NFL's Trent Williams Reveals Cancer Was Misdiagnosed by Team Doctors

Six years ago, Williams noticed a growth on his head but was told not to worry.

November 8, 2019 By Alicia Green

A couple of days after ending his five-month holdout with the Washington Redskins, star left tackle Trent Williams revealed his diagnosis with a rare form of cancer. (A holdout is when a player doesn't attend mandatory offseason workouts.) He also blamed team doctors for failing for six years to take a growth on his head seriously. It ultimately turned out to be cancer, reports The Washington Post.

"I almost lost my life," Williams said. "We literally caught it within weeks of metastasizing through to my brain."

The 31-year-old was diagnosed with Dermatofibrosarcoma Protuberans (DFSP), a rare skin cancer that begins in connective tissue cells in the middle layer of a person's skin. Williams say he noticed the growth late in the 2013 football season and asked doctors about it. At the time, he was told he shouldn't be concerned. As the growth continued to grow over the years, doctors' responses remained the same.

"I guess nobody took the time to see what was going on there," he said. "Football was more important, and to me it was more important too. I was told it was something minor, so I didn't really question them."

It was only when the team started to become more worried about the growth during this recent offseason that Williams was sent to a Redskins-affiliated hospital, where doctors confirmed that it was indeed a serious health issue. After a visit to a hospital in Chicago, Williams was diagnosed with a cancerous tumor and had surgery to remove it in midwinter.

"Think [about] how you describe to your 9-year-old, your 5-year-old, that Daddy might not be here," he said. "It's tough." Williams was so angered by the whole situation that he held out until the NFL's trade deadline.

"The Washington Redskins have requested that the NFL's Management Council convene a joint committee with the NFLPA to review the medical records and the medical care given to Trent Williams," the team said in a statement. "We have requested this review under the NFL's

Collective Bargaining Agreement that provides for an independent third-party review of any NFL player's medical care."

The statement continued, "The Redskins continue to prioritize the health and well-being of our players and staff. Due to health care and privacy regulations, we are unable to comment further at this time. We look forward to the joint committee's results."

Williams's relationship with his team of nine years remains rocky. He says that there is no trust and certain things are hard to look past.

For more football-related cancer content, click here.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/article/nfls-trent-williams-reveals-cancer-misdiagnosed-team-doctors