

“ABILITY IS WHAT YOU’RE CAPABLE OF DOING. MOTIVATION DETERMINES WHAT YOU DO. ATTITUDE DETERMINES HOW WELL YOU DO IT.” NO TWO PEOPLE EMBODY FOOTBALL GREAT LOU HOLTZ’S FAMOUS WORDS BETTER THAN CHASE PERRY AND CHRISTIAN MCCAFFREY, A DYNAMIC PAIRING THAT EMERGED AT GLOBAL DOWN SYNDROME FOUNDATION’S DARE TO PLAY FOOTBALL CAMP.



The Perry family, from left: Kash, Cooper, Casey, Chase, and Brett

Good Sports

A CHANCE FOR both children and young adults to share the values of teamwork, friendship, and healthy competition, Global’s Dare to Play Football Camp gives boys and girls with Down syndrome the opportunity to learn the game from professional volunteer coaches — and it keeps both players and coaches coming back year after year. Ten-year-old Chase, a Global Ambassador, has attended two years in a row. He worked with coach Christian, a dedicated volunteer and Stanford University Cardinal running back who finished second in voting for the Heisman Trophy in 2015.

“I’ve been doing the Dare to Play camp for about six years, since I was a freshman in high school,” Christian told CBS Denver after the 2016 camp in June. His father, former Broncos All-Pro wide receiver and three-time Super Bowl winner Ed McCaffrey, has hosted the event every year since it started.

“I keep coming back because it is one of the best experiences of the year,” Christian said.

When Chase and Christian shared the field earlier this summer, the attributes they have in common — humility, selflessness, and love of the game — were on full display.

PART OF THE TEAM

Sports have played an important role in making Chase the inquisitive fifth-grader he is today. From an early age, Chase has been participating in sports and attending football, baseball, and basketball games.

“Chase began learning to swim at age 2, and he took to it quickly. He would get in the pool every day if he could,” his father, Brett, said. “He also loves watching the Broncos and playing football.”

“I like football because I scored a touchdown,” Chase explained. “But my favorite sport is baseball because I get to hit a home run.”

Chase understands and appreciates the all-for-one spirit of team sports better than most athletes. Naturally humble and sociable, he enjoys calling teammates together for huddles and cheering others as much as he relishes making plays himself.

“Last year, we went to a couple of practices at the Denver Broncos Cheerleaders Dare to Cheer Camp,” said Chase’s mom Casey. Dare to Cheer is a Global program for children with Down syndrome that runs

concurrently with Dare to Play. “Chase loved doing the drills and leading the crowd in the cheers. The camaraderie and the cheering — those are his favorite things about Dare to Play.”

Still, Chase is passionate about more than just sports. By the time he was 3 years old, he was reading at a second-grade level.

“We spent a lot of time reading to Chase when he was a baby,” Casey said. “We wanted to give him an advantage cognitively, and by the time he was a year and a half, he was already taking to the alphabet and reading.”

What makes Chase’s academic and physical accomplishments all the more remarkable is that he’s never taken any medications or nutritional supplements for health issues. When he was very young, he suffered from aspiration problems as well as low blood-oxygen levels, which limited his physical development. He simply turned his down time into reading time, and his curiosity hasn’t faltered since.

“His ability to read has given him access to information, to the world,” Casey said. “He can spell anything, and he’ll Google whatever he’s thinking about and research it.”

A social butterfly, Chase first rocked the runway at the Be Beautiful Be Yourself Fashion Show as Global’s 2009 Ambassador and has participated in many more since then. His dad thinks Chase might even have a future career in party planning.

“He’s so social and wants everyone to have fun,” Brett said.

“He is the antithesis of the head down, disengaged, on-the-phone-all-the-time world we live in. He’s engaging and friendly,” Casey added. “That’s his form of self-advocacy.”

