

Player Spotlight: Montrell Washington, Samford

By Ric Serritella

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Do-it-all standout Montrell Washington has been an offensive weapon for Samford, starring as a wide receiver/return man specialist. The Georgia native led the FCS with 1,938 all-purpose yards in 2021, including 813 receiving yards, 742 kick return yards, 243 punt return yards and 140 rushing yards, while adding 18 touchdowns (three returns). Get to know one of the more dynamic players in the 2022 NFL Draft, as he sat down with NFL Draft Bible prior to his participation in the 10th Annual NFLPA Collegiate Bowl.

What can you tell us about your hometown and family life growing up?

I was born in Marietta, Georgia and grew up in a family of four with my mom, dad and younger brother. In my eighth grade year I moved to Canton, Georgia with my Godparents and it was the best decision I could have made for myself because I was exposed to a different level of football and met a lot of friends that I call brothers.

At what age did you begin to play football and when did you fall in love with the game?

I started playing football at four years old. I would say I really started to love the game around the age of six. That's when I knew what I wanted to do and be when I grew up - be in the NFL!!!

Who is someone that has had an influence on you and what is a valuable lesson that you have learned from them?

My entire family has influenced me throughout my life. We are all very close. However, only four of us graduated from high school. I'm the second to get a college degree. I want my younger siblings and other family members to see that I did it and realize that now everyone can do it, too.

When an NFL scout pops on your game film what should they expect to see, can you provide a self-scouting report?

They will see that I'm extremely fast and have great vision. I'm just an all-around ball player when I step on the field. It doesn't matter if it's SEC OR FCS, I'm what some would call a spark player - electric when the ball is in my hands.

How would you describe your leadership style (lead by example, vocal, one-on-one, other)?

I lead by example. I try my best to boost everyone up who's on my team. It does not matter if you play or not. I'm going to make you think you're the best player to ever touch the field because if you at least have the confidence to think you are better than someone or your opponent, you will give 100%! That's all I ask is for them to give me their all and I'll do the rest.

Who was the toughest opponent you have faced during your career (player or team), how did you fare?

The toughest I would have to say was the Florida Gators because I played the game with broken ribs and couldn't breathe that well. I still finished with three touchdowns and 340 all-purpose yards.

What is a favorite memory that you will cherish from your collegiate career?

Playing in the Florida game. The type of performance I had is something you dream of as a kid and to go out and show everyone was a dream come true for me.

Name a point in your career where you had to deal with adversity. What did you take away from that experience?

During my junior season I was known as just a specialist and it made me go even harder this past season on offense to show my versatility.

Have you endured any major injuries throughout your career? If so, what did you learn from that process? I broke my ribs towards the end of my last season with three games left, one being the Florida game. But I knew I had to suck it up and play because I felt I would be letting my brothers down if I didn't. When I thought I couldn't continue, I made sure never to feel sorry myself and found a way to convince myself that I wasn't hurt. That focus and determination allowed me to finish the season.

What is something that no one knows about you?

Something that no one really knows is that I love to fish. I could fish all day in any weather condition. It's a great way for me to relax and do something I love other than football.

If you can bring one teammate to a fox hole, who are you taking and why?

I would take our quarterback Liam Welch. Liam is the type of player that is willing to do anything for his brothers and I'm the same way no matter what it is. He is a true competitor no matter what we were doing. At practice he carried himself a certain way that made me want to follow him. Not only is he a great quarterback but he has great character. He was more than a teammate. He is someone I count as a true brother. For me, it doesn't get any better than that.

Have you selected an agent or combine training facility yet?

Yes. I signed with JL Sports and will be training at X3 Performance.

Montrell Washington finishes Samford career with impressive stat sheet

By Lynden Blake

WBRC.com

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Montrell Washington capped off a fantastic career at Samford Saturday and he has the stat sheet to prove it.

One thing about Bulldog receiver Montrell Washington - he doesn't care about the personal accolades. "Not at all, nah," Washington said.

But that doesn't stop the senior from putting up crazy numbers.

This season, Washington leads all of FCS in all-purpose yards

"I found out about that after the game, my brother called me and told me," Washington added.

Even though he wasn't keeping track, it means a lot to achieve such a feat.

"I mean usually its somebody with a bigger than, you know its little ole me at Samford, I thought that was real cool," he said.

A statistic Washington does care about is graduating college. He'll do that in December, then it's back to work on the grid-iron with a clean sheet.

"Just hopefully get a shot at the next stage, that's my only go to right now," Washington said.

Samford Football Player and Orlean Beeson School of Education Professor Bridge Gap by Sharing Experiences

By Leighton Doores
Samford.edu
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As a senior in human development and family science as well as an All-American wide receiver on Samford University's football team, Montrell Washington has learned to excel not only on the football field, but in the classroom as well.

At the beginning of the school year, the classroom was not a place where Washington felt completely comfortable. He was much more at home on the football field where his expertise shined. Distinguished Beeson Professor Clara Gerhardt saw the confidence Washington had when it came to his sport and she knew he could find that in the classroom as well. Gerhardt, who has seen many ballets but never a football game, bet Washington that she could turn him into a scholar before he could turn her into a football player.

"I said, 'I know I'm going to win this race because there's no chance you're going to turn me into a football player whereas I have a very good chance of turning you into a graduate,'" said Gerhardt.

When it was time for student-athletes to nominate various professors for "Professor of the Game," an honor given at each home football game to highlight the educator's hard work and dedication, Washington knew this was his chance to invite Gerhardt into his world and make her into a football fan.

"I was just like, if she can turn me into a professor then I can turn her into a football player, and after that I just started to be more interested and she started to understand me better so it just created this bond," said Washington.

When Gerhardt acknowledged that she would feel vulnerable and out of place walking on to the football field, Washington told her that's how he has felt many times in the classroom. As the two began to step into the other's shoes, they gained a perspective they wouldn't have had if the roles hadn't been reversed.

Photo of Montrell Washington

"We as professors are equally vulnerable when we go out into an area that we don't know well and he picked up on that," Gerhardt said. "He's the stronger one of the two of us."

After spending more time in Gerhardt's classroom, Washington says his confidence has grown.

"I've learned to just put yourself out there and give it a try," he said. "Even if it's not correct or you may be wrong, Dr. G would always say 'Just try, just do it.'"

Because Washington stepped out of his comfort zone and then shared his area of expertise, a bridge was built between two people from different generations, cultures, backgrounds and skills, demonstrating we can all gain a new perspective by stepping into another's shoes. At the Homecoming game on Nov. 6, Gerhardt was named "Professor of the Game" as she stepped on to a football field for the first time. Washington continued to shine as he had a 68-yard punt return for a touchdown.