

# [My tampa bay. in 1996, became the first](https://assignbuster.com/my-tampa-bay-in-1996-became-the-first/)

My article that I choice was about one of the mostinteresting sports players of our time. Barry Sandersarguably the best back ever to play the game of football. Barry is not one of those players who is just out there tomake money, no he loves the game and is always trying hishardest when he is out there.

In my paper there is allotinterest information about Barry that not every one knowsabout him. Barry Sanders was born July 16th, 1968 inWichita, Kansas. He grew up in a family being one ofeleven other children. When Barry was a kid he wasconsidered to be too short to play football well at thecollege level. In fact, his 1, 417 yards rushing in his senioryear of high school wasn't enough to impress collegerecruiters. One recruiter told Barry's coach, " We don'tneed another midget." Only two colleges offered Barry afootball scholarship.

Barry accepted a scholarship fromOklahoma State University and the rest is now history. Here are some of Barrys career achievements that he hasdone in the short time he has played the game. Which hasmade him such the over achiever that he is. 1988, won theHeisman Trophy Award for best player in the nation. 1989, lead the NFC in rushing and was Rookie of the Year. 1992, became the Lions' All-Time leading rusher.

1994, rushed for the fourth best NFL season record of 1, 883yards and included a 237 yards in week 11 vs. TampaBay. In 1996, became the first player in NFL history torush for over 1, 000 yards in his first eight seasons, won theNFL rushing title, selected to the Pro Bowl for the eighthtime and became the first player to rush for over 1, 500yards in three consecutive seasons. Sanders continuesadding to his extraordinary numbers on the field. He hasrun for 1, 300 yards and now stands seventh among theNFLs all-time rushers with 11, 472, having surpassed OttisAnderson, O. J.

Simpson and John Riggins. Hes 128 yardsbehind Kansas Citys Marcus Allen, Sandersboyhoodhero when he was growing up in Wichita, Kan., and Allen was a Los Angeles Raider. Next year, providinghe keeps up this trend of 1, 000-yard seasons, Sanders willpass Franco Harris (12, 120), Jim Brown (12, 312) andTony Dorsett(12, 739) and slide into third place behind EricDickerson (13, 259) and Walter Payton (16, 726).

Sandersis the first player in league history to rush for at least 1, 000yards in eight straight seasons, and Thursday he was namedto his eighth straight Pro Bowl. " Anytime he touches theball, its a highlight reel," says Allen, now in his 15th NFLseason. " The player most fun to watch, and by far, the mostdangerous player in the game today, is Barry Sanders. Heis jus! t remarkable. He is also, in my opinion, the guyeveryones still trying to crack.

" Mention any of this toSanders, and you would expect him to be bemused, wearing the kind of bored look people get when theyrewaiting in line at the grocery store. Youve seen him beinginterviewed on TV, standing or sitting in that same spot infront of his locker, avoiding eye contact with the cameraand speaking in that unhurried monotone. There has alwaysbeen a kind of perceived uneasiness about him.

But rattleoff a few of the aforementioned tales of changeespeciallywhat his teammates and family have noticed about himlatelyand he nods knowingly and begins, veryun-Sanders like, by answering a question with a question." When I first came into the league, I was 20 years old," hestarts out saying. " Now Im 28.

So wouldnt you expectthere to be some changes between 20 and 28?" Sure, yousay. He continues. " I know Im more outgoing, especiallypublicly," Sanders says. " I dont think any! of my brothersor sisters, though, would ever term me as quiet or reserved. Whenever I become more comfortable with people, I getmore open. And now, I just think Im more comfortableoutside of my own little environment and people can seemore of me, more inside of the person.

Before, I was aperson who felt out of their element and was just kind ofbeing, sitting back and watching everything. " At home, theyknew I wasnt just this quiet and reserved person, the waypeople thought I was here. Its just a matter of comfort, thats all it is. Even in the locker room, people that Im notreal close with I can laugh and joke. And now, Im moreprone to try to defend myself from attacks from BrettPerriman and Herman Moore." Sanders starts cracking up.

