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PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDA M. BARRETT

LUKAS VAN NESS ANSWERED WHEN THE LEAGUE CAME CALLING

THE BARRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
ALUMNUS AND UNIVERSITY OF
IOWA DEFENSIVE LINEMAN NOW
CALLS THE GREEN BAY PACKERS'
LAMBEAU FIELD HOME





Leanna and Jason Van Ness join their son, Lukas, on the Barrington High School home field.

TEAMMATES KNOW a thing or two about their fellow football players. University of Iowa Hawkeye's defensive line Noah Shannon nicknamed teammate Lukas Van Ness "Hercules" for his size and exceptional fitness on the Big Ten team. That larger-than-life metaphor for strength and adventure is fitting, as at 21, Van Ness has gone from being a relatively unknown player at Iowa to a top NFL draft pick who is now seeing his life change from college student to the demands of pro football.

Van Ness started playing hockey during his younger years. He also enjoyed Barrington Youth Football intermittently between hockey commitments. As a freshman at Barrington High School, Van Ness joined the football team. Mom Leanna Van Ness said that she encouraged her son to join the team to experience the best of high school and to make new friends in the community. Van Ness gained his footing in football with the help of many youth and high school coaches along the way, including Coach Joe Sanchez and the entire team of coaches at Barrington High. When Van Ness headed off to Iowa, no one knew how quickly his trajectory would carry him to the professional level.

Opening photo: Lukas Van Ness stops in Barrington for a final visit before his relocation to Green Bay, Wisconsin.

HIS WORLD-CLASS WORK ETHIC

Van Ness has played hockey and youth football since childhood, and Dad Jason Van Ness, a Barrington Chiropractor, taught him how to manage the bumps and bruises on his own. The emphasis on physical fitness, and awareness and proper treatment of those small injuries, has helped Van Ness avoid larger injuries—providing an incredibly attractive, clean health slate for an NFL career.

His Relative Athletic Score (RAS) is 9.75 out of 10, and his 40-yard dash comes in at 4.58. He is an elite athlete and a quiet yet determined leader on the field. His excellent physical shape, agility from years on the ice, and strong motor skills and speed have him poised for a tremendous upside. Yet perhaps what most defines Van Ness is that given the opportunities and the right environment to learn—both on and off the field and ice, from coaches, his parents, and fellow teammates—is that he stepped up. His commitment level to hard work, excellence, and teamwork is the winning mindset that will carry him across the finish lines in his career and personal life.

There is unlimited potential for this season's #13 NFL draft pick Lukas Van Ness. And though most of our readers are inclined to follow the hometown team, the Chicago Bears, we suspect local football fans will be keeping their eye on the Packers beyond the usual long-standing rivalry, because we have one of our own, dream-come-true player Lukas Van Ness, on the team.



Lukas Van Ness' first sport was hockey, which he played from a young age. He also played Barrington Youth Football and joined the Barrington Broncos Football team in his freshman year in high school.

Leanna Van Ness, RN and Jason Van Ness, DC on Raising Children

WE ASKED LEANNA AND JASON VAN NESS TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS AND UNIQUE PARENTING STYLES IN RAISING THEIR FOUR CHILDREN. HERE IS WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY.



INSIGHTS FROM JASON VAN NESS, DC, CCSP

Control the Controllable” is a phrase we use in our household and one Coach Sanchez frequently touts both on and off the football field. Lukas took this phrase to heart. As a professional athlete, he continues to focus his attention on aspects of his life that can be positively influenced by life choices. A few areas I feel Lukas has mastered which have helped him achieve success are the following...

Academics: Lukas always made academics a priority. He knew that a commitment to academic performance in the classroom translates to success on the football field. Lukas was a NHS student at BHS and was on the Dean's List in The Tippie College of Business at the University of Iowa. His focus on studies continues at the NFL level. He attacks the playbook and film room with the same rigor as his academics.

Preparation: Lukas' preparation allowed him to be successful when an opportunity presented itself during the recruiting process and on the football field. Whether it was interviewing with college and NFL coaches, proving his abilities and readiness when called into action, or his training for the NFL Combine.... Lukas did what he needed to do to ensure he was the best he could be. Coaching staff will frequently mention Lukas' work ethic. His "first to arrive, last to leave" mentality stems from a strong desire to improve and learn from those around him.

Health: Lukas realized early in life that he needs to properly care for his body to avoid injury and maximize his potential. Lukas emphasizes good nutrition, strength/flexibility training, rest and recovery, and preventative health care in his daily routine. He cares for his body the same way one would care for a fine sports car. He uses the best nutrition and body care to optimize his performance.

Appreciative: Throughout this process, Lukas has stayed grounded on what is important. He is humble and realizes that life is more than football alone. He values his relationship with God, family, friends, and teammates.

He continually makes an effort to maintain and build these relationships and knows ultimately, they are the foundation of who he is today and what he represents. Lukas is very appreciative of the Barrington community, and all who have offered words of encouragement and support throughout his journey.

