

FRESNO STATE FOOTBALL JUNE 13, 2016 4:05 PM

# Former Fresno State football star Bryan Robinson dies at 41

## HIGHLIGHTS

Bryan Robinson was found dead in a Milwaukee hotel room Saturday night

Spent 14 seasons in the NFL after first signing with Rams as undrafted free agent in 1997

Former teammate Brian Urlacher considered Robinson a mentor



Fresno State nose tackle Bryan Robinson sacks Boise State quarterback Tony Hilde during their game in 1996 at Bulldog Stadium. Robinson was found dead Saturday, June 11, 2016, in a Milwaukee hotel room. He was 41. **HECTOR AMEZCUA** - FRESNO BEE FILE

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Former Fresno State football star Bryan Robinson – who went on to play 14 seasons in the NFL – died late Saturday after he was found unresponsive in a Milwaukee hotel room. He was 41.

An autopsy done Monday found no trauma, and the cause of death is pending results of toxicology tests, the Milwaukee County medical examiner's office said in a statement. Milwaukee police told the Chicago Tribune that there were no signs of anything suspicious, and they are investigating the situation as a sudden death.



A defensive lineman out of College of the Desert, Robinson played for the Bulldogs in 1995 and '96, earning first-team All-Western Athletic Conference honors after starting 11 games during his senior season. He led the team with five sacks and had seven tackles for a loss.



Bryan Robinson, a former Fresno State star who went on to play 14 seasons in the NFL, died at age 41 on June 11, 2016. DAVE MARTIN - ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Robinson broke into the NFL in 1997 as an undrafted free agent with the St. Louis Rams.

"I had to go in and work extra hard to get noticed," Robinson told The Bee in 2008. "(Then-Rams coach) Dick Vermeil took a liking to me, and it's been a good thing ever since. At the time, it was very difficult, because they first take a look at their draft picks. Ultimate goal for me was to make the team, and I (wouldn't) take no for an answer."

Robinson, known to teammates and friends as "B-Rob," played in 207 games during his NFL career, starting 170 and recording 24 career sacks. He also played for the Chicago Bears, Miami Dolphins, Cincinnati Bengals and Arizona Cardinals before retiring after the 2010 season. Robinson played in Super Bowl XLIII in 2009 with the Cardinals.

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**ROBINSON HAD HIS BEST YEARS WITH THE CHICAGO BEARS FROM 1998 TO 2003, REGISTERING 16.5 OF HIS 24 CAREER SACKS.**

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Robinson was an anchor on the defensive line for the Bears' 2001 NFC Central Division championship team.

One of Robinson's most memorable games for Bears fans was Nov. 7, 1999, the

first game the team played after the death of Hall of Fame running back Walter Payton. Robinson blocked a 28-yard field goal attempt by Green Bay's Ryan Longwell as time expired to preserve a 14-13 victory at Lambeau Field and snap a 10-game losing streak to the Packers.

"I think Walter Payton actually picked me up a little bit and boosted me up in the air because I can't jump that high," Robinson said after the game. "Walter had a lot to do with it. I know he did."

Former Bears linebacker Brian Urlacher said he considered Robinson a mentor.

"He was kind of a jerk to me, but if you took it the right way, it was helpful to you, especially to me as a rookie," Urlacher told the Tribune. "He became one of my better friends on the team.

"B-Rob was very good at what he did, and he never made mental mistakes. He always knew where to be, and he knew where other guys were supposed to be, and he didn't accept that when other guys screwed up. One time in preseason, he went off on me for



getting out of my gap, and they ran through my gap. He didn't accept guys screwing up for mental reasons. Physically, guys are going to make mistakes. Mentally, he didn't accept that, because he was so good at what he did without being wrong."

The Bears issued a statement on Robinson's death Monday, saying: "We are saddened to hear of the loss of Bryan Robinson. He will be remembered for the determination and work ethic he displayed on the field over his six years in Chicago. The Bears and our fans will always be indebted to him for his game-saving blocked field goal in Green Bay six days after Walter Payton's passing. Our prayers are with Bryan and his family."

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