

Wrangler gets quarters back with Favre

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MONDAY, JAN. 14, 2008



Credit: Courtesy of Wrangler

Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre signed on with Greensboro-based Wrangler, then enjoyed a stellar season.

GREENSBORO — Brett Favre turned out to be a great catch for Wrangler, a brand with a long history of making big plays on the endorsement field.

The Green Bay Packers quarterback appeared ready for retirement at the end of 2006, only to sign on with the Greensboro-based jeans maker, and then enjoyed a turnaround, record-setting season in 2007.

"Sometimes you catch lightning in a bottle," said Craig Errington, vice president for marketing communication for VF Jeanswear, which oversees the Wrangler brand. "We certainly experienced some great luck in signing him. (But) in some cases, you make a lot of that luck."

Last February, when Wrangler announced that Favre would endorse its Five Star Premium Denim line, the 38-year-old quarterback had just thrown 18 touchdowns, his lowest total since 1992, and 18 interceptions. The Packers finished 8-8.

Commentators and bloggers urged Favre to hang up his No. 4 jersey.

"When Wrangler approached me, they didn't know if I'd even be returning for the 2007 season," Favre said in a statement. "They certainly didn't know that the team would have such a successful season."

As it turned out, the Packers, at 13-3, became one of the best teams in the National Football League and Favre played like a star again.

On Sunday, he'll lead the Packers against the Giants in the NFC championship game.

During the season, he set NFL milestones for career touchdown passes (442), wins by a starting quarterback (160), and career passing yards (61,657).

He threw 28 touchdowns and completed 66.5 percent of his passes, tops for his career.

Sports Illustrated named him its 2007 Sportsman of the Year.

Wrangler officials cheered it all.

"Everything he's accomplished has just been a bonus for the Wrangler brand," Errington said in a statement. "His decision to return, his and his team's fast start, the records, the playoffs, the awards he's won."

But Errington says Wrangler liked Favre regardless of his play.

"We wanted him for who he was as a person and for the reputation he had developed ... through 17 years in the NFL," Errington said in his statement. "We identified him as an ideal match for the brand."

Wrangler's most visible use of Favre has been on a TV commercial that shows him playing touch football on his ranch in Hattiesburg, Miss. The spot will air before and after today's game.

Favre marks the latest in a series of sports stars who have signed with Wrangler and then scored big.

In 1980, the brand struck a deal with Dale Earnhardt Sr., who won his first Winston Cup championship that year.

At the start of the 1990 baseball season, Wrangler signed Nolan Ryan, who threw his sixth career no-hitter in June of that year.

At the beginning of the 2004 NASCAR season, the brand teamed up with Dale Earnhardt Jr., who captured the Daytona 500.

"All those situations involved some amount of luck, however each was based on a lot of homework," Errington said. "We've had a nice history of success with endorsement partnerships."

Errington won't say how much Wrangler pays Favre.

"It is probably in the mid six figures, maybe even over a million bucks a year," said Dave Remick, director of The Mercanti Group, a boutique investment bank. "(But) it worked out well. They're going to sell more jeans."

The deal also has worked out well for the Brett Favre Fourward Foundation, which helps needy children.

For every touchdown Favre throws this year, Wrangler donates 100 pairs of jeans to the foundation.

"We're up to 2,800 pairs." Errington said. "But we'll be glad to keep providing jeans for as long as his magical season continues."

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