

## NFL's Ronde Barber Talks about Writing for Kids, Brother Tiki's Retirement from the New York Giants

By Laura B. Weiss -- 11/15/2006

This article originally appeared in SLJ's Extra Helping. [Sign up now!](#)

[Current Issue](#)



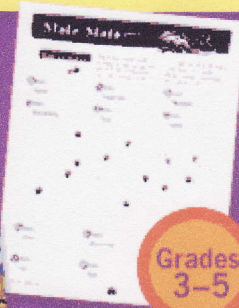
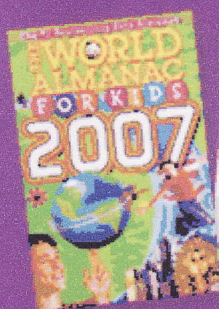
New York Giants star running back Tiki Barber (left) and his brother Ronde (right), a cornerback for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, are best friends and each other's biggest fan. Not surprising that the twins, who grew up in Roanoke, VA, teamed up to write three books about their childhood.

Their latest effort, *Teammates* (S & S, 2006), recounts how perseverance helped Tiki's team to victory. *SLJ* spoke to Ronde about writing for kids and how he feels about being Barber to play pro football after Tiki retires at the end of the season.

### ADVERTISEMENT

## World Almanac Kits

Ready-to-use worksheets



Grades  
3-5

Save up to 50%

**How did the "Barber Bowl" go the other night when New York played Tampa?**

It went bad for us. We lost, but [Tiki's] been on the losing end more times than I have!

**You're both huge NFL stars with busy lives, so what inspired you to write children's books?**

We're not authors by any means. We took our inspiration to [writer] Robert Burleigh. Paula Wiseman is our editor and is a huge Tiki Barber fan. She called our manager and said, "you guys have a good story."

**Your three books are based on growing up as children of a single mother.**

The story of our first book focused on both of us; the second focused on me; the third focused on Tiki. For [*Teammate*] took some creative license. We took Tiki's problem from a couple of years ago, when he had a fumbling problem, and story back to when he was a kid. The books really are about the importance of family and persevering.

**How was it growing up in a largely white community?**

I don't think we knew any better. We spent our whole lives in that kind of environment. We had our friends—mostly white, but we had our black friends too. It wasn't like we were segregated. We never felt like we were different. We turned out pretty rounded because of it.

**You and Tiki seem pretty close, but did you fight as kids?**

We did just about everything together, but we did have our moments. Most of our fights were arguments, not physical confrontations. We used to argue about everything, who would get the phone first or who had finished eating first, little stuff, which is so important to you at the time.

**Will you both continue writing children's books?**

We have a manuscript for a tween book. We're going to continue the Barber literacy franchise. We want specifically to appeal to kids interested in reading.

**What's the tween book about?**

It's somewhat about football. It's dealing with every issue that someone going from 12 to 13 has to deal with. My mom is the main character in it. She's a single parent raising two knuckleheaded kids and giving as much positive influence as she can. It comes out around this time next year.

**Why's Tiki retiring from the Giants at the height of his career?**

He's thought about it plenty over the last year and a half. His body's beat up; he's ready to do something else. He understands that his passion isn't what it once was and he's ready to go on. Most of the guys stay too long.

[After he retires], I think he'll go into media and entertainment. He's very motivated to succeed at whatever he tries.

**Will it be strange playing football with your brother on the sidelines?**

I was following his [career] from Tampa; it will be nice to not worry about how he's doing on the football field. It will be nice to have my own worries.

**I guess your mom won't have to choose which side to sit on any more.**

She'll only be sitting for me now.

[Return to Main Page](#)