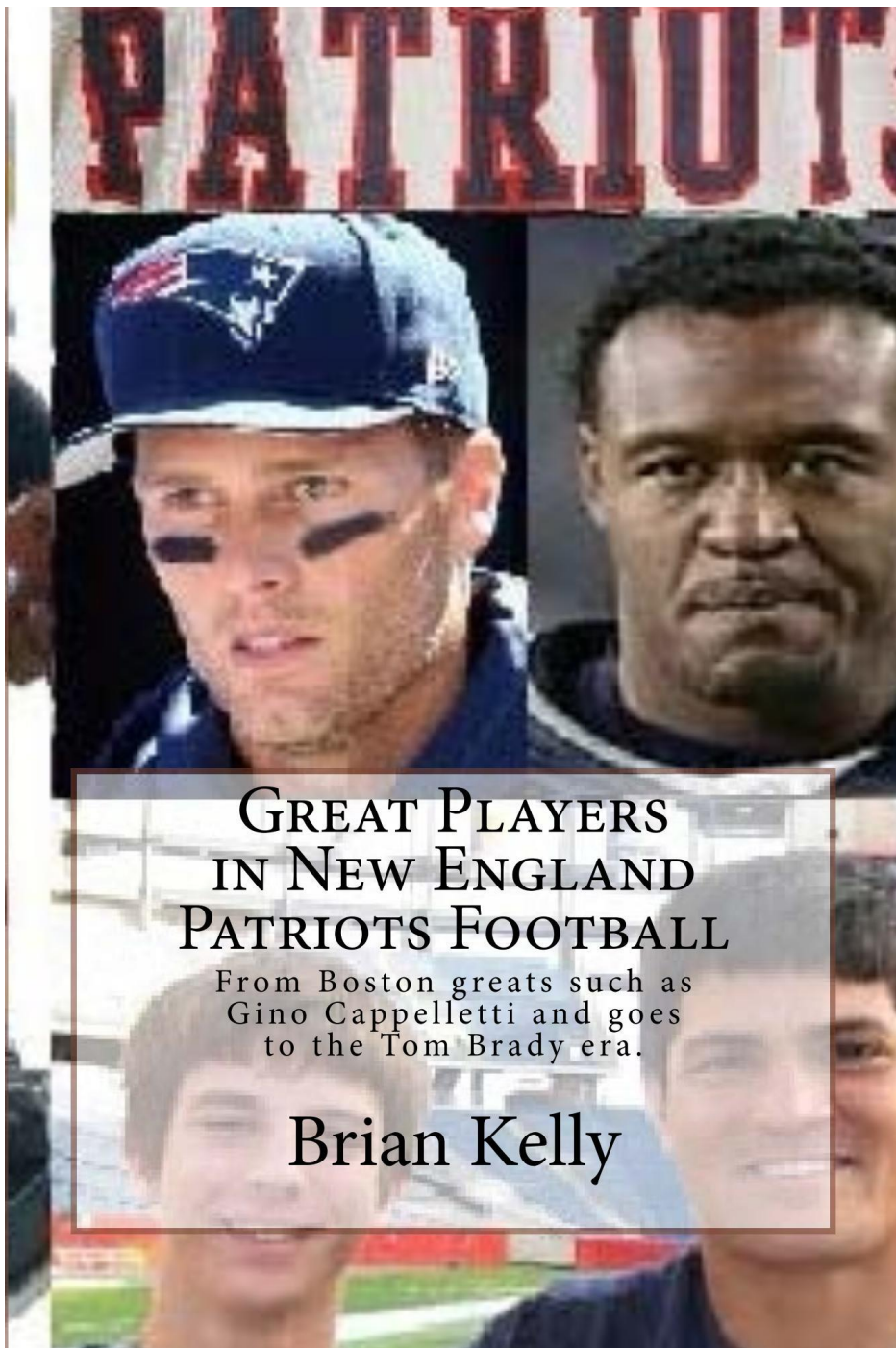


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GREAT PLAYERS IN NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS FOOTBALL

From Boston greats such as
Gino Cappelletti and goes
to the Tom Brady era.

Brian Kelly



#14 Bill Belichick

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

#1 Lou Saban

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

#2 Mike Holovak

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

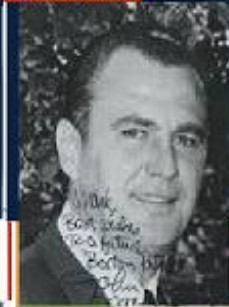
#14 Bill Belichick

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



#3 Clive Rush

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



#4 John Mazur

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



#5 Phil Bengston

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



#6 Chuck Fairbanks

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



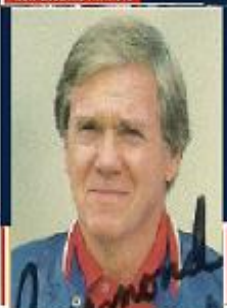
#7 Ron Erhardt

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



#8 Ron Meyer

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



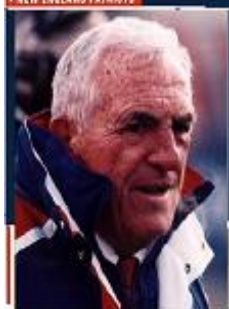
#9 Ray Berry

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



#10 Rod Rust

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



#11 Dick MacPherson

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



#12 Bill Parcels

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



#13 Pete Carroll

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS



#14 Bill Belichick

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

iv Great Players in New England Patriots Football



Great Players in New England Patriots Football

From Boston greats such as Gino Cappelletti to the Tom Brady era.

This book is written for those of us who love New England Patriots football and the great players who played the game. Those who are not the top fans of the Pats will also want this book, so they can try to get a leg up on the facts missing from the bookshelves of those Patriot fans who do not have this book.

The book first tells the story about the great players in Boston Patriots football and then moves to the New England Patriots. It goes way back to the American Football League (AFL) team from Boston in 1960 and brings us right up to today.

Eventually the topic in the chapter becomes the early NFL, then the AFL, and of course the Boston Patriots first football players in 1960 such as Babe Parilli under coach Lou Saban. Then of course there are the New England Patriots, and the phenomenal Wes Welker, and Tedy Bruschi and of course the #1 player in pro football today, Tom Brady, who was groomed by Bill Belichick to be the best.

It seems like yesterday but for those pros trying to create a league out of nothing, there would have been nothing without the hard work of these players. And of course, this great book about the Patriots uses the eras of the 14 coaches to highlight the great players in Patriots football. We travel in time from the days of Lou Saban, Mike Holovak, and Chuck Fairbanks, all the way to the Ray Berry and Bill Belichick eras as we examine the players from the beginning to today.

This book captures the great players in Patriots football even before the Patriots were the New England Patriots. This Patriots-first book takes the reader through stories about the many great players over the years to some great stories about the 58 seasons worth of great games (1018 games) with 523 great wins. The book focuses on the players—some of the the best who played for the Patriots-- John Hannah, Gino Cappelletti, Bob Dee, Vito "Babe" Parilli, Steve Grogan, Bruce Armstrong, Jim Nance, Dont'e Hightower, Drew Bledsoe, Tedy Bruschi, Ty Law, Willie McGinist, Rob Gronkowski, Wes Welker, as well as the current player who is arguably the finest player in pro football today--Tom Brady. The stories within the flow of the book will add substantially to your reading enjoyment.

I dare you to pick up this book. If you are an avid Patriots fan, you will never put it down again. You cannot ever get enough of Patriots' greatness, but we do provide as many stories together in one spot as we can in this can't miss book.

Brian Kelly



Great Players in New England Patriots Football

Author:
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Publisher/ Editor,

Brian W. Kelly
Brian W. Kelly
Brian P. Kelly

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July 2018

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GO** 
PUBLISH 

New England Patriots Season Records from 1960 to 2018

Total 489-386-9 All-time regular season record (1960–2017)

34-20 All-time postseason record (1960–2017)

523-406-9 All-time regular & postseason record (1960–2017)

Total Games 1018

Total Wins 523

Total Losses 406

Total Ties 9 * Prior to Overtime Rules

Stats from 1960 * Through Feb 2018

Boston Patriots

Year	Coach	League	Conf	Div	Pl	Record
------	-------	--------	------	-----	----	--------

1960	Lou Saban	AFL		East	4th	5 9 0
------	-----------	-----	--	------	-----	-------

1961	Lou Saban (2–3)	AFL		East	2nd	9 4 1
------	-----------------	-----	--	------	-----	-------

1960-1961 Lou Saban final record (14-14-1)

1961 Mike Holovak (7–1–1)

1962	Mike Holovak	AFL		East	2nd	9 4 1
------	--------------	-----	--	------	-----	-------

1963	Mike Holovak	AFL		East	1st	7 6 1
------	--------------	-----	--	------	-----	-------

1964	Mike Holovak	AFL		East	2nd	10 3 1
------	--------------	-----	--	------	-----	--------

Gino Cappelletti(MVP)

1965	Mike Holovak	AFL		East	3rd	4 8 2
------	--------------	-----	--	------	-----	-------

1966	Mike Holovak	AFL		East	2 nd	8 4 2
------	--------------	-----	--	------	-----------------	-------

1967	Mike Holovak	AFL		East	5th	3 10 1
------	--------------	-----	--	------	-----	--------

1968	Mike Holovak	AFL		East	4th	4 10 0
------	--------------	-----	--	------	-----	--------

1961-1968 Mike Holovak final record (55-46-6)

1969	Clive Rush	AFL		East	3rd	4 10 0
------	------------	-----	--	------	-----	--------

1970	Clive Rush (1–6)	NFL	AFC/	East	5th	2 12 0
------	------------------	-----	------	------	-----	--------

1969-1970 Clive Rush final record (5-16-0)

1970 John Mazur [last six games of 1970 (1–6)]

New England Patriots

Year	Coach	League	Conf	Div	Pl	Record
------	-------	--------	------	-----	----	--------

1971	John Mazur	NFL	AFC	East	3rd	6 8 0
------	------------	-----	-----	------	-----	-------

1972	John Mazur (2–7)	NFL	AFC	East	5th	3 11 0
------	------------------	-----	-----	------	-----	--------

1971-1972 John Mazur final record (9-21-0)

1972 Phil Bengtson [last 5 games of 1972 –(1–4)]

1972 Phil Bengtson final record (1-4-0)

1973	Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFC	East	3rd	5 9 0
------	-----------------	-----	-----	------	-----	-------

1974	Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFC	East	3rd	7 7 0
------	-----------------	-----	-----	------	-----	-------

1975	Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFC	East	5th	3 11 0
------	-----------------	-----	-----	------	-----	--------

1976	Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFC	East	2 nd	11 3 0
------	-----------------	-----	-----	------	-----------------	--------

1977	Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFC	East	3rd	9 5 0
------	-----------------	-----	-----	------	-----	-------

1978	Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFC	East	1st	11 5 0
------	-----------------	-----	-----	------	-----	--------

1973-1978 Chuck Fairbanks final record (46-50-0)

1979	Ron Erhardt	NFL	AFC	East	2nd	9 7 0
------	-------------	-----	-----	------	-----	-------

1980	Ron Erhardt	NFL	AFC	East	2nd	10 6 0
------	-------------	-----	-----	------	-----	--------

x Great Players in New England Patriots Football

1981 Ron Erhardt	NFL	AFC	East	5th	2 14 0
<u>1979-1981 Ron Erhardt final record (21-27-0)</u>					
1982 Ron Meyer	NFL	AFC	East	7th	5 4 0
1983 Ron Meyer	NFL	AFC	East	2nd	8 8 0
1984 Ron Meyer (5-3)	NFL	AFC	East	2nd	9 7 0
1984 Ray Berry (4-4)					
<u>1982-1984 Ron Meyer final record (18-15)</u>					
1984 Ray Berry (4-4)					
1985 Ray Berry	NFL	AFC	East	3rd	11 5 0
1986 Ray Berry	NFL	AFC	East	1st	11 5 0
1987 Ray Berry	NFL	AFC	East	2nd	8 7 0
1988 Ray Berry	NFL	AFC	East	3rd	9 7 0
1989 Ray Berry	NFL	AFC	East	4th	5 11 0
<u>1984-1989 Ray Berry final record (47-39)</u>					
1990 Rod Rust	NFL	AFC	East	5th	1 15 0
<u>1990 Rod Dust final record (1-15)</u>					
1991 Dick MacPherson	NFL	AFC	East	4th	6 10 0
1992 Dick MacPherson	NFL	AFC	East	5th	2 14 0
<u>1984-1989 Dick MacPherson final record (8-24-0)</u>					
1993 Bill Parcells	NFL	AFC	East	4th	5 11 0
1994 Bill Parcells	NFL	AFC	East	2nd	10 6 0
1995 Bill Parcells	NFL	AFC	East	4th	6 10 0
1996 Bill Parcells	NFL	AFC	East	1st	11 5 0
<u>1993-1996 Bill Parcells final record (32-32-0)</u>					
1997 Pete Carroll	NFL	AFC	East	1st	10 6 0
1998 Pete Carroll	NFL	AFC	East	4th	9 7 0
1999 Pete Carroll	NFL	AFC	East	5th	8 8 0
<u>1997-1999 Pete Carroll final record (27-21-0)</u>					
2000 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	5th	5 11 0
2001 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1 st	11 5 0
2002 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	2nd	9 7 0
2003 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	14 2 0
2004 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	14 2 0
2005 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	10 6 0
2006 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	12 4 0
2007 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	16 0 0
2008 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	2nd	11 5 0
2009 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	10 6 0
2010 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	14 2 0
2011 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	13 3 0
2012 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	12 4 0
2013 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	12 4 0
2014 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	12 4 0
2015 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	12 4 0
2016 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	14 2 0
2017 Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC	East	1st	13 3 0
<u>2000-2017 Bill Belichick final record (214-74-0)</u>					

Total 489-386-9 All-time regular season record (1960-2017)

34-20 All-time postseason record (1960-2017)[30]

523-406-9 All-time regular & postseason record (1960-2017)

Dedication

I dedicate this book

To my wife & children and my wonderful brothers and sisters.

Wife—Patricia A. Kelly

Sons & Daughters—Brian P. Kelly, Michael P. Kelly, Katie P. Kelly

Angel Edward J. Kelly, Jr.

Carol & Amelia Kelly

Nancy "Ann" Flannery & Angel Jim Flannery

Mary A. Daniels & Bill Daniels

Joseph A. Kelly & Diane Kelly

I surely am a lucky person to have

Such a great family

Mom & Dad—Angels Edward J Kelly Sr. and Irene McKeown Kelly

Acknowledgments:

I appreciate all the help that I have received in putting this book together as well as all of the other 157 books from the past.

My acknowledgments were so large at one time that readers complained that they had to go through too many pages to get to page one.

And, so I put my acknowledgment list online, and it continues to grow. Believe it or not, it would cost about a dollar more to print my books with full acknowledgments.

Thank you and God bless you all for your help. Please check out www.letsGOPublish.com to read the latest version of my heartfelt acknowledgments updated for this book.

In this book, I received some extra special help from many fine American patriots including Dennis Grimes, Gerry Rodski, Wily Ky Eyely, Angel Irene McKeown Kelly, Angel Edward Joseph Kelly Sr., Angel Edward Joseph Kelly Jr., Ann Flannery, Angel James Flannery Sr., Mary Daniels, Bill Daniels, Angel Robert Garry Daniels, Angel Sarah Janice Daniels, Angel Punkie Daniels, Joe Kelly, Diane Kelly, Angel Harry Ashford, Angel Josephine Ashford. Brian P. Kelly, Mike P. Kelly, Katie P. Kelly, Angel Ben Kelly, and Budmund (Buddy) Arthur Kelly.

Thank you all!

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	xi
Table of Contents.....	xv
Chapter 1 Introduction to the Patriots	1
Chapter 2 Lou Saban Era 1960-1961	15
Chapter 3 Mike Holovak era 1961 -1968	29
Chapter 4 Clive Rush era 1969-1970	43
Chapter 5 John Mazur era 1970-1972.....	47
Chapter 6 Coach Chuck Fairbanks, 1973 to 1978.....	53
Chapter 7 Coach Ron Erhardt 1979 to 1981	69
Chapter 8 Ron Meyer Era 1982 to 1984	75
Chapter 9 Coach Ray Berry 1985 to 1989	85
Chapter 10 Rod Rust Era, 1990	103
Chapter 11 Dick MacPhersaon Era, 1991-1992.....	107
Chapter 12 Coach Bill Parcells 1993 to 1996.....	111
Chapter 13 Coach Pete Carroll 1997 to 1999	135
Chapter 14 Coach Bill Belichick Part I 2000 to 2005	143
Chapter 15 Coach Bill Belichick Part II 2006-2011... ..	193
Chapter 16 Coach Bill Belichick Part III 2012-2017.....	207
Other books by Brian Kelly: (amazon.com, & Kindle)	234

References

I learned how to write creatively in Grade School at St. Boniface. I even enjoyed reading some of my own stuff.

At Meyers High School (HS Diploma) and King's College (BS Data Processing), and Wilkes-University, (MBA Accounting & Finance) I learned how to research, write bibliographies and footnote every non-original thought included in my writings. I learned to hate *ibid*, and *op. cit.*, and I hated assuring that I had all citations were written down in the proper sequence. Having to pay attention to details took my desire to write creatively and diminished it with busy work.

I know it is necessary for the world to stop plagiarism, so authors and publishers can get paid properly, but for an honest writer, it sure is annoying. I wrote many proposals while with IBM and whenever I needed to cite something, I cited it in place, because my readers, IT Managers, and company management, could care less about tracing the vagaries of citations. I always hated to use stilted footnotes, or produce a lengthy, perfectly formatted bibliography. I bet most bibliographies are flawed because even the experts on such drivel do not like the tedium.

I wrote 157 other books before this book and several hundred articles published by many magazines and newspapers and I only cite when an idea is not mine or when I am quoting, and again, I choose to cite in place, and the reader does not have to trace strange numbers through strange footnotes and back to bibliography elements that may not be readily accessible or available.

Yet, I would be kidding you, if in a book about the great players in New England Patriots Football, I tried to bluff my way, so you would think that I knew everything before I began to research and write anything in this book. I spent as much time researching as writing. I might even call myself an expert of sorts now for all the facts that I have uncovered.

Without any pain on your part, you can read this book from cover to cover to enjoy the stories about the many great players in both the Boston Patriots of the AFL and the New England Patriots of the NFL Both generations of New England Teams made their mark on the football world.

This book is not intended for historians per se, but it does teach a lot of history. It is for regular people of all levels of intelligence. It is for

people who want to have a fun read, who like smiling when Patriots Football is the topic. It is fun reading about the finest players in Boston and New England's football history along with their 523 wins. This book is for people who love New England Patriots' football and perhaps it is also for some Patriot's detractors who want to have command of facts before they defend a point of view.

There are lots and lots of facts in this book. This book is not for sticklers about the mundane aspects of writing that often cause creative writers to lay bricks or paint houses instead of writing. It is for everyday people, like you and I, who enjoy the Patriots because they are the Patriots and who enjoy football because it is football. It is that simple.

When the Patriots play a team and they win or lose, that is a historical fact, but to discover such facts, it does not require fundamental or basic research. The NFL itself as well as the Patriots, copyright their original material but not public facts. They copyright so they can say "no" if somebody else's creativity affects the league or the franchise negatively. Even the NFL does not own publicly well-known facts that are readily available about legacies such as Mike Holovak or Chuck Fairbanks or Bill Parcells or Raymond Berry, or even the more than immortal Bill Belichick and his many championship seasons.

The championships and the coaches and the great players are well known and well defined, though some may think the facts belong to the NFL. Facts are facts, period. So, what? As the author of this book, I care but it is a sports book. I use a judicious approach to assure that I am not throwing the bull when I intend to be presenting the facts.

Nonetheless, this is not a book about heavy math algorithms, or potential advances to the internal combustion engine, or space travel, or the eight elements necessary to find a cure for cancer. So, I refuse to treat this book 100% seriously. It is a sports book. If you find a fault, I will fix it. This is a book about sports and sports legends and stories about sporting events that have been recorded seven million times already someplace else. New Englanders should be pleased. Though I tried for sure to get it all right and I used the work of others to assure so, I bet I made a mistake or two. Tell me about them. Don't

What is my remedy for the *harmed* if I have made a mistake? I did not write this book to harm anybody. If I did not write this book, would the *harmed individuals* from the book be unharmed. So, at the very least, I can *unpublish* those parts of the book. If any reader is harmed, let me know, and I will do whatever must be done for all to be OK.

A Bone to Pick with The Boston Globe

Ladies and gentlemen: This page of my comments regarding the Boston Globe's business practices was not intended ever to be in this book. But, in life, people, even authors, must fight with the few tools we are given in life. For the people of New England who must deal with the business practices of the Boston Globe on a daily basis, or opt for a new paper, many of you understand why I am doing what I can with my little power of the press against this huge media power from Boston.

I will be as brief as possible. When I was writing this book in April 2018, I was happy when I found a number of stories in the Boston Globe. I was even happier when I found that I could buy a 99 cent a week 4-week deal from the paper. So, I did and it enabled me to see things I had been shut out from. \$3.96 was charged to my credit card and I was pleased, and the Globe made the deal so I figured they were pleased too. I live in Pennsylvania, so I did not want a long-term deal.

When I was preparing the initial printing of this book, I found a charge on my credit card for \$27.72. from the Boston Globe. I had no time to investigate so I ignored it and figured they got me for something. I have used no services of which I am aware. This week, I got another charge for \$27.72. So, I called Customer Service 1-888-694-5623.

They were most cordial and told me I had ordered more than I thought. They promised to cancel the future invoices and after my pleading my case, they reluctantly decided to take off the recent invoice amount. However, they would not remove the initial \$27.72. regardless of my urgings.

I asked them to tell me what gave them the authority to steal from my credit card and they said I had signed up for it with the four-week \$.99 subscription. I had never seen such a caveat, so I asked them to send me the documentation they said obligated me to pay anything they say I owe. They agreed that I received no benefit for the first invoice, but their policies would not permit a refund. I told them my policies demanded they send me a full refund. Exasperated after several iterations with them holding the upper hand, I took the following action:

I told them I would give them a prominent space in my new book, Great Players in New England Patriots Football, where they could print their rationale. They were unimpressed. I gave them the opportunity to put their response on the page after my story; but they did not take me up on the offer. When you have a chance, please give them a call and tell them their use of fine print is at the same level that might prompt their investigative team to call on a scam artist for all to know. That is what they acted like in this circumstance

They finally said that there was information about the order on the pages. which constituted my order, and I had agreed to the whole package from them. They were kind enough to send me their fine print. I can say that it was so obvious I missed it and they never sent me a bill or anything to remind me. They simply charged my credit card, hoping I would miss it. I show their fine print below:

Response from the Boston Globe:

None received!

Preface:

This book is all about the great players in New England Patriots football over the past 58 years. Along the way to today, we talk about the origination of the team in 1960 as the Boston Patriots until the New England version came into being in 1971 as the team moved to Foxboro to play its games.

