



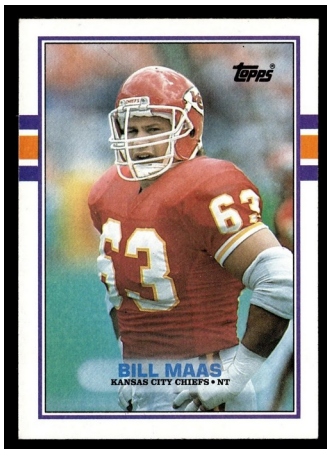
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Bill Maas

This article was written by Matt Keddie.

For Bill Maas, football was a relative unknown until his high school years. Reflecting on the decision to play he said, “You know, my parents just didn't want me to play. I was always the biggest kid in school and when I got to high school, my coach was always after me to get out there and play. Finally, I just went to them and said, please let me play.”¹ His parents eventually caved and the decision paid off. He was drafted fifth overall in the 1984 NFL Draft by the Kansas City Chiefs, following a tremendous college career at the University of Pittsburgh.



Maas made an immediate impact as a rookie in Kansas City, starting all 14 games at nose tackle where he recorded 5.0 sacks.² He fit perfectly in the middle of the defensive line in the Chiefs' 3-4 alignment, alongside Pro Bowler Art Still and tackle Mike Bell. Meanwhile, Kansas City was in a rut. The team had experienced just one winning season (1981) since its most recent division title in 1971.³ After head coach Hank Stram was fired in 1974, his successors in Paul Wiggin (11-24), Tom Bettis (1-6) and Marv Levy (31-42) failed to not only reach the postseason, but also failed to turn the franchise into a consistent winner.⁴

John Mackovic was hired to replace Levy in 1983. Maas started 30 games in Mackovic's first two seasons, but the Chiefs best of those was an 8-8 record in Maas' rookie year. Finally in Mackovic's fourth season, he ended the franchise's 15-year postseason drought (longest in team history), with a 10-6 record. It featured a three-game winning streak to end the regular season and earn a wild card berth.⁵ The Chiefs finished one game behind the AFC West Division champion Denver Broncos. However, the team was defeated soundly in the Wild Card round by the New York Jets, 35-15.⁶ That 1986 season was



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Maas' career best. He started all 16 contests, recorded 7.0 sacks, forced one fumble and recorded two fumble recoveries. As a result, he earned Pro Bowl honors.⁷ He also earned a second-team all-pro selection, chosen by the Associated Press and was selected first-team all-AFC by *Pro Football Weekly*.

After he was drafted, Maas had said, "I thought if I went early, I could help spearhead a turnaround in an organization."⁸ He helped spearhead only a one-year turnaround, but that was not good enough for Chiefs management. Mackovic was fired following the season and the turnaround Maas foresaw did not last. Other than Maas' success and several other star players on defense such as all-pro defensive back Deron Cherry and rising star Albert Lewis, the Chiefs lacked talent. Kansas City regressed in 1987 and 1988 under new head coach Frank Gansz, finishing 4-11 and 4-11-1.⁹ Maas continued his success in 1987, recording 6.0 sacks, forcing three fumbles, returning one for a touchdown. He earned his second trip to the Pro Bowl.¹⁰

The turnaround the team was looking for arrived prior to the 1989 season in the form of head coach Marty Schottenheimer. Upon his hiring, Schottenheimer brought in his own staff that included future NFL head coaches Tony Dungy, Herman Edwards, Bruce Arians and Bill Cowher.¹¹ Cowher and Dungy would both eventually win Super Bowls as head coaches and earn induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. The defense greatly

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benefited from Schottenheimer's arrival. In 1989, they finished ranked eighth in points allowed at 17.9 points per game.¹² Rookie linebacker Derrick Johnson made a strong impact, recording 10.0 sacks, earning Pro Bowl and Defensive Rookie of the Year honors. In addition, cornerback Albert Lewis earned consensus first-team all-pro honors and led the team with four interceptions.¹³ Their 8-7-1 record was a four-win improvement from the previous two seasons, good enough for second place in the AFC West Division.

Beginning in 1990, Kansas City embarked on its greatest stretch of success in franchise history, to date. The team earned six consecutive playoff appearances, including two AFC West Division titles (1993 & 1995) and another West Division title in 1997 and in both 95 and 97, the Chiefs were the AFC's No. 1 seed.¹⁴ Kansas City also won double-digit games in the regular season in four consecutive seasons and five times in six years.

Maas switched to defensive end in 1990, starting opposite future all-pro Neil Smith. Maas rolled up 5.5 sacks on the defensive line and Smith added 9.5 on a unit that ranked in the Top 10 in points allowed four times from 1990 to 1995.¹⁵ Unfortunately, the Chiefs won just three playoff games, reaching the AFC Championship Game only once. On that stretch Maas recalled, "When Marty arrived, he taught us more about football – about working together – than any of us could have learned individually. We all understood the strategy behind each play, and everyone on the team knew their responsibilities. This comprehensive understanding helped us grasp what we needed to accomplish to win."¹⁶

However, following the 1992 season, the Chiefs did not renew Maas' contract. He missed out on the Chiefs division titles under Schottenheimer. In March 1993, he signed a two-year contract as a free agent with the Green Bay Packers.¹⁷ Maas played a reserve role for the Green Bay defensive front. He started just three games, making 14 appearances.¹⁸ The

