

msconnection

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Michigan Chapter, Inc.

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D.DIGMANN

1,901

CONSECUTIVE

DAY STREAK

My Record Streak

By Dan Digmann

I watched with interest as SportsCenter devoted half of its 90-minute broadcast to celebrating Green Bay quarterback Brett Favre's record-setting 200th consecutive season start.

My favorite ESPN show highlighted the future *Hall of Famer's* admirable perseverance over the past 13 NFL seasons. It focused most notably on his playing magnificently while injured, coping with his father's death, and dealing with his wife's diagnosis of breast cancer.

Even retired baseball great Cal Ripken Jr., who surpassed Lou Gehrig's consecutive game streak of 2,130 games, was interviewed and congratulated Favre.

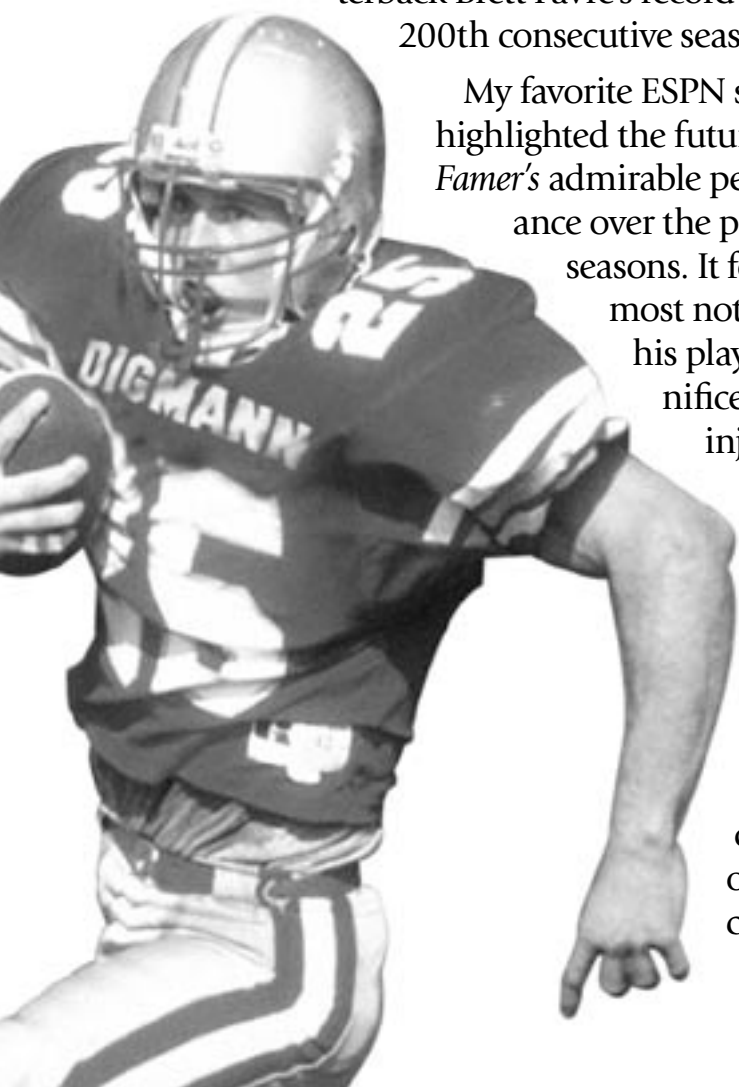
I am humbly impressed with the record-setting accomplishments of these, dare I say, "sports gods". But in many ways, Brett and Cal have nothing on me or anybody else living with MS.

I compete with this disease every day. In fact, May 1, 2005, marks my consecutive day streak at 1,901 days. This is by no means a record, but with each day, I set a new personal best.

When I wake up each morning, I don't even check the roster. I already know I'm in the starting lineup whether or not I feel like competing. Favre always could've called in sick.

I have only one opponent, but I can only hypothetically prepare for it, never knowing which team it's going

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to bring in for me to face from one day to the next. Favre always can watch tapes to prepare for his next opponents, for the most part, the same opponents he faces several times each season.

But thankfully, just like Favre has Ahman Green, Javon Walker, and Na'il Diggs, I have a pretty strong team of family, friends, and health care officials. They help me both offensively and defensively thwart my competition.

Another similarity between our respective contests is that for as much as our battles are physical in nature, there are even greater demands for mental toughness.

Bret Favre can be seen facemask-to-facemask talking trash to challenge an opposing lineman. And many days I can be found "throwing down" one-on-one with MS. Oh yeah, I trash talk. I trash talk a lot.

I suppose that's probably my best technique to prevent the disease from throwing me off my game. I firmly believe that while there are many things I can't control about the effects of MS, my spirit is one thing it can't touch.

It's easy to be optimistic when everything is going well. But Favre has earned the greatest amount of respect and admiration as a true champion when he's risen above adversity, often playing the best games of his life.

My hope is that if I ever face comparable adversity in my competition with MS, my best games also are yet to come.

Dan Digmann is from Mt. Pleasant, and leads the Alma self-help group. He is also a member of the Saginaw Valley Service Council.