

Eric Johnson

Contributed by Chris Yandek
Thursday, 09 December 2004
Last Updated Monday, 30 August 2010

Interview Conducted December 9, 2004

The 2004 San Francisco 49ers team hasn't been full of positive moments. Tight end Eric Johnson is having his best season ever with over 700 yards receiving at the position. A graduate of Yale University, he has been a positive point to the San Francisco 49ers who will probably end up with the first or second choice in the 2005 NFL Draft.

Listen to the Eric Johnson Interview

{audio}http://thesportsinterview.com/mp3/EricJohnson.mp3{/audio}

Chris Yandek: First off how are you?

Eric Johnson: "I am doing good. Thanks for having me."

CY: This 2004 season has been your best with the offensive stats catching on averaging 9.7 yards per carry. What are your thoughts as you make the pace to having the best season as a tight end in San Francisco 49ers history?

EJ: "Well, I am feeling good. I am coming up on Brent Jones's record. Hopefully I can achieve that goal. It would be a huge honor as he is a great player in San Francisco 49ers history. I am looking forward to doing that."

CY: What do you think has been the reason that you have improved on your total reception yards this season?

EJ: "Well, it is a combination of a bunch of things. I have been grooving it pretty good with Tim Rattay. We have really built a chemistry between each other. I feel like I have stepped up my game this year and was able to run some good routes and find those zones. I really have got into a groove this year and piled up those receptions."

CY: Tell me about the fractured collarbone injury that kept you out the entire 2003 NFL season.

EJ: "I broke my collarbone last year in the third game of the preseason and was really disappointed. I was looking to have a breakout year last year. It was a very tough year to sit through. I had to get some surgery at the end of the year to heal it up. After that I was kinda rejuvenated and focused on football. We had a really good off season last year that helped me this year."

CY: The San Francisco 49ers are going to get a top five pick. Being on this team for four years what do you think this team needs to draft at the 2005 NFL Draft?

EJ: "We need some depth in a lot of areas. The offensive line is an area we could probably use a lot of help. The defensive line is scrambling a little bit at the end of this year. There are so many positions that we can fill. We will just see how it plays out. They might trade and try to get a couple of picks in the first round or go for that big top five pick."

CY: What are your thoughts on head coach Dennis Erickson, and what you have learned from him?

EJ: "I think he is a good coach. He is a very classy guy. This has been a tough season on all of us. Coach Erickson has really put a lot of heat on himself which is very respectful. I think that is one of the main things I have learned from him. He has great character. When things are going tough he deals with it well."

CY: What are your thoughts on the NFC West division with the St. Louis Rams, Seattle Seahawks, and Arizona Cardinals?

EJ: "It looks like it is going to go down to the end this year. I can't really say who is going to come out on top. It looks pretty good for the St. Louis Rams. The Seattle Seahawks have been skidding. All the teams are fairly even."

CY: The team is currently 1-11 at the time of this interview. What are the positive things you can look at as the season comes to an end?

EJ: "Just trying to get better every week. We are individually just focusing on ourselves, how we can get better, and help the team win. It's all we can really do right now. We know we are out of playoff contention. We gotta come into work every week and we have a game. We take every game seriously and try to win that game."

CY: What do you think the team troubles have been this year overall?

EJ: "We had a trouble at the beginning of the year by losing a few close games. A lot of times the offense would play well and the defense wouldn't. We have to put all three areas of the game together. That really has hurt us. We really go hot and cold. We kinda seem to have one side that will play well and the other won't. We kinda switch off back and forth that way."

CY: What do you remember most from your college days at Yale University?

EJ: "It was a great time. I had a great time and great experience off the field with learning and meeting some great people. Just a lot of fun. We beat Harvard my last years which you are always looking to do. I got an Ivy Championship in there. It was a great time."

CY: Finally, what do you want to accomplish the rest of your NFL career?

EJ: "Definitely want a Super Bowl. That is the goal every year. That is what you work for every year even if you are out of contention. You gotta focus on winning as many games as you can. Each year it is always to win a Super Bowl."