



Cardinals QB Warner picked as Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year

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Connie Payton and Roger Goodell present [Kurt Warner](#) with the 2008 Walter Payton Man of the Year Award.

Before he played in his third Super Bowl, [Arizona Cardinals](#) QB Kurt Warner received 2008 Walter Payton Man of the Year honors.

The announcement was made Sunday on the field at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Fla., before kickoff of Super Bowl XLIII between the Cardinals and Pittsburgh Steelers. NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and Connie Payton, the late Walter Payton's wife, presented Warner with the award, which acknowledges a player's off-field community service and on-field excellence.

For all of his on-field accomplishments -- including a Super Bowl XXXIV win, two NFL Most Valuable Player awards and four Pro Bowl selections -- Warner's community work remains his biggest source of pride. After visiting flood-ravaged regions in 2008, Warner created a partnership with Habitat for Humanity to sponsor home builds throughout the Midwest. To date, he has raised over \$650,000, including a \$100,000 personal contribution, \$100,000 from his foundation and \$100,000 each from the Cardinals and the NFL Disaster Relief Fund.

Warner established the First Things First Foundation in 2001 and has personally contributed more than \$1.5 million to fund trips for Make-A-Wish families, home builds for underprivileged families and Punt, Pass and Kick clinics with Special Olympians. Warner is an active participant in league-wide and team-based community programs, including NFL Network's Keep Gym in School initiative and the NFL PLAY 60/American Heart Association What Moves U in-school fitness program.

"I am humbled the Lord has given me such an amazing life to impact others," Warner said in a statement released by the NFL. "Of all the awards given to NFL athletes, the Walter Payton Man of the Year is the one

that stands out above the rest to me because of what it represents. When people look back at my career, I want them to see a fierce competitor, but more importantly, I want to be remembered for my consistency of character and the legacy I hope to leave through my First Things First Foundation."

Recent winners of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award -- named after the late Chicago Bears and Hall of Fame RB -- include current Washington Redskins DE Jason Taylor (2007), New Orleans Saints QB Drew Brees and San Diego Chargers RB LaDainian Tomlinson (co-winners in 2006) and Indianapolis Colts QB Peyton Manning (2005).

This year, Warner was among three finalists for the award, including Minnesota Vikings C Matt Birk and Philadelphia Eagles FS Brian Dawkins. Finalists were chosen by a blue-ribbon panel from the 32 team nominees for the award, and all of them will receive a \$1,000 donation to the charity of their choice. The three finalists will receive an additional \$5,000 donation in their name.

The selection panel is comprised of Goodell, former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue, Pro Football Hall of Fame offensive tackle Anthony Munoz, Sports Illustrated football writer Peter King, football greats Frank Gifford and Jack Kemp, Connie Payton and 2007 winner Taylor.

The winner of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award will receive the Gladiator statue and a \$20,000 donation to a charity in his name.

Warner threw for 4,583 yards and 30 touchdowns with 14 interceptions during the regular season, then led the Cardinals to the Super Bowl with three playoff wins.