

## Cardinals' Kyler Murray open to having dual NFL and MLB careers, but current contract forbids it

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If you thought Kyler Murray had moved past baseball, you were mistaken. The first overall selection in the 2019 NFL Draft, Murray was indeed forced to choose between the two sports after having excelled in both up to and throughout much of his collegiate career. A former outfielder for the University of Oklahoma, he served double duty in also being the team's star quarterback.

Also a former infielder, Murray is the only player in the history of either sport to be selected to the Under Armour All-America Baseball Game and the Under Armour All-America Football Game.

He was selected by the Oakland A's in the 2018 MLB Draft and signed a \$4.66 million contract with the club, but wasn't slated to report to spring training until 2019. Following a Heisman-winning 2018 season for the Sooners, however, he opted to remain in football and the decision saw him land a fully guaranteed four-year, \$35.2 million rookie contract in Arizona.

With his first NFL season now in the books, he readily admits baseball still flows through his veins.

"I think I could [play both pro sports]," Murray said, via the Arizona Republic. "Athletically, I think, yeah, I could do it. I've been playing both my whole life. I would love to add to that resume."

Should he opt to join the MLB, the A's still hold his rights from the 2018 selection and contract signing. If Murray does want to actually take the leap into the big leagues, it will have to come

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some time after he rookie contract expires, however. As Ian Rapoport of the NFL Network highlighted on Friday afternoon, there is language in Murray's contract that forbids him from taking part in any baseball-related activities. Outside of the two sides tweaking that part of his rookie deal, Murray won't be able to step on a diamond in any professional setting for a while.

It's not as if a two-sport career hasn't been done before, with NFL greats like Deion Sanders and Bo Jackson having played at an elite level in both the NFL and MLB in their prime. It's exceedingly rare to see it done nowadays though, and for a variety of reasons. The first is the risk of injury, and the incumbent NFL team is likely adverse to seeing their superstar -- particularly if he's the quarterback -- risk himself in another league. The other is equally as obvious, because not everyone has the chops to play multiple sports at a high level.

Murray doesn't fall into the latter category, but the former likely has the Cardinals quickly pointing to that piece in his contract that hold him off the baseball field. Still, it doesn't appear like he's ruling it out at some point.

"I don't understand why in sports they try to marginalize it," Murray said. "They try to make you pick one and I get it, but we'll see. I think it would be fun. Right now, though, I'm just focused on football."

Yes, but for how long?