



Photo of Ron Wolfley. Courtesy of azcentral.com

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz— Ron Wolfley is your typical football lover. Football is in his blood. He played, commentated and watches it on a regular basis.

Wolfley was a NFL player for the St. Louis/Arizona Cardinals from 1985-1991.

He would go on to play for the Cleveland Browns and St. Louis Rams before retiring in 1995.

“I thank God for the opportunity to play in the National Football League (NFL) to play football. It was perfect for me,” Wolfley said.

“I loved it in this hyper, aggressive, alpha male sport where you got to walk in between white lines and suddenly change everything you could act like an unmitigated savage.”

For Wolfey, he suffered many concussions but that didn’t stop him from his passion.

“Desperation is a wonderful master. I'd like to say that my coach used to say that all the time, desperation and being able to go out and be desperate and play. That was my superpower,” Wolfley said.

Back then, concussions and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) wasn’t talked about in the NFL. There’s not even data or stats of how many concussions occurred in the 1980s.

CTE was also not diagnosed until 2002 after the death of [Mike Webster](#).

Wolfley played as running back in which it took a mental aspect that still affects him today.

"We knew that we were doing a ton of damage yet at the same time nobody knew anything about CTE," Wolfley said.

"I do it all over again in a heartbeat, even knowing that CTE is real."

Concussions are a common injury in sports no matter the age. A recent study in 2024 by [HHS Public Access](#) revealed that concussions are becoming more common in later years.

"There were a total of 9916 concussions reported between the academic years 2007–2008 and 2018–2019 from 9 sports (5189 from football; 2096 from non-football male sports; 2631 from female sports)," Dana Waltzman and others said.

Wolfley has a son that is playing high school football currently. Originally, Wolfley and his wife encouraged their son to play baseball because it's become so physical.

"We both cried to push him into baseball. Not because we were worried about the concussion thing but because baseball was something that we wouldn't have to worry about him going out and getting hurt. Football is such a physical game, even today," Wolfley said.

However, Wolfley's son couldn't deny his love for football like his father.

"He was really good then when he was growing up. He was an all-star and really doing well in the game of baseball. But his heart, his heart was for football," Wolfley said.

The game of football has changed over the years in the NFL. With some players choosing to wear guardian caps, new kickoff rules and other regulations/policies to further prevent head injuries.

Wolfley expressed that the NFL is in the right direction with these changes but there could be improvements.

"I wanna emphasize the fact I really think the NFL needed to do it. They needed to go through that change. I just didn't like to see them make as many changes as they have especially to the kickoff," Wolfley said.

However, Wolfley noted that he couldn't fathom wearing a guardian cap if it was required.

"I could not have done it. I don't know how those guys actually wear that," Wolfley said. Many NFL players seem to agree with Wolfley as only [13 players](#) have worn a guardian cap in the 2025 season.

Currently, Wolfley gets to host the Wolf & Luke Show on Arizona Sports Radio in Phoenix from Monday to Friday. He continues to fulfill his passion on the radio as football has a lasting impact for him.

Sources

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