We discuss some of the preliminaries before Patriots football officially began, and then we delve right into the storied Boston and New England players, some of whom were player coaches; their struggles with management and their ultimately pulling off a highly successful program that has lasted for fifty-eight years.

We need to thank four different ownership teams for bringing to us the New England Patriots of today. It all began with businessman . Billy Sullivan who brought the Boston Patriots to life in 1960 and kept it going for 27 years before selling to Victor Kiam, who managed the team from 1988 to 1999. The shortest active owner of them all was James Orthwein, who held the reins from 1992 to 1993 when he sold the franchise and facilities to today's Principal Owner Robert Kraft in 1994. Kraft has successfully managed the Patriots to its current status as the top team in the National Football League.

I have a number of relatives in New England who have encouraged me to write about this great team. Sue Piotroski and Mitch Bornstein have been die-hard Patriots fans since day one and their contagion strengthened my already strong predisposition towards the Patriots from the 1960's.

I have been pleased to wake up every day in the last several months to find myself writing about the National Football League's #1 team, the New England Patriots and their great moments, their great coaches; and their great players. I have been honored to take up this challenge. As I am reviewing the preface for the players book right now, right before publication, I have concluded that you are going to like this book as well as the other two books in this Pittsburgh series:

Great Moments in Pittsburgh Steelers Football
Great Players in Pittsburgh Steelers Football

Great Coaches in Pittsburgh Steelers Football

So, far, after finishing the Great Moments in New England Patriots Football book in May, the New England Management Team has not invited me to the owner's luxury box in Gillette Field, nor have they sent any end-zone tickets my way. I expect neither, but it is a nice thought. So, I want the Kraft family to know that I'd be happy to come to Gillette Stadium to sign books for sale by your stadium vendors. Just invite me. I'll stay with my in-laws.

When you are ready to invite me to Gillette Stadium for any game this coming season. I can assure you, that I will do my best to be there quite early to catch all of the wonderful amenities that I have written about as I covered the stadium fare in the Great Moments book.

I will be pleased to arrive in Foxborough, Massachusetts with bells on. Perhaps somebody could get me four fifty-yard line seats – even thirty-yard seats in a game in which New England is playing against any other NFL team in the regular or post-season. I am not picky. I'd be happy to do some signing before and after the game, and at a selected venue or bookstore the day before or after. I'll wait 'til the signing is finished to move on to the whistle-wetting period. I'll sign until you tell me “No more!”

Your author would like you to know that when football season closes in the first week of February each year, there is now a great football item—this book—that is available all 52 weeks of the year and in fact all 365 days each year. It does not rely on the stadium gates being open for you to get a great dose of Pittsburgh Steelers Football. Just begin reading right here about Great Players in New England Patriots Football.

This book is now available for you to add to your New England Patriots experience, and your book collection. Once you take possession of this great tribute to Pittsburgh Steelers coaches, it is yours forever unless, of course you give it away to one of the many who will be in awe, and who will accept it gladly. For those who love to use gadgets to read, please know that this book is also available on Kindle.

We open the book with the first story set to introduce the Boston and New England Patriots and then we move to the first official Boston quarterback, “Babe” Parilli, with the first ever Patriots head football coach Lou Saban. It takes you all the way to Coach Bill Belichick’s National Championship-Ready program in 2018. It tells a story about all the great players in all the football seasons from 1960 in the AFL to today’s NFL Patriots.

You are going to love this book because it is the perfect read for anybody who loves the New England Patriots and wants to know more about the most revered Boston or New England players who ever suited up to represent the Patriots as a professional in New England in one of the finest pro football programs of all time.

Few sports books are a must-read but Brian Kelly's Great Players in New England Football will quickly appear at the top of Americas most enjoyable must-read books about sports. Enjoy!

Who is Brian W. Kelly?

Brian W. Kelly is one of the leading authors in America with this, his 157th published book. Brian is an outspoken and eloquent expert on a variety of topics and besides books, he has also written several hundred articles on topics of interest to Americans.

Most of his early works involved high technology. Later, Brian wrote a number of patriotic books and most recently he has been writing human interest books such as The Wine Diet and Thank you, IBM. His books are always well received.

Brian's books are highlighted at www.letsgopublish.com. Quantities from 20 to 1000 can be made available from Lets Go Publish by contacting this publisher. You may see most of Brian’s works by taking the following link www.amazon.com/author/brianwkelly.

The Best!

Sincerely,

Brian W. Kelly, Author and
Brian P. Kelly, Editor in Chief
I am Brian Kelly's eldest son.

About the Author



Brian Kelly retired as an Assistant Professor in the Business Information Technology (BIT) Program at Marywood University, where he also served as the IBM i and Midrange Systems Technical Advisor to the IT Faculty. Kelly designed, developed, and taught many college and professional courses. He continues as a contributing technical editor to a number of technical industry magazines, including "The Four Hundred" and "Four Hundred Guru," published by IT Jungle.

Kelly is a former IBM Senior Systems Engineer. His specialty was problem solving for customers as well as implementing advanced operating systems and software on his client's machines. Brian is the author of 153 other books, including 25 Sports Books, and hundreds of magazine articles. He has been a frequent speaker at technical conferences throughout the United States.

Brian was a candidate for the US Congress from Pennsylvania in 2010 and he ran for Mayor in his home town in 2015. Kelly loves the Patriots and he became a big fan in the 1960's watching AFL games with his dad on Sundays on the 21" Admiral B/W TV.

This is Brian's second "Great Players" book about a professional NFL team. Writing about the New England Patriots has been a special treat.

Chapter 1 Introduction to the Patriots

The Patriots celebrate 50 years of football



Everybody loves the Patriots!

In 2009, New England coaches had been toiling for fifty years bringing the best teams that they could to the game very Sunday. In 50th year of Patriots' football in November 2009, the team celebrated the formation of the Boston Patriots, which was soon to be the New England Patriots. The above logo was unveiled to add a special look to the celebration. Here we are eight years later and the coaching has gotten even better and winning has become a persistent pattern with Bill Belichick.

This book celebrates New England Patriots players, the founding; of the team, some struggles, greatness; and the team's football's long-lasting impact on American life and mostly life in New England.

People like me, who love the team from way back when they played tough AFL football, will love this book, as we reach back to the founding and up to the 50th anniversary and now as we approach the 60th anniversary of one of the best organizations that has ever played professional football. Go Pats!



In defining the format of the book, we chose to use a timetable that is based on a historical chronology. Within this framework, we discuss the great players in Patriots football history, and there are many of them, though admittedly some great players were / are better than others.

No book can claim to be able to capture all the great stories of all the great Patriots players, as it would be a never-ending story, but we sure try. The great players naturally include a lot of great people, who over time would make or break the New England Patriots. The verdict is in. The Patriots are the best team in pro football.

To know the full story of the New England Patriots, you have to go through Boston.

Boston was always ready to welcome NFL teams. The Patriots were not the first but with their great record, New Englanders are hoping, they are the last pro football team ever needed. The first pro football team welcomed by Boston was the Boston Bulldogs. This adventure

lasted only during the 1929 season, but it got the juices of the people in Boston and new England flowing at a brisk pace.

The next NFL pro team to play was the Boston Braves/Redskins, from 1932 to 1936. In 1933 after the inaugural season, there was a name change to the Boston Redskins. Founder George Preston Marshall named the team the Boston Braves after the city's Major League Baseball team. However, after a financially devastating and poorly attended season in 1932, Marshall abandoned the Braves name in favor of the Redskins.

The Braves / Redskins had played first at Braves Field and then they moved to Fenway Park. Unfortunately for the area, the team did not draw well, even in its final season when they reached the NFL Championship Game. They moved to Washington as the Redskins right after the 1936 season.

The Boston Yanks played from 1944 to 1948 before moving to New York to become the New York Yanks football team. The team, which as noted began as the Boston Yanks, at the time was owned by Kate Smith's manager, Ted Collins. None of the Boston NFL teams that we discussed were the precursor team to the Patriots. In other words, they are not in the ancestry of the Boston Patriots from the AFL. There is no DNA match. The old Boston Yanks folded in 1952.

The AFL formed in 1959 and the Boston Patriots were one of the franchises. They played their first game in the Fall 1960. As you can see, the desire for there to be a Boston or New England presence in professional football goes back a long way. As you can see from the Boston Yanks picture below, players had little choice in those days but to go both ways—O & D.



The Boston Yanks: just a few pro players because they had to be paid

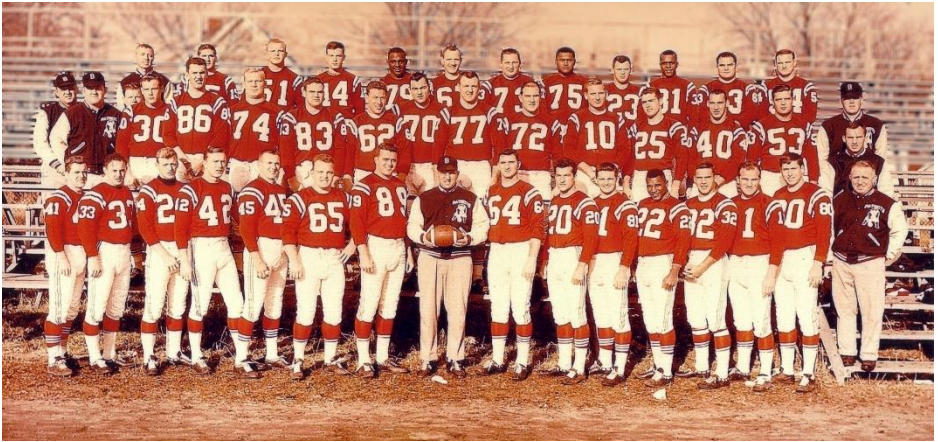
When the AFL was being formed, unlike some other pro-football ventures of the deep past, it looked from the start that it was going to be able to sustain itself and perhaps even surpass the excitement of the NFL. Investors were lining up to become pro-football owners.

It seemed like investors had forgotten the other AFL's that had come before this AFL, and their attempts to out-NFL, the NFL. It was tough slugging. The new upstart AFL clearly operated in direct competition with the more established NFL throughout its ten-year existence.

It was much more successful than earlier rivals to the NFL with the same name, the American Football League (1926), American Football League (1936), American Football League (1940), and the later All-America Football Conference((1944-1950), played in 1946-1949). America had fallen in love with football, and there was a great business out there for a league that could make it.

The Patriots were formed when Boston businessman, William "Billy" Sullivan, an executive of Sullivan Brother Printers, owned by Joseph Sullivan, was awarded the eighth and final franchise of the developing American Football League(AFL) on November 16, 1959. In the next few weeks, locals submitted thousands of ideas for

the Boston football team's official name. On February 20, 1960, Sullivan picked "Boston Patriots" from the lot.



First Boston Patriots team picture—many more players than the Boston Yanks

"Patriots," of course referred to those colonists of the Thirteen Colonies who rebelled against British control during the American Revolution, and who, in July 1776 declared the United States of America an independent nation. "Patriots" as the team nickname had been suggested by 74 fans, among them Larry Kepnes, a regular guy whose signature stood out. Immediately thereafter, artist Phil Bissell developed the "Pat Patriot" logo.

There is not much written about Larry other than his recent obituary. I learned that his full name was Lawrence Kepnes, and he was from Swampscott, Massachusetts. He passed away on Friday November 18, 2016, still a devoted Red Sox and Patriots fan. I can tell he was my kind of guy.

Every football fan alive in 1960, including Larry Kepnes loved the AFL as the folks at home got to see more great football—just like that played in the already mature NFL. The only thing they did not see was the great AFL teams playing the great NFL teams. The leagues were 100% separate and they did not share their proceeds or their secrets or their drafted players until they had to. It would take a little time before the NFL begrudgingly realized that the AFL brand of football was here to stay. Rather than trying to beat them, eventually they joined them.

The old NFL Boston Yanks when they played in Boston, claimed Fenway Park as their home spot and got away with it. However, the Patriots' time in the AFL saw them as homeless. They had no regular home stadium. They played wherever they could find a field-Nickerson Field, Harvard Stadium, even Fenway Park sometimes, as well as Boston College's Alumni Stadium. These stadia were all in or near Boston.

The Patriots were quite happy to have these as home fields during their time in the American Football League.

With Coach Lou Saban, the first Boston Coach, and Coach Mike Holovak, the second Boston coach, the Patriots put forth a number of seasons with great players in which the percentage wins were or at least seemed closer to 1000 than to 500. Those were the great start-up days. Many of the player names from the Boston Patriots teams in the 1960's have slipped into oblivion but there are still some of us, who understand oblivion, and who still recall some early Patriots stars.

The great ones include defensive tackles Jim Lee "Earthquake" Hunt and Houston Antwine; quarterback Vito "Babe" Parilli; and flanker-placekicker Gino "The Duke" Cappelletti (no relationship with John from Penn State). These guys were great to watch. Hunt, Parilli and Cappelletti played every year of the existence of the AFL, with Hunt and Cappelletti spending all ten years with the Patriots.

To fans, the AFL was like a big giant never-ending intramural pickup game that would not end. Nobody wanted it to end. Having a named group of guys playing the teams in the AFL in this great pickup game was great football. Everybody loved the AFL. Everybody loved Boston's Patriots.

With all deference to the NFL, the AFL proved that little guys can make it and that's why the league captured the hearts of American football lovers. The fans still loved their Giants, their Eagles, their Steelers, etc. so it was a big gift to fans to have so many other great teams who never played their teams, who had new-name stars gracing the sidelines each week. Football fans from 1960 to 1969 could actually get away with having two favorite pro teams.

Cappelletti was the all-time leading scorer in the AFL. Later the Patriots were joined by such stars as defensive end Larry Eisenhauer, fullback Jim Nance, and middle linebacker and future Hall of Famer Nick Buoniconti. Cappelletti and Nance were AFL Most Valuable Players, Cappelletti in 1964 and Nance in 1966. Buoniconti and Antwine were later named to the American Football League All-Time Team. Who could ask for more?



Boston Patriots in action

Three years into the AFL, we saw the Boston Patriots defeating the Buffalo Bills in an AFL Eastern Division playoff game in 1963, and we saw the Patriots playing in the 1963 AFL championship game. They lost to the San Diego Chargers 51–10 but as always, they took the bad with the good. Just in their third year of existence, Boston was something. It was good for morale and it was good for Boston Beer sales, which actually were not too bad before the Patriots.

The Patriots as potential champs would not appear again in an AFL or NFL post-season game for another 13 years, but Boston beer sales were still booming in the Fall as well as all over New England. Additionally, the games were great. Before the AFL delivered its swan-song, the Patriots would often challenge the then dominant

AFL Bills for the Eastern Division title. Those of us who remember back then loved those football days.

When the NFL and AFL merged in 1970, I can remember being very disappointed as I had come to like the scrappy, less formal AFL. The Patriots were placed in the AFC East division, where they still play today. Actually, we know that they do more than play. They dominate the AFC East.

It was not long for the Patriots to find a home. They moved to a new stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston, known as Foxboro Stadium, which would serve as their home for 30 years; the team also changed their name to the New England Patriots to reflect the location change, as well as its following throughout the region. It is the only NFL team (though both New York City teams have substantial followings in parts of Connecticut as well) in New England.



Foxboro Stadium

During the 1970s, the Patriots had success, eventually earning a berth to the playoffs in 1976. It was not a free ride but a wild card-berth. Then, in 1978, when Chuck Fairbanks was Head Coach; they made it as AFC East champions. They would lose both playoff games.

In 1985, the Patriots, unaccustomed at the time to glory, returned to the playoffs, and made it all the way to Super Bowl XX, which they lost against the Chicago Bears 46–10. Tony Eason (10 games) and Steve Grogan (6 games) shared the QB duties in this great season. Despite losing the big game, it was a banner year and new Englanders know how to celebrate and so beer sales finally went up again in the city and the suburbs.

Following their Super Bowl loss, the Patriots barreled back into the playoffs in 1986, but were beaten in the first round. The team kept doing its best with many other great players, but the team would not make the playoffs again for eight more years.

Most fans do not care about ownership changes unless the new owner messes things up. The Pats changed ownership several times in that period, being purchased from the Sullivan family first by Victor Kiam in 1988, who sold the team to James Orthwein in 1992. Orthwein's intention was to move the team to his native St. Louis, Missouri. He chose not to try to do that after visiting some Boston Pubs. OK, that was not his reason.

Nonetheless, he did sell the franchise, i.e. the business of the Patriots team two years later to current owner, local businessman Robert Kraft in 1994. Most New Englanders who like football like Kraft because he is a good man and perhaps more importantly, he likes to win.

Orthwein had a short period of ownership and his desire to uproot the team was well-known. Yet he did oversee some major changes to the team. Former New York Giants coach Bill Parcells, who had taken the Giants from misery to stardom was hired in 1993. Nobody could deny Bill Parcells had a unique way of getting the most from any football team he ever coached.

Parcells had his way of getting the greatness from players who never even knew they were great. He would bring the Patriots to two playoff appearances, including Super Bowl XXXI, which they lost to the Green Bay Packers by a score of 35–21. Pete Carroll, Parcells' successor, another top NFL coach today with a flair for making the most of great talent, now with the Seahawks, would also take the team to the playoffs twice.

Bill Belichick is the Patriots current head coach. He was out hunting one day and was hired in 2000. OK, he may have been doing something else, but he was hired, and it was a great day for the Patriots and for Patriot's fans.

The New England Patriots like Foxborough Mass. However, Foxboro stadium quickly became an old story and the Pats were hoping for a newer, more modern facility. So, the powers that be created a new home field, Gillette Stadium for the Patriots and they opened it in 2002. Coach Belichick was a godsend two-years earlier to those fans in New England who not only liked football but liked to win.

Belichick's teams won five Super Bowls, including three in four years (2001-2004). As a football purist, I happen to love perfect NFL season records almost as much as Super Bowl Wins. Not kidding. For example, in 1972, I loved the perfect season of the Miami Dolphins. Nobody yet, even our famous and fabulous Patriots have outclassed this Dolphins team.

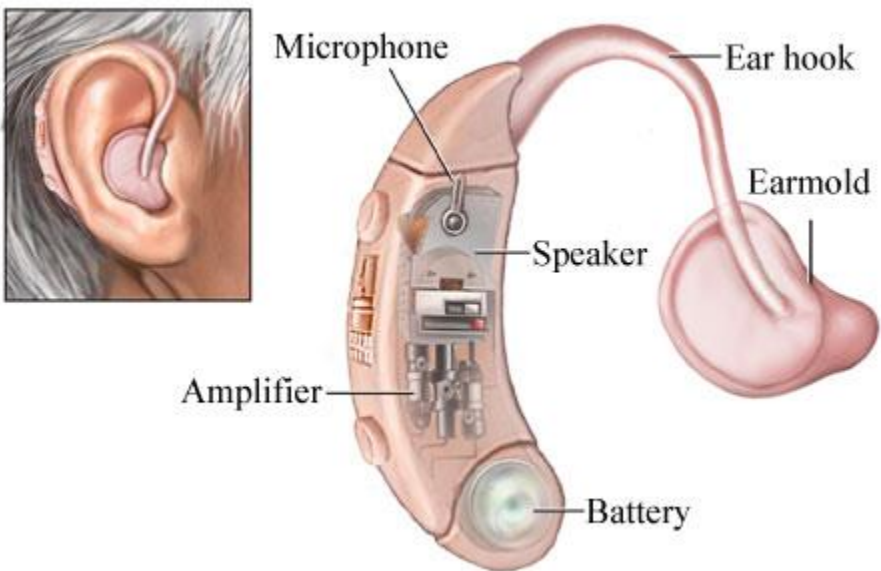


Bill Belichick Loves Winning Super Bowls

The 1972 Dolphins still are the only NFL team to win the Super Bowl with a perfect season. Though the Patriots finished the 2007

regular season with a perfect 16–0 record, becoming only the fourth team in league history to go undefeated, and the only one since the league expanded its regular season schedule to 16 games; they did not eclipse the Dolphins challenge: “Be perfect!”

And, so, even after two playoff victories, the 2007 Patriots ended that season with an 18-1 record. There was this unfortunate encounter and a subsequent loss to the New York Giants in Super Bowl XLII that stole away the aura of perfection from the New England Patriots.



Look above and think of me firing in the commands to Belichick’s ear:

Nobody can argue that the Patriots have made the playoffs in 15 of the 18 seasons that Bill Belichick has been coach, missing them only in 2000 (his first season), 2002, and 2008. They later faced the Seattle Seahawks in Super Bowl XLIX on February 1, 2015, and won by a score of 28-24, and they have won four other Super Bowls.

I do not count in the New England scheme of things; but if I did count, I would miniaturize myself and launch myself from inside a small vessel in Bill Belichick’s ear. I would use a miniature loudspeaker that would keep harping to coach Belichick that a perfect season would be a nice way to finish off a miraculous career...Brady too!

Looking at the great players in Patriot's history we find many player names we know such as Doug Flutie, Steve Grogan, Babe Parilli, Jim Nance, Gino Cappelletti, Irving Fryar, Stanley Morgan, Wes Welker, Ben Coates, Rob Gronkowski, John Hannah, Mike Haynes, Ty Law, Tedy Bruschi, Nick Buoniconti, Richard Seymour, Houston Antwine, Jim Lee Hunt, Vince Wilfork, Stephen Gostkowski, Adam Vinatieri, and other New England greats from over the years.

They all have or have had great reverence for the team for which they played the game of football. That reverence is captured in the subsequent pages of this book. They were all coached by one or several of the great 14 Patriots coaches over the years. With Belichick as # 14, it has been 18 years since that number 14 has grown and nobody is looking for coach #15.

Looking at the quick snapshot of coaches and seasons at the beginning of the book, it is clear that New England has been able to survive a number of coaches who pundits might say could not survive themselves. Meanwhile, the Patriots football program has grown both in acceptance, popularity, and sheer dominance. Look at the coaches in this book to find out why?

Look across the Internet with your web browser and you will be reminded that this year, the New England Patriots are runner-up world champions, having barely lost to the Philadelphia Eagles in February 2018. The Eagles grabbed the coveted Super Bowl Trophy this year. The Patriots have their share of Super Bowl rings for sure. If we listed all of the Patriots' accolades individually, we would have to close this book now with no further additions for a too-many-pages violation.

The 2018 Eagles contest marked the 10th Super Bowl appearance for the New England franchise, eighth of which have come since 2001. This year, 2001, was the year in which Tom Brady led the Pats to a 20-17 win over the Rams. It was in Bill Belichick's second year as head coach.

I think as an intro I have done a fine job. I hope you think so also.

In the full book, I do my best to portray an accurate depiction of the role of its great coaches in the Patriots football history. The records are displayed in a properly summarized format so that none of us are reading this book forever. There are several hundred pages to this book and its mission is not to tell the whole story, just the role of the coaches. All these pages are in this book so there is more than enough reading to accompany you on those cold winter nights after the close of the football season.

