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# Cowboys' Amari Cooper goes above and beyond for cancer patient who wanted to be the WR for Halloween

Julian Perez, 10, went "head to ankle" to represent the wideout with his costume featuring a custom Cooper-autographed prosthetic leg.



Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Amari Cooper tosses a ball on the sidelines during the first half of a preseason NFL football game against the Jacksonville Jaguars at AT&T Stadium on Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021, in Arlington. (Smiley N. Pool / Staff Photographer)



By Michael Gehlken  
4:17 PM on Oct 31, 2021



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03:28



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Julian Perez deliberated little on his Halloween costume this year. He knew.

He wanted to be Amari Cooper.

Leading up to Sunday, the 10-year-old Arlington resident said he planned to dress "head to ankle" as the Cowboys wide receiver. The ensemble included a white helmet, shoulder pads, thigh pads, white football pants and a navy blue No. 19 Cooper jersey.

No cleats, though.

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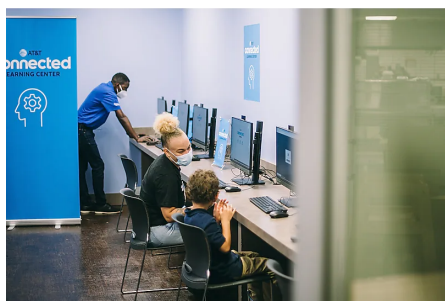
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Those are medically prohibited with his new, Cooper-autographed prosthetic leg.

On Friday, Julian and his mother Vianca Perez wondered aloud if football saved Julian's life. Certainly, his love for the sport gives him purpose after bone cancer resulted in chemotherapy and several surgeries, including his left leg's amputation this August.



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Julian received his first prosthetic leg on Oct. 21.

With help from Cooper, it looks better than he imagined.

Cooper autographed two T-shirts that had Cooper's image printed on them, and he recorded a short video wishing Julian well. One of those signed T-shirts was integrated into the new leg, the design part of a surprise reveal at Scottish Rite for Children in Dallas.

Initially, Julian didn't believe the autograph was real. It is.

Then, he thought Cooper was referencing a different Julian. He wasn't.

"It's obviously an unfortunate situation, but the guy is a big fan of mine," Cooper said after practice Thursday. "I just want to make sure that I'm able to see him through, what he's going through, just because he asked."

Cooper became aware of Julian after a Scottish Rite orthotics and prosthetics resident cold-called Bronte Hermesmeier, a Cowboys public relations staffer, and shared Julian's story. Cooper is Julian's favorite player. In the summer of 2020, Julian was playing a game in which one person throws a football and others compete in a crowd to catch it.

A boy landed on Julian's left leg near his knee.

Julian continued to play but developed a limp that progressively worsened. Medical testing revealed not a osteosarcoma, a cancerous bone tumor that was about the size of a pingpong ball.

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him to be diagnosed and receive treatment sooner.

"I was sad this happened to me, but things happen for a reason," Julian said. "God chose me because I'm strong enough to do this. That's what made me not sad. Just fight through it."

Today, Julian is in remission.

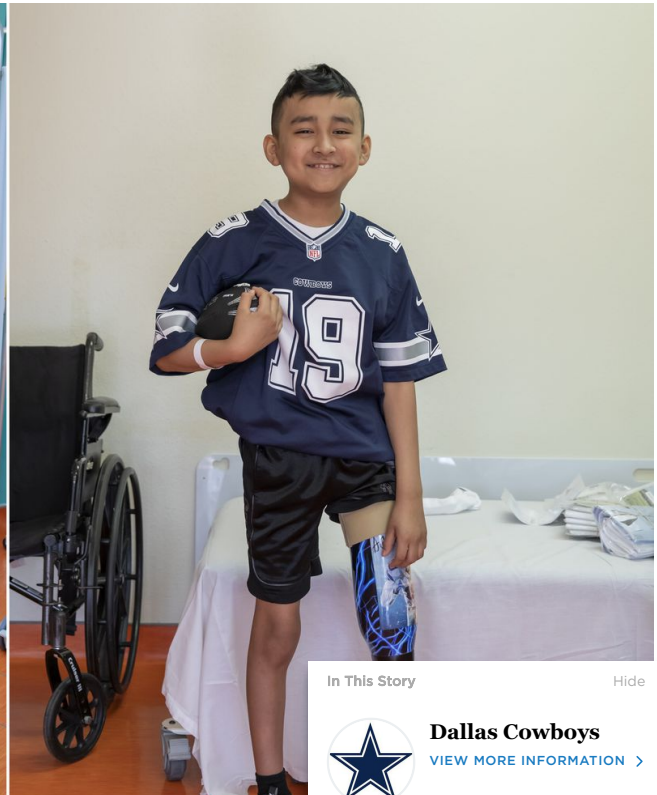
In his current prosthetic stage, he can wear the leg up to two hours a day. Julian said that he looks forward to simple tasks like taking out the trash again. Most of all, he awaits a sports prosthetic someday that would allow him to play football again.

"I want to be in the NFL," Julian said. "I want to be on the team as Amari Cooper."

He already is.



The prosthetic leg of Julian Perez that features a signed Amari Cooper T-shirt integrated into the design -- part of a surprise reveal at Scottish Rite for Children in Dallas. (Scottish Rite for Children in Dallas)



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amputation.

“Sometimes, we’re tested just to test our faith, and that’s the only perspective that I can give to that,” Cooper said. “Every test is for a reason. You can find a way to get through anything as long as you’re still breathing. ...

“Any time he wants to reach out, I’m here. I’m here for sure.”

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COWBOYS

## Appreciating the INT streak of Trevon Diggs is one thing – understanding its difficulty is another

BY CALVIN WATKINS

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**Michael Gehlken.** Michael Gehlken joined the Cowboys beat for the Dallas Morning News in August 2019. This marks his 12th season covering the NFL, previously having reported on the San Diego Chargers and Oakland Raiders.

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