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Packers went 9-7, earning a playoff spot. In the Wild Card round, they defeated the rival Detroit Lions in a narrow, comeback, 28-24 victory. In the Divisional Round, they fell to the eventual Super Bowl champion, Dallas Cowboys, 27-17. Following the season, Maas was released, marking the end of his playing career.¹⁹

In his 10-year career, Maas played 130 games, making 114 regular season starts. He forced 11 fumbles, made eight fumble recoveries and recorded 40.0 career sacks.²⁰ As of today, Maas ranks inside the Top 15 in Chiefs history in career sacks. Only Chris Jones has more career sacks as a pure defensive tackle in team history.²¹

Maas turned to broadcasting after his playing days. He worked as an analyst in various roles for NFL games on Fox Sports for more than a decade. He also had various broadcasting roles in the Kansas City area.²²

In 2025, he was inducted to the Chiefs Hall of Honor, becoming the 54th member to earn enshrinement. On his induction team CEO Clark Hunt said, “Bill embodied toughness and grit. He was not only a fantastic teammate, but he has also continued to be a tremendous supporter of the Kansas City community long after his playing days. Through his broadcasting career and as a Chiefs ambassador, he has remained dedicated to the game and our city.”²³ Maas’ reaction to Clark informing him of his induction was, “I was driving and had to pull over. Let's just say it was emotional. When you receive news like that, all those aches and pains seem to disappear; it's as if they've vanished into thin air.”²⁴

William Thomas Maas was born on March 2, 1962 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was one of four children. He had two brothers, Murray and Ngo, and one sister, Lizanne. Maas attended nearby Marple Newton High School, not playing football until his senior year.²⁵ His athletic talents went largely overlooked by colleges, except by the University of Pittsburgh, who recruited him. Maas was ecstatic to attend Pitt. Not only was the

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school a national power, but a high level of enthusiasm for college football was not present in Philadelphia.²⁶ He said, “Back then, basketball was a much bigger sport in Philadelphia than football, especially high school football. When I took my visit to Pittsburgh, I saw how much that city loved football and I knew I wanted to be a part of it. When you go to a school like Pitt, you feel the tradition and history like a weight on you as soon as you go there. You go there and you want to match that success, you want to be a part of it. That always drove me – the importance of being a Pitt Panther.”²⁷

In college, Maas joined a number of star Panthers who went on to play in the NFL including, Tim Lewis, Rickey Jackson, Chris Doleman, Dan Marino, Russ Grimm and Hugh Green. Doleman, Jackson, Grimm and Marino all went on to Hall of Fame NFL careers.²⁸ Ironically, he would meet many of his past college teammates on the gridiron at the Pro Bowl, “It’s crazy to look at, but that first year I made the Pro Bowl in Hawai’i, I’m on the field with 10 other Pitt Panthers. I’m there with Chris Doleman, Russ Grimm, Mark May, Dan Marino, Tim Lewis, Carlton Williamson, Hugh Green, Rickey Jackson, we all went to school together. It was amazing.”²⁹

Maas did not see much playing time as a freshman in 1980. The Panthers turned in an outstanding season, beginning the year ranked in the Top 10. They finished 11-1 with their only blemish, a 36-22 defeat in Tallahassee, Florida against the Florida State Seminoles.³⁰ The year was capped with a victory in the Gator Bowl over the South Carolina Gamecocks, 37-9. The Pitt defense held Heisman Trophy winner George Rogers in check on the ground, limiting him to 113 yards and forced five turnovers.³¹ The Gamecocks' offense did not score a touchdown until the fourth quarter when the game was well out-of-hand. Maas recorded a sack and blocked a kick on special teams.³² The Panthers were named national champions by multiple selectors (*New York Times*, College Football Researchers Association, DeVold) as well as co-national champions by FACT and the Sagarin Rankings. Despite these claims, the school does not recognize the season

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as a national championship.³³ The undefeated 12-0 Georgia Bulldogs were recognized by the Associated Press as the National Champions.

The Panthers were again right in the thick of the national title chase the following season in 1981. Their 11-1 record included victories over rival West Virginia University, 17-0, in the Backyard Brawl and a 42-14 beating in a revenge win from the previous season, over the Florida State Seminoles.³⁴ Pitt's national title hopes were dashed in the regular season finale against archrival Penn State University. Pitt led the game, 14-0, at the half, but Penn State came out in the second half and scored 48 unanswered points for the win. However, the team rebounded in the Sugar Bowl against the high-powered University of Georgia Bulldogs.³⁵ Trailing 20-17 in the final seconds, Pitt quarterback Dan Marino found receiver John Brown in the end zone to give the Panthers a remarkable, 24-20, comeback win. Bulldogs running back Herschel Walker only lost two games in his entire college football career: this was one of them.³⁶ The Panthers' defense ranked fifth in the nation in scoring defense, allowing just 12.0 points per contest. Bill Maas earned first-team All-American honors. The following season, as a senior, he was named a third-team All-American and first-team All-East.³⁷

Following his playing career and time in broadcasting, Maas ventured into commercial real estate. He sums it up saying, "I think everything I've done after football, I think you can easily point to some of the lessons I got from football to help me succeed. I was in broadcasting for 12 years and am now involved in commercial real estate. If you look at those two industries, for example, you have to be a good teammate to be successful in them. Football, and a lot of team sports for that matter, helps you prepare for that. You learn in football you can't be successful on your own."³⁸

Maas is married to his wife Sarah and they have two adult children.

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End Notes: