

# Former Lewiston High and NFL football player now running for Congress

Posted: Tuesday, October 18, 2011 12:00 am

[Former Lewiston High and NFL football player now running for Congress](#) By MATT BANEY OF THE TRIBUNE The Lewiston Tribune | [0 comments](#)

Lewiston native Jimmy Farris overcame long odds to carve out an NFL career that spanned parts of seven seasons - and he appears to be facing a similar challenge in his latest venture.

Farris announced his candidacy for Idaho's 1st Congressional District seat, which will be on the ballot in November 2012. The 33-year-old political novice will run as a Democrat.

Farris, who settled in Atlanta during his playing career, moved back to Idaho in the summer and is living in Meridian. He said he came back to his native state "with the intention to get heavily involved politically."

"I want to get in the mix, I want to do something about what's going on, and I think this is the best step to do it," Farris said in an interview with the Tribune. "I think the House of Representatives would be a wonderful opportunity for me to work toward some solutions and get Idaho and the country back on the right track."

After moving back, Farris met with leaders of Idaho's Democratic Party. Larry Grant, chairman of the party, said some advised Farris to start his political career by taking aim at a smaller office.

But "it took me about two minutes the first time I talked to Jimmy to figure out that he's destined for bigger things," Grant said. "It really made no sense to hold him back. In fact, that's what I asked him: 'When was the last time your coach told you to hold back?' Of course he said, 'Never.' "

Farris could face a primary challenge from a fellow Democrat, but at this point he is the only one from the party officially in the race, Grant said.

"I'm not aware of anyone else who is seriously considering it," Grant said. "There's a couple of folks out there talking, but they haven't made any moves yet."

In the general election, Farris would presumably face incumbent Republican Raul Labrador. Labrador unseated Democrat Walt Minnick in the 2010 election.

Farris has been meeting with Democrats for weeks, and more or less made his debut as a candidate Saturday evening when he gave a speech at the Ada County JFK Dinner at Boise.

He will spend the next several months traveling the 1st District, meeting with voters and raising money for the campaign.

"A lot of people know me as an ex-high school football player and a retired professional football player," Farris said. "What's important for me right now is being able to get around the state and being able to connect with a lot of old friends and introduce myself to a lot of people as a professional candidate."

Farris declined to outline his specific platform at this point.

"Like most people, I'm a guy who doesn't like the direction we're going as a country," he said. "I think there's some things we could be doing better. I think Congress right now is full of obstructionists and people who don't understand how to work together."

Farris was a standout wide receiver at Lewiston High, from which he graduated in 1996. He then played at the University of Montana, then landed in the NFL in 2001 despite not being drafted. His professional career included stints with San Francisco, New England, Atlanta, Washington and Jacksonville.

Since his playing career wrapped up in 2007, Farris has acted in a few movies and appeared on television as an NFL analyst. That has all been shelved now that he is in politics.

Farris said there are similarities between football and politics.

"I'm approaching it the same way I approached that: I take those long odds, and I take them head-on," he said. "The cool thing about it is it requires a great deal of commitment, hard work, sacrifice, dedication - all things I've done my whole life."

---

*Baney may be reached at [mbaney@lmtribune.com](mailto:mbaney@lmtribune.com) or at (208) 848-2258.*