

Football

## **Former NFL FB Kevin Turner dies at 46 after battle with ALS**

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Matt Rourke/AP

### **Former NFL player Kevin Turner dies after being diagnosed with ALS six years ago.**

Kevin Turner, the former NFL fullback with ALS who was a lead plaintiff in a landmark concussion lawsuit against the league, died Thursday morning. He was 46.

Turner played for the University of Alabama prior to his eight-years in the NFL that included stints with the Patriots and Eagles. He finished his NFL career in 1999 and was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, in 2010. In what is becoming

a familiar scenario with former NFL players after their deaths, Turner's brain and spine will be donated for research, according to his attorney.

Turner had to be put on a ventilator as his condition worsened and he needed a computer to communicate with people. Turner reportedly entered hospice care in Alabama on Monday, and died in his Vestavia Hills, Ala. home.

"Kevin was an inspiration to many of us, as he courageously battled ALS while leading the charge to get approval of the concussion settlement and improve the lives of thousands of retired NFL players," Turner's lawyer Steve Marks said in a statement, referring to the settlement reached between the NFL and hundreds of former players, and which is still working its way through a federal appeals court. "Despite the difficulties he faced, he was always concerned about his NFL brothers and ensuring they had the care and support if faced with similar circumstances. As selfless as Kevin was in life he is in death, as he agreed to donate his brain and spine for research into concussions and ALS. We will miss Kevin greatly, but know he is at peace. We extend our deepest condolences to his family."

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Ezra Shaw/Getty Images

## **In 1999, Kevin Turner carries the ball during a game against the Giants.**

Turner's father Raymond posted a message about his son on Facebook following the younger Turner's death: "Just wanted to tell ever one, Myra and I lost a great son today. He will be missed so much, Thank everyone so very much over this journey we have had for all your support, prayers. He was ready to go to Heaven, excited he said. Love y'all, and thanks God Bless."

And former Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb, a teammate of Turner's in Philly, tweeted Thursday: "Prayers and blessing go out to a former teammate of mine Kevin Turner, unfortunately he passed away. Great mentor and friend. KT we miss you"

In addition to his parents, Turner is survived by his ex-wife, Joyce, and three children.

Turner had accused the NFL of not being upfront about the dangers of concussions, and he believed his ALS had been partly the result of repeated hits to his head. ALS is said to be caused by a combination of environmental and genetic effects. The massive settlement between former players and the league, which has preliminary approval but is being reviewed by a federal appeals court, calls for payments to former players who suffer from neurocognitive impairment related to ALS as well as a CTE, chronic traumatic encephalopathy, the degenerative disease found in ever-increasing numbers of athletes who played contact sports like football.