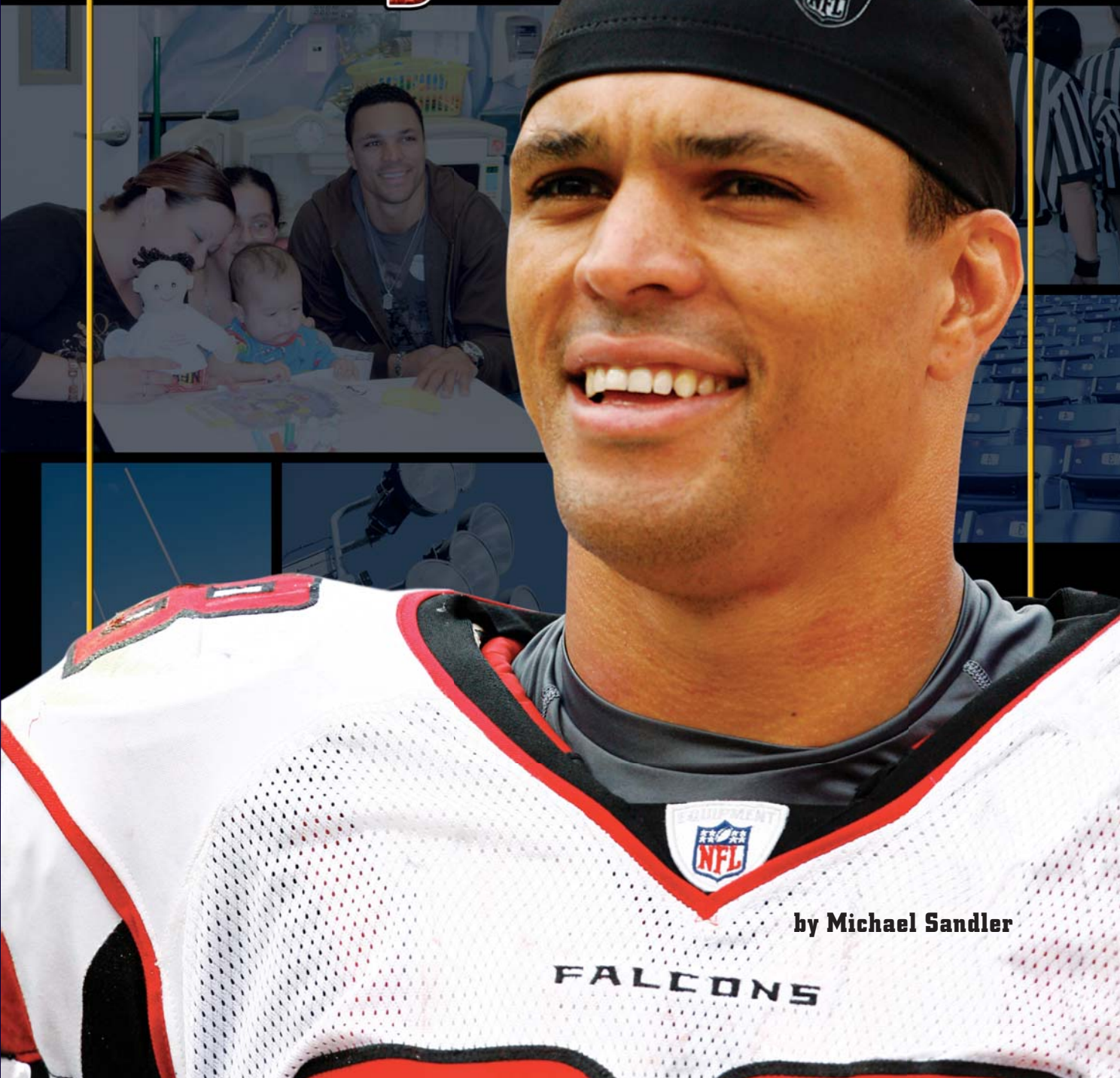




Tony Gonzalez

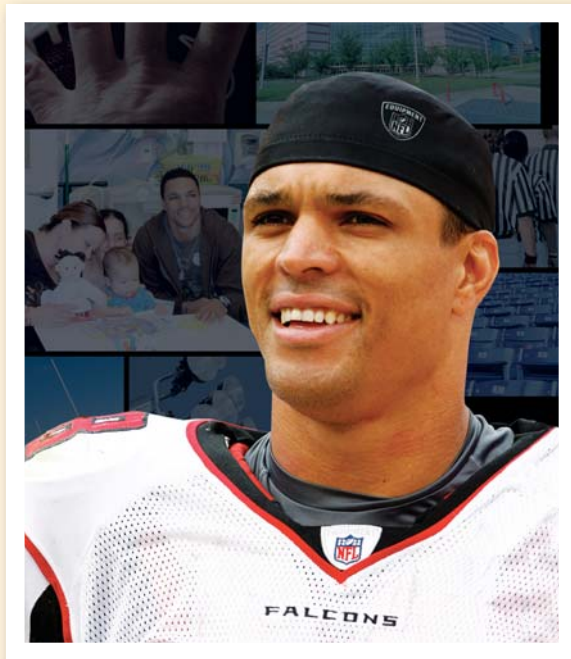


by Michael Sandler

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Tony Gonzalez



by Michael Sandler

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Columbia University

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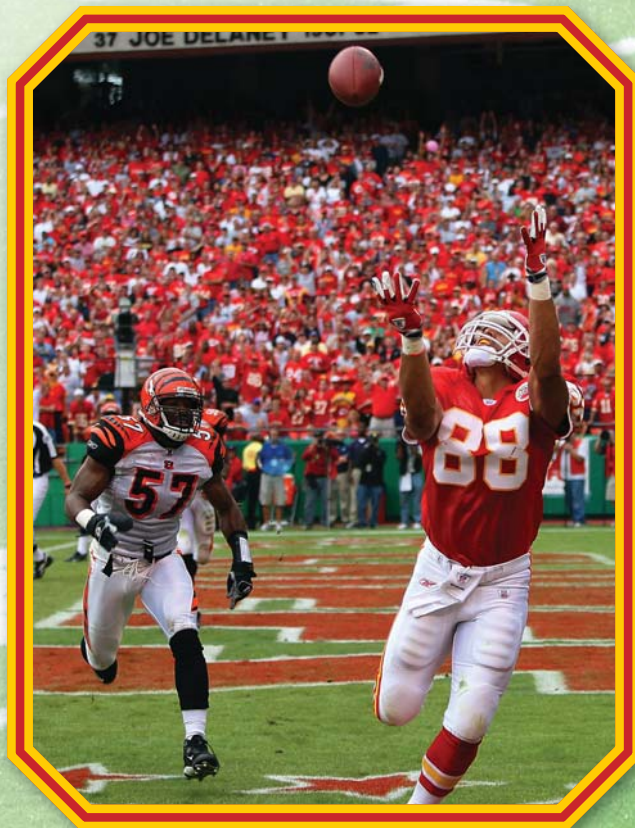
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Sweet 63

The ball was **snapped**. The Kansas City Chiefs' quarterback, Damon Huard, dropped back to pass. He looked into the **end zone** and saw **tight end** Tony Gonzalez racing into the corner. Tony slid behind the Cincinnati Bengals' **defenders**. Damon let the ball fly. Tony reached out and pulled it down. Touchdown!

Now it was time to celebrate! Gonzalez took the ball and slam-dunked it over the cross bar. This was no ordinary score. It was the 63rd touchdown catch of Tony's career, a new NFL record for tight ends.

Tony (#88) about to catch the ball and set the NFL record for touchdowns by tight ends





Tony dunks the ball in celebration.

Tony scored his record-breaking touchdown on October 14, 2007, in the Chiefs' 27-20 win against the Cincinnati Bengals. Within a year, Tony set two more career records for tight ends—most catches and most **receiving yards**.



Building Self-Esteem

Surprisingly, the great NFL tight end didn't start out as a natural at football. "I was awful as a child," Tony said. He remembers being one of the very worst players on his **Pop Warner** team.

It wasn't just a matter of skill. Tony was shy and he wasn't very aggressive. He was also afraid of some of the other kids. Up until middle school, he spent lots of time hiding from bullies.

What changed things around for Tony? Confidence! During the summer after eighth grade, he joined a basketball league and discovered that he was good at the sport. Basketball helped his **self-esteem** grow.



Tony grew up in Huntington Beach, California.

In Tony's very first basketball game, he scored 18 points.



Even as an adult, Tony still enjoys playing basketball.



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Learn More Online

To learn more about Tony Gonzalez and the teams he's played for, visit
www.bearportpublishing.com/FootballHeroes

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Tony Gonzalez

Tony Gonzalez is one of the NFL's best tight ends. Through hard work, he has set NFL records and has been voted to the Pro Bowl ten times. Tony has given his fans something to cheer about off the field, too. In 1998, he formed the Tony Gonzalez Foundation. The group's goal is to help anyone who is in need, especially kids with medical problems or kids who come from poor families. For example, the foundation supports the Shadow Buddies program, which provides special dolls for sick children. Follow Tony through the biggest moments of his career on and off the field to see how this champion makes a difference.

Brett Favre
Larry Fitzgerald
Tony Gonzalez
Matt Hasselbeck
Donovan McNabb

Adrian Peterson
Ben Roethlisberger
Tony Romo
LaDainian Tomlinson
Brian Urlacher

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