

A Force to be Reckoned With Collegiate Sports Figure Who Overcame Adversity

Verry Jackson

*Verry Jackson, came from a single-parent home in the gang infested neighborhoods of San Diego, California. His mom raised eight kids and he didn't have many role models in his community. "I went to a middle school outside of the inner city where I was able to be exposed to things that sparked my mind and presented opportunities." Today, Verry is a student and a Cornerback with the East Texas Baptist University Tigers. Verry shares his sometimes uncertain journey to college football with **DyNAMC**.*



Verry became interested in sports from his earliest memories. His mom encouraged sports as an alternative to getting stuck in the inner city gangs and being surrounded by negativity. "She stuck a football and a baseball in my hands and told me to go outside and play, I took it from there."

Verry shares with **DyNAMC** readers that the sport of football taught him discipline and how to overcome obstacles. It taught him that anything that he stays focused on, he can overcome and achieve.

"It wasn't necessarily the sport that taught me the significant things that turned me into the man I am today. It was more the people I encountered along the way. Just the sport, itself, has a lot of people in the organization that I ran across that impacted my life," he said, "from coaches, players, fans, boosters to friends' parents and the kids that I felt that I was a role model for. All those things played a role in my life." The positive energy he received from the people around him kept him going farther in his sports pursuits.

When he first started playing sports at the age of 4 years old, he was just having fun and being a kid. His older brother, Curtis, was the one who really

encouraged him. Curtis would go outside with Verry and play catch. Verry told **DyNAMC**, "Unfortunately, Curtis was in the wrong place at the wrong time and was struck in the head with a baseball bat, due to gang violence, and it stopped his career short. And from that moment on, I wanted to play for HIM."

Throughout the years, there were other circumstances and people that motivated Verry. "God blessed me with friends, family and people that I met who became a motivation for me. So now I dedicate the game to them."

One of those people was a good friend who he looked up to, and the reason he believes he stayed #1, was Todd Doxey. Another person who had a huge impact on Verry's life in high school was the late Garland "Bubba" Chandler (father of NFL player Nate Chandler), who passed away from cancer.

Verry also sings the praises of NAMCO founder and President, Aldrica Lattimore. Verry shared, "I wish I could describe how much Aldrica impacted my life in my younger years and how much she exposed my eyes to and keeps me relevant to the things I'm watching nowadays. It was kind of like when I was younger and those things that were moving outside of my community sparked

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my mind. When I was high school age, she sparked my mind for my adult years. So I have a whole new chapter that I'm entering that I can thank and appreciate Aldrica for. She definitely impacted my life significantly at a perfect time; and still does to this day. She saw something in me that I couldn't see in myself. I now understand why she exposed me to the things she did. She's really like an angel, honestly."

Verry says "All of the tribulations I had to go through, [the] people who encouraged me throughout the years, I always kept them close to my heart when I played the game." When asked if those are the people who were the greatest influence in his life, Verry replied "Those people, plus one more significant person, keep me grounded and help me remember how blessed I am to be able to continue to play the sport."

He honors those people because they've all since passed away. Verry tells **DyNAMC** readers. "Those are the ones who, although they aren't here, when things get hard; I remember their encouraging words and their faces. And I know that I can overcome anything."



An extremely motivated young man, Verry's future goals are to impact his community in multiple positive ways. He hopes to make it to the next level in football and be able to share his experiences as a person who came from tough neighborhoods but was able to "overcome adversity with just a bunch of love and dedication and just really not giving up."

"That's really what I want to give back to the community," Verry says. "If you believe in yourself and you focus on what you want in life and not give up, you can make it far from there to your destination."

As a college student and a college athlete, Verry still finds time to give back. He currently coaches a Pop Warner little league team and plans to return to his community to uplift and share what he's learned.

Verry feels that it's important to go home to give back because usually the people from his community don't reach the levels he's reached, to be ABLE to give back. He feels his journey can be motivation, knowledge and guidance to instill to kids. "That will be huge for their confidence," he shared with **DyNAMC**. "It will give them a competitive advantage that I didn't have." He agrees that the kind of support and guidance that he is capable of sharing with today's kids can literally change our future.

Verry grew up in diverse neighborhoods and feels diversity is extremely important, both inside and outside of

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the sports arena. "Growing up," he said, "if you looked around, you'd see people of different races and ethnicities struggling. When I moved outside of my community I saw things that I hadn't seen in the inner city. It channeled my creative mind and inspired me to do things that I didn't think were possible. So diversity at a young age is extremely important. It's a necessity really, because if I didn't spark my mind at a young age, I think it would have been too late."

Unfortunately, Verry has encountered discrimination both on and off the field. Verry shares that because he wasn't exposed to the same influences that some were privileged to have, they sometimes "put you off to the side."

"Where I grew up, you are forced to be a man at an early age. Verry explains that being a man meant having the attitude that "no one can stop you." Verry's first team experiences were challenging because of this attitude but he soon overcame it. "You're not used to playing as a team, and if you have that attitude of 'no one can stop me, give me the opportunity, give me this, give me that,' because they look

at you and think, 'he just wants to be in the spotlight. He doesn't get it.'" As a result, when he joined a more prestigious football program, it took time to adjust to his personality. "Things changed for the better when I fell into THEIR program. Thinking back, it did something to my confidence. I thought, 'What am I doing wrong?' But then I realized that you have to create opportunities with your effort, your hard work, and dedication; and that's basically what I had to do. I had to create an opportunity and learn from the experience."

Verry is indeed fortunate to have had some very inspirational people enter his life who have supported him in his endeavors, and he has certainly let none of his opportunities go to waste.

Verry has been featured in **DyNAMC** Leaders for a Changing World magazine and is considered one of its most prized "Future Leaders." He has developed high personal standards, and committed ideas about contributing to his community and to the world, as a whole. Based on his achievements so far, we think he'll do it!



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