

BEHIND THE FACEMASK: JUSTIN BLALOCK

By: [Reggie Roberts](#) | December 2nd, 2011

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Falcons Vice President of Football Communications Reggie Roberts spotlights a player each week in a series of on-the-spot, off-beat questions in a weekly segment featured on AtlantaFalcons.com called "Behind the Facemask." This week's featured player is Falcons starting left guard Justin Blalock. Justin and the rest of his Falcons teammates will try to improve their record to 8-4 on Sunday on the road when they face the red-hot Houston Texans on Sunday at Reliant Stadium. Kickoff is set for 1 p.m. We caught up with Justin following Friday's practice to discuss playing on the Falcons offensive line, playing college football and winning a national championship at the University of Texas in 2006, and what he does to relax when he leaves the Falcons complex.

Reggie Roberts: You've got some pretty big shoes to fill. I've already featured Todd McClure, Will Svitek and Tyson Clabo and they were all pretty entertaining. Think you'll be able to measure up?

Justin Blalock: We've got some interesting characters on our offensive line. You never know what's going to come out of the mouths of those guys. It might be tough to be as entertaining as those three guys, but I will give it my best shot.

RR: Playing in the NFL is tough. What do you do to relax when you leave the complex and head to your house to chill?

JB: Today's Friday, the end of our practice week, so I am going to go home and do as little as possible. That's what I enjoy. It's a pretty jammed packed day when we are here at the complex and we get a lot done in not a whole lot of time, so I like to kind of decompress at least

for an hour. I'll just chill on the couch before going down in my basement to mess around.

RR: I hear you are a big musician. What's up with that?

JB: I like to jam in my basement. I have two guitars, I have a bass guitar, and I have a drum set.

RR: You graduated from Texas which is located in Austin, Texas — one of the best cities in America. Austin has a killer live music scene. Did you hear much live music when you were there?

JB: I used to do the South by Southwest Festival in Austin. There was live music in Austin every night of the week, so I saw a ton of people while I was in school there.

RR: Let's switch gears. Will Svitek tells me that you are his wingman when the two of you go out and do the town. What's that about?

JB: There are a lot of married guys on the offensive line so naturally he and I will go out and do the town since we're both single. Will's aggressive and in his element when he makes the rounds. We have a good time. His specialty is shutting the bar down which is in direct conflict with me and how I am being that I am an early bird and don't like to close the place down. There have been times when've I've broken the rules of engagement and left my wingman when I have hung out with Will.

RR: Thirteen-year veteran center Todd McClure is the dean of the Falcons offensive line, but he told me that you were by far the smartest guy on the line. That's pretty high praise from a guy who has played in 168 NFL games. Is he right?

JB: I am not one to toot my own horn, but standardized tests speak for themselves. And even though we have two Stanford guys on the team (Svitek and Kirk Chambers), I gladly accept the title of the smartest guy on the offensive line.

RR: You mentioned standardized tests speak for themselves. Are you good on standardized tests?

JB: I was always pretty good at them. I scored a 31 out of 36 on the ACT test; I scored a 1,280 out of 1,600 on the SAT test; and I scored a 41 out of a possible 50 on the NFL's Wonderlic Test.

RR: That's insane. Are you serious?

JB: Yeah, those were my scores.

RR: You don't need to be playing football. You need to be building rockets?

JB: I like my day job.

RR: Who do you attribute your intelligence to?

JB: My mom (Jacqueline Robinson). She's a pretty smart lady who was the first college graduate in her family. She graduated from Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois) with a degree in journalism. She currently is a substitute teacher who also runs my foundation (The Justin Blalock Foundation) which works with troubled children in Plano, Texas and in Atlanta, Ga.

RR: Securing a degree from the University of Texas and playing football is no easy task. How did you do it?

JB: I got my degree in education from Texas. It was not easy to do that and play football too, but I just worked hard and stayed after it.

RR: Let's switch back to football. You made 51 consecutive starts while at UT and will make your 74th start as a pro on Sunday in Texas. How have you been so consistent?

JB: I've been lucky. You don't start that many games without being a little lucky. I also like to think that I keep myself in good shape and that I prepare well. My grandfather once told me that if you are playing hard and playing the right way, you won't be the guy who gets hurt. That's been some very good advice.

RR: Let's switch back to Will Svitek, who told me that you were the nicest guy on the team and that if he had a sister, he would love for you to be the guy who dated or married his sister. What are your thoughts on that?

JB: Wow. That's pretty flattering. That's an awesome compliment coming from Will.

RR: Your bread situation changed dramatically on the last day of July of this year when the Falcons extended your contract for six years. What was that day like?

JB: I was happy. I was happy to have that behind me. I wanted to be here, I like it here, and the organization is terrific. This was the place I wanted to be, so I am glad it all got worked out.

RR: Several guys on the team have tattoos, but I would say that you have one of the most unique ones. Walk us through how it came about and how long it took to do.

JB: Every guy on the team at UT had a longhorn of some sort tattooed some place on his body, so I figured I'd place mine where there would be no doubting my loyalty and allegiance to Texas. (Justin's longhorn tattoo goes from shoulder to shoulder across his back).

RR: If your agent presented you with an opportunity to participate in a reality TV show, would you do it?

JB: Not a chance. That's so not my style.

RR: How cool was it to win the national championship (2006) as a member of the Texas Longhorns football team?

JB: It was surreal. We had so many things happen to us that year. We had close games, comebacks. It was a fairytale season.

Published 05 hours ago hours ago by Reggie Roberts.

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