

Super Bowl player won't let stuttering tackle him

by Bend Weekly News Sources

The big game on Sunday isn't Adrian Peterson's only worry. The Chicago Bears football player revealed this week in Miami that he has struggled with stuttering his whole life.

Peterson isn't the only sports star who has wrestled with this complex disorder. Golf superstar Tiger Woods recently told CBS's 60 Minutes that it takes hard work and a competitive spirit to overcome childhood stuttering.

Other sports stars who have been successful despite their stuttering include NBA Hall of Famer and sports commentator Bill Walton, Denver Nuggets' basketball star Kenyon Martin, Chicago Bulls' legend Bob Love and U.S. Open golf champion Ken Venturi.

Peterson has struggled with stuttering since he was a child.

"It's been like this my whole life. Since I was 5 years old, I've been stuttering. It's been a major part of my life," he told The Times of Northwest Indiana.

"Growing up, it was hard, but it's who I am," the Bears running back said to the Chicago Sun-Times. "My advice to [others who stutter] is don't allow it to hold you back from achieving your goals."

"The parallels between speech performance and sports performance are striking," said Jane Fraser, president of the nonprofit Stuttering Foundation, "and Peterson is the latest example of how the many hours of practice and hard work to win in sports are no different from those long hours spent in therapy for stuttering."

"Adrian Peterson is the perfect role model for all school-age children who struggle with this complex disorder," Fraser added.

The Foundation offers help for stuttering through its helpline at 800-992-9392 and online at <http://www.stutteringhelp.org/>.

There are many prominent athletes among the three million people who stutter and the world's most famous golfer is among them. "The words got lost, you know, somewhere between the brain and the mouth. And it

was very difficult, but I fought through it. I went to a school to try and get over that, and I just would work my tail off," Woods told 60 Minutes.

Walton dealt with stuttering just like he did basketball. "I thought about the fundamentals of the game and how to start with the basics like the ability to mechanically duplicate moves on a basketball court. And then I just applied that to speaking."

"Countless hours of work taught me to manage moments of difficult speech," says Chicago's Love.

In a recent interview, Denver Nuggets' Martin said of his stuttering: "How I got through it was just by working hard at it."

Venturi adds, "I have had to work through the years to overcome stuttering and to speak more easily and fluently." Venturi compares moving smoothly through speech to moving gracefully through a golf stroke.

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