

LIVING OUR FAITH IN AND OUT OF SEASON



TEEN YOUTH NIGHT

2007-2008 Activity 1

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2007-2008 – Activity No .1

Theme: Living our Faith in Season and Out of Season.

Overview: Our youth will be challenged to consider how as Orthodox Christians they are called to demonstrate their faith in God by their conduct in everyday life. A discussion contrasting and comparing two pro football players, Troy Polamalu of the Pittsburgh Steelers (An Orthodox Christian) and Michael Vick of the Atlanta Falcons, will be used to illustrate how we should use our God-given talents for the Glory of God and the consequences of misusing them.

Materials:

1. Wikopedia articles on Michael Vick & Troy Polamalu (Attached)
2. *Troy Polamalu Goes on Holy Pilgrimage-* 6/24/07 Edition of *Daylight* (Attached)
3. Guided discussion with questions and answers on the theme (Attached)
4. Question box (Leader is to make a small question box where youth can place anonymous questions about any aspect of Orthodoxy, Contemporary Moral Issues Etc in it for future discussion)
5. Pre-cut slips of paper for youth to write questions for the question box.
6. Pencils/pens for each youth.
7. Concluding Prayer or Evening Prayers – *Come to Me Prayer Book*
8. Icon and Candle For Meeting Area (Optional)

OUTLINE

1. Informal Socialization (10 minutes)
- 2: Meal – (Pizza) - (20 minutes – Optional)
3. Welcome/ Introduction of Theme/ Pass out articles and allow time to skim read. (15 minutes)
4. Guided discussion on the theme (30-40 minutes) (See attached Discussion Guide)
5. After completing the discussion, - Give youth pre-cut slips of paper to write questions for future Q. & A. sessions (if time permits choose one and answer) (5-10 minutes)
6. Discussion of Coming Youth Activities/Charitable Outreach Projects – Jr. ACRY is again sponsoring a Diocesan Wide- Youth Project for the benefit of St. John The Compassionate Mission (10 minutes)
7. Conclusion/Prayer (5 Minutes)

DISCUSSION GUIDE

After the youth have **spent** time reading/scanning the articles about Troy Polomalu and Michael Vick begin the discussion by asking the following questions.

1. What do they have in common? Both are pro football players; they are about the same age: Troy is 26, Michael is 27; they are excellent football players, Troy has been playing with the Steelers for 4 seasons, Michael has been playing with the Falcons for 6 seasons. Both make a large salary and help charity.
2. How do they differ? *Michael is more arrogant, Troy is more humble; Michael shows public outbursts of anger (fined \$20,000 for making obscene gestures); Troy prays. Michael spends a lot of time with his team mates, getting in trouble, Troy prefers to spend time with his wife and family. Troy acts like a Christian, Michael, has been in trouble with the Law.*
3. How has Michael Vick misused the talents and gifts God has given him? *By being materialistic, misusing God's creation by being involved in dog fights that have led to the death of animals, and it is alleged that he uses drugs..*
4. How has Michael Vick's bad conduct adversely affected his career? *He most likely will spend time in jail, sponsors are no longer backing him, he may no longer be allowed to play football and therefore most likely will no longer be able to continue to live in his current life style.*
4. Why is Troy a good example of an Orthodox Christian? *He prays daily and especially during his games; he regularly attends liturgy - a few weeks ago he attended Liturgy in our Diocesan Parish in Latrobe (a church many of our diocesan altar boys visited during the Altar boy Retreat a few years ago) He took time away from summer training to take a spiritual pilgrimage to Constantinople and Greece to learn more about the faith he recently converted to. He is kind to people and acts very humbly and Christ-like. He lives his faith*
5. Given what we have discussed today, how should we act as Orthodox Christians?
It doesn't matter who we are, be we rich and famous, a star athlete or not we are expected to always do our best, and act in a Christian manner. We should be humble, do nice things for others and love everyone. Therefore, it is wrong for us to make fun of others put others down, laugh at them or exclude them. We should not be afraid to act in a Christian manner in school and pray before and after lunch. At this time in our life, we are learning, growing and changing. Make no mistake, it is not easy, especially when others don't share our same faith and are not Orthodox Christians. Choosing good over evil even when evil is more interesting and fun, is extremely hard. If we choose the right way we will be rewarded. If we choose to do wrong, ultimately, we will get punished by God - Michael Vick is a prime example.

