

## Chris Canty is a Better Version of Himself On Air

Derek Futterman | December 7, 2021 | Barrett Sports Media

If you are a New York sports fan, you may remember Chris Canty from his days on the gridiron as a defensive end for the New York Giants. Originally drafted by the Dallas Cowboys in the fourth round, Canty departed the Lone Star State in the spring of 2009 when he signed a six-year deal with “Big Blue.” Two years later, he was an instrumental part of the Giants’ defensive line that secured the franchise a Super Bowl Championship. After the 2012 season, Canty signed with the Baltimore Ravens, where he eventually finished his eleven-year pro football career in 2015.

Upon his retirement, Canty was looking to stay involved with football. However, he didn’t wait until he hung up his cleats. While a member of the Ravens, Canty would join *Hahn and Humpty* on 98.7 FM ESPN Radio New York for weekly hits, giving him experience talking about the game as an active player and affording him an early foray into what would eventually become his second career. A year later, he got the call from then-General Manager at 98.7 FM ESPN Radio New York Tim McCarthy to join Anita Marks on *New York Gameday*, a weekend program that previewed the games during the 2016 season.

Just a short time after that, Canty’s career ascension continued when he was added to the local programming lineup as a member of the midday show: *Hahn, Humpty & Canty*. After Alan Hahn departed the show to host an evening solo program, Dave Rothenberg joined Canty and former New York Islanders goaltender Rick DiPietro, as a co-host, and the show was renamed *DiPietro, Canty & Rothenberg*. Coming out of his career as a professional football player, Canty says that his co-hosts assisted him in honing his craft as a sports radio host.

“Those guys are meticulous in their preparation,” the Bronx native said. “I think as I was trying to find my voice [understanding how to prepare] really helped [me]... You have all this information you want to share with your audience, but [I think those guys helped me] understand how to frame it and prepare to share with your audience.”

After four years as a local radio host, Canty was moved to ESPN’s national programming lineup this past September as a co-host of the new *Canty and Golic Jr.* While he expressed that he did not leave his role on the local program *DiPietro, Canty and Rothenberg* on the best of terms, he affirms that his experience helped prepare him for the opportunity to host on a national scale.

“I feel like, within every experience, good or bad, there’s a lesson to be learned,” Chris Canty said. “Being with my new team now, it just gives me an appreciation for the positivity and everybody on the team pulling the rope in the same direction. To be part of a group where everybody is obsessed with making the show sound as good as it can sound, I think it’s an important thing.”

Working with former Notre Dame defensive tackle Mike Golic Jr. has been a unique experience. Canty calls him “the voice of a generation.” Canty credits him for expanding his comfort level in talking about topics outside of the world of sports and genuinely understanding the nature of radio as a communication medium.

Golic Jr. had a renowned mentor in his father, Mike Golic, who hosted ESPN Radio’s morning show in various forms for more than 20 years and currently serves as an analyst on *Pro Football Talk* on NBC Sports.

“His delivery and style is where sports media and sports radio is going,” said Canty. “Being able to weave in pop culture and talk about things on the periphery of sports – the human interest side of sports; I think that’s important... Everybody can get the content from anywhere, but it’s really just a matter of being able to provide the entertainment value – the color – and GoJo puts me in positions to do that, and it allows me to be a better version of myself on air.”

Having the perspective of a former athlete has been an asset Canty has leveraged to his advantage throughout his time in sports radio.

“I have a wealth of knowledge because I was in the game at a high level for a really long time. There’s a huge amount of information I can pull from to provide color [and] context for the listening audience.”

Learning how to balance the perspective with what will be most relatable and useful for the listening audience, though, has been something he has had to adapt to doing as a former athlete. Chris Canty seeks to continuously improve on his skills, just as he did as a professional athlete.

“Just making sure I don’t get too nuanced is probably the biggest challenge,” he said. “It’s tough – When you’re passionate about sports and football in particular, you want to be able to go into that deep dive. Sometimes, I have to pull back so my audience can go on that journey with me.”

While his national show is not regularly broadcast over 98.7 FM ESPN Radio New York, he remains cognizant of the competition between ESPN Radio New York and WFAN in The Big Apple. As a host though, is focused on compiling and producing an entertaining on-air product every day.

“The talent and the depth on the [ESPN Radio] roster is something that’s really special,” said Canty. “I think that the people that are in charge of putting together the [programming] slate have done a good job of putting together a really good roster. [The ratings are] one of those things that ebb and flow, but ultimately, I think the product that ESPN is putting out there is something everyone on the team can be proud of.”

As his career in sports media continues to unfold, Chris Canty aspires to be part of what he calls the “linear side” of the industry. That includes having more opportunities to

appear on television as a studio analyst or color commentator. He hopes to be able to function as a catalyst for the industry's evolution. The demand for content is proliferating, while the attention span for such content is diminishing. Plus, there are so many sports media options, that it is important to Canty that there be a specific goal and role for sports radio in the landscape.

"I think the thing is everyone is going to be looking for that instant reaction. When you get news, and something that's breaking, people want to hear their favorite talent talking about it. They want to hear people with credibility give compelling reactions and insight into it... I think that's the role of radio in modern sports media; I think it's ultimately about being able to give that instant reaction and being able to have that intimate relationship where you can have a conversation that goes on for hours."