



Photo from Associated Press.

POWER FROM WITHIN

TEXAS TECH QUARTERBACK PATRICK MAHOMES HAS ONE OF THE MOST ACCURATE ARMS IN COLLEGE FOOTBALL BUT HIS REAL STRENGTH COMES FROM HIS FAMILY

BY MAYA GOLDEN | PHOTOS FROM Tyler Morning Telegraph, Associated Press

Glance at a magazine rack at most stores in Texas and you'll likely see the face of Patrick Mahomes II. The East Texan graces the cover of Dave Campbell's Texas Football magazine, the bible of the state's biggest sport.

Being selected for the cover is just another honor for the much-heralded Texas Tech University quarterback who already this season has been named a Big 12 Offensive Player of the Week. Early in the season he was in the running for the Earl Campbell Tyler Rose Award, Davy O'Brien National Quarterback Award and the Maxwell Award. Some believe he also could contend for the Heisman Trophy, college football's highest honor.

If the Heisman is in the stars, the trophy will not likely receive a prime spot at his home in the small town of Whitehouse, Texas.

"Patrick has a million trophies," says his mother, Randi. "They are in my garage or you'll see them in the attic. ... I just try to make it completely even."

Randi's attempts "to make it completely even" are centered on her two younger children, Jackson, 15, and Mia, 5. She doesn't want Patrick's successes to overshadow their successes.

Patrick is close to his younger siblings.

"He (Jackson) hit a growth spurt, so he's like 6-5 now," Patrick says. "We talk a lot of trash to each other and (about) who could beat who on the basketball court. Of course, my little sister is like my angel. I love her to death. I love when I get to see her."

Continues Patrick, "They always keep me grounded (and) my mom is there (for me) 100 percent of the way."

THE ATHLETE

Athletics is ingrained into Patrick. His father, Pat, was a pitcher in the big leagues. During 11 seasons, he played for the Minnesota Twins, Texas Rangers, Boston Red Sox, Chicago Cubs, Pittsburgh Pirates and New York Mets. In 2000, he pitched for the Mets against the New York Yankees in the World Series.

During Pat's third season in the majors, Patrick was born. Randi and Patrick often traveled with him to games.

"Basically, I just wanted to be around him (Patrick)," Pat says. "I wanted to be around him as much as possible."

Patrick grew up mimicking what he saw his father do.

"From the very beginning, everything, whether it was candy shaped like a ball or anything that resembled a ball, ... he'd throw it," Randi says.

Pat says his son was throwing balls by the time he started walking. "He was pretty coordinated. He really, really concentrated on what he was doing. It was fun to him but you could tell (that) he was really trying to learn."

Patrick's focus did not go unnoticed.

"Other major league players would come up asking, 'How do you get him to do that all the time? I can't get my kid to quit playing the Playstation or quit watching cartoons and all he wants to do is play,'" Randi says. "As a first-time mom, I didn't know any different. I remember telling them, 'I can't get him to stop.'"

Patrick grew up in major league clubhouses and around professional athletes.

"He always fancied the shortstops and the first basemen," Pat

says. "So whoever was on my team, that's who he was trying to hang with."

Pat says Patrick showed athletic talent at a young age. "He was out in the outfield with us and he was catching the ball off the big league players' bats. They were hitting the ball and he was tracking them (fly balls) down and catching them at 5 years old."

Randi says the first time Patrick played in a baseball game "he took over the whole game. That was just his natural instinct, his natural drive."

When Randi and Pat divorced 13 years ago, she moved with Patrick and Jackson to Tyler and then Whitehouse, where Patrick began playing football in middle school.

In high school, Patrick was a standout player in football, basketball and baseball. As a pitcher, he led the Whitehouse Wildcats to the state semifinals.

Before his junior year in high school, Patrick thought about quitting football.

"He was just like, 'I don't want to do it,'" recalls Randi. "I told him, 'You know if you quit, I don't see you (being) in the stands just watching.' ... He decided to go one more year and try football again and that's when he fell in love with it. He got to play quarterback, which he always wanted to play."

