



KANSAS LEGEND BIOGRAPHY

Barry Sanders (1968 - Present)

Barry Sanders is known as one of the most electrifying runners that the game of football has ever seen. Sanders was born in Wichita, Kan., and attended Wichita High School North, where he debuted as a running back the fourth game of his senior season. At 5'8" tall, most coaches thought he was too small to play professional football, despite the impressive 1,322 yards Sanders rushed for in just seven games that year.



Oklahoma State recruited Sanders as a kick returner, and he spent his first two seasons as back-up running back behind All-American Thurman Thomas. In 1988, Sanders proved as a junior that he was a standout running back. He won the Heisman Trophy, the Maxwell Award and the Walter Camp Award. He set NCAA records with 27 rushing touchdowns and 3,249 all-purpose yards, which still stand today as single-season records.

The 203-pound running back decided to forego his senior season at Oklahoma State and was selected as the Detroit Lions' first-round pick, the third pick in the 1989 draft overall. Sanders dazzled fans his rookie season with 1,470 yards on 280 carries, scoring 14 touchdowns that season. He continued to play with the Lions until he retired from the sport prior to the 1999 season, just 1,458 yards short of Walter Payton's record as the NFL's all-time career rusher.



Sanders rushed for more than 1,000 yards for 10 straight seasons at Detroit (1989-1999). In 1997, Sanders rushed for more than 2,000 yards, becoming only the third player in NFL history to do so. Sanders was named Most Valuable Player and earned the record of rushing more than 100 yards in 14 consecutive games. He was selected to the Pro Bowl in each of his 10 seasons and first- or second-team All-Pro each season.

Though small in size by most standards, Sanders had an uncanny ability to make defensive players miss and gain valuable yards. His low-to-the-ground running style made him even more elusive to defenders. At the time of his retirement, Sanders held nearly every Lions' rushing record and numerous all-time NFL records. In 2003, Sanders held a press conference to dispel rumors that he had intentions of returning to the game. Sanders still lives in Detroit with his wife and three children.

