

QB

VANITA KROUCH

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**HOMETOWN:** Carrollton, Texas**RESIDENCE:** Carrollton, Texas**AGE:** 44**HEIGHT:** 5-4**YEAR ON U.S. NATIONAL TEAM:** 6th**“THE TOM BRADY OF FLAG FOOTBALL”**

Krouch is the most decorated women’s flag football athlete of all time and widely recognized as the sport’s answer to NFL great Tom Brady.

Krouch has led the U.S. squad to remarkable success, helping the team earn gold medals at the 2018, 2021 and 2024 IFAF World Championships as well as the 2023 IFAF Americas Championships as starting quarterback and team captain. Under her leadership, the U.S. National Team holds a 33-1 record.

“The flag community would call me the female version of Tom Brady and the success he’s had,” Krouch told the NFL in 2022. “Me, personally, I just play football for myself and for the team and I play my style.”

After taking silver in the 2022 World Games, Krouch and the U.S. Women’s National Team bounced back in the 2023 IFAF Americas Continental Championship, earning a perfect 6-0 record, including a gold-medal game victory over Mexico. Krouch was named MVP of the gold medal game after throwing four touchdowns.

In 2024, Krouch led the U.S. National Team to another gold medal at the IFAF Flag Football World Championships in Lahti, Finland. Krouch completed 160-of-222 passes for 1,874 yards, 39 touchdowns and 23 extra points to just three interceptions as the U.S. tallied an 8-0 record to emerge at the top of the largest World Championship field ever comprised of 23 nations from six continents.

Krouch’s success on the flag football field has led her to several unique experiences as she served as the offensive coordinator for the NFC team at the NFL’s annual all-star game, the Pro Bowl, in 2023, when the game transitioned from a tackle to flag football format.

“For the longest time, thinking about the moment, everything, you’re like, ‘Oh, my gosh, this is a dream come true. Is this really happening?’” Krouch told NBCSports.com in 2023. “But then I started thinking to myself: You know what? None of us grew up thinking of this as a dream to obtain. So really, it’s kind of reversed where I’m living a dream. I get to be a pioneer in this growth of flag football for all and inclusion for all, youth and adults, [women and men]. It’s such an inclusive sport, and I get to be a part of this growth and still actively play. It’s exciting. I’m literally living the dream. I’m very much like, ‘Guys, don’t pinch me. Let me keep sleeping.’”

Krouch had a role in the NFL’s 2023 Super Bowl **commercial** “Run With It,” an ad geared toward the push for increased women’s participation in football. She returned the screen in 2025 as she joined U.S. Women’s National Team teammate Ashlea Klam and Kiona “Ki’lolo” Westerlund, a gold-medal-winning alum of USA Football’s 15U and 17U Girls’ Junior Flag National Teams, in the NFL’s Super Bowl LIX commercial **“NFL Flag 50”** promoting the growth of opportunities for girls and women to play America’s favorite sport.

Krouch, Klam and Westerlund, who played the lead role in the commercial, shared screen time with NFL Legends Marshawn Lynch and Pat McAfee, and current NFL All-Pros Myles Garrett and Justin Jefferson.

Through efforts like their “NFL Flag 50” campaign, the NFL hopes to inspire all 50 states to sanction girls’ high school flag football as a varsity sport.

**ROUND BALL**

Krouch’s journey in sports began long before her start in flag football. Krouch started playing basketball in the fourth grade and eventually earned a scholarship to play at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. She played four seasons (2000-03) at SMU, winning a Western Athletic Conference Championship and earning an appearance in the NCAA Tournament as a freshman.

After college, Krouch played semi-pro basketball with the Dallas Diesels before making the transition to flag football. Her nearly two-decade flag football career started after she did an internet search for rec leagues in the Dallas area and began playing 4-on-4 flag in a men’s division.

“I play flag football because it’s empowering and inclusive,” said Krouch. “I feel women can do all the things a guy can do. Plus, flag solves three problems for me – fulfilling my desire to compete, exercise and be social.”

FLEEING PERSECUTION

Originally from Cambodia, Krouch’s family migrated first to the Philippines (where Vanita was born) and then to the United States when she was two months old, escaping from the deadly Khmer Rouge regime.

Krouch’s mother, Phonnary, was critical to keeping her family together in a time of tremendous difficulty. “In a nutshell, my mom is an amazing woman,” Krouch told NBCSports.com “On the journey, she had a lot of trials, tribulations, ... and after our dad left us, it was just mom and four kids in this little one-bedroom apartment. So, it was a challenge. I’m just so amazed by her strength and will to never give up.”

She credits her family’s inspirational journey as the motivation behind her many achievements and uses it to continue to break barriers in sport.

“I’m just thankful, honestly, that my mom allowed me to break the Asian culture barriers of a woman playing sports because that’s not easy,” she continued in the NBCSports.com interview. “She faced a lot of backlash from the community. But she said, ‘Hey, my child’s making good grades. She’s healthy, she’s good. She’s staying off the streets. I don’t see a problem.’ And she just let me do it. I was just lucky to have a mom that let me spread my wings.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS

When she’s not competing against the world’s best flag football athletes, Krouch is helping to shape the lives of children in her community. Krouch has been a physical education teacher for 20 years and is currently teaching at La Villita Elementary in Irving, Texas.

“My work as a P.E. teacher is beyond fulfilling,” Krouch said. “I feel like I haven’t really worked a day in my life because I get to laugh and smile and play and encourage my kids daily. I know that for some of them, I will be the only smile or hug or high five they get and it’s important to me they feel seen and nurtured and loved. I enjoy teaching them how to work with a team and develop their basic motor skills and expose them to various sports and activities to hopefully instill a love for a healthy lifestyle.”

Krouch’s elementary school physical education teacher Toni Neibes was instrumental in her sports and life journey. Neibes, who Krouch calls a “second mom,” signed Krouch up for soccer in third grade, paid for her entry fees and helped get her to practice. Krouch wears her No. 4 jersey to honor Neibes and her contributions to Krouch’s getting started in sports. Neibes wore No. 4 as an athlete as well.

“I see Toni in me when I teach because she taught with tough love and always expected the best effort of me and not just enough to be the best compared to others,” said Krouch. “She pushed me to reach my true potential and capabilities. Without Toni, I don’t think I’d be me at all. She believed in me, helped nurture my love of sports and taught me how to be a more well-rounded person. Without Toni, I truly believe I would be a different human on and off the field.”

In addition to soccer, Krouch competed in basketball, track and field and volleyball in high school.