Don't forget that the Church is here to help us. All that we do in the Church is designed to help us become more like Christ, to have a better, happier life. Like Michael and Troy have to workout to stay in shape, run, lift weights, etc, we, too, have to perform regular spiritual workouts to get stronger. These workouts consists of praying morning and evening, fasting on Wed and Fridays and the four fasting seasons of the year, coming to confession, learning about the faith, reading the Bible, witnessing our faith and serving others. This spiritual workout will prevent us from being selfish, arrogant and mean and allow us to be the kind of friend we would like to have ourselves.

Like Troy then, let us live our Faith in season and out of Season. By doing so, we will in the words of St. Paul "... do all to the Glory of God"

Troy Polamalu

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Pittsburgh Steelers — No. 43
Strong Safety

Date of Birth: April 19, 1981 (age 26)

Place of Birth: Garden Grove, California

Height: 5 ft 10 in (1.78 m) **Weight:** 207 lb (94 kg)

National Football League Debut

2003 for the Pittsburgh Steelers

Career Highlights and Awards

1 Super Bowl ring 3 Pro Bowls: 2005, 2006, 2007

Career History

College: USC

NFL Draft: 2003 / Round: 1 / Pick: 16

Teams:

- Pittsburgh Steelers (2003-present)

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Troy Aumua Polamalu (born Troy Benjamin Aumua on April 19, 1981 in Garden Grove, California) is an American football player who plays strong safety for the Pittsburgh Steelers of the NFL. He is of Samoan descent. Despite Polamalu's hard-hitting style on the gridiron, he is known off-the-field as a soft-spoken, Christian family man,^[1] specifically a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church.^[2]

Early years

Troy attended Douglas High School in Winston, Oregon, where he was a three-sport letterman in: baseball, basketball, and football. He played football for four years as a running back and defensive back. As a senior, he was an All-Far West selection in football, and an All-State center fielder in baseball; in basketball, he was a two-time all-league player.

College career

In his career as a 3-year starter at the University of Southern California, Polamalu recorded 278 tackles (29 for losses), 6 interceptions (3 returned for TDs), 13 deflections, 2 fumble recoveries and 4 blocked punts. He was also a roommate to current Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Carson Palmer.

NFL career

Polamalu was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers 16th overall in the first round of the 2003 NFL Draft. The Chargers, who had the 15th overall pick, had a major need at safety to replace the departed Rodney Harrison but instead chose to go with quantity over quality forgoing the opportunity to select Troy by trading down and getting Sammy Davis and Terrence Kiel. The Steelers, ecstatic that Polamalu slid past the Chargers, quickly made a move to bring Polamalu to their team. The Steelers believed so much that Polamalu could have a positive impact on their defense that they traded up from the 27th spot to the 16th spot, originally held by the Chiefs. The Steelers traded away the 92nd and 200th overall pick for the rights to switch first round picks and select Troy Polamalu. Essentially the trade was Polamalu for Larry Johnson, Julian Battle and Brooks Bollinger (Bollinger was subsequently traded to the Jets in the same draft). He has the distinction of being the only safety ever drafted by the Steelers in the first round.^[3]

In the last game of his college career against Iowa in the Orange bowl, Polamalu injured his hamstring in pre-game warm-ups and was not able to play in the game. Subsequently, the hamstring caused Polamalu to miss the Senior Bowl and 2003 NFL Combine as well.^[4] Polamalu was able to perform for scouts at his USC pro day.

