit you are a sinner.

“There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

Ask God’s forgiveness and repent of your sins.

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Romans 10:13 (See Acts 3:19.)

B. Believe in Jesus (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

Become a child of God by receiving Christ.

“To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.

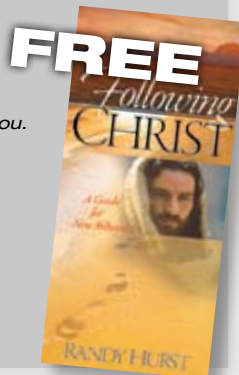
“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

For further help, contact the Assemblies of God church near you.

If you would like someone to pray with you concerning your decision to follow Jesus Christ, please contact the church indicated on the back cover or call:

1-800-4PRAYER

Assemblies of God National Prayer Center



ARE YOU TOUGH ENOUGH? STRONG ENOUGH? PASSIONATE ENOUGH?



ARE YOU GAMING?

If God has called you to an adventure of a lifetime — there is no better time to answer that call than now.

Your skills, talents and experience have prepared you for this moment. Are you ready to touch the world as only a missionary can? Are you ready to embrace God’s call on your life? Visit us at www.GoAG.org or call 417-862-2781, ext. 2088.

The world is waiting ... You Game?

ASSEMBLIES of GOD WORLD MISSIONS