

NFL Kicker Uses NBC Interview to ‘Spread the Love of Jesus’

Move over Kurt Warner ... there’s a new rags-to-riches NFL story taking the world by storm.

Now, obviously a kicker isn’t worth the same to an NFL team as a quarterback, but that doesn’t make this story any less cool.

To wit, the once-moribund Detroit Lions team continued its path to relevancy with a gutsy, come-from-behind road win on Sunday night, beating the Houston Texans 26-23 to improve to a sterling 8-1 record—including a perfect 5-0 on the road.

It was a big win that clearly cemented the Lions as probably the team that can best topple the reigning Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs (who are undefeated despite some apparent chemistry issues), even if the win was a bit ugly.

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The Lions won despite poor play throughout most of the game (quarterback Jared Goff threw an unfathomable five interceptions) and directly thanks to the foot of kicker Jake Bates, who just barely made the game-winning kick.

You can watch the tense moment for yourself below:

JAKE BATES WALKOFF. 

LIONS COME BACK AND WIN IT! #OnePride

– Sunday Night Football on NBC (@SNFonNBC) November 11, 2024

It’s a big win for Detroit, and Bates could’ve easily celebrated the enormity of the win itself in a post-game interview.

(It can't be stressed enough that the Lions are enjoying this success after losing standout defensive end Aidan Hutchinson in gruesome fashion on Oct. 13.)

Instead, Bates showed the world that his priorities—even with euphoria and adrenaline blasting through him—were in the right place.

In one of NBC's far less controversial post-game segments, interviewer Melissa Stark spoke to Bates and cornerback Carlton Davis, who notched a pair of crucial interceptions against standout Texans quarterback C.J. Stroud.

"Jake, I'm going to start with you," Stark began. "Both of those field goals, including the game-winner just made it. How nerve-wracking was that?"

A bashful Bates responded: "I put them a little too close to the post for comfort, but luckily, they went in. I mean [punter/holder Jack Fox] and [long snapper Hogan Hatten] are so good. We work so hard. So I have so much confidence in the operation and the line protecting [me]. I'm just happy to do my job today."

Of note, neither of Bates' kicks were easy, as he sank a 58- and 52-yard field goal en route to the big win.

It's at this point that Stark asked about the crazy backstory Bates has—and the kicker answered perfectly.

"And just recently, you were a brick salesman, you thought you were out of football, what does this mean to you to come back and do this in your hometown area?" Stark asked.

"Yeah, I mean, I think it just shows how good the Lord is," Bates responded without missing a beat. "He's so faithful. And I mean my story is, if anything, I just hope people can see Jesus through my story.

"I mean, that's what I think I'm here to do. It's not make or

miss or being a good kicker or a bad kicker, but spread the love of Jesus.

“Hopefully I’m able to do that on the stage I’m given.”

Funnily enough, the NBC interview pivoted away from Bates as soon as he proclaimed his love for Jesus, but that’s neither here nor there.

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Bates’ remarks highlight something that the establishment media will never tell you about the NFL: Many of its top stars are unabashedly proud Christians.

And that includes stars past and present—like aforementioned standout quarterback and former league MVP Kurt Warner.

Just like Bates, Warner was living a pretty nondescript life before a second shot at professional football. Warner was cut by the Green Bay Packers in 1994 and briefly went into a career as a supermarket clerk, before a second shot at the NFL produced a Hall of Fame-caliber career.

But perhaps more importantly, just like Bates, Warner has been a proud and vocal Christian throughout this journey.

Bates, Warner and other athletes like them, are a stark reminder that the NFL actually does have some honest-to-goodness quality human beings—and they’re the ones who should be getting the biggest platform.

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