Get it? He has just made a joke. " I can sit and talk with myoldest son for hours and hours. Barry and I could never dothat. But the last time he called, he asked to talk tome.

Wetalked for quite a while. Barry, he used to make me madbecause he was just like his mother. Looks like her. Quietlike her. I wanted him to have something of me.

But Iwouldnt let him be outgoing. Barry, I said, youve got tobe different. Ask him. Hell remember." WilliamSanders, Barrys father Peter Schaffer, one of Sandersagents, lives in Denver. He belongs to a health club whereSanders and former Michigan receiver Mercury Hayesjoined a pick up basketball game last year. Sanders! , whos 5-feet-8 and 203 pounds, wore a plain T-shirt andshorts. Hayes shirt said" Michigan" on the front.

The nextday, a couple of Schaffers friends who played in the gamesought him out. " Hey, it was sure fun playing basketballwith Mercury Hayes!" they said. Schaffer didnt have theheart to tell them who the other guy was. Stories like thatone are still as popular as they were in 1988 -- the yearSanders won the Heisman Trophy as a junior at OklahomaState and turned down an invitation to the White Housebecause he said he had to study.

Or how about the timetwo years ago in Miami when Sanders spent the evening inthe lounge at the Marriott? Think youre onto some juicygossip, right? Well, Sanders wasnt attached to any barstool. He and Steve Atwater of the Denver Broncos werein a corner, playing Pop-A-Shot basketball all night. Former Lions offensive tackle Lomas Brown has a goodone, too. He can list the times Sanders has been over to hishouse for dinner, but you! wouldnt have known he wasthere.

" You know how its kids in one room, adults inanother?" says Brown, who spent 11 years with the Lionsbefore he signed with the Arizona Cardinals last February." Well, most of the time Barry would be with my kids, sittingon the floor playing a video game or eating off their plateswatching a movie." Sanders, who has one year left on afour-year, $17. 2-million contract he signed in December1993, still lives in the $175, 000 house in Rochester Hills hebought in 1989 after the Lions made him their first-rounddraft pick. But back in Wichita, he moved his parents into anew 7, 000-square-foot house three years ago. The whitebrick home, which sits on 11 acres with a private pondstocked with bass, crappie and catfish, replaces thethree-bedroom, 850-square-foot home Barry and his 10brothers and sisters grew up in. " You do whats right," Sanders says with a shrug.

Well, that includes everythingfrom paying the college tuitions for his brothers! and sistersto making sure his Nike contract still has a clause that saysthe company must supply his former high school footballcoach with 60 pairs of shoes a year. One person whoknows Sanders best outside his family is MarkMcCormick, a newspaper reporter at the Wichita Eagle. They grew up on the same street, Volutsia, on the citysnorth side, and have been friends since McCormick gotover the day Sanders beat him up in kindergarten. WhenSanders was attending Oklahoma State, McCormick wasstudying journalism at the University of Kansas. He was ona tight budget and got sick, losing 30 pounds one semester." Dang, whats going on with you?" Sanders asked. " Im incollege," McCormick replied. " Im starving.

" Sanderswanted to help and offered his Pell Grant money, whichMcCormick refused. A few years later, after Sandersjoined the Lions, he heard that McCormick was evictedfrom an apartment after getting his first job. He mailed him$500. " Im at the point now in our rel! ationship that I cannever repay him unless I give him a lung or a kidney," McCormick says. " And he still calls me all the time." Afterrushing for 1, 470 yards and breaking Billy Simssingle-season club record his rookie year, Sanders gaveeach of the Lions offensive linemen a Rolex watch, valuedat more than $10, 000. On the back was the inscription:" Thanks for a great 89 season.