PARENTING WISDOM FROM LEANNA VAN NESS, RN

Oh geez! There are few things in life I can say with 100% certainty, except for this. Regarding parenting, we are a far cry from "perfect parents." In fact, as I reflect on how we raised our children, I chuckle to myself knowing all the mistakes we have made on this ride called parenthood. Not for lack of trying, but simply not always knowing the right thing to do or say. But at the end of the day, I know our kids realize we love them unconditionally and will always be here for them! I would say we are perfectly imperfect!

Something you will commonly hear in our household is "work hard, play hard." Simple words, but a motto we live by. Regardless of what the "work" is, we expect 100% effort. Whether that is in the classroom, on the field or on the ice, or building relationships. Does this guarantee success? No, but it is effort that matters most to us. If you put forth full effort, regardless of the outcome, you will sleep well at night.

Our kids were involved in various sports. I vividly remember buying hockey, soccer, lacrosse nets, cones, balls, pucks. You name it, I bought it. Anything to help them advance. But I quickly learned that once they were off the field, they had little desire to play that given sport at home. Soon the weeds were growing around the nets, and I donated most items. To this day I would be hard-pressed to find a football or soccer ball in my garage. I valued their need for downtime and "play." Not play a sport but play—meaning to have fun and enjoy life!

We openly express our love for one another. Nine times out of 10, we will end a conversation by saying "love you." We say it so frequently that it has become a habit. But trust me when I say we also laugh and tease each other.



Coach Joe Sanchez stopped by the Barrington High School football field to catch up with Lukas Van Ness before his professional football career takes off.

We keep it real. No one in our family is immune to being roasted. We joke that you need tough skin to survive in our family!

Jason and I have different approaches to parenting. We don't always see eye to eye. I believe it is healthy for the kids to be exposed to varying viewpoints and perspectives. I explain that we are different people, with different experiences, backgrounds, and opinions. I find it interesting that as they have matured, and they seek us out individually and collectively to garnish advice in various aspects of life.

"It takes a village" comes to mind. You will often hear us say that we are blessed to call Barrington "home!" We love this community and the people in it. I truly credit any success and accomplishments of my children to the teachers, coaches, parents, and friends who have helped shape them and become the people they are today. We are forever grateful and appreciative of all who have provided support and thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Broncos For Life

GETTING TO KNOW HEAD FOOTBALL COACH JOE SANCHEZ AND HIS WORK WITH LUKAS VAN NESS



HEAD FOOTBALL COACH Joe Sanchez and his wife, Wendy, a Physical Education teacher, both work for Barrington 220. They have lived in Barrington for 23 years and have raised their children here. We asked Coach Sanchez to share his background, his coaching philosophy, and the potential he saw in Lukas Van Ness.

Can you share your background with Barrington 220?

This will be my 28th year teaching Social Studies and Coaching Football at BHS. This will be my 22nd season as the Head Football Coach. Along with football, I also coached Girls Softball for nine years, as well. My wife Wendy is a PE teacher at BHS and we just had our oldest, Ellie, graduate from BHS in June and she will be a freshman this year at North Dakota State playing soccer. Our youngest, Aybree, will be a freshman at BHS this upcoming school year.



Coach Joe Sanchez talks about how his team players are all a part of the Bronco Football Family. They play for their "Brothers" putting forth their best efforts for each other.

How did you recognize the potential in Lukas Van Ness from early on?


We saw that as Lukas was coming up in the program, he certainly had the size and athleticism to be a special athlete, but what really stood out were his intangibles: work ethic, intelligence, and his humility. After his junior year, when he made the decision to focus on football, you saw all those things align and he made big strides going into his senior year which is why he earned an opportunity to play at Iowa. Then at Iowa those same traits he demonstrated while at BHS went to another level and that is why he is now getting the opportunity to play in the NFL with the Green Bay Packers.

What is your approach to encouraging and nurturing student athletes like Lukas in their sports journey?

I think what we do as a program is to try to instill the idea that we are all a part of something bigger as a member of the football program. There is a long history and tradition of success. Respecting that history, we have a phrase in our program "BFL" which stands for Broncos For Life. Within this idea of being a Bronco For Life we have four core values and beliefs: Brotherhood, Best is the Standard, Believe, and Battle.

We talk about how we are all a part of the Bronco Football Family and we play for our Brothers in our football family. Within our family we hold ourselves to the standard of giving our Best Effort on the field, in the classroom, and in the community. With this we learn how to BELIEVE & BATTLE for one another. This becomes the center of everything that we try to do to help encourage and nurture the boys who choose to be a part of the program. We believe this will not only help them to be successful on the field but more importantly, we are trying to help give our boys the skills and values they will need to be successful in whatever they choose to pursue after football.

What is the importance of parents in the success of the top student athletes you work with?

I believe that parents play a huge role in the success of their son's or daughter's success as a student athlete. The two most important things a parent can provide is their unconditional love and support regardless of the result or outcome and allowing their child to learn how to advocate and problem solve for themselves. All the best student-athletes I have had the honor to coach and observe in other sports have had parents who provided this type of support. 



Lukas Van Ness is known for his work ethic, intelligence, humility, and leadership on the field and with his teams. We wish him all the very best in his career!