There are a ton of great stories for sure because every Patriots coach as a few good stories and some have a ton. More importantly, none of us should need to search further than this book for the truth about many of the depictions of the coaches and the great players highlighted in this book. Its in there!

Chapter 2 Lou Saban Era 1960-1961

#1 Coach Lou Saban

Year	Coach	League	Division	Place,	Record
1960	Lou Saban	AFL	Eastern	4th	5 9 0
1961	Lou Saban (2-3)	AFL	Eastern	2nd	9 4 1

1960-1961 Lou Saban final record (14-14-1)



Boston Patriots Early Team

The New England Patriots launched their first football team in 1960 under coach Lou Saban. They operated under a different name than we know today. They were the Boston Patriots and they would keep that name until the 1971 season when they would get their own stadium and they would move 25 miles southwest to Foxborough to become the New England Patriots

Most fans do not recall the Boston Patriots heyday, but they do understand the Patriots most recent history which includes ten great shots at the big prize --- the Super Bowl. The Patriots have been very successful in all games with the 1-2 combo of Bill Belichick and Tom Brady, putting whatever was necessary together to win five of those ten Super Bowl Outings. And, there is great news for the future beginning in the fall. After his well-deserved vacation with his significant other, Bill Belichick plans to be back in 2018 to take New

England to another Super Bowl and another set of those huge rings—making it six in all.

New England's debut in the biggest championship game came against the Chicago Bears in Super Bowl XX. The Patriots looked great all season, but Raymond Berry's Patriots were overwhelmed by Mike Ditka's Chicago Bears when game action began. From the opening kickoff at the Louisiana Superdome, led by quarterback Jim McMahon, the Bears had their way that day with a 49-10 big victory.

The Patriots returned to the Super Bowl with Coach Bill Parcells after eleven years for Super Bowl XXXI to face off against Green Bay on January 26, 1997, again at the Louisiana Superdome. It wound up being another big disappointment, but the team looked a lot better than in 1985.

In game action, Desmond Howard returned a kickoff 99 yards for a touchdown and Brett Favre passed for two touchdowns and ran for a score as the Packers won their first Super Bowl in twenty-nine years at the expense of the Patriots. Howard, en-route to garnering the MVP trophy, equaled a Super Bowl record with 244 total return yards.

The Patriots still had not won the big one with this heartbreaking 21 to 35 loss against Green Bay. Finally, after a short wait to Super Bowl XXXVI, the Patriots, with Tom Brady at the close controls and Bill Belichick coaching as he does so well from the sidelines, the New England Patriots broke into Super Bowl Pay dirt and took the gold with their 14th and best head coach ever.

The Patriots found the third time to be the charm. They had lost in their first two appearances, but they won big-time on February 2, 2002 against the stubborn St. Louis Rams, 20-17. Bill Belichick was the first and only coach to win a Super Bowl for the Patriots.

For the rest of the world and all the smart pundits checking on who the Patriots really were with their new second-year coach, this game left no more doubts. The Patriots would get no more disrespect—ever. The New England Patriots had become Champions of the

whole World. It was a great game, and it made all the other Super Bowl victories in the ongoing Belichick/Brady era easier to achieve.

In one of the most exciting Super Bowl finishes ever, in this 2002 encounter, the great Adam Vinatieri booted home a 48-yard field goal with no time left on the clock to give his team of no-name warriors a 20-17 Super Bowl win. This put the final touches on the most amazing season in New England sports history at that point in the Patriots' short life.

The New England Patriots would engage the best of the best in the NFL seven more times. With the mini-team of Tom Brady and Bill Belichick, they would win four more Super Bowls. And, according to Belichick and Brady, it ain't over yet!

Boston before New England

Before the New England Patriots were the name of the team, there was already a team in New England playing football in the AFL. The AFL was formed in November 1959 and the first games were played in the fall 1960.

Coach Lou Saban is responsible for molding the players who showed up for the first camp into the Boston Patriots. In 1960 and 1961, Saban did his best to take the raw material and prove to everybody else but the team that the Patriots could win some games. Saban got five wins out of fourteen games in his first season with a bunch of AFL rookies. The NFL was not lending players to the AFL at that time.

In his second season, and the second season for the Boston Patriots, Lou Saban and Mike Holovak together stole nine games from his fellow AFL coaches and gave them back five losses and one tie in return. There was no guarantee at the time that any AFL franchise (they were all new) would be around for a second year. Lou Saban and Mike Holovak set the team up for great things to come with a spectacular two season record of 13-14-1. Actually, Holovak had seven of those wins after taking over for Saban in year two following a 2-3 Saban start.

The most critical time for a new team is in its first several seasons. The Patriots were very lucky they had the mastery of Lou Saban to guide them out of the starting blocks. By the way, there are reports that at his death Lou Saban's wife Joyce confessed that Nick and Lou Saban may have been second cousins. That explains a lot. Both are of Croation descent.

How did the AFL get its players?

Just like the NFL, the AFL had to draft players for the eight teams that made up the league. Why would any player go with the AFL if they had a shot at the NFL? There are two answers to that question!

#1. Every player after college wants to make as much money in their lifetime as they can as a pro.

#2 Marketing, Marketing, Marketing

It helps to have salesmen selling the product (AFL) like as if they had a shot at selling ice cream to Eskimos. Marketing ultimately gave the AFL its players. The marketers had to have NFL-sized prize money when one of the top college players was ready to go AFL v NFL. There were a lot of guarantees.

A lot of rich people ran the NFL teams and they were getting richer. A lot of rich people were about to run the AFL Teams and they had no problem meeting the salary demands of potential AFL players. It was not a given, but the group with the better marketers were destined to win as the money was not an issue.

How the players would be divvied up in the AFL was just as much an issue as in the NFL. But, the NFL had already solved the how-to!

And so, it was quite legitimate before the league even began playing to conduct a draft to help stock the AFL teams with great players who could win ball-games. You may recall that when the College All Stars played the NFL champs for years during this same time period, sometimes the College All Stars actually beat the pros. They were younger and faster and just as strong. The AFL with money and marketing were a sure thing. And so, came the first AFL draft before the AFL played game # 1.

The 1960 American Football League (AFL) draft was held on November 22–23, 1959, in Minneapolis, shortly after the organization of the AFL league. The fact that there was a league meant the money and the marketing were in place.

The first AFL draft lasted 33 rounds, enough to fill a team. To make sure it was enough, an additional draft of 20 rounds was held by the AFL on December 2. Considering all of the senior football players graduating from so many colleges, there would be no shortage of qualified players to be picked.

Let's take a look now at the team selected by Boston Patriots coaches and how they did under coach Lou Saban in their first year as a united squad.

1960 Lou Saban, Coach #1

The 1960 Boston Patriots football team competed in their first season of Professional American Football League (AFL) football. They were led by Lou Saban in his first of two as head coach. In this first year in which a Patriots team took the field in a pro game, this Patriots team finished with a losing season record of 5-9-0, winning five games, losing nine, and tying none. They failed to qualify for the playoffs for the first time

By the time July came Lou Saban had the Patriots ready to play football at home in the season opener at Nickerson Field. Let me caution you before we move ahead that you will not find team names such as the New York Giants, Philadelphia Eagles, Pittsburgh Steelers, etc., because they were not in the AFL They were in a league that had been well established known as the NFL.

The AFL had a great model at the time, the NFL so many of their rules and standards were already well known and implemented first in the NFL. One of these notions was a preseason. The first preseason game in American Football League history was played on July 30, 1960. It featured our Boston Patriots and they played the Buffalo Bills at Buffalo.

I marvel at how in such short order, after coming together in November 1959 as a grand idea and a plan, that by July, there were teams on the field playing the first AFL preseason game ever. It sure was a monumental accomplishment in that the league was formed less than a year prior to the first kickoff. In fact, so much work had gone into the preparation for the new league that many of the founders had not even had the time to assess the magnitude and success of their efforts. For example, one of the famous Hunt Brothers, League co-founder Lamar Hunt was driving home from his office in late-July and he was “tickled pink” when he heard a sports radio program running down the odds of the AFL’s first weekend of action.



Many US cities had taken a shot at pro football before 1960. Some did not make it. Buffalo, NY was one of those that had been there and done that and now were ready to do it again. They were fully excited about the AFL and a chance to have a pro-team in Buffalo again.

Ironically, this was not the first AFL and so some cities such as Buffalo had once had pro football teams in the NFL, the old AFL, as well as the All-America Football Conference. The city was excited when the Bills were part of the new AFL in 1960.

Such was also the case in Buffalo when team founder Ralph Wilson, Jr. watched more than 100,000 fans gather at a rally the night before the preseason opener. The following evening 16,474 curious fans arrived at the newly renovated and renamed War Memorial Stadium.

Though it was just a pre-season game, and would not counted, it counted for Buffalo and it counted for Boston as the two teams clashed. The Patriots overcame the Bills' home field advantage and the extremely hot temperatures. The Pats defeated Buffalo 28-7. The teams featured a bunch of no-name players who played their hearts out. The star for the evening was Patriots quarterback Butch Songin who tossed two touchdowns to lead the Pats to victory.

Head Coach Lou Saban was so ecstatic that it is reported that he shook hands with every member of the Patriot team and asked them to sign an official AFL ball. Ask yourself: Did this game count? You bet it did.

And so, began the long journey of the very successful America Football League that would eventually and forever change the landscape of professional football.

Lou Saban was Boston's first coach. He was no kid and he knew what he was doing in football. His career had spanned 53 years and included 27 different stops. He was one of the "most traveled coaches" in the history of football. Affectionately dubbed "Much Traveled Lou," the Indiana University graduate compiled a record of 95-99-7 in 16 seasons as a pro football head coach. Lou Saban's record probably would have been much better if he was not always so ready to take a shot at something that was not a sure thing.

Saban started his head coaching career after his four-year playing career as a linebacker with the Cleveland Browns ended in 1949. His first job began the very next season at the Case Institute of Technology in Cleveland. Five years later, Saban was at Northwestern for two years and then moved to Western Illinois University in 1957. Eventually he came to Boston and his expertise helped launch the Boston Patriots into a permanent spot in the hearts of New Englanders. Everything starts with something. Lou Saban gave the Patriots their start.

After an unsuccessful bid at retirement, Saban's last stop as head coach was at Chowan University in North Carolina in 2001 and '02. Lou Saban, a fine and gracious man and great coach, died on March 29, 2009 at the age of 87 but his lasting legacy and influence can still be seen on the football field today.

The team he led played teams that were unrecognizable in their day. All have survived but not under their 1960 names. That does not mean that you may not recognize the names of all of the teams that played the Patriots in their first year. The League's idea was to play each team twice providing a fourteen-game season in year 1. There was a bye week for a rest. You may recognize some nicknames but not always the City/Nickname combo such as the Los Angeles Chargers who became the San Diego Chargers, but who strangely enough are again the Los Angeles Chargers. Yes, it is the same team.

You may wonder who the New York Titans might be when you see that the Boston Patriots played them in the inaugural 1960 season. They simply changed their last name from Titans to the Jets in 1962. Then there were the Dallas Texans, who the Patriots also played in 1960.

The American Football League (AFL) had a 1960 charter member called the Dallas Texans. However, after the first season, they chose to become the Kansas City Chiefs. In 1997, the Houston Oilers became the Tennessee Titans. The Oakland Raiders left to become the LA Raiders but came back after the 1994 season and have been the Oakland Raiders ever since.

Now, with that AFL team genealogy straightened out, there should be no team in the AFL schedule for the Boston Patriots in 1960 that you do not recognize. Of course, don't expect to find the New England Patriots.

As a point of note, the Dallas Cowboys joined the NFL, not the AFL, as an expansion team in 1960 so there was a lot of good football stuff happening at this time in football history.

Here are the opposing teams in the sequence of the games played in 1960. Check out the team names because for the next ten years, these, for the most part, are the teams that the Boston Patriots played until they joined the NFL with the rest of the AFL in 1970

- 1 Denver Broncos
- 2 New York Titans
- 3 Buffalo Bills
- 4 Los Angeles Chargers
- 5 Oakland Raiders
- 6 Denver Broncos
- 7 Los Angeles Chargers
- 8 Oakland Raiders
- 9 New York Titans
- 10 Dallas Texans
- 11 Houston Oilers
- 12 Buffalo Bills
- 13 Dallas Texans
- 14 Houston Oilers

The AFL was as wild as the old west when it began. They were looking to survive and to eventually be wildly successful. Many of the players could not survive on their AFL salaries and so they tended bar and served other tasks when they got a break from practice and playing. Eventually, it would all come together and like the NFL, a lot of fortunes were made.

One of the first ways the AFL showed their lack of orthodoxy in their methods was in scheduling games. When you look at the Pats schedule for 1960, for example, their first game was a Friday, then a Saturday then back to Friday and Saturday before their first Sunday match came to be. The Patriots played just five Sundays out of a fourteen-week season. That's what you call thinking out of the box. The AFL was so wildly successful that the NFL merged with them just ten years later.

Many did not consider the impact of attendance at high school football games on Friday and college football games on Saturday as being affected by the AFL or pro-football at all. Nonetheless, our Congress, apparently looking for work, having nothing to do, was so concerned about AFL style football becoming dominant on Friday

and Saturday, that they passed some laws prohibiting regular season pro games from being played on Fridays and Saturdays.

And you, like me, probably thought the reason Colleges do not play on Sunday is because of some seedy deal with the NFL. Nope. The seedy deal was not a deal at all. It was Congress protecting attendance at HS and college football games. One would think they could have spent their time more wisely but now you know the *rest of the story*.

In the Patriot's first ever season and "home" opener on Friday, Sept 9, the Patriots lost in a close match to the Denver Broncos L (10-13) at Nickerson Field before 21,597. At the NY Titans the following Saturday, Sept 17, the Patriots got their first AFL win W (28-24) in a game played at the Polo Grounds before 19,200. On Sept 23 at home (Nickerson Field), the Pats were shut out by the Buffalo Bills L (0-13) before 20,732. After a bye on Sept 30, on Saturday Oct 8, Boston traveled to LA Memorial Coliseum to play the Chargers. They crushed LA in a 35-0 shutout before 18,226. On the West Coast again on Sunday Oct 16, the Oakland Raiders beat the Patriots L (14-27) before 11,500.

At Denver on Sunday, Oct 23, the Broncos got by the Patriots by one score at Bears Stadium before 12,683. On Friday, Oct 28, at home, the LA Chargers whooped the Patriots L (16-45) before 13,988. At home on Friday, Nov 4, Boston beat Oakland W (34-28) at home before 8,446. Then at home again on Friday November 11, the Patriots outplayed the New York Titans W 38-21) before 11,653

On Friday, Nov 18 at home, the Patriots pounded the Dallas Texans W (42-14) before 14,721. At home on Friday, Nov 25, the Houston Oilers defeated the Boston Patriots L (10-24) before a nice crowd of 27,123. At Buffalo on Sunday Dec 4, the Patriots were defeated by the Bills L (14-38) at War Memorial Stadium before 14,335. At Dallas, on Sunday Dec 11, the Dallas Texans shut out the Patriots L (0-34) in the Cotton Bowl before 12,000. Wrapping up the inaugural season at Houston on Sunday, Dec 18, the Oilers spoiled the Patriots finale L 21-37) at Jeppesen Stadium before 22,352.

1961 Lou Saban, Coach #1**1961 Mike Holovak, Coach #2**

The 1961 Boston Patriots football team competed in their second season of Professional American Football League (AFL) football. They were led by Lou Saban in his last of two as head coach. After assuring the team's viability through 14 games, in 1960, Saban began the 1961 season with a 2-3 record and was fired after the fifth game of the season. He was replaced by Mike Holovak who came in with 7-1-1 helping the Patriots finish with a fine record of 9-4-1 for the whole season. We include both the Saban games and the Holovak games in this chapter. upped the ante and brought forth a fine 9-4-1 winning season.

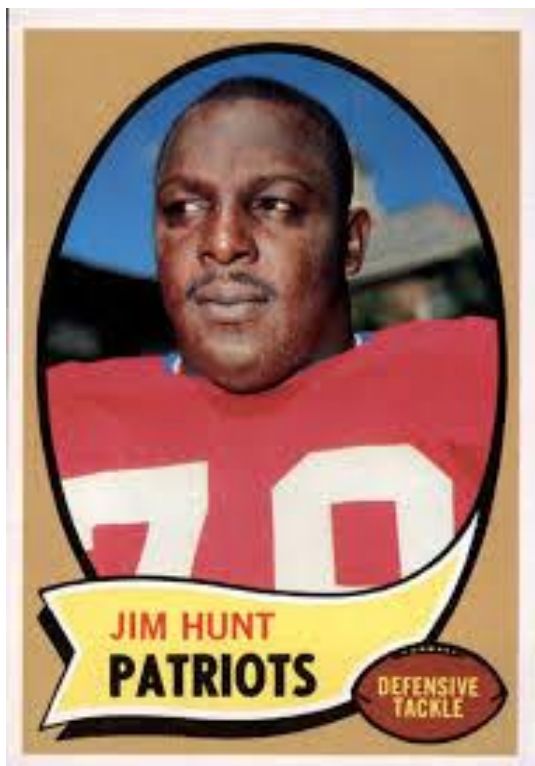
In the home and season opener on Sat Sep 9, at Nickerson Field on the campus of Boston University, the New York Titans edged out the New England Patriots L (20-21). This was two opening day losses in a row. On Sat Sep 16, the Patriots crushed the Denver Broncos at home W (45 17). Then, at Buffalo the next week, again on Saturday, the Patriots defeated the Bills in a close match W (23-21). At New York on Sunday, Oct 1, the Titans nosed out the Patriots L (30 37)

On Sat Oct 7 at home, the San Diego Chargers neutralized the Patriots L (27 38). That was it for coach Lou Saban. Mike Holovak took over immediately when Lou Saban got his notice. He began his successful tenure with the Pats with a tie. On Fri Oct 13, at home, the Boston Patriots tied Houston Oilers T (31 31). At home on Sun Oct 22, the Boston Patriots lambasted the Buffalo Bills W (52 21). At Dallas on Sun Oct 29. The Patriots prevailed by one point over the Texans W (18-17).

At Houston, on Sun Nov 12, the Oilers beat the Patriots L (15 27). Then, at home on Fri Nov 17, the Patriots beat the Oakland Raiders W (20 17). Wrapping up the season with three away game wins, the first was at Denver as the Pats beat the Broncos W (28-24). The next was at Oakland as Boston beat the Raiders W (35-21). And then, at San Diego in the season finale, the Patriots shut out the Chargers W (41-0).

Top Patriot Players Jim Lee Hunt, DT

Jim Lee Hunt played great football for the Boston Patriots from 1960-71. He carried the complimentary nickname, "Earthquake," for obvious reasons.



Hunt played in 141 games at defensive tackle. He was voted to four AFL All-Star games and named "best pass rushing tackle in the AFL" by AFL scouts in 1967.

For a big man, Hunt possessed great speed. One time he intercepted a pass and out-ran two running backs for a 79-yard touchdown return. An award for the best Patriots lineman was named in his honor and John Hannah won it in 1981. In 1993, Hunt was inducted into the Patriots Hall of Fame. He fits in quite well.

Top Patriots Players Vito "Babe" Parilli

Vito "Babe" Parilli played quarterback for the Patriots from 1961-67 and threw for more than 20,000 yards during his career. Parilli was voted to three American Football League All-Star teams and was named the AFL Comeback Player of the Year in 1966 when he threw for 3,441 yards and 31 touchdowns.

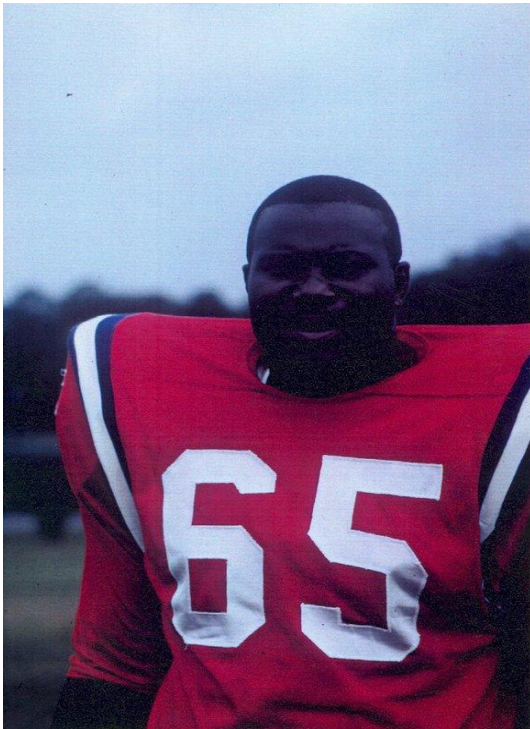
In addition to his skills as a quarterback, Parilli became known as an excellent kick holder and earned the nickname "Gold Finger." The combination of holder/quarterback Parilli and kicker/wide receiver



Gino Cappelletti came to be known as the “Grand Opera.” In 1993, Parilli was inducted into the Patriots Hall of Fame. In 1982, Parilli was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame for his collegiate career under Bear Bryant at the University of Kentucky. The Kentucky native lives his in home state. Inducted 1993.

<< Parilli

Top Patriot Players Houston Antwine, DT



Houston Antwine was unmatched as a sack man for the Boston Patriots. He played all of 11 seasons for the Patriots, appearing in 142 games from 1961-1971. He was the sack leader for the Patriots in three consecutive seasons from 1967-69. His 39 career sacks are tied for 10th (with Richard Seymour) on the Patriots all-time career sacks list.

Antwine was well respected, earning six consecutive American Football League (AFL) All-Star selections from

1963-68. His six all-star appearances are tied for the fourth highest total in franchise history.

He came to the Patriots via a trade from the Houston Oilers in exchange for a fourth-round pick in the 1962 AFL Draft on April 1, 1961. He is one of the good guys, a member of the Patriots 50th Anniversary Team and a member of the 1960s All-Decade Team.

Now that we have whet your appetite with two seasons of Boston Patriots football, before we come back to the rest of the seasons, let's talk about the origins of football and how the NFL/AFL came to be.

Chapter 3 Mike Holovak era 1961 -1968

Coach # 2 Mike Holovak

1961 Mike Holovak (7-1-1)

1962 Mike Holovak AFL East 2nd 9 4 1

1963 Mike Holovak AFL East 1st 7 6 1

- Won Divisional Playoffs (at Bills) 26-8
- Lost AFL Championship (at Chargers) 10-51

1964 Mike Holovak AFL East 2nd 10 3 1

Gino Cappelletti(MVP)

1965 Mike Holovak AFL East 3rd 4 8 2

1966 Mike Holovak AFL East 2nd 8 4 2

- Jim Nance(MVP)

1967 Mike Holovak AFL East 5th 3 10 1

1968 Mike Holovak AFL East 4th 4 10 0

1961-1968 Mike Holovak final record (55-46-6)



1961 Boston Patriots Team Picture

1961 Mike Holovak, Coach #2

The 1961 Boston Patriots football team competed in their second season of Professional American Football League (AFL) football. They were led by Lou Saban in his last of two years as head coach. Lou Saban began the 1961 season with a 2-3 record and was fired

after the fifth game of the season. He was replaced by Mike Holovak who came in with 7-1-1, helping the Patriots finish with a fine record of 9-4-1 for the whole season. We include both the Saban games and the Holovak games in Chapter 3 covering the launch of the Patriots in the AFL in the 1960 and 1961 seasons.

