

# Where are They Now? Nimitz DB Michael Thomas Headed to NFL?

VYPE MAGAZINE - North Houston

THE YEAR OF THE CARDINAL – Michael Thomas  
Former Nimitz QB Headed to Pros After Tremendous College Career

In the fall of 2007, Michael Thomas was just hoping for a shot to play collegiate football.

Four years later, the 5-foot-11 product of Nimitz High School is one game away from capping back-to-back 12-1 seasons to end his illustrious career at Stanford University.

“It’s crazy to think about the journey that I’ve had,” said Thomas. “Four years ago I was hoping to just get a chance to earn a scholarship and now I am the co-captain of a BCS football team. All of the hard work that we put into the program is paying off.”

As the starting quarterback at Nimitz, Thomas was the overlooked signal caller that played in the competitive district 17-4A – the same division that featured two-time Heisman trophy finalist Andrew Luck, Darron Thomas (Oregon) and Ken Guiton (Ohio State).

Recruited as an athlete by Boise State, Missouri, Northwestern and Vanderbilt, Thomas ultimately found his niche as a Cardinal. In a program that was reeling but had shown promise in the previous year with a monumental upset of top-ranked Southern California, snapping a 35-game home winning streak, Thomas wanted to be a component in the restoration of a proud and tradition-rich program.

“When I got to Stanford we had talent but the guys didn’t know how to win yet,” Thomas explained. “Coach (Jim) Harbaugh did a great job to get the guys to believe that, in order to compete, we’d have to work. It wasn’t about the stars when it came to our recruiting class; it was the type of guys that were recruited.

“I didn’t want to go to a program that was already established or all about hype. I wanted to go some place where we could work and make our own story. We all had in our minds when we got here that we were going to change this program and find a way to win. We weren’t going to accept failure.”

In his four seasons at Stanford, the Cardinal have recorded three bowl berths, including two BCS appearances, while Thomas earned accolades as an honorable mention Pac-12 performer on two occasions. This season, the senior free safety has tallied 61 total tackles while accounting for three of the team’s six interceptions – including a 62-yard interception returned for a touchdown against Washington.

Things weren’t always easy at Stanford for Thomas as the Cardinal posted a 5-7 record during his freshman season. However, as one of only eight true freshmen to see action, he played in all 12 games in the secondary and on special teams and used his experience and strong work ethic to leave no room for complacency in the future.

“When I first got to Stanford we would play in a game then I would go back to my dorm and have people ask me what I was doing all morning,” Thomas recalled. “That’s how it was when we first got here and now Stanford football is relevant again. It’s been special to be a part of a team that helped the program resurrect itself.”

As a student-athlete, Thomas only has one game left in his collegiate career – a date with Oklahoma State in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl – and he admits that a win would be a ‘storybook ending’ to his career.

With the 2012 NFL Draft looming in April, the Houston native is just soaking in his last few days in the Bay Area while considering his training options for both the NFL Combine and the Stanford Pro Days.

For the sociology major that plans on coaching at some point in his future, Thomas is just thankful for the opportunity that he has been given to play the game that he loves while having the chance to receive an education at a premiere academic institution.

“To be able to go to a school like Stanford and get a great education that allows me to do what I want once I graduate is awesome,” said Thomas. “To be able to say that once you graduate and play big-time football and go to BCS games – that’s crazy.

“I’ve gotten the best of both worlds.”