

Inspiring deaf Seattle Seahawks player Derrick Coleman to play in the Super Bowl

He's been deaf since the age of three. He was bullied and told he would never make it. He plays with a hearing aid in his helmet in one of the toughest sports on the planet.

And now, after overcoming incredible odds, Derrick Coleman is set to play in the biggest NFL game of all - the Super Bowl.

The Seattle Seahawks No. 40 is the first legally deaf offensive player in America's much-loved National Football League.

His story is as amazing as it is inspirational.

He suffered a genetic and incurable hearing impairment as a child, he was picked last for games as a kid, he was bullied and told to give up playing football. He was even overlooked in the NFL draft after starring at high school and college.

The fullback is made a strong stuff however and he never gave up on his dream, no matter the setback. People putting him down because of his disability only made him more determined to reach his goal.

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"Being deaf, being hard of hearing is who I am, so I'm not going to let someone else come in here and say 'Oh, you're deaf,'" he told ABC News. "That's who I am. It made me who I am today."

Coleman, who in some kind of irony plays in front of the loudest fans in the NFL, can still hear the crowd when he plays.

"I can hear [the fans]. I can definitely hear them," he said. "It don't hurt my ears as much as everyone else's but I know it's loud."

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His hearing aids give him hearing on a scale of 7 or 8 out of 10, compared to the 1 or 2 he has without them, he told *The Seattle Times*.

During his early career his mother May Hamlin amazingly used a pair of pantyhose to help keep her son's hearing aids in his helmet.

"I took a pair of my pantyhose and I cut the pantyhose and tied the top of it and I said, 'Let's see if this works and if this holds them in,' and lo and behold, it worked," she told CBS News.

Coleman doesn't rely on the hearing aids on the field anymore however, having taught himself to read lips so he can adapt to any late change in plays.

"I can rely on reading lips. That's the advantage that most people don't have. They

don't know how to read lips - like when the hearing goes out what do you do? They kind of freak out," he said.

It is not only Coleman's current success on the field that has thrust him into the national spotlight - he recently starred in a Duracell advert that caused something of an internet sensation.

The powerful ad tell his story of making the NFL and has received a tremendous reaction from people around the world, being watched by more than five million people on YouTube.

Coleman has been taken aback by the reaction.

"I knew I was going to be able to touch some people, and that the hearing-impaired and deaf community - that it would get to them. ... but I am happy that it did," he told The Seattle Times.

"I don't really know how to respond to that. But I'm glad that it really got to everybody."

Coleman's Seahawks take on the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XLVIII on Monday, 3 February at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

His journey to the pinnacle has been long and arduous but his strength of character has overcome any physical obstacle in his path.

"You can always make something work if you really put your mind to it," he said.

"You can definitely achieve it and that's why when people say I can't do something, I know that I probably can or will at least try my best to get it done and if I don't, at least I tried.

"You can't use your problem as an excuse. Because you use an excuse, you're not going to get to your dream."

Questions:

1. Do you know other inspirational stories of disability? Come to share with us!
2. If you were a deaf, what problems would you meet?
3. How would you overcome your difficulty, if you were a deaf?
4. How do people communicate with others except for use language?
5. Would you try to learn body language? Why?
6. Have you pay attention to the disability friendly equipment in your life? What is it?
7. Do you consider government should offer more welfare to impair people?
8. Will you sit down on the priority seat in crowded bus?
9. How do you think about the blind people work as a massagist?
10. Do you have a dream? Have you ever meet any problems? Will you use your problem as an excuse?