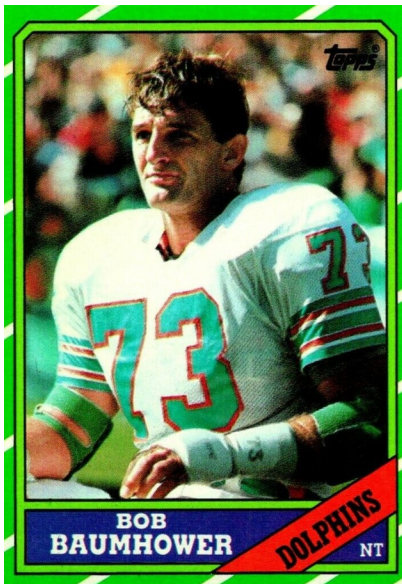


Bob Baumhower

This article was written by Matt Keddie.

Very few football players have the luxury of playing for legendary coaches in both their college and professional careers. Robert Glenn Baumhower (b. August 4, 1955) played for Don Shula in his ten-year NFL career with the Miami Dolphins, and under the tutelage of genius, Paul “Bear” Bryant, at the University of Alabama.¹



A key member of Miami's “Killer Bees” defense, Baumhower was very opportunistic of such a situation, “As a young guy going to Palm Beach High School and watching the Dolphins do their thing back in the day in the early '70s, going undefeated, going to Super Bowls, I've always been a huge fan. When I got the opportunity to play for Miami after moving to Alabama and going to Alabama and then getting drafted by the Dolphins and playing for Coach Shula, it was more than I could imagine as a young guy growing up in North Palm Beach and going to Palm Beach High.”² Baumhower strove to be the best player on the defense, serving as its anchor. Starting at nose tackle, his 6'5” and 261 pound frame was not the prototypical nose tackle in terms of size, however, he possessed outstanding technique and athleticism that set him apart.

Baumhower was drafted 40th overall in the 1977 NFL draft by the Dolphins.³ Coming in as a rookie, a decision was made by Shula that defined his career: “Coach Shula and Mike Scarry, my position coach, asked me to play nose, and I never played it before. That's not a position you grow up wanting to play. I didn't like it. A week into training



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camp they knew I didn't like it. They had a conversation with me. They said, 'We really need you to master this position. You can be a good defensive end, but we think you can be a great nose tackle.'"⁴ The rest became history. Baumhower earned a spot on the All-Rookie team, starting all 14 games netting three fumble recoveries, and an unofficial 4.0 sacks.⁵ He was third in the Rookie of the Year voting: "I thought about what they said. Because of who coach Shula is, I went to work. I did everything I could do to master the position. Because of Coach Shula's vision, I was the rookie of the year and had a pretty good career down there. That's what made him such a great coach."⁶

Under Shula, Baumhower was a five-time Pro Bowl selection (1979; 1981-1984), four time All-AFC choice (1979, 1981, 1982, 1983) by *Pro Football Weekly* and the UPI, and was named to various All-Pro teams by the Associated Press, *Sporting News*, and the *Newspaper Ent. Association*.⁷

The Killer Bees defense of the 1980s earned their name from the last names of the defensive starters, that began with the letter B: Doug Betters, Baumhower, Kim Bokamper, Bob Brudzinski, Glenn Blackwood, and Lyle Blackwood.⁸ One of the greatest moments of the unit was during the 1982 season against the San Diego Chargers. Miami lost the previous meeting in the 1981 playoffs, 41-38, in which the team mounted a significant comeback from a 24-0 deficit, only to fall short.⁹ Despite the heroic comeback, Chargers quarterback Dan Fouts tore up Miami's defense, tossing three touchdowns and 433 passing yards.¹⁰ Fouts led the NFL in passing that season. This game, however, was to be known as "The Revenge of the Killer Bees." Even though San Diego came in with the league's top ranked offense once again, the Killer Bees stole the

1 "Dolphins Add Five More Players To 50th Anniversary Team," CBSMiami, November 3, 2015, <https://miami.cbslocal.com/2015/11/03/dolphins-add-five-more-players-to-50th-anniversary-team/>.

2 "Dolphins Add Five More Players To 50th Anniversary Team," CBSMiami, November 3, 2015, <https://miami.cbslocal.com/2015/11/03/dolphins-add-five-more-players-to-50th-anniversary-team/>.

3 "Bob Baumhower," ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/players/B/BaumBo00.htm>.

4 Heim, Mark. "Bob Baumhower shares thing Don Shula did to make Bear Bryant envious; NFL mourns loss of Miami coach," AL.com, May 4, 2020, <https://www.al.com/sports/2020/05/bob-baumhower-shares-thing-don-shula-did-to-make-bear-bryant-envious-nfl-mourns-loss-of-miami-coach.html>.

5 "Bob Baumhower," ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/players/B/BaumBo00.htm>.

6 Heim, Mark. "Bob Baumhower shares thing Don Shula did to make Bear Bryant envious; NFL mourns loss of Miami coach," AL.com, May 4, 2020, <https://www.al.com/sports/2020/05/bob-baumhower-shares-thing-don-shula-did-to-make-bear-bryant-envious-nfl-mourns-loss-of-miami-coach.html>.

7 "Bob Baumhower," ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/players/B/BaumBo00.htm>.



