



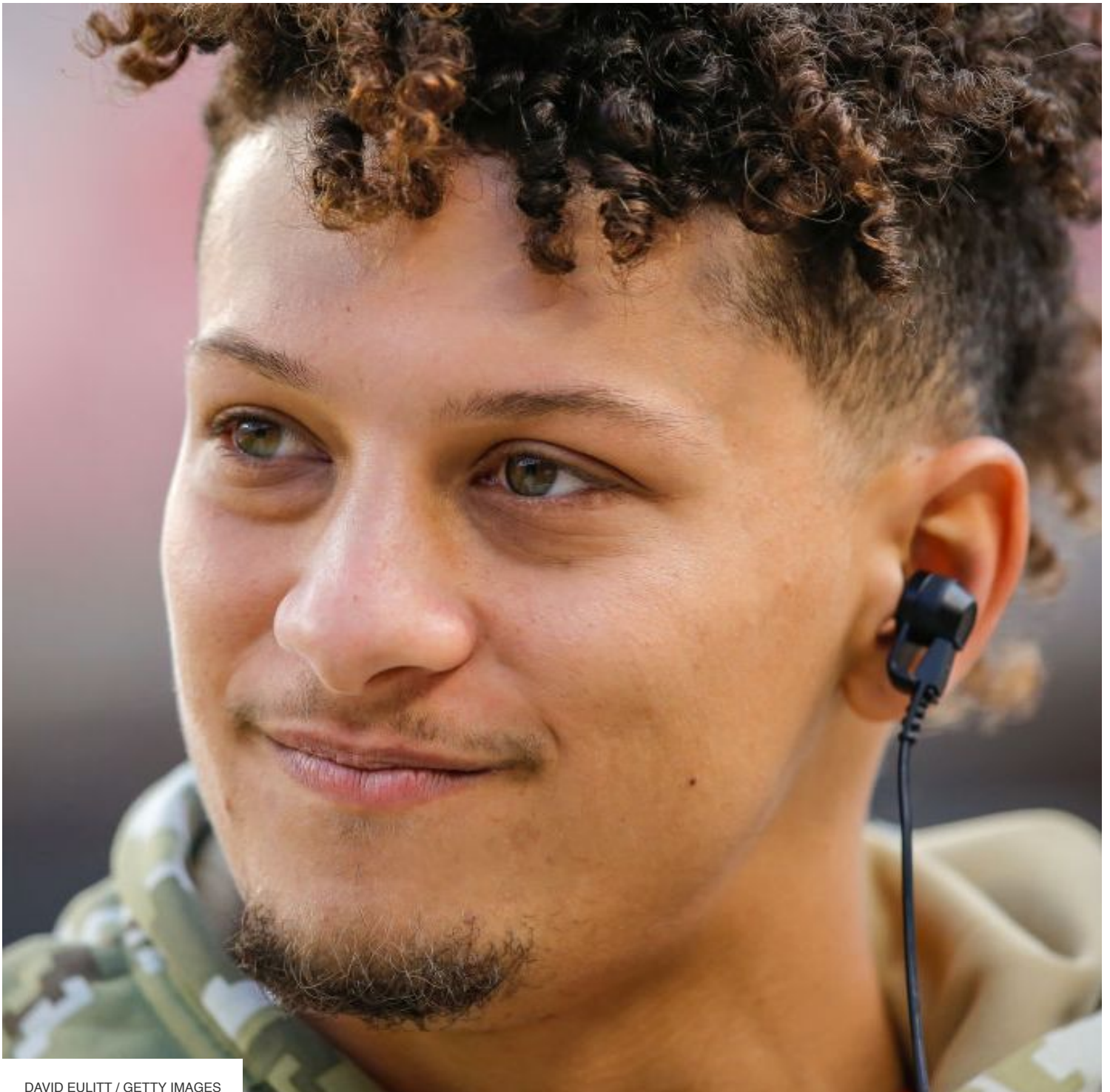
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Super Bowl MVP Patrick Mahomes Says the Party is Over

The Super Bowl MVP talks offseason prep—and knocking off the weight he gained from all those celebration beers.

BY [JOSH ST. CLAIR](#) MAR 11, 2020



DAVID EULITT / GETTY IMAGES

Three days after defeating the San Francisco 49ers in Miami, two days after riding shotgun with Mickey Mouse at Disney World, Super Bowl MVP Patrick Mahomes was back in Kansas City, partybus parading along Grand Boulevard with ski goggles and his Supreme fanny pack, and slamming down Bud Light in what felt like 13 degree weather. A month later, still buzzing, Mahomes reflects: “It was insane.”

On the streets, it was euphoria. Along the parade route, fans were tossing up footballs for the QB to sign and pass back to the crowd. LaRue Bell, 43, is a sales manager in St. Joseph, Missouri, just outside Kansas City. He had ridden in for the frigid victory celebration—the city’s first since 1970. Not far from Bell on 17th street, a man stood up on the back of a truck, and Mahomes turned and then let one fly. But the ball sailed and Bell, seeing glory and thinking the pass was for him, went for the catch. Running, eyes in the air, he collided instead with a parking meter, which put Bell on his back like Wile E. Coyote stepping on a rake. Someone else scooped up the ball and ran away. The whole thing was captured on video.

In a recent interview with *Men's Health*, Mahomes says he only remembers the overthrow. He didn’t register the fumble recovery. The Chiefs' bus simply drove on to Union Station where, for Mahomes, the party continued. Backstage at the Sprint Center, he played beer pong with Post Malone before walking out of the tunnel to roisterous cheers followed by the sound of 14,000 people chanting “*MVP, MVP, MVP!*”

On the ride home early that morning, Mahomes checked Twitter, where the parking meter clip had just surfaced. “Someone tweeted the video at me,” Mahomes remembers. “But it said nothing about the guy who ran into the parking meter. I thought, 'Did anyone check on the parking meter guy?'" So Mahomes tweeted, *Yo is the dude who hit the parking meter okay?* “And as I did that, it went viral and blew up.”

Bell went into work later that morning, feeling a bit sore. He knew nothing about the clip until he found his coworkers gathered around, watching the video. One of them looked over, making a quick realization: “Hey, that’s *you*.”

Then the newspapers came.

Bell told *The Kansas City Star* what happened: he had gone for the catch, and instead shattered his wife's phone, which he kept inside his coat. But other than that, he was okay. There were police nearby, Bell went on. "All they did [was] point and laugh." But Bell didn't seem to care. As he told the newspaper, proudly: "That was my Super Bowl."



HEATHER SMITH

Also working that post-parade morning, though less sore, was Chiefs General Manager Brett Veach. Veach was the first one to show Coach Andy Reid tapes of Mahomes, back when the East Texas native was playing at Texas Tech. Veach had told Reid that Mahomes was one of the best he'd seen, and Reid bought in. Kansas City then drafted him tenth overall in 2017, two picks ahead of Deshaun Watson. Mahomes sat the bench his rookie year behind veteran Alex Smith, before, at 22, being named starter the following season. His first season, he went from untested rookie to league MVP. The next season, he was Super Bowl MVP.

That day, Veach and his staff were already behind. They had to prepare for the 2020 draft, which other teams, not focused on winning a Super Bowl in February, already had months to prepare. And, though Veach has been vague about details, Chiefs management also needed discuss Mahomes' contract. The franchise's QB will be entering the fourth year of his rookie contract. He was paid a modest \$4.5 million for the 2019 season, which made the Super Bowl MVP one of the lowest-paid starting quarterbacks in the league. It's likely that number will change, and some ballpark Mahomes' next contract at four years and \$200 million, which would be the highest. Ever.

Mahomes, however, probably wasn't thinking too much about all this. Not long after the celebrations, he was back home in K.C., where he and girlfriend Brittany Matthews share a home. Like Veach, Mahomes was also feeling behind on his 2020 preparation. "Winning the Super Bowl, it's amazing," he explains, "but it cuts into your offseason. So you can't have a lot of time off." Then, continuing half-jokingly: "My trainer and Britney let me know that."



HEATHER SMITH

Matthews, who has been with Mahomes since the two were high school sophomores in Texas, briefly played professional soccer and is now a personal trainer. Mahomes says he has to work hard to keep his weight down during the season. “I eat my dinner at six and then I’m always that guy that wants that little sweet after my meal,” he says. “So when we’re training, [Brittany] hates when I go into the kitchen to get a cookie, or order a milkshake.”

The week of slamming beer and wings had taken Mahomes from 225 to 232. Already behind the eight ball, he knew the early training was going to hurt a bit.

Of course, last season, being behind was sorta Kansas City’s thing. In the playoffs, they trailed in every game, including a 24-0 deficit at home in the divisional round, before Mahomes, in front of the bench, let out some sideline fire—“Do something special! They’re already counting us the fuck out!”—and K.C. came back to trounce Houston, 51-31.

That's the sort of energy Mahomes wants to keep up. So he and Matthews usually get in to their training facility around 5:30 A.M. Or as teammate Tyrann Mathieu razzed Mahomes on Twitter last week: "up early with the grandpa's [sic]."

Mahomes says his offseason is currently focused on his hands, his feet, and his shoulder. As a mobile quarterback who will often throw on the run and across his body (sometimes without looking), his fundamentals have to be perfect. As for his shoulder, his new training has been all about his scapulas. "The first two weeks [after training], I felt like I couldn't move my back," Mahomes says. His new goal: to make his MLB-like release even quicker.

God knows he has the power. According to his pops, now-retired MLB pitcher Pat Mahomes, Pat Jr. was throwing 91 mph as an eighth grader. In high school, he hit 96. (He was drafted by the Tigers in 2014, but decided to go to Texas Tech instead to play football.) Now he just needs to cut down his release time—which should be more catcher than pitcher.

Probably because Mahomes is so versatile, offseason injury prevention also remains top priority. Fans will remember last season almost ended for K.C. on a Week 7 quarterback sneak in Denver.

Mahomes had gone into the game with an aggravated ankle injury. The team was coming off two losses after starting the season with four straight wins. After the successful 4th-and-1 sneak, Mahomes stayed on the ground, his kneecap visibly dislocated. He later told Erin Andrews he thought his season was over. A trainer popped his knee back in place on live television, and the star QB walked off the field into the tunnel as Chief Kingdom held their collective breaths. Mahomes was laughing and optimistic by halftime. He returned after missing only two weeks.

"Comeback Kingdom." That's been Mahomes' own personal slogan since, and something he's used to characterize his own brand, which includes a bevy of partnerships, like Essentia and their campaign "It Might as Well Be You" (Not unlike Mahomes' sideline rally "Do something special!"). The partnerships are as much preparative as professional. "I went to school for business and marketing," Mahomes explains. "I like seeing how different companies explore how to build their brand." As the face of a franchise and as an athlete whose career could end in a single snap, brand smarts matter.



HEATHER SMITH

Of course, the only things on Mahomes' mind now are his hands, feet, and scalps. “For me it's all about going in and getting another [championship]. Being better next [season].”

As to whether the party bus will roll on this spring to the traditional White House visit, a previously lackluster event now mired in moral quandaries, with teams and players opting out, and some, like the 2017 Golden State Warriors, having their invite preemptively withdrawn altogether, Mahomes says the team hasn't yet decided. “It's always about representing your organization, representing yourself, and representing the team in the right way,” he says, diplomatically.

And the biggest part of that brand is Kansas City.

“Whatever's best for the team and Kansas City we'll do,” Mahomes says.

And "Kansas City" means every type of fan. The old. The bandwagon new. And the dude who hit the parking meter.
