



# GOT GAME?

INTERVIEW BY EMILY WARD

*Patrick Peterson is the star cornerback of the Arizona Cardinals—and an all-around good guy. He was recognized as the best college defensive back in the country while playing for Louisiana State University and also earned All-American honors. Today, Peterson dedicates his time to the Patrick Peterson Foundation for Success, which provides opportunities for low-income and inner-city youths. Arizona Foothills Magazine caught up with him to talk football, training, diet and his favorite things to do in the Valley.*

**AFM: When did you get started playing football?**

**PP:** I started playing Pee-Wee football for the Pompano Eagles when I was 7-years-old. I tried playing in the 8- and 9-year-old age group, but they told me I had to sit out a year because I was too young. I officially started playing again when I was 8-years-old.

**AFM: What was the biggest adjustment going from college to professional football?**

**PP:** The biggest adjustment was learning that professional football is much more mental than college football. In college, athletes are able to rely on their athletic ability to be successful—you can beat the guy in front of you based on the fact that you are stronger and faster. In professional football, everyone has the highest level of athletic ability, so you need to study players and plays in order to beat them.

**AFM: What does your offseason exercise regimen consist of?**

**PP:** After the Pro Bowl, I take two weeks off—no training whatsoever. After those two weeks are over, I begin my regimen. The first month is all conditioning to get me back into tip-top shape. The second month combines conditioning with weight-room work. The last month and a half leading up to OTAs, I combine conditioning with weight-room work and field work.

**AFM: What do you do for cardio? What exercises would you recommend for getting faster?**

**PP:** My favorite cardio workout is beach work—agility drills, ladder work, etc. Running on the sand overemphasizes and over strengthens your muscles, which makes running on grass a whole lot easier. It also helps build muscle memory, which allows me to exert that level of effort when I am training off the sand. It is the most efficient speed training. No trainers are needed; you just need sand and a set of cones.

**AFM: What do you eat on game days? Do you have any other game-day rituals?**

**PP:** It varies between three different meals. I will either eat a Subway turkey sandwich, a big breakfast, or pasta made by my wife. It is always one of those three.

**AFM: What are your best tips for eating well?**

**PP:** Read the labels to see what is in the food you are eating. If you don't know how to read the label, try to pull aside someone who works at the grocery store to help you understand the label. Aside from labels, eating a lot of green foods and baking your meats is very important to eating right and living a healthy life. You want to avoid greases and oils as much as possible because that turns into fat. I stick to lean meats (bison and lamb are my favorites) because they are much healthier than ground meat.

**AFM: What is your favorite healthy food or meal?**

**PP:** My favorite healthy foods are lamb chops, mashed potatoes and my wife's raisin Brussels sprouts.

**AFM: What is your favorite cheat meal?**

**PP:** By far, my favorite cheat meal is a 10-piece lemon pepper at Wing Stop. Occasionally, I will throw in some fries on the side.

**AFM: What are your favorite things to do in the Valley?**

**PP:** 1. Golf. Arizona is the golf mecca when it comes to states that have the best all-around golf. 2. Helping out in the community. As professional athletes, our voice in the community is so powerful. This doesn't just apply to Arizona. I know how valuable my voice can be toward bettering the community, and I always make sure it doesn't go unheard.

**AFM: What advice would you give young athletes whose biggest dream is to play professionally?**

**PP:** Follow your dreams and put in the work to get there. At the same time, I think it is important for everyone to have a backup plan. That includes athletes who have already made it to the pros. Anything can happen on any given day that can put your dreams of a professional athletic career in jeopardy. Tap into your other skills and interests and find something else that you love to do aside from playing. Your time as a professional athlete is limited. Athletes still have roughly 30 to 40-plus years of life after their playing career ends, so it is important that you have something else to be passionate about.

**AFM: What are your hopes for the 2015 season?**

**PP:** I want to have a Defensive Player of the Year-type year. Whether that means I have 13 interceptions or seven, it doesn't really matter. I just want to play the highest level of football.