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From left: Casey Perry, David Rest, Cookie Gold (seated), Ricki Rest, and Chase Perry



From left: Susan Karsh, Greg Karsh, Brett Perry, Randy Karsh, Casey Perry, and Chase Perry

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A FAMILY AFFAIR

Four generations of the Perry family have helped Global Down Syndrome Foundation in its mission to improve the lives of people with Down syndrome through medical care, research, education, and advocacy. In addition to Chase Perry and his parents, Casey and Brett, that includes his grandparents, Susan and Randy Karsh and Ricki and David Rest, and two great-grandmothers, Cookie Gold and Janice Selix.

“All of Chase’s grandparents and great-grandparents are thankful for what Global is doing with Chase,” Casey Perry said.

When Janice, who passed away in 2013, visited Chase and his parents in Denver, she was impressed with the vision of what would become the Anna and John J. Sie Center at Children’s Hospital Colorado and by what was being done in Colorado for her great-grandson, according to Casey.

Upon her death, Janice bequeathed what became the Sie Center’s Shared Family Room, a comfortable space for clinicians and families to discuss diagnoses and plans for their children. Her donation also established the Down Syndrome & Aspiration Research Grant at the Sie Center, which has funded crucial research into the causes and treatments for aspiration problems in children with Down syndrome, just like her great-grandson.



Janice Selix and Chase Perry

Chase’s ability to read has given him access to information, to the world. He can spell anything, and he’ll Google whatever he’s thinking about and research it.

– CASEY PERRY, CHASE PERRY’S MOTHER



Christian McCaffrey with a Dare to Play camper in 2010



Christian, Chase and fellow camper, Dustin, at 2016's Dare to Play Football Camp



Christian McCaffrey dodging defense from the UCLA Bruins in October 2015
Photo courtesy of StanfordPhoto.com



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— CHRISTIAN MCCAFFREY
TO CBS DENVER
AFTER THE 2016 CAMP

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UNASSUMING STAR

Although he's just as engaging and friendly as his pint-sized camper, Christian prefers spending time on the field, not so much in the spotlight, despite being one of college football's rising stars.

He'll begin his junior season this fall at Stanford as a favorite to win the 2016 Heisman Trophy. Last year, he broke the NCAA single-season record for all-purpose yardage and was a runner-up for the Heisman, while helping Stanford to a 12-2 record and a stunning 45-16 Rose Bowl victory over the University of Iowa.

"He's one of the best players that ever played college football," Christian's coach at Stanford told *USA TODAY Sports*. "The numbers say that, and when you watch the film it's saying it. Did he really do that? Did he really break the rushing record in three quarters for the school? Did he really break Barry Sanders' record with a game to go in the season? Those are astronomical things."

The second-oldest son in a family with four boys — all athletes — Christian started playing football when he was 7 years old, mainly because he wanted to imitate his older brother, Max, who had just started playing football, too. But by the time he was playing for Valor Christian High School, he had attracted attention not only for his uncanny speed and agility, but also his affinity for teamwork.

His high school coach, Rod Sherman, told *Sports Illustrated* that when the team voted for Christian as team captain before his senior season, Christian said, "We don't need captains, we're all in this together."

"He has the ability to make himself less to make others great," Sherman told the magazine.

His anonymity will undoubtedly disappear, as his success as a football player becomes more widely recognized and appreciated — and as the expected NFL draft offers come in — but his love of the game, and who he is fundamentally, won't.

"He's that kid who really just wanted to have fun and be with his buddies," his father, Ed, told *The Denver Post*. "Even though he's on a national stage and has had a lot of success, he's still playing because he loves the game and loves his teammates and coaches."

His mother, Lisa, insists that Christian has been happy from the day he was born, and no matter what he does, he will always be happy.

The campers at Dare to Play could pick up on that, too.

He spent the program advising them on their technique, posing for pictures with them, and cheering every touchdown Chase and his fellow teammates made.

"Dare to Play is such an amazing event and it just kind of puts life into perspective," he told *The Denver Post*. "It really makes you appreciate what you have."

For Christian, that's quite a lot.