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## USA Football: Hall of Famer Muñoz Continues Paving the Way for Others

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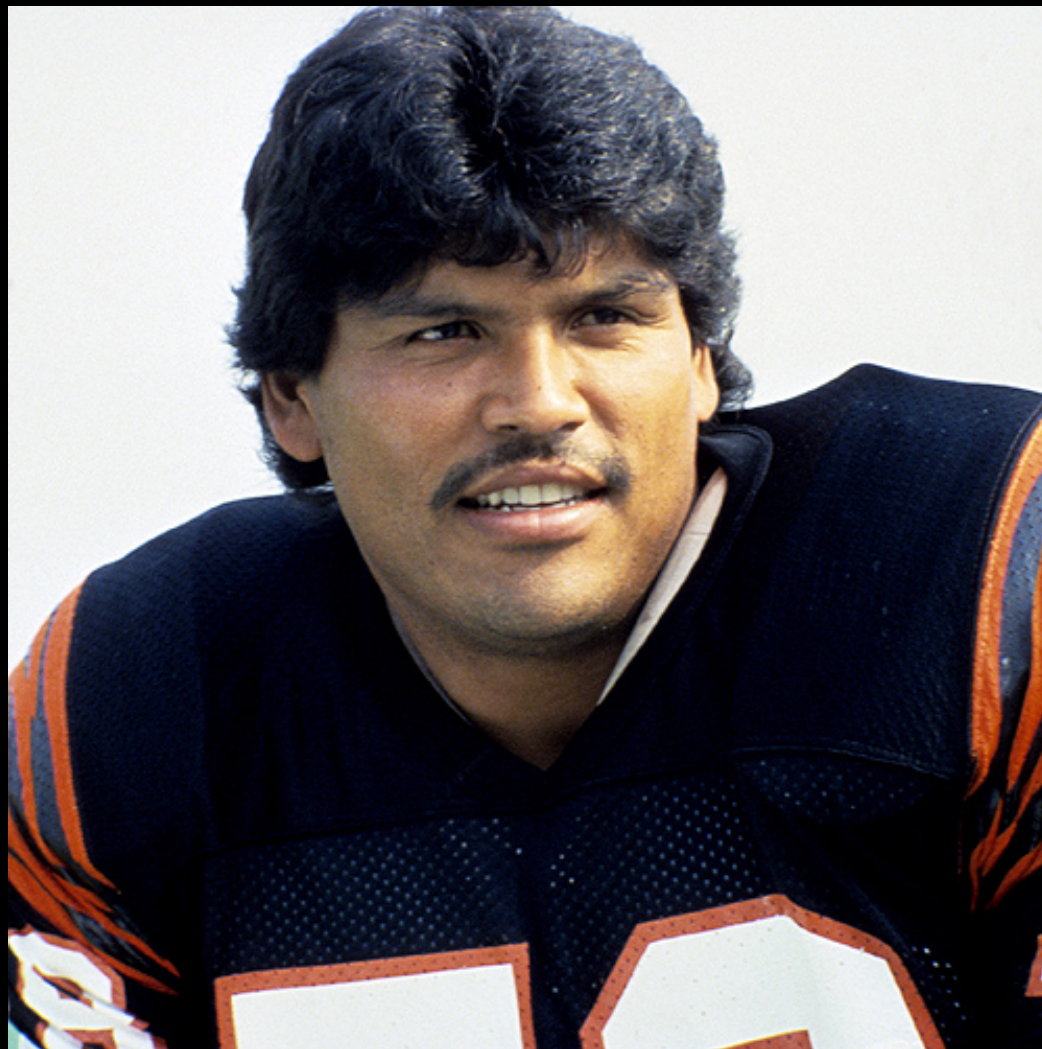
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*By Alex Fink and Steve Alic  
USA Football*

*To honor Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15), USA Football spotlights the Hispanic community and America's favorite sport. USA Football recently spoke with Anthony Muñoz, who is of Mexican descent, to discuss football and its bond to the Hispanic community. Read the entire profile which originally appeared on USA Football's site [here](#).*

Considered one of the best offensive linemen in NFL history, Muñoz paved the way for the Cincinnati Bengals to be a fixture atop the AFC during his illustrious 14-year career. Muñoz reached 11 consecutive Pro Bowls (1981-'91), was voted offensive lineman of the year in 1981, 1987 and 1988, and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1998. He also was named to the NFL's 75th Anniversary Team in 1994.

Today, Muñoz, a native of Ontario, Calif., serves thousands of young people through the Anthony Muñoz Foundation (AMF). The AMF enriches Cincinnati-area youth mentally, physically and spiritually in 22 counties.



**USA Football:** Are there similarities between the values found on the football field and those commonly found in Hispanic families and the Hispanic community in general?

**Anthony Muñoz:** Yes, there are similarities. There's a prevailing sense of "family" in football. You get that in the Hispanic community and that's what you want with a football team. There's a sense of commitment to one another in both instances, too. And there's pride, in a good way—pride in your heritage, your teammates and team.

**USA FB:** From the time when you grew up in Southern California, do you feel that football has gained greater popularity in the Hispanic community? If so, to what do you attribute this?

**Muñoz:** It has gotten stronger. I experienced this during a few trips to Mexico, being part of football clinics there. Football's always been big; they've even got their own Hall of Fame for football. You don't have as many Hispanic stars in football as you do baseball, but football has definitely grown in popularity.

I attribute part of this to the number of media outlets covering the game now. The game is covered better, not just in Mexico, but everywhere. *(Editor's Note: NFL television programming is viewed in 230 countries and territories and broadcast in 31 languages.)* You have so many more avenues now for people to find it.

**USA FB:** When you played in the NFL, were you cognizant of the fact that you were a role model for youngsters, particularly Hispanic youngsters?

**Muñoz:** That's always been something that I've been aware of and serious about. NFL players are looked at as role models—I see this even more clearly now than when I played. I've been retired from the NFL for 17 years. When I talk to young people, none of them likely saw me play, but the sense of history is big in the Latino community; the parents keep that alive. I realized early in my career that I was looked at as a role model for every young person who loved football as well for the Hispanic community.

It's great to have other players and football coaches that kids can look to and know that they're Hispanic just like these men and they can excel in football.

**USA FB:** You spent time in Canton, Ohio this summer speaking with the eight national teams that competed in the International Federation of American Football (IFAF) Junior World Championship, the first junior world championship in football's history. What are your lasting memories from speaking with those teams and watching them practice, particularly Team Mexico?

**Muñoz:** I will remember what a great experience that was for the student-athletes. Especially for those seven countries outside of the United States, for them to come here and play the game in a place like Canton, Ohio, and Fawcett Stadium, to compete against one another ... I'll remember their interest, seeing how eager they are to learn and get better when I walked [around] the practice fields and gave a couple of clinics for the linemen in between practices.

I was invited to speak to the teams during the tournament's welcome dinner two days before the first day of games. I'm a proud American, but it was special to see

Team Mexico welcome me so enthusiastically because of my heritage (*Editor's Note: Team Mexico presented Muñoz with a national team jersey*). My grandparents were from Mexico and it was exciting to see how the Mexican team embraced me, even though I wasn't born there. That was pretty neat.

To view a list of active NFL players with Hispanic heritage, visit this profile on USA Football's site [here](#).

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