In the home and season opener on Sat Sep 9, at Nickerson Field on the campus of Boston University, the New York Titans edged out the New England Patriots L (20-21). This was two opening day losses in a row. See game summaries for 1961 in Chapter 2.

1962 Mike Holovak, Coach #2

Mike Holovak was not a long-anticipated acquisition of Boston. He came in the middle of the prior season and without the benefit that most coaches get, he turned the Patriots team around on a dime by leading the Patriots on a 7-1-1 rampage in which no opposing team was safe. Holovak had a lot of great seasons with the AFL Boston Patriots and eventually he retired and took a cushy job in the front office. By the time he was done, Boston was almost New England. He was a great competitor.

He still stands as the Patriots' second winningest coach, Holovak led the Boston Patriots to the AFL League title game after the 1963 season. The team burped in the championship game in a loss to San Diego, 51-10. Mr. Holovak later became vice president of player personnel and general manager of the Houston Oilers and he stayed on when they moved to Tennessee and became the Titans.

He was a rugged football player who began his NFL career playing for the Chicago Bears and Los Angeles Rams before he became freshman football coach at Boston College in 1949 and varsity coach in 1951.

"Mike Holovak was a great coach and a wonderful person," Patriots owner Robert Kraft said in a statement issued by the team. "I remember watching Mike's Boston College teams in the 1950s and his Patriots teams in the 1960s.

"I was fortunate to have the opportunity to spend time with him on several occasions. Our team has lost one of its founding fathers and the entire Patriots family is saddened by Mike's passing."

Holovak had a 53-47-9 record as Patriots coach, including playoffs.

Only Bill Belichick has more wins, 105 at the time of Holovak's obituary.

When the Boston Patriots became part of the new AFL in 1960, Holovak was their first director of player personnel and served as offensive backfield coach. They were 5-9 that season under Lou Saban and the team missed the playoffs.

After they started the 1961 season at 2-3, Holovak was asked to replace Saban and led them to a 7-1-1 record the rest of the campaign, finishing with a 41-0 smash-mouth win at San Diego and a four-game winning streak.

Top Patriots Players—Gino Cappelletti, WR, K

They say that Gino Cappelletti is the "original Patriot" because for many years he has been the most recognized figure in franchise history. A versatile player, Cappelletti played wide receiver and kicker for the Boston Patriots from the first season in 1960 through 1970.

Because he was talented at both the receiver position and the kicker position he was the Patriots all-time leading scorer until 2005 when he was surpassed by Adam Vinatieri, who kicked lots of field goals for New England.



When he was with the American Football League (his whole career), Cappelletti led the AFL in scoring five times and he holds two of the top five scoring seasons in league history – 147 points in 1961 and 155 points in 1964, a season in which he was also named the

AFL's Most Valuable Player.

Cappelletti was voted an AFL All-Star five times and still holds the Patriots records for career field goals made. He also remains among the top 10 receivers in Patriots history. After his playing career ended, Cappelletti moved into the broadcast booth with his longtime partner Gil Santos. For the better part of the past quarter century, Santos and Cappelletti have been the voices of the Patriots for millions of New England football fans. In 1992, Cappelletti was inducted in the Patriots Hall of Fame. The Minnesota native makes his home in Massachusetts. Inducted 1992.

To date, Cappelletti is the Patriots' third all-time leading receiver with 292 catches for 4,589 yards, and for years had the most field goal attempts (334) in team history. Stephen Gostkowski has 388.

During Cappelletti's pro career, he did more than kick field goals and receive passes. He also returned punts and kickoffs, played defensive back and even had one pass completion for a touchdown. How about that.

He was just the second AFL player to record three interceptions (of Tom Flores) in a regular-season game. He also holds the professional football record for most touchdowns in Saturday games (10). He scored 18 points or more in a game ten times and scored 20

or more points in a game eight times. He was quite a player on a team that was not known at the time for greatness.

He set the AFL single-game record by scoring 28 points in the Patriots' 42–14 rout of Houston on December 18, 1965. Cappelletti is the only player in professional football history to run for a two-point conversion, throw for a two-point conversion, catch a pass, intercept a pass, return a punt and return a kickoff in the same season.

He kicked six field goals (without a miss) in a 39–10 win at Denver on October 4, 1964 and became one of only two AFL kickers with at least four field goals per game for three consecutive games.

Cappelletti kicked the longest field goal in the AFL in consecutive seasons and led the AFL in field-goal percentage in 1965. In 1984, Cappelletti was inducted into the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame. However, he has not been selected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. In 2003, he was named to the Professional Football Researchers Association Hall of Very Good in the association's inaugural HOVG class.

Top Patriots Players—Bob Dee, DL



With a name that brings back memories of a 50's rock star, Bobby Vee, Bob Dee the football great was anything but a genteel man on the field. This Bob Dee was for years viewed as the Ironman of the American Football League, never missing a game during his career. A local native, he was born in Quincy, Mass., and he graduated from the

College of Holy Cross.

A three-sport letterman in college, he was an athlete first. He was one of the first players signed by the Boston Patriots in 1960. As a defensive lineman for the Patriots from 1960 to 1967, Dee started 112 consecutive games. He wore the same helmet nearly every game. His big claim to fame along with others is that he scored the first touchdown in AFL history when he dove onto a fumble in the end zone in a preseason contest against Buffalo. Dee was voted to five AFL All-Star teams and was enshrined in the Patriots Hall of Fame.

He put some time in with the Washington Redskins in 1957–58, and returned to Holy Cross to tutor the team's linemen before he got the call to the AFL. He had some quirks for a big guy such that he was superstitious. And, so he was not quick to begin to use equipment improvements over the years. As noted, he chose to wear the same helmet throughout 90% of his career (105 of 112 games).]

Dee recorded 33 QB sacks (not including his strip sack of Tommy O'Connell in the AFL's first Exhibition Game).

He sacked the best of them. For example, he recorded sacks against Frank Tripucka, Al Dorow, Hunter Enis, Jacky Lee, MC Reynolds, Randy Duncan, Cotton Davidson, George Blanda, Jack Kemp, Johnny Green, John Hadl, Tobin Rote, Len Dawson, Eddie Wilson, Dick Wood, Joe Namath, Tom Flores, Rick Norton and Bob Griese. He recovered fumbles by Al Carmichael, Art Baker, Wayne Crow, Jacky Lee, Paul Lowe, Bill Tobin, Wray Carlton & Max Chobian. He was a great guy to have on the team.

He was also good at picking off the ball from opposing QBs. He had two interceptions in the Patriots 26-8 Eastern Divisional Playoff Game win over the Buffalo Bills. In that game, he wore one sneaker and one football shoe with spikes, which he said helped him maneuver better in the snow in the game played at War Memorial Stadium on December 28, 1963.

On July 22, 1968, for a “too good to resist” business opportunity, Bob Dee announced his retirement from professional football, citing a business opportunity that was "too good to resist."

Ten years later, in 1970, he passed away of a heart attack in 1979 while on a business trip.

One of his keepsake mementos from football was when he was awarded a game ball for his outstanding performance in the Patriots 34-17 win over the Houston Oilers on November 29, 1964. He was inducted in the Patriots Hall of Fame on August 18, 1993. The Patriots organization thought the world of Bob Dee. In recognition of his accomplishments on the field, the Patriots retired his number (89).

About the 1962 Season

The 1962 Boston Patriots football team competed in their third season of Professional American Football League (AFL) football. They were led by Mike Holovak in his second of eight years as head coach. The team had a fine record of 9-4-1 and finished in second place in the AFL Eastern Division but did not make the playoffs. Today, for sure, that record would have brought a Wild Card Berth.

Top Patriot Players Nick Buoniconti, LB

Nick Buoniconti was a stalwart playing linebacker for the Boston Patriots from 1962-68. He was voted an American Football League All-Star five times, including 1966 when he was the top vote getter.

A native of Springfield, Mass., he took night classes during the season at Suffolk University to receive his law degree in 1968.



In 1970, Buoniconti was named to the All-AFL Team commemorating the best players in that league's history. Hall of Fame quarterback Len Dawson said of Buoniconti, "If you are lucky enough to knock him down, you have to lay on him or he'll get right back into the play."

In 1992, Buoniconti was inducted into the Patriots Hall of Fame and in 2001, he was named to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Bouniconti was traded by the Patriots in 1969 to the Miami Dolphins where he

excelled as part of Miami's 1972 undefeated championship team. He still resides in South Florida. Inducted 1992.

1963 Mike Holovak, Coach #2

The 1963 Boston Patriots football team competed in their fourth season of Professional American Football League (AFL) football. They were led by Mike Holovak in his third of eight years as head coach. The Patriots had a winning record again, 7-6-1 and they made the playoffs. They beat the Buffalo Bills W (26-8) in the Divisional Playoffs and they lost the AFL Championship (AFL equivalent of the Super Bowl) at the Chargers L (8-26).

After having played their first three seasons at Nickerson Field on the campus of Boston University, the Patriots moved operations to Fenway Park. Though this was their best overall accomplishments in terms of the playoffs in their four years, the Patriots hovered around the .500 mark all season, and were not a dominant team in the division. But, neither were the others.

Nonetheless, at the end of the season, they were in position to win the Eastern Division title outright with a victory on their final game. The 35–3 road loss to the defending champion Kansas City Chiefs allowed the Buffalo Bills catch up and both finished at 7–6–1. This required a divisional playoff game, the AFL's first ever.

Both teams had a bye the following week, postponed from the Sunday after the assassination of President Kennedy. So, the tiebreaker playoff was scheduled for Saturday, December 28, at Buffalo's War Memorial Stadium. The teams had split their two games during the regular season, with the home team winning each. Therefore, in this tie-breaker, the host Bills were slight favorites.

Despite the predictions, the visiting Patriots won the playoff game 26–8 on a snowy field. All-everything quarterback Babe Parilli ruled the day by throwing two touchdown passes to fullback Larry Garron. End Gino Cappelletti, put on his other hat and kicked three field goals.

With the win, the Boston Patriots became the Eastern Division champions, while the Western champion San Diego Chargers (11–3) were idle. The AFL championship game was played the following week in southern California on January 5, where San Diego had no problem routing the Patriots 51–10 at Balboa Stadium.

1963 Divisional Playoff Game

Boston Patriots 26 Buffalo 8

1963 AFL Championship Game

San Diego Chargers 51; Boston Patriots 10

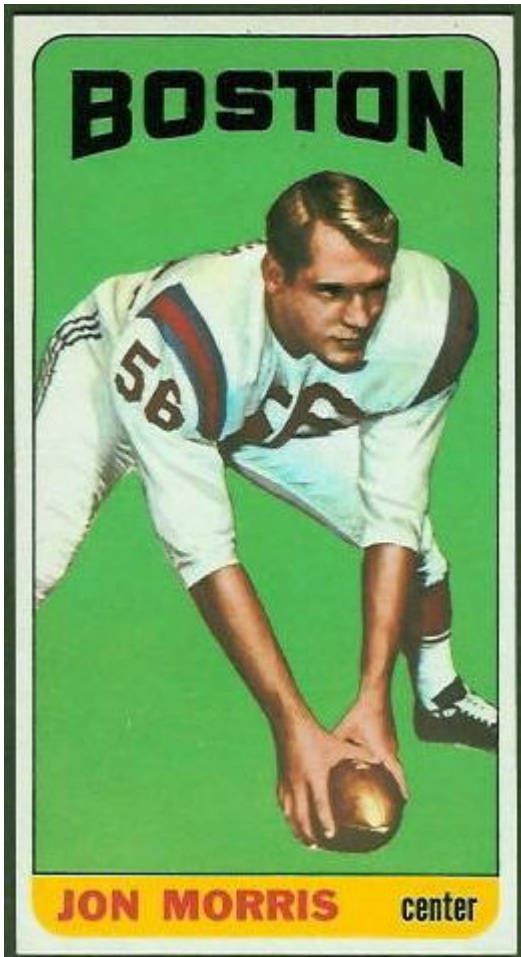
On January 5, 1964, at San Diego, in the American Football League (AFL) Championship game, San Diego walloped the Boston Patriots 51-10 to win the AFL Championship.

1964 Mike Holovak, Coach #2

The 1964 Boston Patriots football team competed in their fifth season of Professional American Football League (AFL) football. They were led by Mike Holovak in his fourth of eight years as head coach. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had a better record this year 10-3-1 with three additional victories. They missed the playoffs but finished second in the AFL's Eastern Division.

They beat the Buffalo Bills W (26-8) in the Divisional Playoffs and they lost the AFL Championship (AFL equivalent of the Super Bowl) at the Chargers L (8-26).

Top Patriots Players Jon Morris, C



Every time Jon Morris was in a game, he handed off to somebody, either directly or he tossed a short pass to them behind the line of scrimmage. That is the job of a Center and Morris was always one of the best.

Jon Morris played 11 seasons of smash-mouth football for the Patriots, appearing in 130 games from 1964-74. Centers take it on the chin a lot and Morris gave it back as much as he had to take it.

As a Boston Patriots player of the 1960's, he earned seven consecutive All-Star appearances with six AFL-All Star games from 1964 through 1969. He was also an AFC Pro Bowl center in 1970.

His seven league All-Star selections rank second in Patriots history behind Pro Football Hall of Famer John Hannah (9). Morris was the first Patriots' player to be selected to the NFL Pro Bowl. He anchored an offensive line that opened holes for Jim Nance to amass a team-record 45 rushing touchdowns from 1965-71.

Morris was always recognized by his peers, his opponents, and the pundits of the day. He had been selected by the Patriots in the fourth round of the 1964 American Football League Draft out of Holy Cross. He was also selected in the second round by Vince Lombardi of the Green Bay Packers but instead of playing for the great immortal coach, Morris chose to go to the AFL and the Patriots. Those were interesting times.

After his playing career, Morris worked as the color commentator on Patriots radio broadcasts from 1979 to 1987, followed by color analysis of NFL games for NBC television. Morris also played for Detroit (1975-77) and Chicago (1978). Inducted 2011.

1965 Mike Holovak, Coach #2

The 1965 Boston Patriots football team competed in their fifth season of Professional American Football League (AFL) football. They were led by Mike Holovak in his fifth of eight years as head coach. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had a losing record this year 4-8-2 with six less victories. They missed the playoffs, finishing third in the AFL's Eastern Division.

The pundits look back and cannot figure out how the miserable 1965 season with a 4-8-2 record could have found a spot to squeeze in after a 10-3-1 season in 1964 and an 8-4-2 season in 1966. They are even more puzzled, and you will be too when we examine the miserable 1967 and 1968 seasons which resulted in Mike Holovak being forced to become a professional Backgammon Player at Boston's historic Green Dragon Tavern. Sorry, just kidding! But, I am getting thirsty.

Top Patriots Players Jim Nance, RB

Somehow everybody has heard of Jim Nance, even though his playing years were circa Boston Patriots. When the Patriots celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2009, Jim Nance surely got a mention.



Patriots fans got a rare opportunity to vote for one of three hall of fame finalists, each of whom were perennial American Football League (AFL) All-Stars for the then Boston Patriots. The great fullback Jim Nance posthumously earned the honor of becoming the 14th player and the first running back to be inducted into the team's Hall of Fame.

Nance played seven seasons with the Boston Patriots from 1965-1971 and was the

AFL's MVP in 1966 when he rushed for 1,458 yards and 11 touchdowns. He also was the first AFL back to top the 1,000-yard rushing mark in consecutive seasons. His 104.1 rushing yards per game in 1966 remains a Patriots record. He was that good.

His 45 rushing TDs is still tops in team history while his 5,323 rushing yards is second only to Sam Cunningham. Nance was named to the Patriots All-Time Team in 2009.

1966 Mike Holovak, Coach #2

The 1966 Boston Patriots football team competed in their fifth season of Professional American Football League (AFL) football. They played most of their games in Fenway Park except when competing with the Red Sox for a ballpark. They were led by Mike Holovak in his sixth of eight years as head coach. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had a great record again this year of 8-4-2 with four more victories. They missed the playoffs, and they finished second in the AFL's Eastern Division. It was another great season, but it would be Mike Holovak's last in the winner's circle as the team as you will see went down the big slide in 1967 and 1968.

Even after Holovak left, and he did at the end of 1968, things would not get better immediately for Boston. I sure wish I could bring somebody else in to tell the fine New England Patriots' but since I can't I will do the (What's the opposite of honors?). This season is one to be enjoyed in the writing and in the reading as it would be the last winning season the Patriots posted as an AFL team. The Patriots would not have another such season until 1976, by which time the team was in the NFL as the New England Patriots. Enjoy this season summary. I know I will.

1967 Mike Holovak, Coach #2

The 1967 Boston Patriots football team competed in their eighth season of Professional American Football League (AFL) football. They played most of their games in Fenway Park except when competing with the Red Sox for a ballpark. They were led by Mike Holovak in his seventh of eight years as head coach. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had a losing record this year of 3-10-1. They missed the playoffs, and they finished fifth in the AFL's Eastern Division.

1968 Mike Holovak, Coach #2

The 1968 Boston Patriots football team competed in their ninth season of Professional American Football League (AFL) football.

They played most of their games in Fenway Park except when competing with the Red Sox for a ballpark. This would be the last year for Fenway Park. The following year, the Patriots would play at Boston College's Alumni Stadium. They were led by Mike Holovak in his eight and last year as head coach. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had a losing record this year of 4-10, just a hair better than the 3-10-1 season of 1967. They missed the playoffs, and they finished fourth in the AFL's Eastern Division.

Chapter 4 Clive Rush era 1969-1970

Coach #3 Clive Rush
Coach #4 John Mazur

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>League</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Pl</u>	<u>W-L-T</u>
1969	Clive Rush	AFL	East		3rd	4 10 0
1970	Clive Rush (1-6)	NFL	AFC	East	5th	2 12 0

1969-1970 Clive Rush final record (5-16-0)
1970 John Mazur (1-6)



Clive Rush 3rd Head Coach Boston Patriots

1969 Clive Rush, Coach #3

The 1969 Boston Patriots football team competed in their tenth and last season of Professional American Football League (AFL) football. In 1970, the NFL / AFL merger would be complete, so this was the last year of the Patriots playing in the AFL. However, the Boston Patriots team would live-on for one more season.

The Boston Patriots this year played their games in Boston College's Alumni Stadium. This would be a one year's engagement as the

following year, games would be played at Harvard Stadium. The Patriots were led by Clive Rush his first of two years as head coach. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had a losing record this year of 4-10, exactly the same as the prior year. They missed the playoffs, and they tied for third place in the AFL's Eastern Division.

1970 Clive Rush, Coach #3

1970 John Mazur Coach #4

The 1970 Boston Patriots football team competed in their first eleventh season overall and their first season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were in the EAST Division of the American Football Conference (AFC). They played their games in Harvard Stadium. The use of Harvard's stadium would be a one year's engagement. The following year, they would move into their own newly built arena known as Schaefer Stadium.

The 1970 Patriots were led by Clive Rush in his second year for the first half of the year in which they had a record of 1-6-0. Rush was replaced mid-season by John Mazur who also compiled a 1-6-0 record. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had a combined losing record this year of 2-10. It was the worst Patriot's season ever. They missed the playoffs for the seventh straight season, and they finished in fifth place (last) in the AFL's Eastern Division.



Coach Mazur, Adams, Vataha & Plunkett

This was the last season the Patriots would be called the "Boston" Patriots. The following year, they would turn in the "Boston" name and instead they would operate from then to now as the "New England" Patriots. Their final season known as Boston did not go as anybody had planned, as the Patriots would struggle all season and would finish 2-12 with two coaches--the worst record in the NFL.

After winning their first game against the Miami Dolphins, the Patriots would lose 9 in a row before beating the Buffalo Bills on the road. The season concluded with an embarrassing 45-7 loss to the Cincinnati Bengals in Cincinnati. Head coach Clive Rush would quit the season at the midpoint because of medical reasons.

His replacement, John Mazur, did not do much better of a job. Mazur would end up coaching the team next season. The Patriots would score the fewest points in the league in 1970, scoring only 149 points, while allowing 361. Watch the games played this season as with 25 other teams in the expanded NFL, the Patriots play a number of teams, such as the NY Giants for the first time this year.

Chapter 5 John Mazur era 1970-1972

Coach #4 John Mazur

Coach #5 Phil Bengston

1970 John Mazur (1-6)

New England Patriots

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Leag</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Pl</u>	<u>W-L-T</u>
1971	John Mazur ,	NFL	AFC	East	3rd	6 8 0
1972	John Mazur (2-7)	NFL	AFC	East	5th	3 11 0

1971-1972 John Mazur final record (9-21-0)

1972 Phil Bengston (1-4)

1972 Phil Bengston final record (1-4-0)



1971 John Mazur, Coach #4

The 1971 former Boston Patriots football team competed in their twelfth season in professional football and their second season in the National Football League (NFL). This year the team would change its name to the New England Patriots and it would move into Shaeffer Stadium, (named after the brewery). The stadium would be renamed several times in its lifetime before being replaced in 2002 by the luxurious Gillette Stadium.

The Patriots were led by John Mazur in his second and only full-year of three years as head coach. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had a losing record this year of 6-8-0 and showed promise. They missed the playoffs, and they tied for third place in the AFL's Eastern Division.

The 1971 season would be the first that the team played as the New England Patriots, having changed its name from the Boston Patriots, briefly to the Bay State Patriots before changing it again to the New England Patriots. Their idea in the New England name was to help regionalize the franchise's equal distance from Boston and Providence.

Their record of six wins and eight losses, was much better than the past several years but it was no cigar. It brought them to a third-place finish in the AFC East Division. The Patriots enjoyed playing in a brand new stadium known as Schaefer Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts after playing in three different stadiums the previous three seasons in Boston and four stadiums overall in their time as the Boston Patriots.

Mazur showed who was boss in training camp, after the team with the urging of GM Upton Bell had acquired Duane Thomas from the Dallas Cowboys, where he had a label as a "disgruntled running back." To get Thomas, the Patriots had given up Carl Garrett and Halvor Hagen. Almost upon arriving, Thomas became embroiled in a conflict with coach John Mazur, prompting Patriots general manager Upton Bell to request that Commissioner Pete Rozelle to void the trade three days after it had been made. Rozelle granted Bell's request, and the traded players returned to where they had been prior to the deal.

The Patriots kept Hagen and Jackson in exchange for a second (#35-Robert Newhouse) and third round draft choices in the 1972 NFL draft. Thomas returned to the Cowboys, but decided to keep silent all season long, refusing to speak to teammates, management, and the media.

Thomas's story is interesting even though he made life unpleasant for everybody with whom he came in contact. He was not very likeable, but he was a great football player. There is no question that he helped Dallas win all the marbles including the Super Bowl (VI). His stoical demeanor and cheap shots at pundits apparently cost him Super Bowl MVP.

He was as reportedly voted as the Super Bowl Most Valuable Player by an overwhelming margin. Thomas, however, had boycotted the media throughout the season as well, and Larry Klein, editor of Sport, which presented the award, didn't know how Thomas would act at a banquet in New York. With this in mind, Klein chose to announce Dallas QB Roger Staubach as the winner.

During the 1972 offseason he became even more isolated and insubordinate, so he was traded in early August to the San Diego Chargers in exchange for Mike Montgomery and Billy Parks. Some guys never learn. Kudos to John Mazur for recognizing a sour apple.

The 1971 season began on September 19, 1971 at home against the Oakland Raiders. The Patriots prevailed in the first ever game at Schaefer Stadium in Foxborough Massachusetts W (20-6) before 55,405. At home again on Sept 26, the Detroit Lions beat the New England Patriots L (7-34) before a packed house of 61,057. At home for the third game in a row, on Oct 3, the Baltimore Colts beat the Patriots L (3 23) before 61,232. On Oct 10 at home, the Patriots shut out the Jets W (20 0) before 61,357. At Miami on Oct 17, the Dolphins drubbed the Patriots L (3 41) at the Orange Bowl before 58,822.

At Dallas on Oct 24, the Cowboys beat the Patriots L (21 44) at Texas Stadium before 65,70. Then, on Oct 31 at San Francisco, the Patriots went down L (10 27) at Candlestick Park before 45,092

At home on Nov 7 the Patriots defeated the Houston Oilers W (28 20) before 53,155. On Nov 14, at home, the Patriots beat the Buffalo Bills 38 33 at Schaefer Stadium before 57,446. At Cleveland, on Nov 21, the Browns beat the Patriots L (7-27) at Cleveland Municipal Stadium before 65,238.

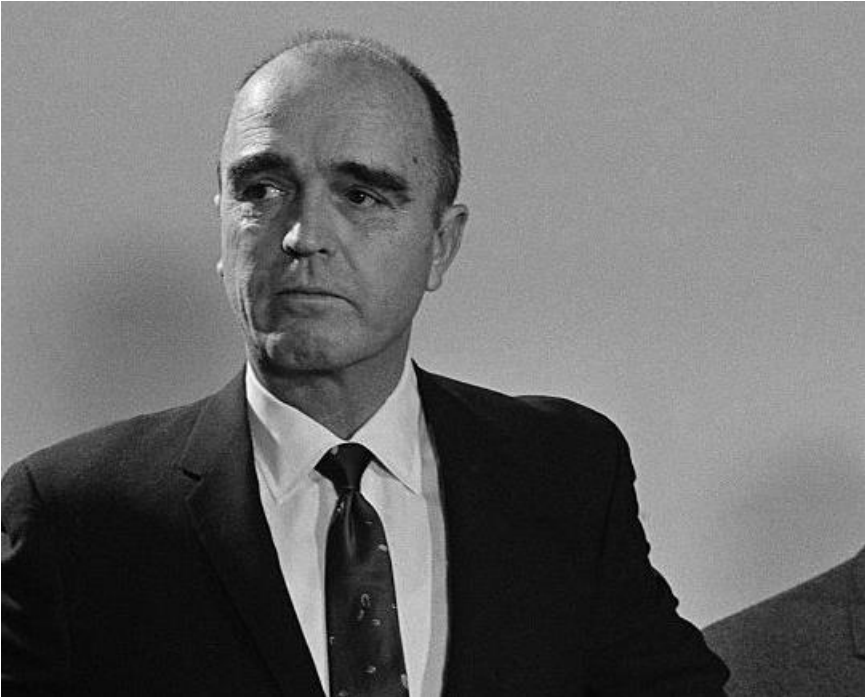
On Nov 28 at Buffalo, the Bills beat the Patriots L (20-27) at War Memorial Stadium before 27,166. At home on Dec 5, the Patriots defeated the Miami Dolphins W (34 13) at Schaefer Stadium before 61,457. At New York in Shea Stadium, on Dec 12, the Jets beat the Patriots L (6-13) before 63,175. In the final game of the season Dec 19 at Baltimore, the New England Patriots bet the Colts W (21 17) at W. Memorial Stadium before 57,942.

1972 John Mazur, Coach #4

1972 Phil Bengtson Coach #5

The 1972 former Boston Patriots football team competed in their thirteenth season in professional football and their third season in the National Football League (NFL). This was the second year the team would be using the name “New England Patriots” and it was the second year in which Shaeffer Stadium was their home venue. The stadium would be renamed several times in its lifetime before being replaced in 2002 by the luxurious Gillette Stadium.

The Patriots were led by John Mazur in his third season. Mazur would resign before the end of the season and he was replaced by Phil Bengtson for the last five games. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had a losing record this year of 3-11-0 and showed no improvement. They missed the playoffs, and they finished in fifth (last) place in the AFC East.



Phil Bengston, Interim Coach New England Patriots (1-4-0)

The New England Patriots were not impressing anybody with a 3-11 record sheared between coaches Mazur and Bengston, contributing to their last place finish in the AFC East Division. The Patriots continued what pundits now call their “period of futility” as they slumped to another poor record of 3-11 and missed the playoffs for the 9th straight season.

After being embarrassed 31-7 in their home opener against Cincinnati, the Patriots would manage to win their next 2 games against Atlanta and Washington. But, they would pick up their midseason misery, as they lost 9 straight games to a miserable 2-10-0 record before finally winning again.

They won their first (and only) road game against the New Orleans Saints. They were winless against AFC opponents. Besides their embarrassing home opening loss, the Patriots had plenty of other bad moments during the season. One good example was a 52-0 thrashing given to them by the powerful Miami Dolphins. This loss

went down as the worst loss in Patriots history and the most points they've ever allowed in a game in franchise history.

Although they did manage to win three games, the 1972 Patriots had the second-worst point differential of any team in a 14-game NFL season, ahead of only the expansion 1976 Buccaneers. They lost eight of their fourteen games by three touchdowns or more, and their first two wins were by a single point. Knowing that eventually Bill Belichick and Tom Brady would come along, makes it easier to endure these early days as the teams was figuring out how to be great.

Chapter 6 Coach Chuck Fairbanks, 1973 to 1978

Coach #6 Chuck Fairbanks

Year Coach	League	Conf/Div	Place	Record
1973 Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFCEast	3rd	5 9 0
1974 Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFCEast	3rd	7 7 0
1975 Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFCEast	5th	3 11 0
1976 Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFCEast	2 nd	11 3 0
• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Raiders) 21–24				
1977 Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFCEast	3rd	9 5 0
1978 Chuck Fairbanks	NFL	AFCEast	1st	11 5 0
• Lost Divisional Playoffs (Oilers) 14–31[15]				
<u>1973-1978 Chuck Fairbanks final record (46-50-0)</u>				

Who was Coach Chuck Fairbanks

Chuck Fairbanks was a fine coach. Like most NFL coaches, he got his training by coaching college teams. There are so few Heisman Trophy winners given out that a coach who helps produce a Heisman winner often shares in the accolades. Fairbanks produced a Heisman at the University of Oklahoma, Steve Owens, and he later spent six seasons as one of the better coaches of the era with New England. He passed away on April 2, 2013 in Scottsdale, Ariz. at 79. Years of age. It was tough.



Chuck Fairbanks on the sidelines doing what he did best--coaching

The University of Oklahoma announced his cause of death as brain cancer. As the Sooners head coach, Fairbanks was as good as it gets. He pulled off a 52-15-1 in six years with the Sooners, including an Orange Bowl victory his first season. His squad then won consecutive Sugar Bowl wins in 1971-72 before he took over the Patriots. It was no wonder that he was selected as the Patriots were looking to turn their professional program around. Fairbanks quickly got the program in gear, winning 46 games at New England in his time there, which was a Patriot record at the time.

It took a while to get the team in gear but then after a few years of Fairbanks Seasoning, they were ready to go. The Patriots made the playoffs in their fourth season under Fairbanks in 1976 and then two years later, they were on their way to their first outright AFC East title when owner Billy Sullivan, for his own reasons, pulled an ownership prerogative that affected the team negatively.

He angrily suspended Fairbanks for the final regular-season game. The Patriots did not need the game to be in the playoffs, but it was unsettling for the team. Why, you may ask, would the owner step and do something dumb like that? Nobody could fire the owner for a dumb move. Even though fans would have been pleased if he were asked to go. Fairbanks had had enough of pro football. He had agreed to become the coach at the University of Colorado. Coaches go where it suits them best all of the time.

Mr. Fairbanks was asked, and he returned for the playoffs, but with the disruption in continuity, New England lost to Houston. Fairbanks thus ended his time at 0-2 in the playoffs with New England. The unexpected suspension shook up Fairbanks.

At Colorado, Mr. Fairbanks could not rustle up a winner. Nothing good happens overnight anywhere and there was not enough time for Chuck Fairbanks, as there had been at New England for him to have **his** team ready to go as a winner. His record was 7-26 in three seasons, including an 82-42 loss at home to the Sooners and his replacement there, Barry Switzer.

Fairbanks left the Colorado Buffaloes to become coach and general manager of the New Jersey Generals of the USFL. He was fired after one season.

In Fairbanks's first year coaching in 1967, the Oklahoma Sooners had a great record of 10-1 and they beat Tennessee in the Orange Bowl. His teams won 11 games each in his last two seasons with OU, beating Auburn and Penn State in the Sugar Bowl.

When queried, Fairbanks admitted that he had agreed to the suggestion of Switzer, his offensive coordinator, to install the wishbone offense at OU after Texas used it to win a national championship in 1969. A wishbone offense is a formation in which the fullback is positioned closer to the quarterback, with two halfbacks positioned farther back. It's a formation that lends itself to a strong running game.

After becoming head coach, Switzer used the wishbone to win three national titles, matching the number Bud Wilkinson won at Oklahoma from 1947 to 1963, a tenure that included a record 47-game winning streak.

Charles Leo Fairbanks was born to play and to coach football in Detroit on June 10, 1933. He played for Michigan State's 1952 national title team and he served as an assistant at Arizona State and Houston before joining the OU staff in 1966. Owens became one of five Heisman winners for Oklahoma after rushing for 1,523 yards and 23 touchdowns in 1969.

Fairbanks was great at what he did but everything does not always work out all the time. He moved on after football to a great career in real estate and golf-course development. He occasionally worked as a consultant for NFL teams in training camp, including with the Dallas Cowboys when Bill Parcells was coach. He was one of football's good guys.

1973 Chuck Fairbanks Coach # 6

The 1973 New England Patriots football team competed in their fourteenth season in professional football and their fourth season in the National Football League (NFL). This was the third year that

the team would be using the name “New England Patriots” and it was the third year in which Shaeffer Stadium was their home venue. As previously noted, the stadium would be renamed several times in its lifetime before being replaced in 2002 by the luxurious Gillette Stadium.

The Patriots were led by Chuck Fairbanks his first of six seasons. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had a losing record this year of 5-9-0 but showed much improvement. They missed the playoffs, and they finished in third place in the AFC East.

Summarizing for clarity, the New England Patriots finished the National Football League's 1973 season with a record of five wins and nine losses. It was not a good season but better than many. It gave the Pats third place in the five-team AFC East Division. It was the first year under head coach and general manager Chuck Fairbanks, hired in January after six seasons as head coach of the Oklahoma Sooners.

Fairbanks hoped to make the team better by drafting great players right out of college. His selections in the 1973 NFL Draft included John Hannah, Sam Cunningham, Ray Hamilton, and Darryl Stingley. The assistant coaches on his offense included future NFL head coaches Ron Erhardt, Sam Rutigliano, and Red Miller. Fairbanks had a great mind and a great coaching ability and his time in New England was well spent for Patriot fans.

Top Patriots Players—John Hannah, OL

John Hannah was a Patriot for his whole career from 1973 through the 1985 Super Bowl season. He was named as "The Greatest Offensive Lineman of All Time" by Sports Illustrated. A durable player at a physical position, Hannah played in 183 games and missed only five games due to injury.

The Patriots were not the pride of the league when they were playing out of Boston with no home field. Hannah was so good, he overcame the stigma and was one of only two Patriots voted to the NFL's 75th anniversary team. Hannah played in nine pro bowls and

he earned Offensive Lineman of the Year honors for four straight years, from 1978 to 1981.

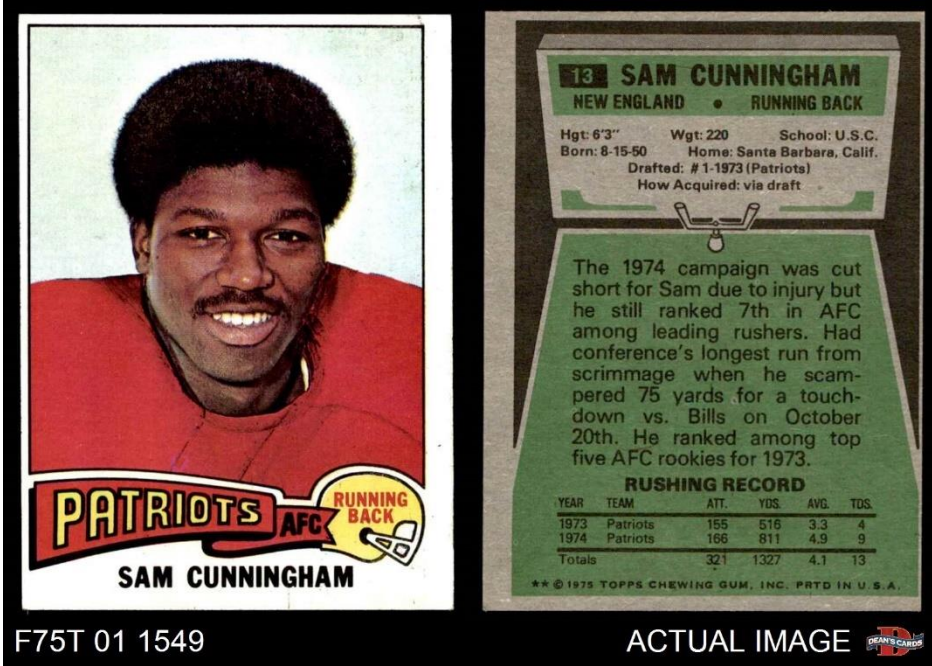


He was the anchor of the 1978 offensive line that set an NFL record with 3,165 rushing yards - a record which has not been challenged since.

In 1991, Hannah was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame and was the initial member of the Patriots Hall of Fame. In 1999, Hannah was

inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame for his outstanding career at the University of Alabama under coach Bear Bryant. Hannah is still active with the Patriots organization even while making his home in Alabama. Inducted 1991.

Top Patriots Players Sam Cunningham, RB



You may never have heard of Sam Cunningham, but it was not because when he was on the field for your team, he was not playing his heart out. Cunningham played and played and played football for nine seasons for the Patriots. If he were not on the team, the win total would not have so quickly hit 500.

The Patriots put him in 107 games from 1973 to 1979 after they had moved from the AFL to the NFL. He was also a mainstay in 1981 and 1982. You need to have collected some great stats when you play that long, and the coach keeps putting you in the game.

So, it is with Sam Cunningham who is the Patriots all-time leading rusher with 5,453 yards and his 43 rushing touchdowns rank second in team history. He played a significant role in helping the Patriots set the NFL record for most rushing yards in a season with 3,165 yards in 1978.

Sam Cunningham joined the Patriots as a 1973 first round draft pick after an All-American career at USC. He was dubbed Sam "Bam" Cunningham while in college for his ability to dive over piles into

the end zone. If the team needed to score, there was a Cunningham available.

Sam is a member of the Patriots 50th Anniversary Team and 1970s All-Decade Team. He was enshrined to the Patriots Hall of Fame in 2010. He lives in California, enjoying the fruits of a great career.

1974 Chuck Fairbanks Coach # 6

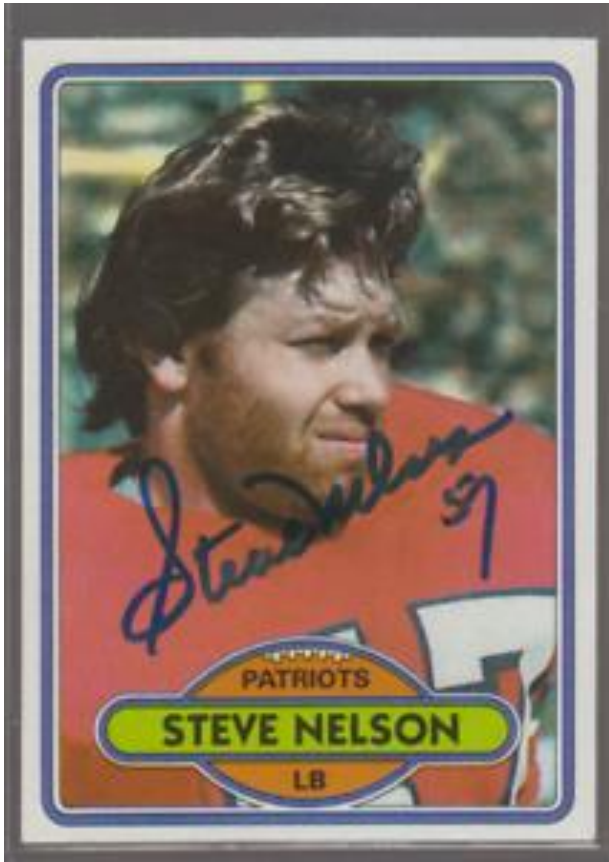
The 1974 New England Patriots football team competed in their fifteenth season in professional football and their fifth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Chuck Fairbanks his second of six seasons. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had a break-even record after a great start this year finishing at 7-7-0. They showed much improvement. They missed the playoffs, and they finished tied for third place in the AFC East.

New England stunned the Super Bowl Champion Miami Dolphins in Week 1 at Schaffer Stadium. The Pats went on to win their first five games on their way to a 6-1 start. However, they struggled in the second half of the season, winning only one game before finishing with a 7-7 record.

Top Patriot Players Steve Nelson, LB

Steve Nelson was a linebacker for the Patriots from 1974-87. He quickly became and stayed as the nucleus of the Patriots defense.

Nelson was voted to three Pro Bowls and he is on the books for more than 100 tackles nine times during his career. He led the Patriots in tackles in eight of his 14 seasons, including an unofficial team record of 207 in 1988.



He finished his career with a patriotic 1,776 total tackles. After retirement, he coached for the Patriots and later built Curry College into a perennial power. More recently, Nelson has become a familiar football analyst on local television and radio. In 1993, Nelson was inducted into the Patriots Hall of Fame. The Minnesota native remains a Massachusetts resident. Inducted 1993.

1975 Chuck Fairbanks Coach # 6

The 1975 New England Patriots football team competed in their sixteenth season in professional football and their sixth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Chuck Fairbanks his third of six seasons. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots fell backwards to a record of 3-11-0 this year when there were great expectations. They had a break-even record after finishing 1974 at 7-7-0. a great start this year finishing at 7-7-0. They showed much improvement. They missed the playoffs, and they finished tied for fourth place in the AFC East.

The Patriots had big designs for the 1975 season after a good year in 1974. They were hoping to make the playoffs for the first time since 1963. However, New England continued its forgetful period of the

'70s, as they finished 3–11 and they missed the playoffs for the 12th straight season. They started bad, middles OK and then finished miserably, losing their final 6 games to conclude the season. Although they tied the New York Jets for last place in the AFC East, they lost the tiebreaker by virtue of New York winning both matchups during the season.

Top Patriot Players Steve Grogan, QB

Steve Grogan was another iron-man; but he did not carry the nickname. Nonetheless, he was a model of toughness and longevity, playing in 149 games over his 16-year playing career from 1975 to 1990. He remains not only a fan favorite for his gritty style but also a favorite among former teammates.



A highly athletic quarterback, Grogan rushed for NFL record 12 touchdowns in 1976 and for 35 during his career. Grogan led the 1976 team to within seconds of the AFC Championship game. That team, which suffered a controversial playoff loss to the Raiders, is considered by many as one of the best in team history, certainly the best in the

pre-Belichick era.

Grogan also helped lead the Patriots to their first AFC Championship in 1985. After thirty years, he still ranks among the leaders in team history in nearly every passing category. Despite playing quarterback, he was still credited and applauded for being one of the hardest hitters and toughest players in Patriots history.

Steve Grogan was inducted into the Patriots Hall of Fame in 1995 after spending parts of three decades with the club. The Kansas resident lives both in Massachusetts, where he owns a Mansfield sporting goods store, and in Kansas.

1976 Chuck Fairbanks Coach # 6

The 1976 New England Patriots football team competed in their seventeenth season in professional football and their seventh season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Chuck Fairbanks his fourth of six seasons. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots were a great team this year with a record of 11-3-0 this year. They showed great improvement. They made the playoffs and they finished in second place in the AFC East.

This season was worth waiting for. After a nine-year stretch, (the forgettable years) in which New England / Boston posted just one non-losing season amid eight losing years, the Patriots turned around their fortunes, going 11-3. It goes down in history as their first winning season as an NFL team (their last winning season came in 1966, when the team was still in the AFL).

As we know, the team had gone just 3-11 the previous season, and was considered a "Cinderella team" in 1976. Nobody expected what a great year they would have. Coach Chuck Fairbanks was named NFL Coach of the Year, and cornerback Mike Haynes was named NFL Rookie of the Year.

The 1976 Patriots not only had a great record; they had great stats. The team rushed for a total of 2,957 yards (averaging five yards per carry) and scored 376 points, both second-best in the league. The 2,957 yards rushing were the fifth-highest total in NFL history at the time. The team's 5.0 yards per carry was the best in the NFL and remains higher than all Super Bowl champions except the 1973 Miami Dolphins whose run game was 5.0 yards per carry.

The Patriots also were great thieves on defense as they led the league in takeaways at 50. The Pats finished third in the league in turnover differential at plus-14.

The Patriots made only their second playoff appearance in their history and their first since 1963, but lost to the eventual Super Bowl champion Oakland Raiders in the first round of the playoffs. Earlier in the season, the Patriots handed the Raiders their only loss of the season with a blowout final score of 48–17. However, controversial roughing the passer penalty on Ray Hamilton on a Raiders drive late in the playoff game dimmed the Patriots' hopes of defeating the Raiders again, but they were in the game all the way.

Despite the playoff loss, the team has been considered one of the most talented in Patriots history; in 2004, Patriots head coach Bill Belichick, who was an assistant coach for the Detroit Lions in 1976, called this Patriots team "loaded", a "who's who team." Bill Belichick has earned the right like EF Hutton that "When Bill Belichick speaks, people listen!" And, how!

