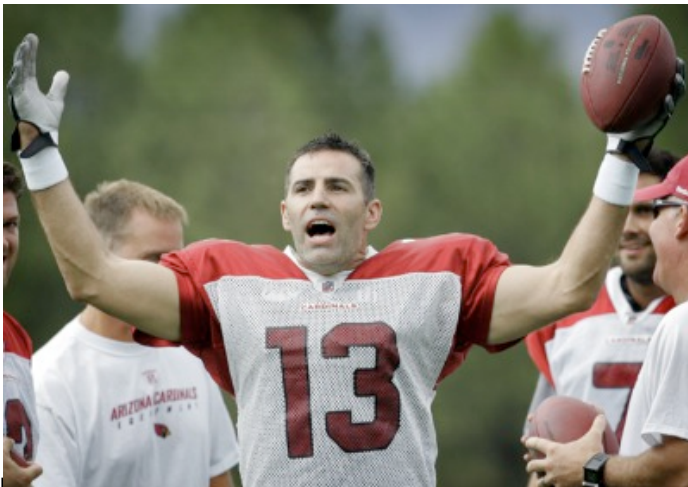


America's Most-Liked Sports Figures

Americans take to sports heroes who seem trustworthy and sincere.

Tom Van Riper, 10.16.09



Kurt Warner - Football

Percent Like: 69%

People see him as: Trustworthy, down to earth, experienced

The guy who throws Fitzgerald the passes got a lift from the Super Bowl too. The Arizona Cardinals QB is a hit with fans who appreciate his rise to stardom the hard way, from a life of grocery bagging and Arena Football to the NFL. Warner got more acclaim than he did for his two previous Super Bowl appearances with the Rams--when you battle back at age 37 to take the starting job from a young stud draft pick (Matt Leinert out of USC), people can relate.

E-Poll Market Research, an Encino, Calif.-based research firm that tracks celebrity likability ratings, scientifically surveyed a representative sample of 1,100 people age 13 and over. Candidates were limited to active athletes, coaches or commentators with a minimum 10% awareness rating.

The most common adjective fans use to describe their favorites: trustworthy. The term popped up most frequently for four people: Arizona Cardinals quarterback Kurt Warner, San Antonio Spurs big man Tim Duncan, NFL commentator and former 49ers quarterback Steve Young, and longtime media personality Robin Roberts. All exude a consistency and familiarity that leads fans to believe they'd be perfect barroom buddies (though Young, a Mormon, doesn't drink) or spouses, E-Poll Chief Executive Gerry Philpott points out.

"It means they're seen as dependable, people think 'I can count on them,'" Philpott says.

Of course, never underestimate the power of the [Super Bowl](#), which pushed both Warner and his top pass catcher, Larry Fitzgerald, into the limelight last February. With a pair of touchdown catches in a tough 27-23 loss to the Steelers, the dynamic Fitzgerald got to showcase his talent in front of roughly 100 million people.

Fans also got a big dose of Warner's rags to riches story during the game's buildup (he spent time bagging groceries and toiling in the Arena Football League before catching on in the NFL). It's true that Warner had appeared in two prior Super Bowls with the Rams. But no doubt many people were taken with the 37-year-old's success in wrestling the starting QB job from hotshot draft pick Matt Leinert, a former Southern Cal Heisman Trophy winner, and then justifying the choice by taking the usually mediocre Cards to the Super Bowl.