After his senior year, Patrick was named a MaxPreps 2013-2014 National Male Athlete of the Year, Texas Associated Press Sports Editors High School Player of the Year, Class 4A Offensive Player of the Year and earned All-East Texas Most Valuable Player Awards in football and basketball.

University recruiters and professional baseball scouts came calling.

"We had scouts at our house every day, which I think that's way too much stress for a teenage kid that's still in high school to have to go through," Randi says. "I always told him, this is more than (what) most kids ever get to do."

Pat used his experience as an in-demand athlete to guide his son through the recruiting process.

In high school at Lindale, Texas, Pat had played football, basketball and baseball. He was All-State as a quarterback. Pat originally signed a letter of intent to play basketball at the University of Arkansas but after being drafted by the Minnesota Twins chose a baseball career.

A RISING STAR

Kliff Kingsbury, who was then in his first year as head football coach at Texas Tech, won the war to recruit Patrick. Kingsbury had previously been a successful offensive coordinator at other colleges and was a quarterback at Tech years ago.

"He (Coach Kingsbury) told Patrick, 'Listen, you're my No. 1 guy. I'm not recruiting any other quarterbacks,'" recalls Pat.

Kingsbury says he was impressed with Patrick from the first time he watched him play football at Whitehouse. "(The football) just kind of jumps off his hand. You can tell (the) guys that have that type of arm strength. It (the football) kind of jumps out differently."

Kingsbury says his quarterback also impresses him off the playing field.

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"He's always been a very humble, well-spoken, nice kid who his teammates love because he never tries to place himself above them."

As a junior in college, Patrick is just now realizing his potential, the coach says.

"I think he's definitely understanding now how good he can be and how his success can impact his life. When we first got him, I don't think he had any clue how good he was going to be. It's been fun to see him (progress). He's still the same humble kid but he knows that if he puts in the work, he has a special path ahead of him."

As one of the best college quarterbacks, Patrick is receiving lots of attention. During the Big 12 Media Days held in Dallas this summer, sports reporters were lined six rows deep just to talk to Patrick. Cameramen balanced on step ladders to get a shot of him.

The 21-year-old didn't seem frazzled by the commotion. "I watched my dad do it (handle pressure)," Patrick says. "I got to watch him and watch how he handled it. I don't really feel the pressure."

Says Pat, "I think ... the moment is never too big for him."

Randi says she prays that God will protect all of her children and is comforted with how Patrick is handling things. "I think sometimes, 'Where did he get this calmness about him on some things.' ... I probably feel the pressure where he should. But, he just seems so calm about it."

FAMILY SUPPORT

Patrick knows his parents are there for him.

"My dad supports me everywhere. He'll drive to Iowa State to watch us (Tech) play and that's the craziest thing."

Pat says, "I think it's just important for him to know there's someone there to support him at all times — good or bad, win or loss."

His parents are also the voice of reason when it comes to Patrick's life off the field.

Pat warns his son: "Whatever you tweet out, whatever you put on Facebook, whatever you do, it's going to be out there and everybody's going to have access to it. Everybody has a phone, everybody has a camera, so make sure you're not doing anything you're not embarrassed about."

Randi and Pat are proud of the way Patrick conducts himself.

"He's always been a straight-A student," Pat says. "He's always had good grades."

Pat says that Patrick is respectful to everyone. "It's not a blow-off ever. He's going to take his time to thank you for coming to his game, thank you for talking to him."

Randi tears up when she talks about Patrick's faith in God.

"In middle school, he got real involved with his youth group. He got saved. There was a night at church, he had his hands raised to the Lord and he was singing. I just felt overcome with this most awesome moment, more than any football game, because I knew where his heart truly is."

Patrick says he is more concerned with winning the Big 12 and bowl games with his Tech teammates than receiving personal honors.

Should Patrick win the Heisman Trophy, Randi jokes that it could end up in the same place as most of his other sports trophies — in the garage.

"My mom ... will say, 'I can't believe you have these (Patrick's sports trophies) in the garage!' I'm like, 'Mom, you move the gas can and the spider spray and that other stuff and it (potential future Heisman) can go right there.'"



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