Pittsburgh Steelers

Polamalu (#43) is currently in his fourth season with the Pittsburgh Steelers and is the first team starting strong safety. He is easily recognized when playing due to the large mane of curly hair flowing out of his helmet and past his shoulders. Polamalu is considered to be one of the more cerebral players in the NFL and is becoming the new face of the Steelers' defense.

In the CBS Playoffs Pre-game Show, Polamalu said the last time he had gotten a haircut was when he was at USC in 2000^[1] when a coach told him he needed one. Polamalu has not received a haircut since. In pre-

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colonial Samoan culture, it is customary for men to wear their hair long. The hair was the center of talk around a tackle on October 15, 2006. After an interception where Polamalu looked poised for a touchdown return, Chiefs RB Larry Johnson pulled him down by his hair in order to tackle him and then pulled him up by it. Commentators correctly pointed out that pulling hair is legal and doesn't qualify for an unnecessary-roughness penalty; however, Larry Johnson was called for an unsportsman-like penalty for pulling Polamalu up by his hair. The penalty was for continuing the play out of bounds.

Polamalu's blend of speed, anticipation, and instinct makes him a standout player who seems to be involved in almost every defensive play. The Steelers often use Polamalu in different packages. He may blitz the quarterback, come on a delayed blitz, or pretends to blitz and drop back into coverage, confusing the quarterback. Polamalu often adds to the quarterback's confusion by turning around and walking away from the line of scrimmage before the snap. In only his 3rd season (2006), he tied the NFL record for most sacks, 3, in a single game by a safety. The 2007 Pro Bowl was his third consecutive Pro Bowl appearance; he started at safety for the AFC, playing next to the Baltimore Raven's starting free safety Ed Reed. The rivalry they share based on their teams divisional rivalry was evident, as the two battled for possession of an overthrown halfback pass from former New York Giants running back Tiki Barber; Reed came down with the interception. He also made the AP NFL All-Pro Second Team in 2005, followed by being named to the First Team in 2006.

Polamalu became part of the 2005 controversy over the quality of NFL officiating during the divisional playoff game between the Steelers and the Indianapolis Colts. Polamalu intercepted a pass, rolled to the ground, then fumbled the ball while getting up. The play was initially ruled an interception and fumble, but after viewing the instant replay, referee Pete Morelli ruled the play an incomplete pass. His rationale was that Polamalu did not make a "football move" after intercepting the pass but before fumbling the ball, and therefore did not demonstrate possession of the ball. The NFL later released a statement saying that Morelli's interpretation was incorrect, and that the interception should have been upheld.

His first Super Bowl appearance was in Super Bowl XL in 2006, when the Pittsburgh Steelers gained the franchise's fifth Super Bowl with a 21-10 win over the Seattle Seahawks.

In week 12 of the 2006 NFL season at the Baltimore Ravens, Polamalu suffered a knee injury that caused him to miss the first two games of his professional career. The Steelers lost the game, 27-0.

On July 23, 2007, before training camp, the Steelers gave Polamalu the biggest contract in team history extending him through 2011. In an article on ESPN.com, Polamalu says, "I didn't want to be a player who is jumping from team to team. I've always felt comfortable here, I think this organization, this tradition they have here, is very legendary and I always wanted to be part of this." The 4-year contract extension, worth just over \$30 million with about \$15 million in guarantees, makes Polamalu one of the highest paid defensive backs in the league and the highest paid safety in the league.^[7]

Faith

Polamalu is an Eastern Orthodox Christian, having converted through the influence of his wife Theodora, who is of Greek descent. Among his spiritual activities is a pilgrimage to Greek Orthodox sites in Greece and Turkey, taken in 2007.^[2] He seldom gives interviews, but when he does, he often speaks of the role his spirituality plays in his life. Polamalu has said that he tries to separate himself from his profession as much as possible, like not watching football games at home. He says a prayer after each play and also on the sidelines.

