



The Middle School Rules of Charles Tillman: "Peanut"

By Sean Jensen

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Over a dozen seasons, Charles Tillman established himself as the greatest cornerback in the storied history of the Chicago Bears. A two-time Pro Bowl selection, Tillman has been distinguished as one of the NFL's most opportunistic defensive backs, intercepting 36 passes and forcing 42 fumbles—the most in the league since his rookie year in 2003. In fact, he popularized the “Peanut Punch,” a nod to his childhood nickname and a tribute to his knack for jarring a football from the grasp of an offensive player.

But even more than his acclaim on the field, Tillman is highly regarded off the field. With his father serving in the United States Army, Tillman attended 11 different schools domestically and internationally. Lightly recruited out of Copperas Cove High School in Texas, Tillman was offered a single Division 1-A scholarship, but he shined at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and was selected by the Bears in the second round of the NFL Draft.

In 2005, Tillman and his wife Jackie established the Cornerstone Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides resources and opportunities to children in need. Tillman was a 2012 finalist for the NFL Players Association's Byron White Man of the Year award, and he was the 2013 winner of the prestigious Walter Payton Man of the Year award, which “recognizes a player's off-the-field community service as well as his playing excellence.”

The Middle School Rules of Charles Tillman will feature the defining childhood stories of a young, well-traveled boy nicknamed “Peanut,” who had to deal with racism, adapt to constant relocation, and endure the divorce of his parents. Inspired by faith and family, Tillman persevered and carved out an indelible mark both on and off the field.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

SEAN JENSEN was born in South Korea. He was adopted and grew up in California, Massachusetts, and Virginia, mostly on or near military bases. Given his unique background, he has always been drawn to storytelling, a skill he developed at Northwestern University and crafted as a sportswriter for the last 16 years, almost exclusively covering the NFL. During his career, he has fostered strong relationships with athletes in multiple sports, and penned award-winning features on Derrick Rose and Adrian Peterson, among others.

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