Coming in #2 in the AFC East, the Patriots needed to compete in the Divisional Playoffs, hoping to be moving on to the Super Bowl. The game was on Dec 18 against the Oakland Raiders. In a game marked with controversy, the New England Patriots never gave up and almost pulled it off but did not, losing by three points L (21–24) in the Oakland Coliseum before 53,045



In the photo above, on Dec. 19, 1976, the day after the Playoff defeat, Massachusetts State troopers tried to contain fans who crushed against a wire gate at Logan airport. The fans, who came to meet the Patriots' plane, were upset with the officiating in a bitter 24-21 playoff loss to the Oakland Raiders. Ken Stabler, the Raiders quarterback, dived into the end zone with the game-winning touchdown while only 10 seconds remained on the clock. There was controversial officiating in the wild final drive to the score.

What happened?

The final score tells everybody the game was close, but Patriot fans believe Oakland officiating with the thumb on the scale for the Raiders helped move the core in the Raiders' favor.

Oakland 24, New England 21 is a heartache score. The Patriots played well and for a time at the end of the game they appeared to have the game in the bag with a 21-17 lead late in the fourth quarter. Then Kenny, the Snake Stabler took control of the game. He threw a pass on third and 18 and fortunately, it fell incomplete. However, referee Ben Dreith put his thumb on the scale and made a controversial roughing-the-passer call on Ray Hamilton. That call gave the Raiders a new set of downs on the 13-yard line. The Snake eventually ran in for the go-ahead TD and that's all she wrote.

Top Patriots Players Mike Haynes, CB, PR



Mike Haynes played cornerback and punt returner for the Patriots from 1976-82. He was one of two Patriots selected to the NFL's 75th Anniversary team—a very high honor for a player. He was known as a tenacious defensive back for man-to-man coverage.

For his defensive prowess, Haynes was named to six Pro Bowls in his seven years

with the Patriots. An outstanding punt return specialist, Haynes was the first Patriot to return a punt for a touchdown.

In his rookie season in 1976, the team performed better than most seasons in history. Haynes contributed with eight pass interceptions and he returned two punts to pay-dirt for touchdowns.

He was traded to the Raiders following the 1982 season where he was contributed big time again and did his part in two Super Bowl Denver championships. He was elected to the Patriots Hall of Fame in 1994 and inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1997. He was also inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2001 for his ASU career. He was a great football player.

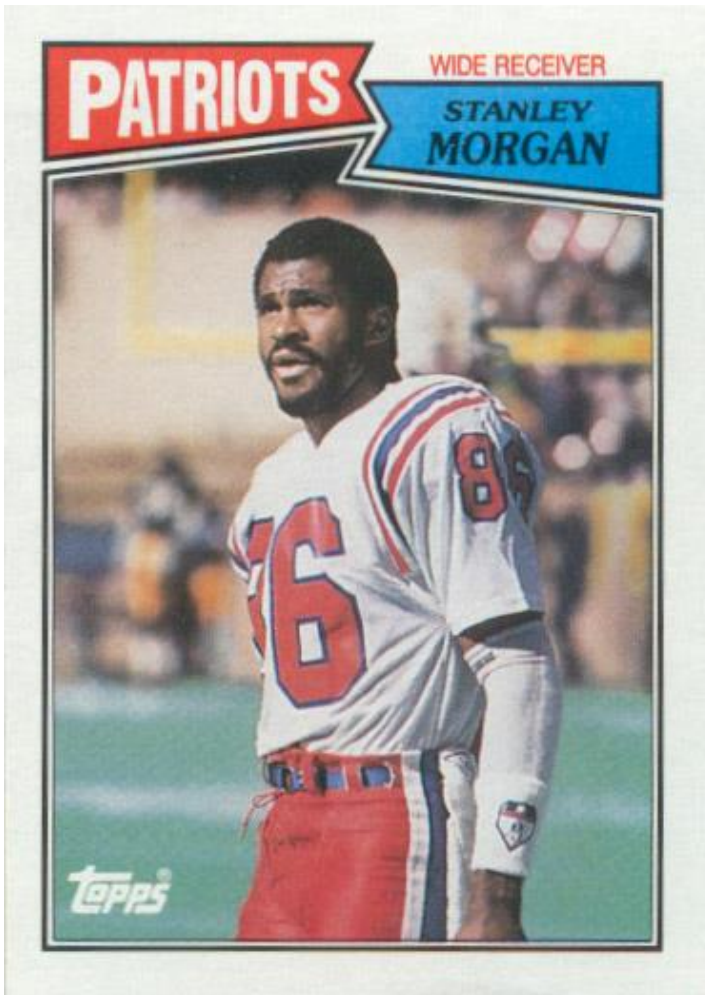
Haynes currently lives in New York and works for the National Football League.

1977 Chuck Fairbanks Coach # 6

The 1977 New England Patriots football team competed in their eighteenth season in professional football and their eighth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Chuck Fairbanks in his fifth of six seasons. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots were a fine team this year with a record of 9-5-0. They lost two more games than in 1976 but still finished the year in a respectable third place in the AFC East. They did not make the playoffs, but they looked pretty good most of the year.

Top Patriots Players Stanley Morgan, WR

Stanley Morgan could not have played better for the Patriots with extra-sticky fly paper for fingers. As a wide receiver for the Patriots from 1977 to 1989 he hauled in 534 career receptions, a franchise record that stood for 17 years before Troy Brown beat his mark.



Morgan remains the franchise record holder with 10,352 receiving yards and 67 touchdowns. He still owns a career average of 19.2 yards per catch which still stands as an NFL record for those with more than 500 career receptions.

Morgan is a four-time Pro Bowl honoree. In addition to

being a great receiver, he was also a fine punt returner, ranking among the career leaders in Patriots history. In 2007, Morgan was inducted into the Patriots Hall of Fame—a tribute well-earned.

1978 Chuck Fairbanks Coach # 6

The 1978 New England Patriots football team competed in their nineteenth season in professional football and their ninth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Chuck Fairbanks in his last of six seasons. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots were a fine team this year with a better record than 1977's record of 9-5-0. This year, they hit the mark at 11-5-0 as

the league chose to play sixteen instead of fourteen games per season. They won two more games than in 1977 and finished the year as the #1 ranked team in the AFC East. They made the playoffs winning the AFC East and they played in the Divisional Playoffs in which they lost. They looked pretty good for most of the year and none too shabby in the playoff game.

As noted, the Patriots finished the season with a record of eleven wins and five losses, and finished tied for first in the AFC East, winning their first division title in franchise history over Miami by a built-in tiebreaker.

The 1978 Patriots were another great team. They set an NFL record for most rushing yards in a single season, with 3,165 yards on the ground. You may recall some of these names. The Pats had four different players who rushed for more than 500 yards, beginning with running back Sam "Bam" Cunningham, 768; running back Andy Johnson, 675; running back Horace Ivory, 693; and quarterback Steve Grogan, 539. The team also picked up an NFL-record 181 rushing first-downs. This is one of those Patriot teams that had enough to win it all but just didn't win it all.

Divisional Playoffs Patriots 31, Houston 14

The final score was New England 14, Houston 31. After they beat the Dolphins in a wild card game. the Oilers were on a high. They traveled up to New England to face the Patriots at Schaefer Stadium before 61,297 chilled fans. The Oilers were not fazed by the cold. They earned their trip to Pittsburgh with a trip to the Super Bowl on the line. The Patriots had to wait until 1979 for another shot at the top marbles. The game as all Oilers. QB Dan Pastorini threw three touchdown passes in the second quarter. That was more than enough to defeat the Patriots in their first home playoff game. Home field gave the Pats no edge on this particular day.

Chapter 7 Coach Ron Erhardt 1979 to 1981

Coach #7 Ron Erhardt

Year Coach	League	Conf/Div	Place	Record
1979 Ron Erhardt	NFL	AFCEast	2nd	9 7 0
1980 Ron Erhardt	NFL	AFCEast	2nd	10 6 0
1981 Ron Erhardt	NFL	AFCEast	5th	2 14 0
1979-1981 Ron Erhardt final record (21-27-0)				



Coach Ron Erhardt on the field

Ron Erhardt, a Talented Coach

Ron Erhardt is a native of Mandan, North Dakota,. He got his Bachelor's Degree from Jamestown College in 1953, and then entered the military where he put in two years. After retiring from the service, in 1956, he became an assistant coach at Williston High School in Williston, North Dakota. The next year he began a six-year run as a head coach at two North Dakota Catholic high schools where his combined record was 45-9-2 .

Erhardt's early success helped him be discovered at the collegiate level. He first served as an assistant at North Dakota State University in 1963 for three years. Then, in 1966, he was named

head coach at the school. This appointment set the stage for another strong tenure, in which Erhardt amassed a 61-7-1 record in his seven years. Erhardt also served as the Bison athletic director, winning a pair of college national championships. He was a great coach.

After missing the playoffs in 1977, the Patriots were ready to go for the Super Bowl in 1978. At the end of the last chapter we recounted their loss in the divisional playoffs. As noted, prior to the last regular season game on December 18, head coach Chuck Fairbanks announced he was leaving the team to accept a contract offer from the University of Colorado. The team ownership, to say the least was very upset.

They responded to the new by immediately suspending Fairbanks and they made Erhardt and fellow assistant Hank Bullough co-coaches for the final game of the season. The Patriots dropped that contest, then lost their opening round matchup to the Houston Oilers in the divisional playoffs.

Fairbanks was permitted to leave for Colorado, with Erhardt officially taking the reins of the team as head coach on April 6, according to Erhardt. Having had a .890 winning percentage at North Dakota State upon taking the position, Erhardt said, "I've never been a loser in football and I don't intend to start now."

He might not have been a loser but to the owners, he did not measure up. But, maybe nobody could. The Patriots "underachieved" with a 19-13 record in the 1979 (9-7) and 1980 (10-6) seasons, missing the playoffs by one game each year. Considering from whence they had come over the years, almost winning making the playoffs was not really that bad. The team was playing well in this period with 441 points scored in 1980. It was a club record not broken until 2007.

But then, inexplicably, the Patriots fell apart the third year under Erhardt to a 2-14 record in 1981. Owner Billy Sullivan, who some pundits say was responsible for all four letters in the word "gaff," used the calculatus-eliminatus method to determine that Erhardt was "just too nice a guy," to be the coach of the Patriots. Owner Billy Sullivan dismissed this coach after one terrible performance year on December 22, just two days after the conclusion of the season.

There are lots of good coaches who think Ron Erhardt is a good coach who wound up with a not-so-good owner. Ron Erhardt, the three-season head coach of the New England Patriots coach turned his football fortunes around by becoming the offensive architect of the New York Giants' two Super Bowl titles. He did this when Bill Parcells was at the helm and Parcells saw him as one of the best. On March 21, 2012, this great coach "Erhardt" passed away at 80-years of age as one of the best with a great and solid football legacy despite his 1981 experience with the Patriots.

The Giants made the press announcement that the one-time head coach of the New England Patriots and the long-time NFL offensive coordinator had passed away in retirement in Boca Raton, Fla. Accolades came in from all directions.

"Ron was a wonderful man and a great coach," Giants chief executive John Mara said. "He was a big part of our success in the 1980s and was an important contributor to our first two Super Bowl championships."

When it was time for Ron Erhardt to abruptly leave the Patriots, Ray Perkins was the head coach of the Giants. He brought Erhardt in as offensive coordinator of the Giants in 1982, about a month after Erhardt was released by the Patriots.

When Perkins left in 1982 for the University of Alabama, the Giants named Bill Parcells as the head coach. He kept Erhardt, who he knew from some experience he had with the Patriots in 1980. Erhardt was a fine head coach for New England the Patriots but he was an even better offensive coordinator for eight seasons with the Giants. With Erhardt calling the plays, the Giants reached the playoffs five times, won three NFC East titles and picked up two Super Bowls to boot.

Phil Simms was the QB for the first Super Bowl over Denver after the 1986 season, and Jeff Hostetler took the QB spot on the Giants team en route to the second title after Simms broke his left foot late in the 1990 season.

"I learned an awful lot from him. He went on and did some amazing things offensively," Hostetler said. "What amazes me, is that system is still out there, still being used, and it works as successfully as ever. It is - without a doubt, out of all the systems I've been involved with and that's probably five, six, or seven different systems - the simplest as far as verbiage, and most consistent."

Under Erhardt's mentoring, the Giants consistently had one of the NFL's most productive rushing attacks. Joe Morris rushed for more than 1,000 yards three times, including 1,516 in the Giants' first Super Bowl season. With Erhardt doing the offensive teaching, The Giants also finished in the Top 10 in the league in passing in 1984, '85 and '87.

Not all good things last and eventually somebody did not want what Erhardt had to offer. He lost his play-calling duties when Bill Parcells left the Giants after the 1991 season and Ray Handley wanted somebody else. Erhardt went with Pittsburgh as their offensive coordinator in 1992 and he spent four good years with them, helping them reach the Super Bowl after the 1995 season. He also put in one season as the Jets O-coordinator in 1996.

Before becoming the head coach at New England, Erhardt had other duties with the Patriots. He became the Patriots backfield coach in 1973. He stayed in the that position for four seasons before becoming the New England offensive coordinator. Erhardt was a natural to become New England's head coach and he was appointed to serve after Chuck Fairbanks left after the 1978 season. Erhardt did not have the best record in his three years from 1979-81, compiling a record of 21-27.

Fired after one bad year. Was that the best medicine for the Patriots or for Coach Erhardt. Could Billy Sullivan have been the real problem with the Patriots for all those years? Considering that Erhardt, a native of Mandan, N.D., was 67-7-1 as a head coach in college and he won two college division national championships at North Dakota State University, one does wonder.

1979 Ron Erhardt Coach # 7

The 1979 New England Patriots football team competed in their twentieth season of professional football and their tenth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Ron Erhardt in his first of three seasons. Erhardt had co-coached the Patriots in the last game of the 1978 season, but we do not count that in this book as a coached season. Billy Sullivan was still the owner of the Patriots. This year, the new overtime rule would be applied to tie games so that fewer games would end in ties.

The Patriots were an OK team this year with a better than 500 records of 9-7-0. They finished the year as the #2 ranked team in the AFC East. They were one game away from making the playoffs. They looked pretty good for most of the year but not enough to win a box of cigars.

1980 Ron Erhardt Coach # 7

The 1980 New England Patriots football team competed in their twenty-first season of professional football and their eleventh season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Ron Erhardt in his second of three seasons. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots were a fine team this year with a better record (10-6) than the 9-7-0 from 1979. They finished the year again as the #2 ranked team in the AFC East. They were one game away from making the playoffs. They looked pretty good for most of the year but again, not quite enough to compete for the big cigar.

Running Back Sam Cunningham decided he wanted more this season from the Patriots and he held out all season. For their part, the Patriots turned to rookie Vagas Ferguson to carry the bulk of the rushing game. Ferguson responded by breaking the team's rookie rushing record. The Patriots were rolling along quite well right before the mid-season point and it looked like a good year to make the playoffs. Unfortunately, the Pats managed to win just two of their next seven games, and they finished with a 10-6 record that saw them fall a game short of a wild card berth.

Bill Parcells, then the linebackers coach with the team, has stated that the players on this Patriots team gave him his famous "Tuna" nickname when he asked, "What do you think I am, Charlie the Tuna?" Parcells had high regards for coach Ron Erhardt.

1981 Ron Erhardt Coach # 7

The 1981 New England Patriots football team competed in their twenty-second season of professional football and their twelfth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Ron Erhardt in his last of three seasons. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots were a different team this year, seeming having lost the fire that was the hallmark of Erhardt's first two years at the helm. They finished with a dismal 2-14 record, tied for fourth (last) in the AFC East. They were out of all post season contention. Two days after the season, Billy Sullivan fired coach Ron Erhardt as it was tough to take a 2-14 season at any time.

The season went as you would expect for a 2-14 year. The team lost their first four games, and then ten of their last eleven, including the last nine games of the season. They could not do anything right or, so it seemed.

The games were close, but nobody was giving trophies for almost wins. The Patriots were defeated in both the first and last games of the season by the Baltimore Colts. Ironically what became known as the Patriots' bookend losses proved to be Baltimore's only two wins of the 1981 season.

It was known that the loser of that last game would have the first pick in the 1982 NFL Draft, and so the pundits enjoyed nicknaming this last game, "The Stupor Bowl. " With the Patriot loss, the team had the first pick, choosing University of Texas defensive end Kenneth Sims, an eventual draft "bust" as first overall pick in the NFL draft. Even their draft pick consolation prize did not work out in 1981.

Chapter 8 Ron Meyer Era 1982 to 1984

Coach #8 Ron Meyer

Coach #9 Raymond Berry

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>League</u>	<u>Conf/Div</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Record</u>
1982	Ron Meyer	NFL	AFC East	7th	5 4 0
				• Lost First Round (at Dolphins) 13-28	9 game season w/strike
1983	Ron Meyer	NFL	AFC East	2nd	8 8 0
1984	Ron Meyer (5-3)	NFL	AFC East	2nd	9 7 0
	Raymond Berry (4-8)				
<u>1982-1984 Ron Meyer final record (18-15)</u>					



Former Coach Ron Meyer on sidelines with Patriots

Ron Meyer replaces Ron Erhardt as Pats head coach

Reprinted from the UPI Web Archives

March 9, 1982

FOXBORO, Mass. -- Ron Meyer has promised the New England Patriots will be one of the best-conditioned teams in the NFL next season. And he's getting an early start on his grand plan -- starting his first mini-camp this weekend.

Meyer, who replaced the fired Ron Erhardt as the Pats' coach after New England went 2-14, is allowed an extra mini-camp under NFL rules. It took him a few weeks to complete his coaching staff, but no time at all to schedule the mini-camp.

All but six Patriots are scheduled to report to Schaefer Stadium on Friday. There will be team meetings, tests for strength, flexibility and conditioning, and a practice on Sunday to wrap-up the three-day affair.

The six not participating, because they are free agents, are Harold Jackson, John Lee, Bill Matthews, Tom Owen, Carlos Pennywell and Garry Puetz.

'We want to introduce the players to a year-round flexibility, weight-training and conditioning program, to our basic football philosophy -- what it takes to win,' Meyer said.

'You can't lay out certain idioms or axioms on what it takes to win. We've evaluated the existing personnel on film. It's a beneficial teaching aide but we're not locking ourselves in with a pre-conceived idea of each player. It (the mini-camp) will give us an update on where the players are and give us an idea on where our weaknesses may occur,' the coach said.

Another purpose of the mini-camp will be to allow the players to meet the new coaches. Meyer hired former Oakland assistant Lew Erber to head the offense and former Seattle assistant Jim Mora to head the defense. He also brought six coaches -- and the team's first-ever strength coach -- with him from Southern Methodist.

'It's a two-way street,' Meyer said when queried as to whether veterans might be a bit wary of a new coach and a new system. 'We're also going to be tested. Those guys are going to come in and say, 'who are they, what do they know, what kind of men are they and will they help me to become a better football player?' 'To say it'll be an adverse relationship, I certainly hope not,' Meyer continued. 'It's going to be a 'we'-togetherness rather than a dogmatic type of relationship. We've got too much at stake to worry about personalities.'

One disgruntled veteran, Tim Fox, is expected to report, the team said. Fox is upset with his contract and told the Boston Globe he wouldn't attend the camp. The team said Fox is under contract.



Ron Meyer Patriots Coach

1982 Ron Meyer Coach # 8

The 1982 New England Patriots football team competed in their twenty-third season of professional football and their thirteenth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Ron Meyer in his first of two and a half seasons. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots were a better team this year, and they were able to put the prior 2-14 season behind them. This season was strike-shortened from 16 games to nine. The Patriots finished well at 5-4 and gained a spot in the playoffs. The team finished seventh in the American Football Conference. As noted, the 1982 season was shortened from 16 regular season games to 9, due to the 57-day players strike.

Schedule / Results

Because this was a strange season with games scheduled and rescheduled and canceled and moved from one week to another. We present this seasons games in tabular form rather than by telling the

story of the season as we have since the 1960 season. The information in the table from left to right will be shown in this sequence with commas separating the values in the table. Away games show an “at” in front of the opponent’s name.

- Actual Week
- Original week
- Opponent
- Result (W or L)
- Score
- Record
- Venue
- Attendance

1, 1, at Baltimore Colts, W, 24–13, 1–0, Memorial Stadium, 39,055

2, 2, New York Jets, L, 7–31, 1–1, Schaefer Stadium, 53,515

* , 3, Seattle Seahawks, Canceled, , , Schaefer Stadium,

* , 4, at Buffalo Bills, Canceled, , , Rich Stadium,

* , 5, Cincinnati Bengals, Canceled, , , Schaefer Stadium,

* , 6, at Miami Dolphins, Canceled, , , Miami Orange Bowl,

* , 7, St. Louis Cardinals, Canceled, , , Schaefer Stadium,

* , 8, at New York Jets, Canceled, , , Shea Stadium,

* , 9, Baltimore Colts, Canceled, , , Schaefer Stadium,

* , 10, Buffalo Bills, Canceled (played Jan 2, 1983), , , Schaefer Stadium,

11, 3, at Cleveland Browns, L, 7–10, 1–2, Cleveland Stadium, 51,781

12, 4, Houston Oilers, W, 29–21, 2–2, Schaefer Stadium, 33,602

13, 5, at Chicago Bears, L, 13–26, 2–3, Soldier Field, 36,973

14, 6, Miami Dolphins, W, 3–0 (Snowplow Game), 3–3, Schaefer, 25,716

15, 7, at Seattle Seahawks, W, 16–0, 4–3, Kingdome, 53,457

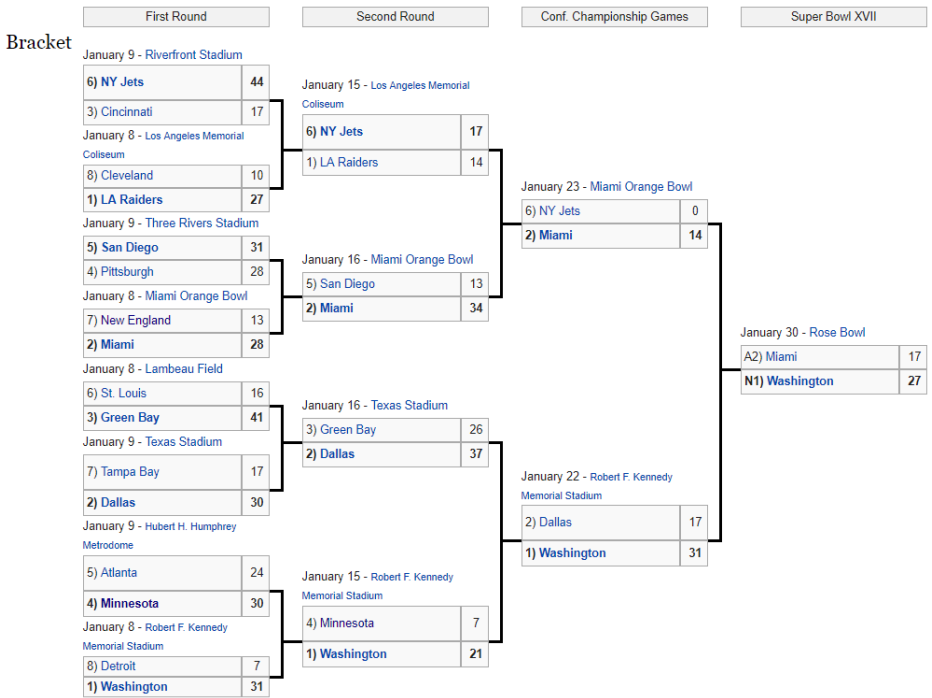
16, 8, at Pittsburgh Steelers, L, 14–37, 4–4, Three Rivers Stadium, 51,515

17, 9, Buffalo Bills, W, 30–19, 5–4, Schaefer Stadium, 36,218

Post Season Bracket Tournament (like March Madness)

If it were not for the fact that in the type of post season tournament that was conducted this year, a team might play just *one* tournament game, there were those who thought perhaps the whole 1982 season should be played as a tournament to make it more exciting—rather than play the nine-game season. Besides the post season tournament, the other big change was that there were no divisions in play this year. The top eight teams of the fourteen teams in each conference played a tournament to decide who would play in the Super Bowl. Almost all teams saw action

The bracket for this unusual and special post season is shown below:



The League Playoffs began on January 8, 1983. The postseason tournament concluded with the Washington Redskins defeating the Miami Dolphins in Super Bowl XVII, 27–17, on January 30, at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California.