Trivia

- In 2005, Pittsburgh area band Mr. Devious wrote and recorded the novelty song Puhlahmahlu, a parody of the song Mah Nà Mah Nà. Guitarist Glenn Shirey said that the song was inspired by a Fox Sports announcer's mispronunciation of Polamalu's name.^[8]
- Polamalu is featured on the cover of the Scholastic children's book National Football League Megastars which profiles Polamalu and 14 other NFL stars.
- Polamalu has garnered several nicknames; a couple being "The Tazmanian Devil" or "Taz" "The Flying Hawaiian," and "The Samoan Headhunter".
- Polamalu sat with Joe Hardy at the billionaire's 84th birthday party on January 6, 2007. [1]
- In January, 2007, he petitioned to change his legal name to his mother's maiden name (Polamalu), which he had been using for the last 15 years. His legal name had been Troy Aumua.[2]
- Polamalu is known for his humble lifestyle. He rarely hangs out with fellow teammates, instead preferring to spend time at home with his wife Theodora, the sister of St. Louis Rams tight end Alex Holmes, another former USC player.[3]
- Off-field interests include growing flowers and playing the piano.[4]
- Troy Polamalu is the highest rated player for the Pittsburgh Steelers in the game Madden 2007 with an overall rating of 98 out of 99.

- Was roommates in college with Bengals QB Carson Palmer.

Troy Polamalu goes on holy pilgrimage

The Steelers' Troy Polamalu moves to the beat of a different drummer.

When the Steelers are doing conditioning drills, Polamalu is seldom in step with the rest of his teammates. He gets ready in his own way. Bill Cowher left him alone to do his own thing.

While most of the Steelers have been participating the past few weeks in "voluntary" conditioning sessions at their South Side complex, Polamalu took a break to go on a religious pilgrimage, visiting shrines in Turkey and Greece.

Most serious Steelers' fans know that Polamalu is of Samoan descent, but few know that he joined the Greek Orthodox Church. He was married to Theodora in services at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church on the North Side, and he was baptized by total immersion in a baptistery pool at a Greek Orthodox church in Oakmont. His wife's mother is of Greek heritage.

Polamalu is now nearing the end of a 12-day religious tour with a group of men from the Greek Orthodox community in Pittsburgh. Among those accompanying the group are Father George Livanos of All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Canonsburg and Father John Touloumes of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church.

It is a period for meditation and prayer and a renewal of faith.

I learned about Polamalu's pilgrimage involvement from an old friend. Manuel "Buns" Pihakis was serving patrons at the annual two-day Greek Food Festival at All Saints Greek Orthodox Church last Wednesday when I paid a visit to see him and his friend Frank Sarris. Both are pillars of this beautiful church.

Pihakis introduced me to Dorothea Livanos, the wife of Father George. She was reluctant to discuss what Polamalu was doing, for fear she was intruding on his private life, but she talked enthusiastically about what her husband and the other men were doing in Turkey and Greece.

I told her I had been talking to Polamalu two weeks earlier when he played for the Steelers' basketball team in Bethel Park, and how I had been struck by his demeanor when I met and talked with him three years ago at St. Vincent College in Latrobe. He seemed so different from most of the Steelers and pro athletes in general.

He is quiet, soft-spoken, quick with a smile, pleasant with people of all ages, engaging once you break through the barrier and deeply spiritual. Yet he's a Pro Bowl demon on the football field. There's more to Troy Polamalu than that long black hair of his.

I compared him to a Greek pastry they were offering at a nearby table. "He seemed so sweet, like baklava," I said.

"And they both pack a lot of power," declared Dorothea, and she smiled at her own observation.

I checked with other friends of mine to learn more about Polamalu's conversion to the Greek Orthodox faith. Stella and Gus Kalaris operate a popular ice ball stand at West Park on the North Side, not far from the Holy Trinity Church they attend and support faithfully.

They confirmed that Polamalu was, indeed, a member of their church. "He participates in a lot of the services," said Gus Kalaris. "He's even taken an active part in processions during Easter. Everyone respects his space, but they are happy to have him there."

