Sports Legends Dick Vitale and Randy Moss Return to ESPN Cancer-Free

Vitale and Moss were emotional upon their return to sports broadcasting. Plus: NBA Hall of Famer Dwayne Wade also had cancer.

February 12, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

In separate but similar triumphs, beloved NFL Hall of Famer Randy Moss and college hoops icon Dick Vitale made their return to broadcasting on ESPN after recovering from their cancer diagnoses and treatments.

Two months ago, Moss, 47, stepped away from ESPN to undergo surgery to treat bile duct cancer. After his diagnosis, Moss told ESPN it was his goal to get healthy enough to attend Super Bowl LIX.

Now cancer-free, he fulfilled his goal and made an emotional return to Postseason NFL Countdown in New Orleans for the big game, The Associated Press (AP) reports.

The wide receiver was welcomed back with a video featuring kind words from Bill Belichick, Tom Brady, Malik Nabers and others.

In tears, Moss said: “Y’all already know it’s the big crybaby here. I can’t do it alone, and I really thank y’all. It’s been hard, but I’ve got a lot of love and a lot of people believing in me, man. So I’m happy to be here.”

Vitale, 85, has been with ESPN since its launch in 1979 and called the station’s first college basketball broadcast, according to the AP.

Welcome back #DickVitale !

[image or embed]

— .yimzinaitra. (@yimzinaitra.bsky.social) February 10,

2025 at 6:57 AM

Over the past four years, he has battled four types of cancer: melanoma, lymphoma, vocal cord and lymph node cancer. In late December, he announced that he is cancer-free.

Before his long-awaited return to broadcasting for last week's Duke-Clemson basketball face-off, Vitale hadn't called a game for ESPN in two years, the AP reports.

He was greeted with a thunderous standing ovation from fans, one of whom held a sign reading: "We missed you, Dickie," according to ESPN.

"Tonight, we celebrate the return of a true legend," Clemson's in-arena announcer said. "For over four decades, his passion, energy and unmistakable voice have defined the game we love. After a two-year battle with cancer, he's back where he belongs. Courtside, calling the action and inspiring us all."

Vitale was overcome by emotion as he waved to the roaring crowd.

"I want to say thanks to all the people," Vitale said later during the game. "The reception here has been really off the charts. I'm sorry for being so emotional. I can't tell you how excited I am to be here.... This is like my Super Bowl. To be able to sit courtside and do a game, it beats the hell out of chemotherapy and radiation."

He continued: "And I want to say to all cancer patients out there: Please, think positive and have faith. And keep fighting and fighting."

In related news, NBA Hall of Famer Dwayne Wade, 43, revealed on a recent episode of his podcast, The Why With Dwayne Wade, that he underwent surgery to remove a cancerous tumor on his kidney in 2023.

After experiencing stomach issues and changes in his urination, Wade scheduled a body scan that revealed a possible tumor or cyst on his kidney, according to the AP. Because the area could not be biopsied, doctors removed 40% of his right kidney. Ultimately, tests showed that the tumor was cancerous.

Last year, about 81,610 people were diagnosed with kidney cancer, according to the American Cancer Society. The rate of new annual kidney cancer diagnoses has been on the rise for many years, possibly due in part to the use of new imaging tests, such as CT scans, which can identify some cancers that might not have been found otherwise.

To read more, click #Cancer Screening. There, you'll find headlines such as "Prevention and Screening Drive Drop in Cancer Deaths," "Senate Introduces Bipartisan Legislation Aimed at Removing Cost Barriers to Prostate Cancer Screening" and "Catching Cancer Early."

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/sports-legends-dick-vitale-randy-moss-return-espn-cancerfree