



Tommy Maddox

Tommy was the NFL's youngest player as a first-round draft pick in 1992, as Denver Broncos' heir-apparent to quarterback John Elway but he unexpectedly spent his initial NFL years on the sidelines. He saw little action and was traded away to a series of teams over a 5 year period. Tommy was eventually cut from the NFL in 1997 and returned to Dallas to start his own business - an insurance agency.

After a few years of soul-searching, Tommy was given the chance to play professional football again when he took a risk, closed his insurance business and, after a series of tryouts, landed a position to play in arena football, then in the XFL.

Tommy's inspiring football comeback began immediately as he led the Los Angeles Extreme to the XFL championship in 2001 - becoming the league's first and only MVP. His efforts and talent were quickly recognized by the Pittsburgh Steelers who saw his potential similar to that of Kurt Warner, another underappreciated quarterback who went from playing arena league football one season to leading the St. Louis Rams to an NFL Super Bowl victory the next.

As often happens in life, unforeseen obstacles rose up to challenge Tommy's comeback. In November of 2002, his football career and comeback story almost ended during a game with the Tennessee Titans, when he suffered a potential career-ending tackle that left him temporarily paralyzed. After the support of friends, family and the nation, Tommy miraculously recovered. In fact, he did more than recover, he came back to lead the Pittsburgh Steelers to win the AFC North Title that very same season - in one of the most inspiring comebacks in NFL history.

Tommy's courage, faith, recovery and post-injury performance earned him the unanimous honor as the NFL's Comeback Player of the Year.

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