To which Stella added, "He's such a nice young man. He seems almost shy."

I told them about an experience I had with Polamalu, a few months after I met him for the first time. He approached me as I was signing books during the holiday season of 2004 at Monroeville Mall. He said hello and introduced me to Theodora, then his girl friend. That's so unusual for a ballplayer to do that.

Later, he waved to me and smiled as he passed on the other side of the walkway. Fifteen minutes later, he showed up in front of me and set a steaming hot cinnamon bun on the table. He smiled and walked away without a word.

Bob Milie of Mt. Lebanon, a trainer with the Steelers in the glory days of the '70s, shared a story about Polamalu: "My cousin was out to dinner at an Italian restaurant in Sarver, up beyond New Kensington. Troy Polamalu and his wife were eating there that same evening. Everyone was discreet enough not to disturb them during dinner.

"After finishing his meal, Polamalu rose and asked for everyone's attention. He thanked everyone for not disturbing him and his wife while they were dining. He then announced, in appreciation, that he was picking up the tab for everyone, and that he'd sign autographs for a few minutes before he left. How about that?"

Yes, indeed, Troy Polamalu moves to the beat of a different drummer.

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Michael Vick



From Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia

Michael Dwayne Vick (born June 26, 1980 in Newport News, Virginia) holds the National Football League (NFL) record for rushing over 1,000 yards as a quarterback during a regular season and is under contract with the Atlanta Falcons (2001-present). Vick was suspended by the NFL in August 2007 due to a plea of guilty to federal felony charges resulting from the Bad Newz Kennels dog fighting investigation and related gambling activities ^[1] and was convicted with sentencing slated for December 2007.

After a standout high school football career, Vick attended Virginia Tech where he played for the Hokies' football team on a full athletic scholarship. During his time with the Hokies, he helped the team to an appearance in the 1999-2000 BCS National Championship game and finished third in that season's Heisman Trophy voting. ^[2]

After three years at Virginia Tech, Vick declared himself eligible and was the top overall NFL Draft choice in 2001. ^[3] In that draft, the Atlanta Falcons selected Vick with the first overall selection. In his first year with the franchise, the Falcons, aided by Vick's performance at quarterback, played in the National Football Conference Championship Game and was thought to have helped draw record attendance at home games at the Georgia Dome.

In week eight of the 2004 NFL season, Vick became the first player in NFL history to rush for 100 yards and pass for 250 in a single game. ^[4] On December 24, 2004, Vick signed a 10-year contract extension with the Falcons; it was the most lucrative contract in the history of the NFL. ^{[5][4] [6]}

Due to his conviction on August 27, 2007 of federal conspiracy charges and the admissions in his plea agreement that he funded high stakes gambling and other costs during the 6-year long interstate dogfighting operation in which he participated ^[1], Vick is facing a sentence in federal prison for between 12 months and 5 years on December 10; a Virginia grand jury will consider additional charges in the case on September 25. After his federal conviction, the Falcons began a civil legal process to attempt to recoup \$20 million of the \$37 million in bonuses paid to Vick under terms of his contract extension. ^[5] He could face a lifetime ban

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from the NFL for the gambling issues. On August 17, Commissioner Roger Goodell stated that he wants the legal Process to run its course before he rules on Vick's future

Professional career

NFL Draft

Vick was selected in the first round of the 2001 NFL Draft with the first overall pick. The San Diego Chargers had the number one selection spot in the draft that year but traded the rights to the first overall choice to the Atlanta Falcons a day before the draft, for which they received the Falcons' first round pick (5th overall) and third round pick in 2001 (used to draft CB Tay Cody), a second round pick in 2002 (used to draft WR Reche Caldwell) and WR/KR Tim Dwight. With the Chargers' downgraded spot (the 5th overall), they selected Texas Christian University running back LaDainian Tomlinson, who went on to become league MVP in 2006 (although Vick has never become league MVP, he finished second in voting in 2004).^[13] In this way, Tomlinson and Vick are linked as having been "traded" for each other, although the transaction was actually the result of traded draft picks and contract negotiations.^[14]

