

# Deion Sanders

CLAIMING HE'S TIRED AND HAS LOST PASSION FOR THE GAME, THE TWO-SPORT STAR SAYS HE WON'T PLAY PRO FOOTBALL IN '94/**BY RICK WEINBERG**

*The following is an exclusive interview between SPORT Magazine and Deion Sanders during the Pro Bowl. At that time, he stated on record that he was no longer interested in playing professional football for the Atlanta Falcons or any other team. At press time, there had been no other comments to refute that intention.*



Talk about dropping a bomb.

Deion Sanders, the celebrated, high-stepping two-sport superstar not playing football next season? Come on.

Sanders, arguably the best cornerback in the NFL, can't be serious, can he?

Is this proclamation simply rhetoric? An attempt at gaining more publicity?

He says he's serious.

During our interview, while riding along a road paralleling the blue-drenched ocean and green-carpeted mountains of Hawaii, Sanders, the Atlanta Braves outfielder and Falcons All-Pro cornerback, revealed that he wants to devote himself full time to baseball—well, and music.

**SPORT:** Why are you giving up pro football?

**SANDERS:** I'm tired. I've been driving myself too much. I'm 26 going on 36. I've lost the feeling—that [excitement] of playing football. I don't know when, or if,

I'll get it back. The last game of the [1993] season was the worst I've ever played. I had no desire, no drive, no enthusiasm. I didn't want to be out there. I should've walked off the field and out of the stadium and said, "Later, see ya when I get the feeling back."

**SPORT:** Could it be that you're simply frustrated with the game?

**SANDERS:**...Tired and frustrated. I've got a lot of other things happening. I'm in the process of finishing a CD, and it's really great. I'm working with some of the best people in the [music] business. I've got a feeling this thing is going to take off, and if it does, there's no question I'll be looking to relax and take time off from football.

**SPORT:** For how long? One year? Two?

**SANDERS:** At least one season. Could be more depending on [the music gig].

**SPORT:** Deion, you not playing football is an outlandish thought. You've made similarly shocking statements before that you've later rescinded. Why should we believe you this time?

**SANDERS:** People can believe whatever they want to believe.

**SPORT:** Is this a contract play?

**SANDERS:** Not a chance. If...[Falcons owner] Rankin Smith walked up to me right now and said, "Prime, here's a new three-year deal," I'd say, "I'm not interested."

**SPORT:** Without football, what will you

do to fill the void?

**SANDERS:** I've received some movie offers. Some TV sitcom offers too. Those are things I really want to do, and the only way I can do them is by giving up something, and that something is football.

**SPORT:** You're not also tired of baseball, are you?

**SANDERS:** No, that's where all my desire has gone. I guess it's because there's so much in baseball that I want to do....I haven't attained the success I'm capable of, but I will this year. It might take a couple months or until midseason, but I'll do it.

**SPORT:** Scouts say you could be a .330, .340 hitter capable of 15 homers and 50-75 stolen bases. Do you agree?

**SANDERS:** Sounds good, but really I don't know how successful I can be. I might surpass what the scouts say.

**SPORT:** You're not as confident in your baseball abilities as you are with football, are you?

**SANDERS:** I've got a lot of weaknesses [in baseball]. Everybody does. No one's perfect. Not even Barry Bonds—but he's as close to being a perfect baseball player as there is.

**SPORT:** What are some of your weaknesses?

**SANDERS:** I don't take enough pitches, I'm far from being a traditional leadoff hitter, my fielding isn't where it should be. My whole game needs refining. The key [to improving] is being out there every day,