

# 'Strength in Numbers' Ad Campaign Hits NYC

{ Some well-known NFL players were the center of attention at photo and video shoots. }

Author: *NFLPlayers.com*

6/24/2009

By Khalil Garriott  
NFLPLAYERS.COM

NEW YORK—Photo and video shoots for a new advertising campaign by the marketing and licensing subsidiary of the NFL Players Association were held in New York City last week, showcasing players' personalities and their unique individual stories.

NFL PLAYERS is incorporating a group of 16 players into its 2009 campaign, themed "Strength in Numbers." A variety of players with diverse backgrounds and interests outside of football were chosen for the brand campaign, which will demonstrate what makes each player authentic and real.

"For this year's branding campaign, we will create greater access to the players and their stories," said Andrew Feffer, COO of NFL PLAYERS. "This will include more interactive content built through exclusive video and imagery."

Defensive end Jared Allen of the Minnesota Vikings gave a quick reply when asked what the phrase "Strength in Numbers" means to him.

"If one's better, why not have more?" Allen answered. "When you have a multitude of people all on the same page, you can accomplish some great things.

"On the field, we are numbers. But that's only part of our story," Allen said at his video shoot.

Allen, a two-time All-Pro player, has used his jersey number to help build his own brand. He owns a restaurant and has a clothing line called Jared Allen Sixty-Nine Inc., which helps people recognize the connection between the brand and himself.

For several hours each day from June 14-20, players attended separate print and video shoots at different locales such as parks and rooftops in New York. Sites were chosen based on that player's individual experiences, interests or talents.

Allen's June 18 photo shoot was held at Tom Cats Barbershop in Brooklyn because Allen is famous for sporting a mullet that flows freely out of his helmet during the season. Wearing an outfit that included jeans, Cowboy boots and a Western-style belt buckle à la Burt Reynolds in "The Longest Yard," the star pass-rusher decided to get racing stripes added to his signature hairstyle, of which he is extremely proud.

"It is way more than a hairdo; it's a lifestyle," he said of his mullet. "I've found that the better I treat my hair, the better it treats me. I get reactions all the time, because you've got to own it!"

By capturing video content, still photographs and interviews with players, the ad campaign will show fans parts of their personalities which don't shine through on game days. For Domonique Foxworth, an NFLPA Executive Committee member and Baltimore Ravens cornerback, he chose his No. 24 jersey simply because it was available and "it looked cool" on him.

"I think it's important for them to see that [there's] more to us than just running into people and things like that," Foxworth said during his print shoot. "And for me, it's important for people to view me as more than just a football player because I am a lot more. I have a lot of other interests and other things I want to explore, and I think it's important for people to know about that."

Scott Fujita, an NFLPA co-alternate player representative, shared the two most memorable moments from his NFL career.

The New Orleans Saints linebacker said, "I would say that, without question, 2006 in New Orleans was the most special experience in my whole sports career. There were two shining moments: in the Super Dome against the Atlanta Falcons—it was electric—and winning our first playoff game at home against Philadelphia to put us in the NFC Championship [Game]. I'll never



forget that moment.



“Winning the game and actually going into the locker room, getting showered up and coming back onto the field about 45 minutes later, and the Super Dome is still completely full. Fans are going crazy. It’s just one of those stories I’ll never forget.”

Fujita, who wore No. 51 in Kansas City, No. 50 in Dallas and now No. 55 in New Orleans, embraced the team element of the “Strength in Numbers” theme.

“The one thing that I always liked about football is that when you’re on the field, it’s you and 10 other guys trying to do the same thing,” Fujita said. “In no other sport is the type of team or community more present than it is in football. And that’s what has drawn me to it.”

Fujita, whose last name is Japanese, had his video shoot filmed at a local Japanese market and posed for his print shoot at Empire-Fulton State Park in Brooklyn. He called being an NFL player a brotherhood.

“It’s crazy because everywhere you go, each locker room is unique but for the most part, it’s the same type of character, same type of guys,” he said. “It is a brotherhood and it’s always about the same.”

The photo shoots were located in settings that reflect players’ personal stories. Among the many features of the campaign will be individual micro sites on nflplayers.com, print ads and video clips. The overall goal is to emotionally connect players with their fans worldwide.

“By uncovering each player’s unique stories, we deliver compelling content in a way that will resonate with fans and showcase the player’s personality off the field,” Feffer said.

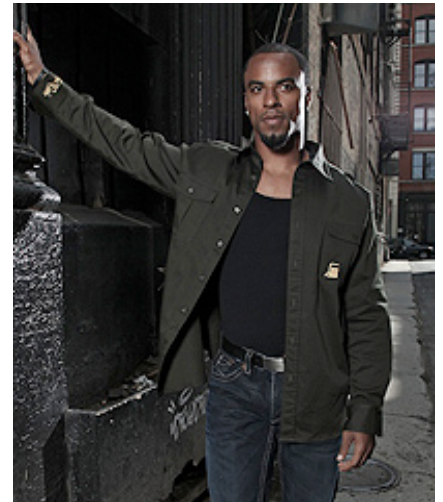
“We’re asking each player to use their number as a metaphor for the different parts of their lives,” said John Trotter, partner and creative director at Forty Forty, which planned the new campaign’s creative strategy. “So when clients, consumers and fans are viewing this, the takeaway will be that there is strength in numbers. The ‘Strength in Numbers’ idea is a great reinforcement of the new messaging of ‘one voice, one locker room, one team.’”

Other players who were filmed, photographed and interviewed in New York included Ebenezer Ekuban, Darren Sharper, John Carney, A.J. Hawk, Matt Hasselbeck, Calvin Johnson and Brendon Ayanbadejo. For Ayanbadejo, an avid road bike-rider since the age of 10, being filmed while riding a bike at the Brooklyn Promenade seemed like a natural fit.

“Usually, a typical ride for me would be like five miles,” said Ayanbadejo, a three-time Pro Bowler. “I’ll ride to the beach or ride to the gym but usually I just work out while riding it.”

By culling interesting tidbits about players’ lives off the football field, the campaign will serve as an exclusive, creative outlet to tell their stories. The behind-the-scenes photographic content captured at the shoots will play an important role in delivering the message.

“After the basic shots were in the bag for each player, I just tried to capture my subject’s personalities within the environment I was given,” said Donald Miralle, lead photographer of the brand campaign. “In the end, I thought the campaign was the most successful and different of the four years I have been involved and there were some unexpected moments made that are instant classics.”



Cast your vote in a new NFL PLAYERS poll about the “Strength in Numbers” campaign [here](#). You make the call!