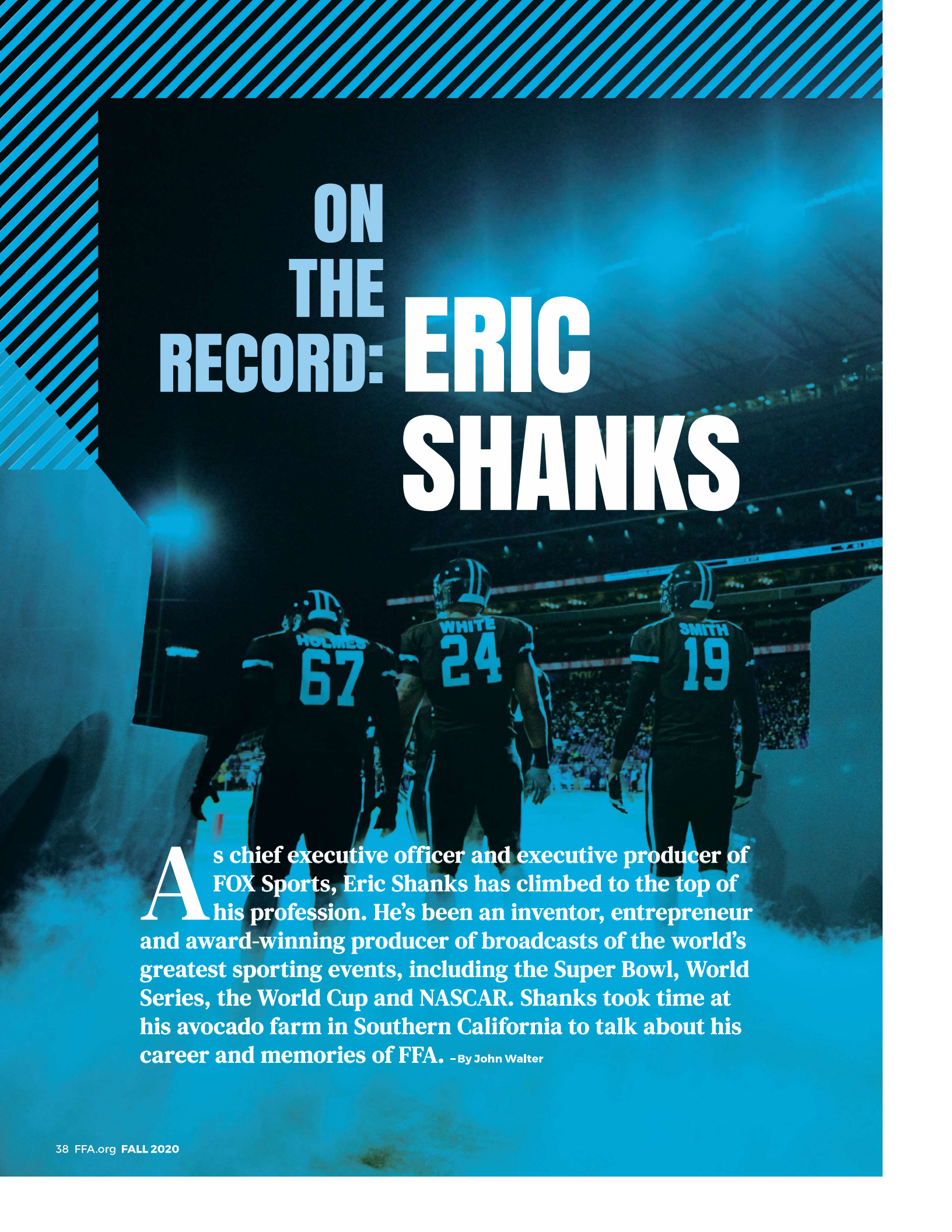




ON THE RECORD: **ERIC SHANKS**

As chief executive officer and executive producer of FOX Sports, Eric Shanks has climbed to the top of his profession. He's been an inventor, entrepreneur and award-winning producer of broadcasts of the world's greatest sporting events, including the Super Bowl, World Series, the World Cup and NASCAR. Shanks took time at his avocado farm in Southern California to talk about his career and memories of FFA. —By John Walter

"I learned that you don't know what you can do until you try to do it. I always took the first opportunity, made the most of it and tried to overachieve." - ERIC SHANKS



Eric Shanks

NH-What were some highlights of your FFA experience?

ES-For me, everything starts with the people. The people who were in our class in the little town of Brazil, Ind., and the FFA chapter there were what made the experience great. Also, we had an amazing ag teacher and leader of our FFA chapter, Steve Stoelting. It was his passion for everything from entomology to soil judging to basketball that made all of us in FFA have such a great time.

NH-What's the most memorable sporting event you've overseen at FOX Sports?

ES-A lot of what we do is plan, so we will plan for a Super Bowl for an entire year — the pregame show, how many cameras we're going to have, how we're going to cover the game and so on. But you can't plan for the game itself. We had the privilege of covering the greatest comeback in Super Bowl history, which was Tom Brady's 28-3 comeback. That was probably one of the best games FOX Sports ever produced, because late in the game, we never let the viewer think the game was out of hand.

NH-Which athlete have you been most excited to meet or watch?

ES-The people in the FOX Sports family I get to work with every day are amazing people, whether it's Terry Bradshaw, Michael Strahan, Alex Rodriguez, Urban Meyer or others. They just happen to be Hall of Fame athletes. Whether it's Bradshaw or Alex, they're leaders here, just like they were on the field. It's great to be able to learn from them.

NH-How did FFA help you with your career path?

ES-Again, I think it goes back to the people and learning to have respect for others. In my line of work, I meet so many different people, and if you don't start out with that perspective of respecting one another, I just don't think you're going to be as successful. Just growing up in ag, I always say that what we do in live television is a lot like farming. Every day you wake up and you don't know what the day's going to bring. We'd all be better off if everyone had the skills and mind-set of a farmer.

NH-What advice would you give FFA members?

ES-I've always given the advice to bite off more than you can chew. When I was out of school and moved to the big city or took different jobs at different places, I learned that you don't know what you can do until you try to do it. I always took the first opportunity, made the most of it and tried to overachieve.