As noted, there was a 57-day players' strike which reduced the regular season to nine games. Thus, the league used this special 16-team playoff format (dubbed the "Super Bowl Tournament"), just for this year and never again. As noted, there were no Division standings. Eight teams from each conference were seeded 1–8 based on their regular season records. The Patriots were seventh in their conference.

This year marked the first time in NFL history in which a team that qualified for the playoffs had a losing record (< .500), as both Cleveland and Detroit finished with 4–5 records (.444). Both of these

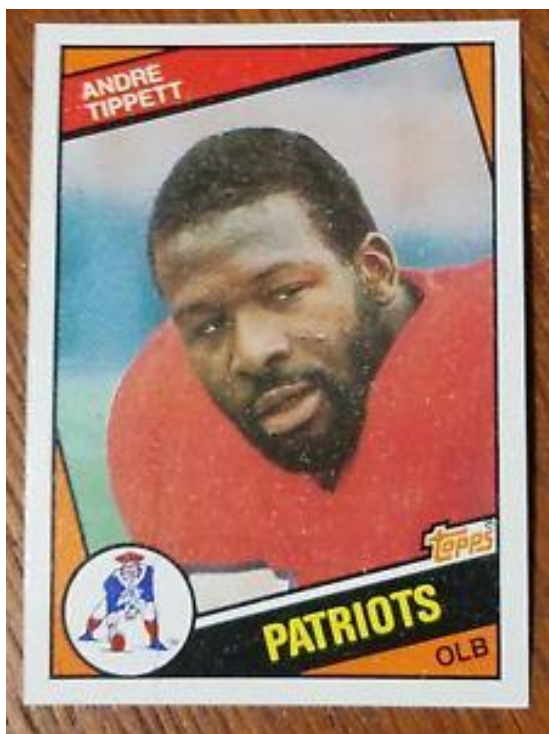
teams lost in the first round of the playoffs as did the Patriots who sported a 5-4 conference record.

AFC: Playoffs Dolphins 28, New England 13

The game began at 4:00 PM EST. The weather was 76 degrees at the Miami Orange Bowl in Miami Florida, the home team of the Dolphins/ 68,842 fans attended the game.

Top Patriots Players Andre Tippett, LB

Andre Tippett played 11 seasons for the Patriots from 1982-93. He is the second player to earn induction to the Hall of Fame after spending his entire career with the Patriots.



Tippett was one of the greatest linebackers in NFL history, spending his entire 12-year career with the Patriots. A strong-side linebacker who excelled at rushing the passer, Tippett set the record for most sacks over a two-year period with 35 in the 1984 and 1985 seasons and holds the franchise record for career sacks with 100.

In 1985, he was named the Defensive Player of the Year for the AFC Champion Patriots. Since his retirement, Tippett has worked for the Patriots

and currently serves as the team's Executive Director of Community Affairs.

Tippett was voted into the Patriots Hall of Fame in 1999 and enshrined into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2008. The Massachusetts native is active in local youth football and coaches a Pop Warner team. Inducted 1999.

1983 Ron Meyer Coach # 8

The 1983 New England Patriots football team competed in their twenty-fourth season of professional football and their fourteenth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Ron Meyer in his second of two and a half seasons. Billy Sullivan was the owner. The Patriots had an 8-8 record this year. This season was back to normal with 16 games being scheduled and played

The Pats tied for second in the AFC East Division. The team played inconsistently all season. Nonetheless in the last game, with an 8-7 record going in, they still had a shot, at a playoff spot as long as they managed a in their final game of the season in Seattle. It did not happen. The Patriots would have problems with turnovers the whole game as rookie quarterback Tony Eason was gobbled up in a 24-6 loss to the Seahawks.

In the home and season opener on September 4, 1983 the Baltimore Colts defeated New England L (23-29) before 45,526. At Miami on Sept 11, the Dolphins beat the Patriots L (24-34) before 59,343. At Schaefer Stadium, on Sept 18, the Patriots beat the New York Jets W (23-13) before 43,182. At Pittsburgh, on Sept 25, New England defeated the Steelers W (28-23) before 58,282

At home at Schaefer Stadium on Oct 2, the San Francisco 49ers whipped the Patriots L (13-33) before 54,293. At Baltimore on Oct 9, the Colts beat the Patriots L (7-12) before 35,618. Then, on Oct 16, at home, the Patriots defeated the San Diego Chargers W (37-21) before 59,016. At Buffalo on Oct 23, the New England Patriots walloped the Bills in a shutout W (31-0) before 60,424.

At Atlanta on Oct 30, the Falcons defeated the Patriots L (13-24) before 47,546. On Nov 6, New England beat the Buffalo Bills at

Schaefer Stadium W (21–7) before 42,604. Then, on Nov 13, the Patriots beat Miami at home W (17–6) before 60,771. The next week on Nov 20, the Cleveland Browns shut out the Patriots L (0-30) before 40,987.

At New York, on Nov 27, the Jets dominated New England L (3-26) before 48,620. The New Orleans Saints lost to the Patriots on Dec 4, 1983 by one TD W (7-0) at Schaefer Stadium before 24,579. At Los Angeles on Dec 11, the Patriots beat the Rams W (21-7) before 46,503. In the final game of the season on Dec 18 at Seattle, if New England won the game, they were in the playoffs. They could not pull it off and were beaten by the Seahawks L (6-24) before 59,688.

1984 Ron Meyer Coach # 8

1984 Raymond Berry Coach # 9

The 1984 New England Patriots football team competed in their twenty-fifth season of professional football and their fifteenth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Ron Meyer in his third of two and a half seasons. Meyer would be replaced halfway through this season after a dispute with owners. Meyer was 5-3 at the time. Billy Sullivan was the owner. Ray Berry took on the task of coaching the second half of the season. He was 4-4. The Patriots had an 9-7 record this year between the two coaches. The Patriots finished second in the AFC East Division.

As noted, head coach Ron Meyer, who had coached the Patriots for the previous two seasons, was fired halfway through this season. Meyer had angered several of his players with public criticism. After the team's 44–22 loss to Miami in Week 8, Meyer decided to fire popular defensive coordinator Rod Rust; Meyer himself was fired by Patriots management shortly thereafter.

The Patriots did not hire Meyer's replacement from within. Instead they found Raymond Berry, who had been New England's receivers coach from 1978 to 1981 under coaches Chuck Fairbanks and Ron Erhardt. Berry had been working in the private sector in Medfield, Massachusetts, when the Patriots called him to replace Meyer.

Berry's first order of business was to immediately rehire Rust.

Under Berry's leadership, the Patriots won four of their last eight games. Berry's importance to the team was reflected less in his initial win-loss record than in the respect he immediately earned in the locker room – "Raymond Berry earned more respect in one day than Ron Meyer earned in three years," according to running back Tony Collins. Everybody has an opinion.

Chapter 9 Coach Ray Berry 1985 to 1989

Coach # 9 Raymond Berry

Year	Coach	League	Conf/Div	Place	Record
1984	Ray Berry (4-4)				
1985	Ray Berry	NFL	AFC-East	3rd	11-5-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won Wild Card Playoffs (at Jets) 26-14 • Won Divisional Playoffs (at Raiders) 27-20 • Won Conference Championship (at Dolphins) 31-14 • Lost Super Bowl XX (vs. Bears) 10-46
1986	Ray Berry	NFL	AFC-East	1st	11-5-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Broncos) 17-22
1987	Ray Berry	NFL	AFC-East	2nd	8-7-0
1988	Ray Berry	NFL	AFC-East	3rd	9-7-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Stephens(OROY)
1989	Ray Berry	NFL	AFC-East	4th	5-11-0
<u>1984-1989 Ray Berry final record (47-39)</u>					

Raymond Berry: Great Person, Great Player, Great Coach



1985 AFC Divisional Playoffs – LA Raiders Vs New England Patriots – 3rd Qtr

Raymond Berry was a great receiver who caught passes for the Colts from a guy who is one of the greatest QB's of all time, Johnny

Unitas. Berry liked to say: "Luck is something which happens when preparation meets opportunity. One play may make the difference in winning or losing a game. I must be prepared to make my own luck."

Those who capture the Raymond Berry story find a man of determination, dedication and desire. Berry, had a little-known handicap which forced him to wear special shoes because one leg was shorter than the other. He did not become a starter on his high school football team until his senior year – even though his father was the coach.

After all is said and done Ray Berry proved his worth. He played as a split end for the Baltimore Colts from 1955 to 1967, and after several assistant coaching positions, he landed the head coach job of the New England Patriots from 1984 to 1989.



Ray Berry was an end for Southern Methodist. He caught just 33 passes in three seasons. It is still a mystery why the Baltimore Colts selected him, even as a "future choice" on the 20th round of the 1954 draft.

He was diminutive and unassuming, and at first appeared not to be destined for football greatness. But you could not tell him that. His subsequent rise to the Pro Football Hall of Fame has been touted as one of American football's most wonderful Cinderella

stories. He made up for his lack of athleticism through rigorous practice and attention to detail, and was known for his near-perfect route running and sure handedness.

Raymond Berry was a definite long-shot to make the Colts. To say Raymond was determined is an understatement. He practiced and practiced, catching passes from anyone willing to throw to him. He concentrated on making the most difficult catches and running perfect patterns to make it easy for any QB to get him the ball.

He was not the fastest receiver in the world either. He had just average speed. He loved football and practiced his way into being one of the best players to ever play the game.

Despite not being fast, he was definitely tricky. By his own count, he developed 88 different moves to get open. He ran patterns within inches of how they were diagramed. If Raymond Berry were to offer advice today to young football players about how to become a great player, I am convinced he would give a three-word sermon: Practice! Practice! Practice! In 1956, when Johnny Unitas became the Colts' QB, Berry put all of his many hours of practice to good use.

Together, Berry and Unitas gave the Baltimore Colts one of the greatest pass-catch teams of all time. Three straight times Raymond Berry led the league in receptions and caught a then-record 631 passes for 9,275 yards and 68 touchdowns in his 13-year career. A first-or-second-team All-Pro choice in 1957 through 1961 and again in 1965, Ray Berry was selected to play in six Pro Bowl games during his career. A sure-handed receiver, Berry holds a record nobody keeps. He fumbled only once in 13 years.

The pundits say that his greatest football moment was in the famous overtime 1958 NFL Championship Game. He set what was then a record with 12 catches for 178 yards and a touchdown. Several of his grabs came in the Colts' life-or-death, last minute drive to gain the tying touchdown. In the overtime period, two receptions good for 33 yards were the major gains in Baltimore's drive for the winning score. You guessed it. It was Ray Berry, who was the difference maker. He was a difference maker as a coach for the Patriots also.

With the Colts, Berry led the NFL in receptions and receiving yards three times and in receiving touchdowns twice, and he was invited to six Pro Bowls. He and the Colts won consecutive NFL

championships, including the 1958 NFL Championship Game—known as "The Greatest Game Ever Played"—in which Berry caught 12 passes for 178 yards and a touchdown. As a head coach, he led the Patriots to Super Bowl XX following the 1985 season, where his team was defeated by the Chicago Bears, 46–10.

As noted, Berry was a favorite target of quarterback Johnny Unitas, and the two were regarded as the dominant passing and receiving duo of their era.

After his playing career, Berry coached wide receivers for the Dallas Cowboys, the University of Arkansas, Detroit Lions, Cleveland Browns, and Patriots. He became the Patriots' head coach in 1984 and held that position through 1989, amassing 48 wins and 39 losses.

In recognition of his playing career, Berry was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1973. He is a member of the NFL 75th Anniversary All-Time Team as one of the best players of the NFL's first 75 years. His number 82 jersey is retired by the Indianapolis Colts and he is a member of the Patriots' 1980s All-Decade Team. He was a fine coach but he coached at a time in Patriot's history in which it was tough to be a great coach.

1985 Raymond Berry Coach # 9

The 1985 New England Patriots football team competed in their twenty-sixth season of professional football and their sixteenth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Ray Berry in his first full season of five and a half seasons. Berry replaced Ron Meyer half way through the 1984 season (4-4). Billy Sullivan was the owner. Patrick Sullivan was the GM. The Patriots had a nice 11-5 record this year. It was good enough for third place in the AFC East Division. Their fine record got them a wild-card berth and coach Berry took them to the Super Bowl game played in 1986. After winning three playoff games, the Bears beat the Patriots in the Super Bowl for the big Cigar.

Think about this. When hired, Ray Berry was not working in the NFL at the time he was snagged mid-season in 984 to coach the Patriots. One year later, he had them in the Super Bowl. Let that

sink in. Please. It is a tribute to New England Coach Ray Berry and the New England organization was not known at the time, at least, as the most welcoming spot for a great coach to get comfortable enough to stay the course or to be asked to stay the course.

The Playoffs got the Pats to the big game.

You may not believe the trivia about the 1985 Patriots ascendancy to the Super Bowl Game. Maybe it is not trivia. Maybe it was vital. The 1985 Patriots became the first team in NFL history ever to advance to the Super Bowl by winning 3 playoff games on the road, defeating the New York Jets 26–14, the Los Angeles Raiders, 27–20, and then they went on to stun the football world and did the impossible as they pulled out a massive and stunning upset over the Miami Dolphins 31–14, in the AFC Championship game.

The Patriots' win in Miami was their first victory in that stadium since 1969. The win over the Dolphins in that game has gone down as one of the greatest upsets in NFL history, as the Dolphins were heavily favored. Ray Berry told his team they could win.

But despite the Patriots' success in the playoffs, they proved unable to compete with the acclaimed 17–1 Chicago Bears in Super Bowl XX, losing 46–10 in what was at the time the most lopsided defeat in Super Bowl history.

Coach Ray Berry took 100% of the blame for the Super Bowl loss. That was the kind of guy he was. "We couldn't protect the quarterback, and that was my fault. I couldn't come up with a system to handle the Bears' pass rush," head coach Raymond Berry recognized and admitted.

1986 Raymond Berry Coach # 9

The 1986 New England Patriots football team competed in their twenty-seventh season of professional football and their seventeenth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were

led by Ray Berry in his second full season of five and a half seasons. Patrick Sullivan was the GM. The Patriots had a nice 11-5 record this year for the second season in a row. It was good enough for first place in the AFC East Division.

Their fine record got them past having to play in a wild-card game as they simply advanced to the AFC v NFC championship game. Unfortunately, they lost that game by a skosh, 22-17 to the Broncos and that was their last playoff game for 1986. The Giants would beat the Broncos 39-20 in the Super Bowl. A lot of Giants were found smoking those huge cigars and wearing those huge rings.

Divisional Playoffs: Mile High Stadium, Denver **Denver Broncos beat Patriots L (22–17) before 76,105**

It was a close ball game, but the Patriots did start off behind. Broncos QB John Elway ran for a touchdown and passed for another one as it was an Elway show all the way for Denver over the Patriots—but the game was darn close. Denver running back Sammy Winder put in a nice 102 yards and caught a pass for another 16 to help move the score.

The one battle won by New England was *turnovers*, but this was a rare game in which that was not a deciding factor. Winning turnovers by 2-0, the Pats were outgained on the ground by 441 to 271. The worst part of the Patriots game was that the O-line permitted five sacks of NE QB Tony Eason.

1987 Raymond Berry Coach # 9

The 1987 New England Patriots football team competed in their twenty-eighth season of professional football and their seventeenth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Ray Berry in his third full season of five and a half seasons. Billy Sullivan was the owner in his last year at the top spot. Patrick Sullivan was the GM. The Patriots had a winning 8-7 record in this strike-shortened season. It was good enough for a second-place tie in the AFC East Division.

Before we discuss the 1987 regular season, let's look at a great article for the times by Elizabeth Merrill in June 2011. She is an ESPN Senior Writer. She penned this piece looking back into 1987 and she makes some sense out of the players / owners' turbulence of the time. The article discusses the replacement player environment and is very good though it is not specific to New England. Her great perspective on these times is titled:

NFL replacements part of history

NFL owners hate the idea of a strike today as much as they hated it back when. They just figured out how to keep the peace.

After the strike that shortened the season to 9 games, the peace lasted 5 years, but the players say that during that time, they watched the NFL owners just get richer, with even bigger TV contract incomes. The players had never gotten what they felt was their due-- 55% of owners gross. But, they were still looking for it,

While both sides took losses in the 1982 strike, it was widely considered that the players won. The players felt the owners would yield again. They never dreamed the owners would go on with a football season....without them. But, they did. Enter the replacement players.

The players finished the first two weeks of the 1987 season, much like they had done in '82. Players would leave their sidelines in both work stoppages just before the kickoff, come out to half way point of the field, and shake hands to the Boos of the fans. After week two, football on Sundays stopped.

But, just for one week. This time the owners had a plan. They got players to cross the picket lines. In their normal lives, these new NFL players were Cops, Bankers, Cooks—anyone who had played a little college ball lined up to try out for their local teams. The coaches were not on strike. The players union did not like that one bit and so the new guys were called scabs, and the teams they played

for got all kinds of new nick-names. They are funny but these times were quite serious:

- Chicago Spare Bears
- New Orleans Saint-Elsewheres
- San Francisco Phony Niners
- Miami Dolfinks
- Seattle SeaScabs
- Los Angeles Scabs.

Most guys who were not in the NFL and never were, simply could not help themselves. They saw this as their chance of a lifetime. Coaches like before, urged teams players not to strike but to come out and play--stick together. Some teams did not stick to this plan.

The most famous of the line crossers were the Dallas Cowboys. Several hall of fame players joined in with scrubs, and the Cowboys LOST to a 100% replacement team for the Washington Redskins. The Skins in fact, were the only team without a single line-crosser, and some say this unity helped propel them to the Super Bowl that year. That, and the fact the real teams would actually get together and practice, on their own. The skins upset of Dallas that season even served as the backdrop for a movie, "The Replacements" with Keanu Reeves. I think it is OK with the players and the NFL if you choose to go see the movie.

Games of the 1987 Season – Coach Berry

Some NE Patriots Season Particulars

The 1987 NFL season featured a number of games that were predominantly played by replacement players as the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA) players were on strike from weeks four to six. The New England Patriots were 8-7 in the shortened season and the team was 2-1 using replacement players season ended with Super Bowl XXII, with the Washington Redskins defeating the Denver Broncos 42–10 at Jack Murphy Stadium in San Diego. The Broncos suffered their second

consecutive Super Bowl defeat. At this point it had been just a few years since the Broncos beat the Pats in the Super Bowl

The Replacement players were quite active and actually helpful to New England in 1987. Having Raymond Berry as coach had to help getting everything ready to play. The pundits joked about the positive impact of the “new” players on performance. For example, placement player Mike LeBlanc gave the team something it did not have in quite a while—a running game. Le Blanc was a nice addition though like all replacement players, he was unexpected at the beginning of the season.

Those who like to gobble steam statistics already know that in 1986, the Patriots became the first team in 20 years to average less than 3 yards a carry. Yet, on October 11 in the second replacement game, Le Blanc accumulated 213 yards rushing as New England beat the Buffalo Bills 14-7.

LeBlanc ironically had just been giving his “don’t call us” papers from Winnipeg of the CFL and he was then signed by the Patriots as a replacement, had gained 146 yards on 35 carries. Though LeBlanc ran circles around the Bills, his showing was not viewed by many New England fans. He outran the Bills before the smallest Sullivan Stadium crowd ever -- 11,878 rain-soaked fans. Meanwhile, the striking Patriots were quietly walked the picket line.

Nobody was messing with anybody outside the stadium. No incidents were reported on the New England picket line during the second week of demonstrations by striking NFL players at games played by replacement players.

LeBlanc assured a major running attack that accumulated the most New England rushing yards since the final game of the 1985 season, the year in which the Patriots used a ground attack to reach the Super Bowl.

LeBlanc played exactly like we thought he would before we got him, New England coach Raymond Berry said. 'He cut and slashed all over the place.'

'I don't know if we planned on running as much as we did, I think the weather had a lot to do with that. The running game was there, and we stayed with it. We moved the ball fairly well,' said New England running back Bruce Hansen.

While they got excellence from LeBlanc, the New England passing game was pitiful. Bob Bleier completed just 4 of 13 throws for 43 yards and he gave up an interception.

Ray Berry described it aptly but was happy for the win: 'It's kind of like stepping into the batter's box in major-league baseball and hitting a 95-mph fastball,' said Berry of the poor passing game. 'It's a very advanced skill and takes time in the amount of work preparation. It's just easier handing the ball off.'

The Patriots put up with a lot by way of the elements. They dealt with a cold rain, stiff winds and they endured three blocked punts. Nonetheless they won the game, bringing their record to 2-2. This win moved the Patriots into a four-way tie for first place in the AFC East. As the definition of humor involves the unusual, having the defeated Bills, at 1-3, after this game meant that they were the only team in the division that was not in first place.

The Bills were simply outgained 256 yards to 168, struggled on offense for the second consecutive week. They had gotten shellacked by Indianapolis 47-6 just last week. The Bill coach offered commentary of the game:

'We missed too many tackles today,' Bills coach Marv Levy said. 'The players tried harder and I'm proud of them for that. They played with spirit and I admire them for that.'

New England began with a 7-0 lead at 8:34 of the first quarter on a Carl Woods 4-yard touchdown run. LeBlanc had a 42-yard burst that put New England on the 23-yard line. Inching closer, at 6:36 left in the third quarter, Bleier scored on a 1-yard touchdown run to raise New England's lead to 14-0. The score had been set up when linebacker Greg Moore recovered quarterback Willie Totten's fumbled snap at the Buffalo 19. LeBlanc took it in the 14 yards to register the score.

