

San Diego's #1 Quarterback: Excellence On and Off the Field – Go Saints!

By writer Kathryn Aldridge

Rodney Thompson, Jr., has accomplished much at the age of 17. He's a junior at Saint Augustine High School in San Diego, CA, where he is the proud recipient of the National Academic Athletic Scholar Award and the St. Augustine Scholar Recognition for maintaining a GPA above 3.8.

*In addition to his exceptional scholastic accomplishments, he's the #1 quarterback for San Diego's #1 ranked high school football team, the St. Augustine Saints. He's deciding whether to pursue a sports journalism or finance degree, which would support his father's business when he graduates. With so much on his plate, at such a young age, he sits down with **DyNAMC** to tell us how he gets it done.*

Rodney Thompson Jr.





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Watching his brother compete in sports at a young age, before he could play, fueled his passion for football. "Just experiencing what it was like and the competitiveness and the drive all the people had...I just knew it was for me. Once I started playing, that's when I really got into it. There's nothing like playing a sport. You get away from everything and get your mind off everything that's stressing you out or that you're worried about and you can just play. There's nothing better than that," he told *DyNAMC*.

Rodney's accomplishments certainly haven't come easy. "I put in countless hours watching films, studying other teams, scouting, and practicing. That's about three or four extra hours a day," he explained. After that, he has homework, projects, and chores, which take him another three or so hours. He shared with *DyNAMC* that he goes to sleep around 9:30 p.m., sometimes later, and has to be up between 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. That's a rough schedule for a teenager!

But, he's bolstered by the continuous support of his family. "They're always looking out for me and they've been there at every game. They make sure I'm where I need to be and get the training I need." Rodney says his big brother is probably his biggest supporter, giving him advice on the game, telling him the things to avoid, and just being there for him. "He's in Las Vegas right now, but he still checks in constantly," he tells *DyNAMC*. "I'm starting

to get some attention from colleges and he always calls and asks, 'Hey, did anybody call you?' And he's always asking how things are going with football. So, he always stays in touch."

Rodney's father has been a major influence in his life, as well. As a businessman, Rodney, Sr., also coaches youth teams. Rodney told *DyNAMC*, "My father has always been the type of person to give back, even before thinking of himself. All my family has. We've always been the type of people who give back to those who are in need or are struggling."

Rodney wants to continue his education and move to the next level in football. He hopes that football will help him continue his education and even has his sights set on the National Football League. If he makes it to the NFL, he wants to be able to not only take care of his family, but also help out those who are less fortunate. He even wants to start his own charity organization. "If I were to go to the NFL," he said, "that would be awesome, of course. But with the money I make, how can I help others get the same opportunities as me and, maybe, help those who are less fortunate. There are a lot of people out there struggling and it would just be awesome to be able to help them out."

When he was just 12 years old, Rodney was featured in *DyNAMC* Magazine, having interviewed some prominent people,

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such as political strategist Angela Rye and Commissioner Simon. What he took from that experience was that having confidence in oneself is paramount...along with loving what you do. He tells *DyNAMC*, "You have to love what you're doing and you have to be committed to it. Otherwise, you can't be an effective leader." Rodney elaborates, "No one is going to follow a guy who's not sure of himself. You just have to be confident in everything you do. That just makes everyone around you confident, as well." Those are profound words from such a young man and is one of the reasons Rodney is a *DyNAMC* Future Leader. He says, "Everyone around me expects great things from me, so I try to be the best I can be. I've done so much in my short, 17-year-old life, I think to myself, 'You've done so much, you might as well be confident in yourself and not be scared.'"

On the subject of racial issues in our society today, Rodney told *DyNAMC*, "Honestly, it's hard to think about. I just want peace. I don't want to see people rioting and fighting." Rodney is fortunate to be surrounded by people who embrace diversity. He told us that when he

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first attended Saint Augustine High School [a Catholic college preparatory high school for young men dedicated to the enrichment of each student in mind, heart, and body], it wasn't very diverse. However, the school has become more and more integrated. "We have kids from all over, now, and I think it's pretty cool," he stated. "As it correlates to sports, we're starting to become a lot better, as well, winning more championships than we have before. With the school being more diverse, it's a more fun and exciting environment."

As for opportunities in sports, Rodney feels there have been tremendous strides, historically. "A lot of people do embrace diversity, but others don't want to see change," he stated. "That's how it is around the world today, not only in sports, but in other areas." There were



Rhodney Thompson championship

so many people behind Tiger Woods and Jesse Owens and Jackie Robinson when they broke through the glass ceiling. “They knew they were doing something special,” he said, “and that has led us to today, where you have not only black people, but, in baseball, you have Dominicans and people from China, and all over the place. In fact, I believe there’s a basketball player who was drafted from Lithuania.”

Rodney feels that diversity in sports is of paramount importance and that, because of increasing diversity, sports have made a major impact on our society. We couldn’t agree more. Rodney himself, with his confidence and positive attitude, is sure to change the lives of everyone who has the honor of knowing him.



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