Barry Sanders." Whencenter Kevin Glover came home one day last February, abox the size of a small refrigerator was sitting in thedriveway near his garage. In it was a big-screen TV and athank-you note from Sanders. " Its not expected, but hedoes it," Glover says. The TV " is something Im going tocherish. When I retire, I plan on getting a plaque for it thatwill say, A gift from Barry Sanders.

" All of this giving, allof this helping, and Sanders still turns down most of theendorsement offers that come his way, deals that couldbring him an additional $4 million to $5 million a year, Sc! haffer says. " You can put $1 million in front of him that heturns down, but hell say yes to the Michigan state seat-beltpatrol campaign," Schaffer says. " A lot of football playershave tremendous egos. They like to see themselves on TV. Not Barry.

" Sanders doesnt decline everything, though. He has endorsement deals with more than a half-dozencompanies, including many of the prized onesNike, McDonalds, Cadillac, 7-Eleven, and, soon to beannounced, Little Caesars. " He needs to let himself takeoff," Perriman says. " He should be the Michael Jordan offootball. He could be that. Playing eight years, he knowshes not going to be playing forever.

I tell him, You betterget what you deserve and what you can while you can. Heneeds to be as large in commercials as he is a player." ButSanders wont. He is doing more, but he wont do it all. " Iwish there were another way of doing it," Sanders says ofendorsements. " Im definitely more comfortable with thegame being bigger than the person." That has beenSanders philosophy since the fourth grade.

That year, inhis first football game ever, the first time he touched theball, he scored on a 70-yard sweep. The next Saturday, hiscoach tried him out on kickoffs. He ran the first one backfor a touchdown. His father was there. " It was 1977 and Iwas sitting in my 63 Pontiac listening to Texas beatOklahoma, 13-6," William Sanders says. " Must have runfor three or four touchdowns that day.

" In his first fewyears with the Lions, much was made about Sandersupbringing, about the stern father and quiet mother, par! ents who had their own distinct ways of raising theirchildren. " Growing up, the kids would get together and justkind of ask the question, How in the world did these twoget together? " Barry says with a laugh. Barry wasespecially close to his motherand still is. Shirley Sandershad children spanning three decades, beginning with Diane, born in 1959, and ending with Krista, the youngest of theeight girls, born in 1974. Shirley delivered Barry, No. 7 onthe familys roster, on July 16, 1968. His mother speaks ina soft voice and is bashful around strangers.

" I love it whenhe comes home," she says. " We sit and talk for hours. Imiss him.

I feel for him sometimesall the attention he getsand doesnt want." When her husband pipes up and offersone of his gruff opinions (" I dont like boys to be close totheir mothers because it makes sissies out of them," hesays), Shirley smiles and rolls her eyes. Last month at theSanders home in Wichita, Shirley spent part of the eveni! ng in her kitchen listening to Christian music while herhusband sat on his leather recliner watching a basketballgame. Indiana was beating up Princeton.

Shirley says shemissed many of Barrys football games when he wasgrowing up, mainly because Friday night was reserved forchoir practice at Paradise Baptist Church. Religion is acentral theme of the Sanders family. One of the proudestmoments in her life came when Barry sent $200, 000 of his$2.

1-million signing bonus to Paradise his rookie year. While Shirley is quiet and unassuming, her husband isanything but. William Sanders listens to Rush Limbaugh andDr. Laura, smokesWhite Owl cigars and rarely leaveshome without his Cleveland Browns jacket. His favoritecollege remains Oklahomabecause he listened to theSooners broadcasts on the radio when he was growing up. He points out that he has collected only two autographs forhimself through the yearsTroy Aikman (because heplayed two seasons at Oklahoma) and Bernie Kosar!(Cleveland).

In 1994, William Sanders brought a footballto Dallas, where the Cowboys were playing the Lions. When the teams were warming up, he was introduced toEmmitt Smith. Sanders asked if Smith could do him a favorand sign his football for a friend. " He said hed get me afterthe game," William Sanders says, angry as he tells thestory. As it turns out, the Lions won the game in overtime. When he asked Smith to sign the ball, he refused. " MyBarry would never do that," Sanders says. Until this pastsummer, William Sanders was working six days a week asa freelance roofer and remodeler.