Personal

Controversies and incidents

Between his selection by the Atlanta Falcons in the 2001 NFL Draft and early 2007, Vick was allegedly involved several incidents or events:

- In 2007, conflicting statements were made by his estranged parents about possible dogfighting activities in 2001. Michael Boddie, his father, who now lives in Atlanta, told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that around 2001, Michael Vick was staging dogfights in the garage of the family's home in Newport News and kept fighting dogs in the family's backyard, including injured ones which the father nursed back to health. Boddie said his son had been urged to not engage in the activity, but continued. He stated "This is Mike's thing. And he knows it."^[16] Within days, Michael Vick's mother, Brenda Vick Boddie, who now lives in Suffolk, Virginia, responded. She told the *Newport News Daily Press* "There was no dogfighting [at our home]. There were no cages."^[17]
- In early 2004, two men were arrested in Virginia for distributing marijuana. The truck they were driving was registered to Michael Vick. The Falcons coach Dan Reeves recalled that he lectured Vick at that time on the importance of reputation, on choosing the right friends, on staying out of trouble for the good of his team. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* quoted Reeves as having told Vick: "You are an Atlanta Falcon... Whatever you do is going to be a reflection on all of us, not just you."^[18]
- On October 10, 2004, Vick and the other members of his party were at Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport on their way to board an AirTran afternoon flight to Newport News, Virginia. While they were passing through a security checkpoint with Vick, a security camera caught Quanis Phillips and Todd Harris picking up an expensive-appearing watch (either a Rolex or a fake) which belonged to Alvin Spencer, a security screener.^[19] After watching the theft on a video tape, Spencer filed a police report. However, he claimed that Billy "White Shoes" Johnson, known as the Falcons "fixer", interfered with the investigation.^[18] It took six days for Spencer to get the watch back, according to the *Washington Post*.^[19]

- November 26, 2006 - After a Falcons loss to the New Orleans Saints in the Georgia Dome in apparent reaction to fans booing, Vick made an obscene gesture at fans, holding up two middle fingers. He was fined \$10,000 by the NFL for his obscene gesture, and agreed to donate another \$10,000 to charity.^[22]
- January 17, 2007 Vick surrendered a water bottle which had a hidden compartment to security personnel at Miami International Airport. "The compartment was hidden by the bottle's label so that it appeared to be a full bottle of water when held upright," police said. Test results indicated there were no illegal substances in the water bottle and Vick was cleared of any wrongdoing.^[23] Vick announced that the water bottle was a jewelry stash box, and that the substance in question had been jewelry.^[24]

Dog Fighting

Beginning on April 25, 2007, widespread media publicity was drawn by discovery of evidence of unlawful dog fighting activities at a property he owns in a rural county in southeastern Virginia.^[18] Vick was accused of financing the operation, directly participating in dog fights and executions, and personally handling thousands of dollars in related gambling activities. As of August 17, the situation was under continued investigation at both the federal and local levels.

By July, some charges had already been made at the federal level, with four cooperating witnesses and three co-defendants having agreed to testify by mid-August. Others charges were anticipated at both federal and local (state) levels, according to statements by authorities.

In July 2007, Vick and three other men were charged by federal authorities with felony charges of operating an unlawful six-year long interstate dog fighting venture known as "Bad Newz Kennels" at Vick's 15-acre property in Surry County, Virginia. Vick was accused of financing the operation, directly participating in dog fights and executions, and personally handling thousands of dollars in related gambling activities. By August 20, Vick and each of the other three co-defendants had agreed to separate plea bargains for the federal charges.^[25] ^[26] They are expected to each receive federal prison sentences between 12 months and a maximum of five years.