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show. Before the game Fouts asked, “How would I stop the Charger offense? Number one, I’d stop the quarterback.”¹¹ That is exactly what Miami did. Fouts completed just 15 of 34 passes for only 191 yards passing. He threw five interceptions and was sacked three times.¹² He said, “Miami didn’t give us anything. Its defense is the best we’ve seen.”¹³ Bokamper recalled, “I read newspaper stories out of San Diego that the Chargers didn’t respect us too much. They thought we were a fluke or something. Today we went out and showed the country what kind of defense we are when it comes to the real serious situations.”¹⁴ Miami rolled to victory, 34-13.

Miami boasted a top ten defense in points allowed in 1978, earning an 11-5 mark in the NFL’s inaugural year with a 16 game schedule.¹⁵ Baumhower intercepted his only career pass and recorded 1.5 sacks. He earned his first Pro Bowl honors in 1979, when he was also a second team All-Pro player (Associated Press), and first-team All-AFC by both *Pro Football Weekly* and the *Sporting News*.¹⁶ He continued to raise his game into the 1980s, with a string of four consecutive Pro Bowl seasons, 1981-1984, when he also earned All-Pro status in each.

In 1981, he led the Dolphins in sacks with 9.0 (unofficial).¹⁷ His sack total fell to 3.5 in 1982, but he only started in eight contests due to the strike-shortened season.¹⁸ The Dolphins reached the Super Bowl, but lost to the Washington Redskins, 27-17. Baumhower and the defense rebounded for 1983, when Miami boasted the league’s top

8 Driano, Jim. “Remembering Dolphins’ “Killer Bees”,” 247sports.com, January 24, 1983, <https://247sports.com/nfl/miami-dolphins/Article/Remembering-Dolphins-Killer-Bees—74988343/>.

9 Papanek, John. “Revenge of the Killer Bees,” vault.si.com, May 26, 2016, <https://vault.si.com/vault/1983/01/24/the-revenge-of-the-killer-bees>

10 “Divisional Round – San Diego Chargers at Miami Dolphins, January 2nd, 1982,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/boxscores/198201020mia.htm>.

11 Papanek, John. “Revenge of the Killer Bees,” vault.si.com, May 26, 2016, <https://vault.si.com/vault/1983/01/24/the-revenge-of-the-killer-bees>

12 “Divisional Round – San Diego Chargers at Miami Dolphins – January 16th, 1983,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/boxscores/198301160mia.htm>.

13 Papanek, John. “Revenge of the Killer Bees,” vault.si.com, May 26, 2016, <https://vault.si.com/vault/1983/01/24/the-revenge-of-the-killer-bees>

14 Papanek, John. “Revenge of the Killer Bees,” vault.si.com, May 26, 2016, <https://vault.si.com/vault/1983/01/24/the-revenge-of-the-killer-bees>

15 “Miami Dolphins Franchise Encyclopedia,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/mia/>.

16 “Bob Baumhower,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/players/B/BaumBo00.htm>.



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ranked unit.¹⁹ It was also Baumhower's career best season. He was second on the team with 8.0 sacks, and was named the Defensive Player of the Year by the *Pro Football Writers of America* and was a first-team All-Pro (Associated Press).²⁰

Miami returned to the Super Bowl at the end of the 1984 season, but were soundly defeated by the San Francisco 49ers. Baumhower suffered a knee injury that resulted in him sitting out the 1985 season. He attempted to make a comeback for 1986, starting in 12 games, then retired at the end of the season.²¹

For his career, Baumhower played in 130 games, piled up 39.5 sacks (unofficial), and won two conference championships.²² His 39.5 career sacks ranked seventh in team history at the time of his retirement. In 2008, he was inducted into the Miami Dolphins Honor Roll. In addition to working with Shula, Baumhower credits practicing against his teammates as the reason for his success, “But a lot of that was because the center and two guards I was practicing against were Jim Langer, Bob Kuchenberg and Larry Little, three All-Pros, maybe the best trio ever. They bounced me around like a pinball. But I learned a lot, and that made playing other teams easier.”²³

Baumhower also had an outstanding collegiate career for Bear Bryant at Alabama. He played on two 11-1 Crimson Tide squads. He was on the fifth ranked 1974 team that lost 13-11 to Notre Dame in the Orange Bowl and the 1975 team that defeated Penn State 13-6 in the Orange Bowl and finished ranked No. 3 in the nation. Baumhower was a first team All-SEC defensive tackle in both 1975 and 1976 and was invited to play in the Senior Bowl.

Following his pro football career Baumhower has had success in the hospitality industry as the owner and CEO of Aloha Hospitality that owns several restaurants throughout Alabama including his namesake, Baumhower’s Victory Grille.

1 7 “Bob Baumhower,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/players/B/BaumBo00.htm>.

1 8 “Bob Baumhower,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/players/B/BaumBo00.htm>.

1 9 “Miami Dolphins Franchise Encyclopedia,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/mia/>.

2 0 “Bob Baumhower,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/players/B/BaumBo00.htm>.

2 1 “Bob Baumhower,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/players/B/BaumBo00.htm>.

2 2 “Bob Baumhower,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/players/B/BaumBo00.htm>.

2 3 Nix, JW. “The Best Miami Dolphins Not in the Pro Football Hall of Fame (Defense),” BleacherReport.com, March 9, 2011, <https://bleacherreport.com/articles/630811-the-best-miami-dolphins-not-in-the-pro-football-hall-of-fame-defense>.



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End Notes: