

First-Round RB Mendenhall Signs Three-Year Deal w/ Champion

Posted by Matt Loede

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WINSTON-SALEM, NC (September 4, 2008) – Champion, a leading athletic apparel brand for men and women, announced today a three-year deal with Rashard Mendenhall who was the 2008 first-round draft pick of the Pittsburgh Steelers. The partnership builds on the brand’s How You Play campaign momentum and paves the way for new and exciting initiatives, starting with a personality-driven TV integration later in the year.

“We are thrilled to welcome Rashard to the Champion team,” said Claire Edgar, Champion Brand Leader. “He is the perfect complement to our brand, which focuses on great performance, style, and an inclusive team spirited, fun attitude to sport.”

“I’m excited to be with Champion. They’re such an easy fit with my personality,” Mendenhall added. “They have both the performance apparel I need and the style, versatility and comfort I look for off the field. I also share Champion’s attitude towards sports – sport is there to be enjoyed by everyone as part of a fun and fulfilling lifestyle. I’ve approached sports with that attitude all my life.”

With numerous football accolades under his belt, Mendenhall underscores the brand’s sporting heritage. However it’s his versatile persona that truly represents the Champion spirit.

“When looking at potential partners, we felt that Champion was an ideal fit for Rashard because their brand and message embodies his personality as well as his athleticism. In addition to his passion about his family and friends, he has a great interest in and

appreciation for the Arts, including both music and writing,” said Dave Riggs, Director of Athlete Marketing at Priority Sports, Mendenhall’s agency.

“While our competitors may look to align themselves with an athlete or an arsenal of athletes, we are interested in the personality and interests of the player off the field as well. We’re looking to work with Rashard on programs that showcase his dynamic range and interests,” said Edgar.

Champion will utilize Mendenhall for traditional and non-traditional advertising initiatives both locally and nationally, starting in early September with outdoor and print advertising in the Pittsburgh market. Later in the year, the brand plans to execute a national TV integration to connect with fans and audiences in a fun and meaningful way by tapping into Mendenhall’s off-the-field interests.

“We’ll be working together with Rashard to proactively engage our consumers via grassroots, viral online and retail efforts,” said Edgar. The brand will also look to place an emphasis on social media as an effort to make Mendenhall accessible to fans and consumers, particularly younger males who spend much of their time online.

“For most of us, sport and fitness are an important and enjoyable part of our life. Rashard’s interests and sense of ‘play’ extends beyond athletics which makes him approachable for our consumers and reflects what Champion is all about.” said Edgar.

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