On August 24, Vick filed his plea documents with the federal court. He pleaded guilty to one felony count of conspiracy to operate an interstate dogfighting ring. In addition, he admitted to providing most of the financing for the operation itself, as well as participating directly in several dogfights in Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and South Carolina. He also admitted to sharing in the proceeds from these dog fights. He also admitted that he knew his colleagues killed several dogs who didn't perform well enough. However, while he admitted to providing most of the money for gambling on the fights, he denied placing any side bets on the dogfights. He also denied actually killing any dogs himself.

On August 27, U.S. District Judge Henry E. Hudson accepted Vick's guilty plea; he will be sentenced on December 10. He faces a maximum of 5 years in prison, a fine of \$250,000 and 3 years of supervised release. Prosecutors have asked Hudson to sentence Vick to 12-18 months (the minimum amount possible under federal sentencing guidelines) if Vick cooperates with the government as he has agreed. However, Hudson does have the right to increase the sentence up to the maximum limits, and warned two codefendants (Peace and Phillips) that the brutality in killing the dogs warranted exceeding the guidelines in their cases.^[28]

Additionally, separate Virginia charges against all four men and possibly others will be considered when a Surry County grand jury meets on September 25.^[29]

Suspended by the NFL

Hours after Vick filed his guilty plea, the NFL suspended Vick indefinitely without pay. In a letter to Vick, Commissioner Roger Goodell said that Vick had admitted to conduct that was "not only illegal, but also cruel and reprehensible." While Vick is technically a first-time offender under the NFL's Personal Conduct Policy, Goodell handed down a harsher suspension because Vick admitted that he provided most of the money for the gambling side of the operation. The NFL does not allow its players to be involved in any form of gambling, and even first-time offenders risk being banned for life. However, Goodell did leave open the possibility of reinstating Vick depending on how well he cooperates with federal and state authorities.^[30] Earlier, Goodell had barred Vick from reporting to training camp while the league conducted its own investigation into the matter.

On August 27, Falcons owner Arthur Blank said in a press conference that the Falcons will seek to recover a portion of Vick's signing bonus. He also said the team had no immediate plans to cut ties with Vick, citing salary-cap issues.^[31] It had initially appeared that Goodell had cleared the way for the Falcons to release Vick, since he ruled that Vick's involvement in gambling activity breached his contract. On August 29, the Falcons sent a letter to Vick demanding that he reimburse them for \$20 million of the \$37 million bonus. However, many experts familiar with NFL labor matters suggested that the Falcons will wind up with far less than that, and the matter will almost certainly go to arbitration.^[32]

Impact of dogfighting case publicity

Following the widespread publicity of the dogfighting case and details of alleged brutality executing dogs not considered vicious or aggressive enough by hanging, drowning, shooting, electrocution and other means, many companies suspended and/or terminated his endorsements and withdrew Vick-related products from sale.^{[38][39][40][41]}

On July 18, 2007, following extensive media coverage of the content of Vick's 18-page federal indictment of the previous day, Neil Schwartz, director of marketing for SportScanInfo, which tracks sporting goods sales, told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*: "I just think it's going to be really hard for Michael to somehow repair his public image unless these charges are totally false... American people are incredibly forgiving, but the heinous nature of what went on here may be a whole different ballgame." The same article also quoted Bill Sutton, a professor of sports business at the University of Central Florida: "You won't find him anywhere" in advertising or marketing in the near future.^[42]

MSNBC quoted David Carter, founder of the Sports Business Group, a Southern California-based provider of strategic sports-marketing services: "Number one, animal cruelty is something no one will tolerate. Number two, you have the underbelly of possible gambling. Number three, you have the strength of [animal] advocacy groups. They aren't going away."^[43]

According to the *Virginian-Pilot* in a July 19, 2007 article, Vick's biggest marketing deal at that time was with Nike.^[44] Later on the same day, *USA Today* reported that Vick's legal troubles had prompted Nike to suspend the release of its latest product line named after him, telling retailers it will not release a fifth signature shoe, the Air Zoom Vick V, "this summer."^[45]

