



# CLEVELAND BROWNS TRANSCRIPT

*LB Sione Takitaki*  
*4-26-19*

**LB Sione Takitaki:**

**On his style of play and Browns personnel saying he had a physical, violent style:**

“I feel like they kind of hit it on the head. I am a physical guy. I feel like I do a good job of being physical, shedding blocks, things like that and filling gaps. I also am smart enough to use finesse moves here and there and that really opens up doors when going against linemen and tight ends trying to block you, fullbacks and things like that. I really feel like I am a physical linebacker, but I also use a lot of finesse and am really smart.”

**On what initiated his maturation process college:**

“Through my college career, I ran into some incidents early through my freshman and sophomore year. I feel like all of them definitely helped me out and molded me into the man I am today. The biggest turnaround was when I got married to my wife. I met my spouse, and we were dating for a year and a half. We got married in 2016. I feel like that was the big turnaround knowing that I had to take care of somebody else and not just myself. When I got married, I knew I really had to buckle up. I have to feed another mouth and make sure that she is good. She is going to be the mother to my future kids and things like that. I feel like that was the big turnaround when I got married.”

**On spending the 2016 season away from football:**

“It was difficult. It was difficult to be out of playing football, going to school and doing the thing that I love the most and that is playing ball. I feel like stepping away from that really made me look at a lot of things in life and what I really wanted to do. Do I want to play ball or not? I feel like just that time being away, getting a job – I worked construction for that whole two semesters that I was away from the game – it kind of really made me get my things in order.”

**On if he grew out of ‘being a knucklehead’ as he reflected about himself when he arrived to BYU:**

“Yeah, I feel like I showed all of the NFL teams that were talking to me that I have moved past that in these last few years – ne being a team captain, me taking care of my school and me being married and being in a happy marriage. Marriage is hard so I feel like seeing all of these things with me easily persuaded the team that I kind of moved past all of those knucklehead days.”

**On where he fits best in an NFL defensive scheme, given he played ILB and OLB:**

“What makes me a great linebacker is that I play inside or outside. I am willing to come in and fit in wherever the coaches need me and where the team needs me. I am pretty comfortable playing both. If I had to play outside linebacker and set the edge here and there or play inside linebacker you could flow and make plays left and right or being in charge of the defense and things like that, I feel comfortable doing both. I feel like that is what makes me a unique linebacker.”

**On choosing to return to football after being out of football for a year:**

“I could have transferred. Just talking to my wife and myself, I wanted to come back to BYU and right my wrongs. It is easy to run away. You could always run away and go to another school, hide your problems and never look back, but for myself, I wanted to come back to BYU because I am LDS, I am a Latter-day Saint. I wanted to come back to BYU and make sure that I right my name right since I have been in all of that trouble. I feel like that was the last, final decision to come back and show everybody that I could do it, and I could finish out here. That is exactly what I did.”

**On if he was still going to school while working a construction job:**



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“I was out of school. I actually got kicked out of the university during that last incident in 2016. I got kicked out of the university so I was not in school or football so I was not getting a scholarship check. I was working doing hard labor actually for money to survive – to pay rent, to put food on the table. It was hard, but hard times make you who you are. I feel like it was a good situation at the end.”

**On his construction work:**

“I was pouring cement, glass, blockwall and doing all of that stuff. We would do basements, concrete walls and stuff like that, but we would never actually build a house.”

**On how he met his wife:**

“My wife was a BYU swimmer. I met her at school. I met her actually at a bonfire. At first, she wasn’t really digging me. I definitely had to try and persuade her and all that stuff. She is a swimmer. She used to swim.”

**On reflecting on why he got in trouble when he was younger:**

“I attribute it to my life. Definitely rough times. I lost my dad when I was 14 so I feel like all this trouble really just made me stronger at the end. I feel like I figured out a lot of things in life going forward from now on. Definitely had bumps in the road, but I feel early on the decisions I was making and things like that early on in my career from coming out of high school that I was definitely going down the wrong path. I feel like I attribute to my journey and my life.”

**On when he expected to be drafted:**

“This is where me and my agent were talking and where they saw me going. Once I got the call, I was really excited. I was actually going to use the restroom. Funny story, I was watching it on TV and I saw the Rams going and their pick was in, and I saw Cleveland was next, I was like, ‘Ah, I never really talked to Cleveland in the past, except at the Combine.’ I went to use the restroom and as I sat on the toilet, I got a call and I jumped right up and didn’t have to use the restroom anymore.”

**On if they can quote his draft story:**

“Just do whatever you guys want. Man, I feel like that was a funny story. It is something I will always remember. I was looking at the TV like Cleveland is next man; I haven’t talked to them since the Combine. Then I walked away and go shut the door to the restroom, kind of pondering and thinking like, ‘Man, what’s up?’ Then, I get a call it says Cleveland, Ohio and I’m like, ‘Oh, man.’ Then, boom, it happened. So blessed.”

**On how he convinced BYU to take him back in the program:**

“I always had a good relationship with my coaches. My coaches were always sticking their necks out there for me. At the end of the day, I always have good vibes with them and always put my best foot forward with them. It was always respect with them. They always would want to help me out. From coach Bronco Mendenhall down to coach (Kalani) Sitake when he came him and the administration too, I always had a good relationship with. They knew I was rough around the edges, but they always wanted to help. I feel like it just took some time for them to be like, ‘Man, we are going to give you a third chance, man. How bad would it look if you ruined it again?’ It just took some convincing and showing them by example and me being married, getting back in church, I really got right with the gospel and LDS. I felt like it took some convincing in that area and in that direction, and he made it happen. It worked out for both parties.”

**On what he knows about the Browns, specifically referencing the past three seasons:**

“Yeah, I know exactly what you just said. I know that they weren’t doing so good for years and then last year (QB) Baker (Mayfield) comes and gets that offense going and they find that groove and they had a good season last year. Feel like they could have done better. They had some close wins, some close losses. I feel like going into this year, they got good players in OBJ (WR Odell Beckham Jr.) and free agency. I



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feel like this year, they are only going to go up. This year, the team is going to work hard. Obviously, I'm young. I haven't been there, but I'm going and doing my part going in there and earn my respect the right way and do things the right and work hard. At the end of the day, everyone is going to work hard. I feel like we are really going to get things going this season."

**On if something specific about his wife and marriage that made him a better person:**

"Definitely. I feel like for me I got really lucky. I married a great girl. Saw her in church – beautiful. She just has everything right. Always pushing me to do better, and I feel like before I was always making decisions on the fly and wasn't really thinking. With a good girl by my side, she definitely has me thinking about every decision and things like that. I feel like we just fit. She is a great friend for me. She is going to be a great mom. Smart girl, really smart girl. I got really lucky. She is out of my league."

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