

47-Year-Old Pastor Makes Shocking College Football Comeback Nearly 30 Years Later

Some dreams disappear with time. Others have a way of showing up again when you least expect them.

For California pastor Justin Buzzard, a football dream that seemed finished nearly 30 years ago has suddenly found new life. At 47, the husband and father of three has earned a place on the San Jose City College Jaguars football team, stepping back onto the field decades after injuries derailed his first opportunity to play college football.

The New York Post reported that Buzzard, who is a South Bay pastor with Garden City Church, is returning to the sport after injuries brought his earlier football ambitions to an unexpected halt.

What ultimately pushed him toward an improbable comeback came from inside his own family.

According to Fox News, Buzzard's son showed him a social media video of a 60-year-old man playing football. Instead of simply admiring someone else's story, Buzzard began wondering whether there was still room for another chapter in his own.

He reached out to a coach at San Jose City College. That decision eventually put him back in pads, competing at defensive end, the position he had played years before.

Buzzard knew, however, that walking into a college locker room at 47 would be unusual.

He told "Fox & Friends" that he wondered whether the younger

athletes would accept him, go easy on him or come after him harder because of his age. Instead, he said his teammates have welcomed him.



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"No one's going easy on me ... and I'm not going easy on them," Buzzard told Fox News. "I'm giving them everything I've got, too."

There were questions at home as well.

Buzzard's wife of 23 years initially supported him making the team, but wasn't exactly thrilled about the possibility of watching her husband take hits during games.

"She told me actually a couple of weeks ago, she said, 'I want you to make the team, but I don't want you to play in any games,'" Buzzard recalled to Fox News.

Her perspective has since shifted, and Buzzard said she now plans to attend his games.

Yet beneath the helmets, practices and physical demands is something deeper.

Almost 30 years passed. The injury happened. Life moved forward. Buzzard became a husband, a father and a pastor. By every conventional measure, the window for college football should have been firmly closed.

Yet at 47, he is walking through it.

"I think God cares about all of life, not some separate, religious slice of you," Buzzard said. "I pray a lot that He would protect me from injury. I know what I'm doing is high risk, but I've been praying big, specific prayers: 'God protect me from injury, I want to go the distance, I want to

make it through the whole season, and help my team, San Jose City College, in any way I can.'"

For those of us who have watched years pass since a dream was planted in our hearts, Buzzard's journey offers a striking reminder: Time does not always get the final word. An opportunity that once vanished may return in a form and season you never anticipated.

Buzzard summed up his approach with a challenge of his own.

"Risk or rust," he told Fox News. "You're either risking or you're rusting as a man. Take risks. Don't rust."

Sometimes the greater risk isn't stepping onto the field.

It's deciding your season is over before God is finished writing the story.

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