

MANNING UP

NFL STAR PEYTON
MANNING ON
GROWING THE GAME
IN CHINA



What advice can you give to young players if they want to make it to the NFL one day?

The best thing about football is it's a team game and you can always practice it with your friends. To work on your skills, to take whatever your coaches may tell you and work on that on your own in order to throw the ball better or to catch better, and to set goals and work hard to accomplish them—that's the best way to improve, in my opinion. **Do you want your kids to play football?** I don't want to be a parent who pushes our kids into anything they don't want to do. I do think football is a great game. It teaches you valuable lessons about interdependence, taking coaching and learning to handle both winning and defeat. But our kids are young, they're five. There's no plan there, no rush. I never knew as a five-year-old that I was going to play in the NFL. I've always felt real fortunate to have played in the NFL, but it was never a goal. I worked hard as I got older. But I think as parents we need to encourage our kids to do the things they want to do, while helping them have fun in the process. **How can we help more kids in China love football?** I think it has to start by trying to get more kids involved. To play it certainly gets more people watching it. The best part about football is it's so unpredictable. There's a lot of great players and a lot of great teams to cheer for. Certainly, I think the goal would be to bring a



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game over here at some point, to give the fans a chance to watch the game up close, keep up with their favorite team and watch the Super Bowl every year. I think the NFL will also continue to bring players like me over here every year as ambassadors to talk about their commitment. The sky's the limit as far as growing the game here. **Did you like being a quarterback?** That's a great question. I've loved being a quarterback all these years. My dad played quarterback, and obviously [my brother] Eli plays quarterback. I think as a quarterback you get to work with so many different types of people and personalities. But once you get into that huddle, it doesn't matter where you're from or where you grew up; we're all in there together and trying to accomplish the same goal. And as the quarterback, you're kind of the leader of the huddle. It was a very rewarding job. **When will the first NFL game be played in China?** That's a better question for NFL China or the commissioner. I just know that's what they want to happen, and I think it'd be great. I've played preseason games in Tokyo, Mexico City and Toronto. I always enjoy playing outside of the US, and I think it'd be great to have a game over here. We'll see what happens.

★ Jennifer Stevens

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