



First Job Fridays: Kirk Cousins

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Professional athletes often live a celebrity lifestyle—million-dollar mansions and fancy rides just come with the territory. But many of them grew up in rundown apartments and drove creaky cars before landing a spot in the big leagues. Some have even embraced more modest lifestyles after signing multimillion-dollar contracts.

In our regular First Job Friday feature on Information Station, we profile American success stories whose humble beginnings preceded (and shaped) their moment in the spotlight.

This week, we're highlighting Kirk Cousins, the starting quarterback for the National Football League's (NFL) Washington Redskins, whose career year propelled the team to the postseason for the first time since 2012. But he wasn't always a Washington sports star orchestrating long

touchdown drives and fourth quarter comebacks. During his college days at Michigan State University, Cousins started out working an entry-level job paying minimum wage to earn some extra pocket money. It was anything but glorious—he picked up golf balls at a local driving range—but Cousins found that it paid off to keep his spending in check and learn how to save for the future. "All you know is being frugal and it takes a little while to know you can spend a little more," he says looking back. Entry-level jobs also teach a lot of "soft skills" like how to show up on time, have a good customer service attitude, and deal with co-workers.

Cousins now prioritizes the practical over the posh. He inherited his grandparents' 2000 GMC Savana in college and still drives it today—spacious and comfortable, the old conversion van is

all Cousins needs. "I figured I'd have more fun driving this than a Toyota Corolla, so might as well just stick with the van," he admitted.

And recognizing the rigors of professional football—an average NFL career lasts little more than three years—Cousins realizes that it's prudent to prepare for the future. "[Y]ou don't know how long you're going to play, you've got to save every dollar even though you are making a good salary," he explains. "You never know what's going to happen so I try to put as much money away as I can." And the football star thanks his starter job for that because it taught him the art of frugality.

For Cousins, throwing footballs is the same as picking up golf balls: A chance to make some money—and keep it in the bank.