

playoff history dallas cowboys

Playoff history Dallas Cowboys is a rich tapestry filled with triumphs, heartbreaks, legendary players, and unforgettable moments. The Dallas Cowboys, often referred to as "America's Team," boast one of the most storied franchises in NFL history. Their playoff journey reflects not only their success but also the evolution of the league itself. This article will explore the Dallas Cowboys' playoff history, including key seasons, memorable games, and legendary players who have left an indelible mark on the franchise.

Early Years and Rise to Prominence

The Dallas Cowboys were established in 1960, and their early years were marked by struggles. However, the team began to find its footing in the late 1960s, making its first playoff appearance in 1966. The Cowboys faced the Green Bay Packers in the NFL Championship Game, narrowly losing 34-27 in a contest that would set the stage for future rivalries.

The 1970s: The First Super Bowl Success

The 1970s proved to be a defining decade for the Cowboys, characterized by remarkable playoff success and the emergence of key players.

1. Super Bowl VI: The Cowboys made their first Super Bowl appearance in 1972, defeating the Miami Dolphins 24-3. This victory established the Cowboys as a powerhouse in the NFL and solidified their national appeal.
2. Super Bowl X: In 1975, the Cowboys faced the Pittsburgh Steelers but fell short in a hard-fought battle, losing 21-17.
3. Super Bowl XII: The Cowboys returned to glory in 1978, defeating the Denver Broncos 27-10. The game was notable for the performances of defensive linemen Harvey Martin and Randy White, both of whom were named co-MVPs.

During this era, the Cowboys not only excelled on the field but also cultivated a passionate fan base, leading to their moniker as "America's Team."

The 1980s: A Decade of Disappointment

The 1980s were less kind to the Cowboys. While they made several playoff appearances, they struggled to recapture their previous Super Bowl success.

- 1980 NFC Championship Game: The Cowboys lost to the Philadelphia Eagles 20-7, marking a disappointing end to their season.

- 1981 and 1982 Playoffs: The Cowboys reached the playoffs again but faced early exits, losing in the Divisional Round both times.

Despite the struggles, the Cowboys began to rebuild, laying the groundwork for a resurgence in the 1990s.

The 1990s: A Dynasty is Born

The 1990s marked a golden era for the Dallas Cowboys, as they became one of the NFL's most dominant franchises.

1. Super Bowl XXVII (1992): Under head coach Jimmy Johnson, the Cowboys defeated the Buffalo Bills 52-17, showcasing their offensive prowess and solidifying their return to prominence.
2. Super Bowl XXVIII (1993): The Cowboys faced the Bills again, winning 30-13 and becoming the first team since the 1970s to win back-to-back Super Bowls.
3. Super Bowl XXX (1995): The Cowboys triumphed over the Pittsburgh Steelers 27-17, securing their fifth Super Bowl title. This victory marked the end of the era of the "Triplets": quarterback Troy Aikman, running back Emmitt Smith, and wide receiver Michael Irvin, who became icons of the franchise.

During this time, the Cowboys not only achieved success on the field but also became a cultural phenomenon, drawing fans from all over the country.

The 2000s: Transition and Challenges

The early 2000s were a period of transition for the Cowboys. After the departure of key players from the 1990s dynasty, the team struggled to find its footing.

- 2003 Playoffs: With a new coach, Bill Parcells, the Cowboys returned to the playoffs but were eliminated in the Wild Card Round by the Carolina Panthers.

- 2007 Season: The Cowboys finished the regular season with a 13-3 record and were considered strong Super Bowl contenders. However, they lost in the Divisional Round to the New York Giants, a game that would haunt the franchise for years.

Despite these challenges, the Cowboys continued to build a competitive team, with players like quarterback Tony Romo emerging as leaders.

Recent Years: A Return to Playoff Contention

The 2010s saw the Cowboys experiencing ups and downs but still managing to make playoff appearances.

1. 2014 Season: The Cowboys finished with a 12-4 record and advanced to the Divisional Round, where they faced the Green Bay Packers. A controversial no-catch call on Dez Bryant in the fourth quarter was a pivotal moment, leading to a heartbreaking 26-21 loss.
2. 2016 Season: With rookie quarterback Dak Prescott and rookie running back Ezekiel Elliott, the Cowboys finished with a 13-3 record and made the playoffs but lost to the Packers again in the Divisional Round.
3. 2020 Season: The Cowboys faced challenges with injuries and roster changes but managed to make the playoffs as the NFC East champions. They faced a tough defeat against the San Francisco 49ers in the Wild Card Round.

Statistical Highlights of Playoff History

The Dallas Cowboys' playoff history is marked by impressive statistics that reflect their success over the years. Here are some key figures:

- Super Bowl Appearances: 8
- Super Bowl Wins: 5 (VI, XII, XXVII, XXVIII, XXX)
- Playoff Wins: The Cowboys have secured over 35 playoff victories, making them one of the teams with the most playoff wins in NFL history.
- Notable Players: Hall of Famers such as Troy Aikman, Emmitt Smith, Michael Irvin, and Tony Dorsett have all contributed to the Cowboys' playoff legacy.

Conclusion: A Legacy of Excellence

The playoff history of the Dallas Cowboys is a saga of glory, perseverance, and passionate fandom. From their early struggles to their dominance in the 1990s and their ongoing quest for success, the Cowboys have solidified their place in NFL history. The legacy of legendary players and iconic moments continues to inspire future generations, ensuring that the Dallas Cowboys remain a cornerstone of American football culture.

As the Cowboys look to the future, their playoff history serves as a reminder of their storied past and the potential for new triumphs in the seasons to come. Whether they are winning championships or facing heartbreak, the Dallas Cowboys will always be a significant part of playoff history.

Frequently Asked Questions

What year did the Dallas Cowboys win their first Super Bowl?

The Dallas Cowboys won their first Super Bowl in 1972, defeating the Miami Dolphins in Super Bowl VI.

How many Super Bowls have the Dallas Cowboys won?

The Dallas Cowboys have won a total of five Super Bowls: Super Bowl VI, XII, XXVII, XXVIII, and XXX.

Who is the all-time leading passer for the Cowboys in playoff history?

Troy Aikman is the all-time leading passer for the Dallas Cowboys in playoff history.

In which year did the Cowboys make their most recent playoff appearance?

As of 2023, the Dallas Cowboys made their most recent playoff appearance in the 2022 season.

Which team did the Cowboys face in their first playoff game?

The Dallas Cowboys faced the Green Bay Packers in their first playoff game on December 24, 1966.

What is the Cowboys' all-time playoff record?

As of 2023, the Dallas Cowboys have an all-time playoff record of 35 wins and 30 losses.

Who holds the record for the most rushing yards in a single playoff game for the Cowboys?

Emmitt Smith holds the record for the most rushing yards in a single playoff game for the Dallas Cowboys, with 250 yards against the Philadelphia Eagles in 1995.

How many times have the Cowboys appeared in the NFC Championship Game?

The Dallas Cowboys have appeared in the NFC Championship Game 14 times.

Which coach led the Cowboys to their first playoff victory?

Tom Landry was the head coach who led the Dallas Cowboys to their first playoff victory in 1970.

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