



## Vernon Davis: The NFL Playoffs Interview

By Kam Williams  
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San Francisco 49ers tight end Vernon Davis is a game-changer who embodies the ethos of leadership both on and off the field. Picked 6th overall in the 1st round of the 2006 NFL Draft out of the University of Maryland, Vernon had already been an All-American football star in high school and a multi-award winner setting records for speed, strength and receptions.

In advance of draft day, he ran the 40-yard dash in the fastest time ever for a tight end. And at the time of his signing, he became the highest paid tight end in NFL history.

Ever a record breaker, Davis is a two-time team captain and a two-time Pro Bowl player who helped lead the 49ers to this year's playoffs. He is also the recipient of the Len Eshmont Award as the club's most inspirational player and in 2009 tied the NFL's single-season TD record for tight ends with 13.

Here, he talks about life and about his team's prospects as the 49ers enter the playoffs.

**Kam Williams:** Hi, Vernon, thanks for the interview.



Vernon Davis

**Vernon Davis:** Hi, Kam, thanks for speaking with me.

**KW:** Congrats on a very successful 2011 season with the 49ers. You guys not only won your division but earned a bye the first week in the playoffs. Do you think the team will make it to the Superbowl?

**VD:** Yes! Everyone on our team is very motivated, especially given where we've come from and what we've been through in the past.

**KW:** As a tight end, you have to both block and catch passes. Which do you enjoy doing more?

I like both, but I'd have to say I like catching passes more because of the thrill of it. Don't get me wrong, I like helping guys in the passing game, too.

**KW:** Tell me, what it feels like to score a touchdown in a packed stadium in front of thousands of fans?

**VD:** There's nothing like going out on the field on a Sunday and making plays in front of a large audience of fans and having them cheer for you. You can hear the cheers and then again you can't because you're in the moment and you've just scored a touch-down. You've just beaten someone. And to be good at something you're so competitive about is a feeling you can't explain.

**KW:** Precious few pairs of siblings have been able to make it to the NFL. I can think of Eli and Peyton Manning and Tiki and Ronde Barber. What do you attribute your and Vontae's success to? Your genes? Luck? Hard work? Good coaching?

**VD:** I'd have to say hard work. We've worked so hard to get to where we are

today. And nothing comes easily in terms of success. If you want success, you have to work hard at it and realize that it takes time; it doesn't come to you overnight. I was just speaking with my little cousin on the telephone who wants to be a singer and she was upset and a little discouraged because she wants to be a singer and it's not happening yet. But what I told her is that instead of being upset, you should be practicing, because the harder you work the more successful you'll become. All my life, I've worked hard knowing that someone else is out there is trying to out-work me. So, I'd be out there on Christmas and during winter breaks. That's how I've kept my edge.

**KW:** Bernadette Beekman observed that you and your brother do a lot of charity work. She'd like to know which gives you the most satisfaction.

**VD:** Giving back and trying to create opportunities that will be advantageous to kids in the future. When I was a kid, I didn't get to meet role models from the NFL or the NBA. So it means a lot to me to put a smile on their faces by showing up.

**KW:** You launched a design company last year, Modern Class Design. What are your future plans with it?

**VD:** To take it to a whole new level with urban renewal projects. I look at this business venture as an opportunity to give back and build my brand at the same time. At the end of the day, what could be better than making a great living and making a big difference?

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