Before that, he workedon the beef-kill line at a rendering plant, firing . 22s into theskulls of cattle, among other jobs. " Barry came into moneyin 88," William Sanders says, walking up the private drivethat leads to their home. " You know, well be here fouryears on Memorial Day. I was never hung up on movingout of the ghetto just to say I moved out.

Money can be acurse and a nigh! tmare if you let it control you." As nice ashis new house is, William Sanders misses his oldneighborhood. " I bought that house (on Volutsia) for$8, 200 in 1964," he says. " I paid it off in February 1984 --$77. 50 a month on a 20-year note." In those days, sleepingarrangements were eight girls in one bedroom, three boysin another. William was the neighborhoods master builderof bunk beds. And also, the chief disciplinarian.

" Iremember in Barrys senior year in high school he had on apair of Converse All-Stars for basketball, " William Sanderssays. " He came in one day and his shoes were untied. I toldhim if he ever comes in the house again with his shoesuntied Id break both his legs. " I was such a sergeant overmy kids. I felt I had to be." Barrys brother Byron, whoplayed football at Northwestern, says, " My father doesntrealize that although we appear to be reserved, no one inthe world can intimidate any of his children because of theway he was. He loved us, and ! thats the difference.

" Today, the children all grown and gone, William Sandersmisses the full house. Hes planning a family reunion fornext summer. " Let me tell you how I feel about things now," William Sanders says. " God told Abraham that he was ablessing to many nations.

Well, were thankful for theblessings of Barry. I remember I wanted one of my sons togo to Oklahoma so bad, so that I could go down in peace. Now, if Barry goes into the Hall of Fame, when hesstanding up there, on the steps in Canton, I can lay downright there and die." " I think a lot of things that I believehave changed, or I have just adjusted some. I think if thatswhat you really want to do, then I think you should. Whatthe other players around the league think about him. Youcould call him the best running back, and there would be noreal argument.

But you could go even further: BarrySanders of the Detroit Lions might be, quite simply, thebest player in the game. Were he to be judged only for themagic he creates with a hand off, his supremacy would endat his position. but Sanders has accomplished somethingremarkable, if not unprecedented, since the days of JimBrown. The current of terror that begins to flow in the daysand hours before a game usually emanates from viciousdefenders and flows white-hot into the rattled psyches ofthe players who earn their pay with the ball in their hands. But alone among his offensive fellows, Sanders hasreversed that current. Sanders has a whole breed of menbest known for barking like dogs instead praying out loud. In a week of preparing for Sanders, says Chicago Bearlinebacker Vinson Smith, " You have to not sleep for acouple of nights." Re! ally? " Yes.

Yes. " And even duringfitful dozing, says Minnesota Viking defensive tackle HenryThomas, who usually dreams of sacks and motor cycles," you sit up in the middle of the night hollering, 'Barry! Sanders!' " Most people dont just think Barry is a greatfootball player they also think he is a great person too. Barry Sanders is simply the most exciting sports player towatch. Not to mention that he has a great personality and isa class act. This guy is so good at what he does it's scaryand he doesn't even have a trace of ego in him. WhenBarry runs the ball he defies the laws of gravity and physicsof a moving object.

He makes moves that make your eyespop out of their sockets and leave your mouth hangingwide open. To me this report help my find out that Barry ismore than just a good ball player he also is a good personthat most people dont see. Barry does not let all themoney he earns get to his head he act like you and me. Atthe end of Barrys career he will probably own every singlerecord there is.

He is on the pace to do that with noproblem. There is no doubt in my mind that Barry will be inthe Hall of Fame with ease. To bad all the sports playersare not like Barry if they were all the games you watchwould be ten times better then what they are now. Biographies