On July 27, Nike announced it "has suspended Michael Vick's contract without pay, and will not sell any more Michael Vick product at Nike owned retail at this time." However, the company said it had not terminated the contract, as animal-rights activists had urged.^[46] The same day, Adidas announced its Reebok

division would stop selling Vick football jerseys and the NFL said it had pulled all Vick-related items from NFLShop.com,^[47] including Falcons jerseys customized with Vick's name and number.^[48]

Within a few more days, Donruss, a trading card company, decided to pull Vick's card from any future 2007 releases, according to Beckett Media, which covers the collectibles industry.^[49] Upper Deck, another trading card company, took similar action.

On July 31, St. Louis-based sporting goods manufacturer Rawlings, which used Vick's likeness to sell merchandise and modeled a football using his name, ended its relationship. The same day, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported that Dick's Sporting Goods and Sports Authority stores, part of a major chain, have also stopped selling Vick-related goods.^[41]

Upon the filing of Vick's Plea Agreement and Statement of Facts with the federal court in Richmond, Nike announced it had terminated his contract (which had been suspended earlier).^[50]

On August 29, 2007, An eBay auction for 22 Vick football cards, chewed up and slobbered on by two Missouri dogs ended with a final bid of \$7,400. All the proceeds are expected to be donated to the Humane Society.^[51]

Charity work

In June 2006, Vick, along with his brother Marcus Vick and mother Brenda Vick Boddie, established The Vick Foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports at-risk youth and the after school programs that serve them in the Metro Atlanta and Hampton Roads areas. The announcement of the organization came just before the start of the foundation's first fundraiser, the Michael Vick Golf Classic. The inaugural event was held at the prestigious Kingsmill Golf Course in James City County near Williamsburg, Virginia in partnership with The Virginia Tech Alumni Association Tidewater Chapter, and netted more than \$80,000 for charity.[1]

After the Virginia Tech massacre in April 2007, Vick teamed up with the United Way to donate \$10,000 to assist families affected by the tragedy.^[52] Vick explained, "When tragic things like this happen, families have enough to deal with, and if I can help in some small way, that's the least I can do." The Vick Foundation is collecting donations from local communities in both Atlanta and Virginia that will be placed in the United In Caring Fund for Victims of the Virginia Tech Tragedy and the special fund at the United Way of Montgomery, Radford and Floyd counties, which serves the Virginia Tech area. Vick's foundation said the money will be used to provide help with funeral expenses, transportation for family members and other

Public impact upon community youth, leaders

The revelations of Michael Vick's activities with the Bad Newz Kennels drew widespread negative public reactions, but possibly hurt nowhere more than in his old neighborhood. Until August 24, there could be some comfort in disbelief. In the aftermath of Vick's guilty plea agreement, in Newport News, mentors and others working with underprivileged youth sought to identify lessons to communicate to those who had seen him as a role model.

"It's difficult, because Mike (Vick) is someone who we held up as doing it right," Bernard Johnson told the *Newport News Daily Press*. Johnson, who has coached kids, including Vick, in the Boys and Girls Club football program for 28 years, said the lesson to kids now is all about responsibility and accountability.^[57]

**The Diocesan Apostolate For Youth
The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the U. S. A.**

Vernon Lee, co-founder of the Peninsula All-Star Football Camp, said the Vick situation should be a wake-up call "for anyone coming into contact with a young person...we can try to plant the seeds necessary so that this doesn't happen again...not assume that there is a direct correlation between athleticism and real-life skills."

Lee said a key part of Peninsula All-Star Football Camp is a semi-private session in which parents and coaches are ordered out of the auditorium while college and professional athletes tell the high school players how to get their personal lives in order. In the session, the campers are warned about potential dangers from parties to drugs to girls to friends.^[57]

Noting the reality that Vick is likely to do prison time, the Boys and Girls Club's Johnson told a reporter:

"Now we explain that you can't depend on somebody else to take care of your responsibility...and sometimes money will get in the way of right and wrong."^[57]