Buffalo made it to 14-7 with 3:03 gone in the fourth quarter. Totten tossed a 13-yard touchdown pass to Thad McFadden. Buffalo

linebacker Scott Watters partially blocked Alan Herline's punt to put the Bills on the Patriot 16. The Bills then had a shot at tying the game when big defensive lineman Dino Mangiero sacked Totten for an 8-yard loss to the New England 30 as time went to zero.

The reason none of the names in the *1987 game 4 highlights* are familiar is because even the fans at the time had no idea who the no-name replacement players were. After packing in about 60,000 fans each game, having just 11,000 at this Patriots game meant there were not too many in the stands to be telling tall tales about the replacement player game they saw that day.

The 1987 Games

On Sept 13, the Patriots, with their regular players in uniform, won their home and season opener against the Miami Dolphins W (28–21) before 54,642. At New York, with the normal players on the field at Shea Stadium, the Jets beat the Patriots L (24-43) before 70,847. The September 28 game against Washington's Redskins was canceled due to the player's strike. On October 4, the Cleveland Broan's replacement players defeated the New England Patriot's replacement players L (10-20) before 14,830. Notice the difference in the # of fans. The rest of the season was replacement players.

At home on Oct 11, at home, with a crisp running attack led by Replacement Mike LeBlanc, New England defeated Buffalo Bills W (14–7) before 11,878. At Houston, in the last replacement player game of 1987, the Patriots defeated the Oilers W (21-7) before 26,294. On Oct 25, at Indianapolis, the regular players were back in action after the strike, and the Colts had their way with the Patriots L (16-30) before 48,850. On Nov 1, at home, the Patriots beat the Los Angeles Raiders W (26–23) before 60,664. At New York, on Nov 8, the Giants defeated New England L (10-17) before 73,817) at Giants Stadium in the Meadowlands.

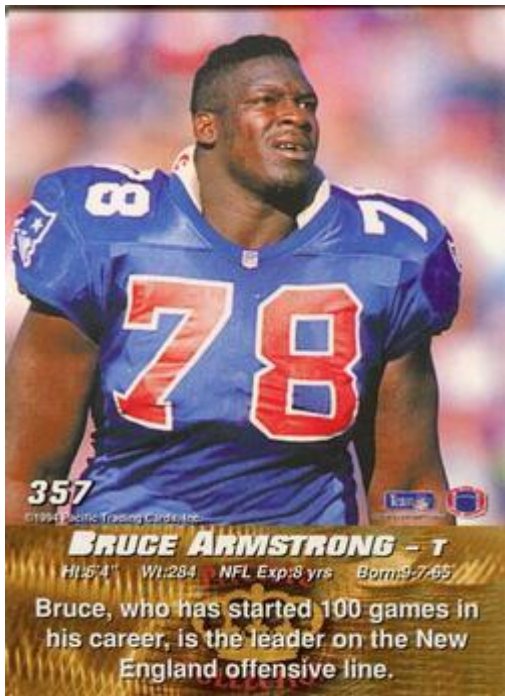
On Nov15, at home in Sullivan Stadium, the Dallas Cowboys defeated the New England Patriots L (17-23) before 60,567. At home on Nov 22, New England shut-out Indianapolis before 56,906. At home again the following week, on Nov 29, the Eagles beat the

Patriots L (31-34) before 54,198. At Denver on Dec 6, the Broncos beat the Patriots L (20-31) before 75,795.

On Dec 13, the Patriots whipped the New York Jets W 42-20 before 60,617. On Dec 14, at Buffalo before 74,945, the Patriots beat the Bills W (13-7) bringing the record to 7-7. At Miami on Dec 21, the Patriots beat the Dolphins W (24-10) before 61,192 finishing the strike-shortened season at 8-7.

Top Patriots Players Bruce Armstrong, T

When it comes to strong men and iron men and endurance men, the name Armstrong would be a good name to give out to humans if you were God and that was part of the gift set you were giving. With few credits, Bruce Armstrong went to work every day on the football field amassing statistics and game statistics that puts him at the top of the iron-man classic if it were ever held.



Armstrong holds the Patriots team record with 212 games played, starting in every one of them. A six-time Pro Bowl participant, he was only one of three players in league history to play with the same team in three different decades. He is tough as nails though somewhat undersized for his tackle position. Nonetheless, Bruce Armstrong, a guy with the toughest name in the league lived up to his God-given name.

Armstrong anchored the Patriots' offensive line

through the late 1980s and 1990s. He played the last eight games of the 1999 season with three torn ligaments in his right knee and was name an alternate to the Pro Bowl that season. His battles with Buffalo's Hall of Fame defensive end Bruce Smith were legendary

during the peak of both players' careers. Armstrong was selected for the Patriots Hall of Fame in 2001. Inducted 2001.

1988 Raymond Berry Coach # 9

The 1988 New England Patriots football team competed in their twenty-ninth season of professional football and their nineteenth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Ray Berry in his fourth full season of five and a half seasons. Victor Kiam bought the Patriots this year from 28-year owner Billy Sullivan and he assumed #1 duties this year. Patrick Sullivan remained as the GM. They went back to a sixteen-week schedule after the strike, the Patriots had a winning 9-7 record this year. It was good enough for a tie for second place in the AFC East Division.

It would take until 1994 for the Patriots to record another winning record. As noted, for this season, the Patriots slightly improved on their 8-7 record 1987, winning one more game due to one game being cancelled the previous season. Despite the winning record, the Patriots again did not reach the postseason. They finished tied for second place in the AFC East with the arch rival Colts, but when the record books were closed for 1988, they actually finished in 3rd place because the Colts had a better record against common opponents than the Patriots did.

1989 Raymond Berry Coach # 9

The 1989 New England Patriots football team competed in their thirtieth season of professional football and their twentieth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Ray Berry in his fifth and final full season of five and a half seasons (1/2 season in 1984). Victor Kiam was the owner. Patrick Sullivan remained as the GM. The Patriots had their worst record of Ray Berry's tenure at 5-11 this season. It was good enough for fourth place in the AFC East Division.

As a side note, the Patriots' pass defense surrendered 7.64 yards-per-attempt in 1989, one of the ten worst totals in NFL history. 1989 was not one of the Pats finest seasons for sure but looking back from 2018, we know that there are many fine seasons to come after 1994.

After the season, Head Coach Raymond Berry was fired and replaced by Rod Rust.

Working through the 1989 side notes, we've got a big one coming up. Looking at the end of the season, Rod Rust was not first choice for being the new coach. Before Parcells, Carroll, and Belichick, Victor Kiam an owner who looked at the cause and effects of having a winning team, winning, tried to hire another Hall of Fame coach before the age of the big three noted above.

The Boston Globe's late, great Will McDonough had it on good authority that, then-Patriots owner Victor Kiam offered New England's head coaching /G.M. roles to former 49ers coach Bill Walsh. However, Walsh turned down the offer, citing his commitment to continue working for NBC, the Globe reported. Still, a coaching change was coming for New England, which had fallen to 5-11 with Ray Berry in '89.

After the 1989 season, the Patriots parted ways with head coach Raymond Berry. There is always a good reason and it was not the great coaching with little talent that Berry had done before 1989. It was reported as a conflict over the hiring of New England's offensive and defensive coordinators.

Berry himself knew a little bit about football and how to be a great as he was a Hall of Fame wide receiver. He was a successful NFL head coach, too. He led the Patriots to a 51-41 mark, with New England making the Super Bowl for the first time in its history in his first full season on the job. Overall, the Patriots won more than they lost in four of his full campaigns from 1985-1988.

When Walsh said no; the Patriots would select Steelers defensive coordinator Rod Rust to replace Berry, but he did not last very long and was fired after one year at the helm in 1990. New England went from 5-11 to 1-15 proving that it can get worse. It was the league's worst record in 1990.

The Pats then looked to Syracuse head coach Dick McPherson, who was a great coach at Syracuse. He improved their lot and took the team to a 6-10 mark in '91. However, even though MacPherson was a great immortal coach at Syracuse, it got worse the following year with a 2-14 mark in '92. MacPherson had missed seven games because of illness. He was given no more chances and was replaced in January 1993.

After this, the Patriots had an unlimited wallet and they looked to New York to hire Super Bowl Bill Parcells. Parcells took the Patriots to the playoffs in his second season and the Super Bowl in his fourth season. Then came the three-season stint for Pete Carroll (1997-1999), who was then replaced by Belichick.

Hard as it is to believe before this great trio of coaches, there was a 9-39 stretch in which the Patriots endured in the three seasons after Berry's departure. Would things have been different if the Patriots lured Walsh east, or if Berry had stayed on? One would presume so, but nobody has a crystal ball.

If Walsh succeeded in New England, would Parcells ever have had reason to join the franchise? How would franchise history have been altered?

We'll never know. But we do know this: Raymond Berry, like Belichick and Carroll, won more than he lost in his time in Foxboro, and he has his own spot in Patriots history.

Before we completely close out the Ray Berry Era, I would like to share a nicely done article by Dan Flaherty to serve as a closing article for Raymond Berry, who considering the obstacles he overcame, was a fine coach for sure.

Raymond Berry: A Great Patriots Coach

If we walk back to December 1989, the Patriots were looking to be consistent winners and they knew a great coach mattered. They were looking at hall of Fame type people.

The story told by the late, great Will McDonough of the Boston Globe, was that before Robert Kraft, then-Patriots owner Victor Kiam offered New England's head coaching /G.M. roles to former 49ers coach Bill Walsh. However, Walsh turned down the offer, citing his commitment to continue working for NBC, as the Globe reported.

Still, one could feel a coaching change was coming for New England, which fell to 5-11 in 1989. The Patriots had a great coach, Ray Berry who had gotten them into the Super Bowl but the team had a history of disputes between good coaches and team management.

The Patriots must not have thought Berry was as special as they parted ways over a dispute. It was apparently over a conflict about the hiring of New England's offensive and defensive coordinators.

A Hall of Fame wide receiver, Berry was already a a successful NFL head coach, too. He led the Patriots to a 51-41 mark, with New England making the Super Bowl for the first time in its history in his first full season on the job. Overall, the Patriots posted winning records in his first four full campaigns (1985-1988). That was unusual for sure for the early patriots.

The Patriots would tab Steelers defensive coordinator Rod Rust to replace Berry, but he was fired after New England was a league-worst 1-15 in 1990. The Pats then turned to Syracuse head coach Dick McPherson, who led New England to a 6-10 mark in '91. However, New England was 2-14 in '92, with McPherson missing seven games because of illness. McPherson had earned his stripes at Syracuse and was surely a great college football coach.

He was replaced in January 1993. From there, the Patriots hired Parcells, who led New England to the playoffs in his second season. My perception at the time was that Bill Parcells could work with

guano if need be and he could make it smell sweet. He got the Pats into a Super Bowl in his fourth year. Then came the three-season stint for Pete Carroll (1997-1999), who was replaced by Belichick.

But before that trio of great coaches came the franchise endured a 9-39 stretch in the three seasons after Berry's departure. Would things have been different if the Patriots lured Walsh to the east, or if Berry stayed on? If Walsh succeeded in New England, would Parcells ever have had reason to join the franchise? How would franchise history have been altered? Would Bill Belichick be kicking but today for the Patriots?

You and I will never know. But we do know this: Raymond Berry, just like Belichick and Carroll, won more than he lost in his time in Foxborough, and he surely has his own great spot in Patriots history

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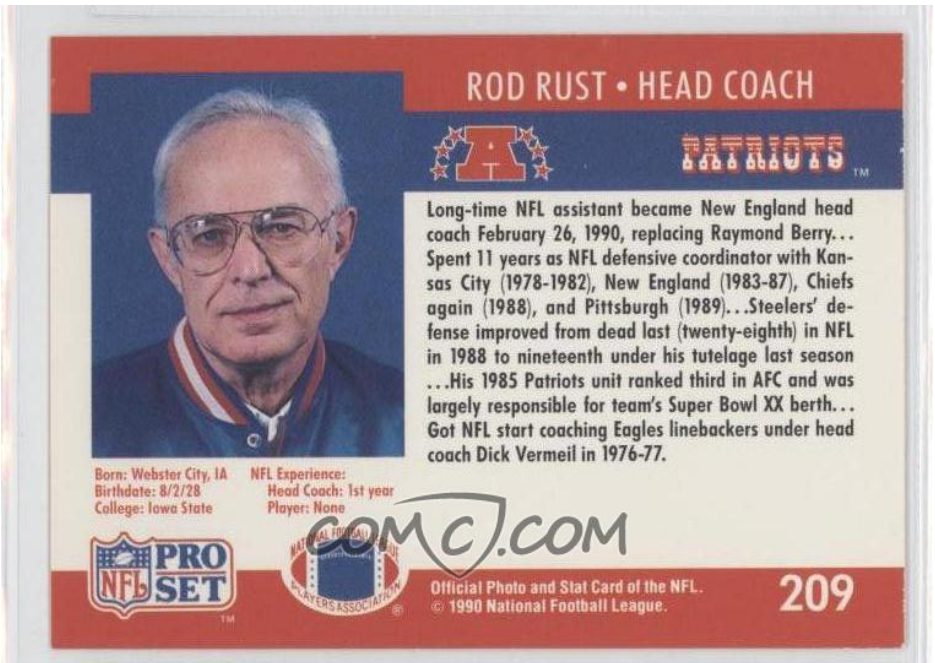
Chapter 10 Rod Rust Era, 1990

Coach #10 Rod Rust

Coach #11 Dick MacPherson

Year	Coach	League	Conf/Div	Place	Record
1990	Rod Rust	NFL	AFC-East	5th	1-15-0

1990 Rod Rust final record (1-15)



Coach Rod Rust Pro Football Card

1990 Rod Rust #10

The 1990 New England Patriots football team competed in their thirty-first season of professional football and their twenty-first season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Rod Rust in his first of one full season. Victor Kiam was the owner. Patrick Sullivan was the GM. The Patriots outdid their final Ray Berry 5-11 record with an even worse 1-15 record this year. It was last in the AFC East Division and last in the entire league.

This was the worst record in franchise history. When it looked like they could do no worse, they managed to do the impossible. For example, they lost a nationally televised game to the Washington Redskins in which they were down 9–0 before the Redskins even ran an offensive play. The Redskins' two first-quarter scores had come on a Kurt Gouveia fumble return for a touchdown (#1), and after the kickoff, the Patriots snapped the ball out of the end zone for a safety. The rain was coming down in buckets and so the announced crowd for the game was 22,286.

In a humiliating Week 9 blowout loss in Philadelphia, Eagles' QB Randall Cunningham scored on a long run in which the defense was split between Patriots who did not even try to tackle Cunningham and another few who completely missed him on such attempts. To make it worst, this became the most played highlight reel on all the national NFL-related TV shows (including ESPN's NFL Primetime and Monday Night Football). It unfortunately made the 1990 Patriots' incompetence both a national story and a collective joke. It was not good.

Eventually to end the pain, the Patriots' final game of the season finally came. It was against the eventual Super Bowl champion New York Giants. The game drew a sellout crowd to Foxboro, but over 40,000 fans were rooting for the visitors, as tickets to Giants home games (the Giants were having a banner year) were nearly impossible to come by for non-season-ticket holders.

The Patriots' accumulated a negative-265 point-differential (181 points scored, 446 points surrendered). It was the worst total of any team in the 1990s. Raymond Berry began to look like a miracle worker for taking this team to five wins in the prior season.

The Patriots opponents this year were almost all top teams. Compared with the previous season's Dallas Cowboys, the Patriots played only three teams with non-winning records – divisional rivals the Indianapolis Colts and New York Jets plus one game against the Phoenix Cardinals – all season.

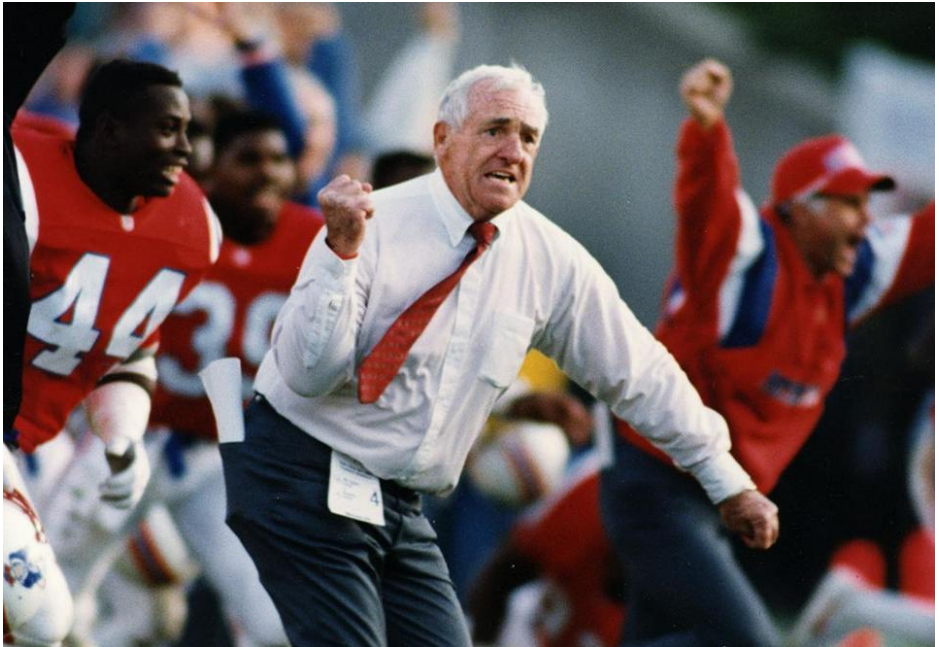
The 1990 Patriots and 1981 Baltimore Colts are the only NFL teams since 1940 to have eleven losses during which they never led in one season. No team wants records or notable acts such as these.

The 1990 Patriots became the third team to end a season at 1-15, and were matched by the 1991 Colts the following year. They also tied the 1976 Tampa Bay Buccaneers for most consecutive losses inside one season (the Buccaneers lost all 14 games at a time when the NFL had not adopted a 16-game schedule yet). The Bucs record later was eclipsed by the 15-straight losing 2001 Carolina Panthers. It was then topped by the 0-16 2008 Detroit Lions and the most recent 0-16 2017 Cleveland Browns.

Budweiser renamed Schaefer Stadium in 1983 to Sullivan Stadium in honor of the long-term owner family. In 1990, shortly after the Sullivan's sold their majority interest in the team to Victor Kiam, the stadium was officially renamed to "Foxboro Stadium." Note that the official spelling of the town in which the stadium is built is "Foxborough," the shorter spelling is used for the stadium.

Chapter 11 Dick MacPherson Era, 1991-1992

1991 Dick MacPherson NFL	AFC-East	4th	6-10-0
• Leonard Russell(OROY)			
1992 Dick MacPherson NFL	AFC-East	5th	2-14-0
<u>1991-1992 Dick MacPherson final record (8-24-0)</u>			



1991 Dick MacPherson #11

The 1991 New England Patriots football team competed in their thirty-second season of professional football and their twenty-second season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Dick MacPherson in his first of two seasons with the team. Victor Kiam was the owner. Nobody carried the GM tie in 1991. The Patriots record was 6-10-0 and they finished in fourth place in the AFC East Division.

This year was not very good; but it was better than the 1-15 from the prior year under Coach Rust. Though the Patriots scored twenty or more points just five times during the 1991 season, they were able to

upset playoff-bound teams such as the Houston Oilers, Buffalo Bills and New York Jets. This was the last season where the Patriots were owned by Victor Kiam, who was forced to sell the team to St. Louis businessman James Orthwein in order to settle a debt. The Franchise would change hands again before it found its way into the hands of the Kraft family, the current owners.

Top Patriot Players Ben Coates, TE

Ben Coates was a receiving machine. It is that simple. He played in 142 games over nine seasons as a Patriot and he started 105 of those games.

When the 2010 season began, Coates was third all-time in team history in receptions (490), fourth in receiving yards (5,471) and second in receiving touchdowns (50) – all tops among tight ends in Patriots annals.

In 1994, Coates had set a single-season record for receptions by a tight end with 96 (now tied for third). But, he still holds the franchise record for receptions by a tight end. He also led the team in touchdown receptions for six straight seasons between 1993 and 1998 and led the team in overall receptions five times.



Coates was so good he received a lot of great honors for his fine play. For example, he was named to the Patriots Team of the Century in 2000 and he ranks in the top 10 all-time among NFL tight ends in career receptions, yards and touchdowns.

When Drew Bledsoe was the man on the scene for Bill Parcells and Pete Carroll and early on for Bill Belichick, Coates was Drew

Bledsoe's go-to receiver throughout his career. He became a fan favorite for his dependability, toughness and performance. Coates was no pushover. He capped off his career with the Baltimore Ravens, where he added his talents to their 2000 Super Bowl championship team. He was inducted into the Patriots Hall of Fame in 2008—well deserved.

1992 Dick MacPherson #11

The 1992 New England Patriots football team competed in their thirty-third season of professional football and their twenty-third season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Dick MacPherson in his last of two seasons with the team. James Orthwein. Orthwein would be an active owner of the New England Patriots during the 1992 and 1993 seasons. He sold the

team in 1994. Nobody carried the GM tie in 1992. The Patriots record was 2-14, and they finished in fifth (last) place in the AFC East Division.

Every Patriot season during this period had a series of sub-plots and Dick MacPherson's swan-song season (1992) is no different. The Patriots' two wins in weeks eleven and twelve of the 1992 season came after a horrendous 0-9 start, and they were followed by a five-game losing streak to end the season. They received the first overall pick in the following year's draft. Nobody would consider trading that record for a #1 draft pick.

This was the first season of the ownership bonanza as this version of the team was owned by James Orthwein. He bought the team from previous owner Victor Kiam to settle a debt. This was also the last season in which Dick MacPherson would be the head coach after a two-year tenure. It was also the last season to feature the Patriots' original colors and logo on their primary uniforms, which were overhauled for use in the following season. Things were changing. Soon the Patriots would begin to win games again.

Chapter 12 Coach Bill Parcells 1993 to 1996

Coach #12 Bill Parcells

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>League</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Pl</u>	<u>W-L-T</u>
1993	Bill Parcells	NFL	AFC-East	4th		5 11 0
1994	Bill Parcells	NFL	AFC-East	2nd		10 6 0
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost Wild Card Playoffs (at Browns) 13–20 • Bill Parcells(COY)[18]
1995	Bill Parcells	NFL	AFC-East	4th		6 10 0
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curtis Martin(OROY)
1996	Bill Parcells	NFL	AFC-East	1st		11 5 0
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won Divisional Playoffs(Steelers) 28–3 • Won Conference Championship(Jaguars) 20–6 • Lost Super Bowl XXXI (vs. Packers) 21–35
<u>1993-1996 Bill Parcells final record (32-32-0)</u>						



Coach Bill Parcells taking it seriously against Indianapolis

1993 Bill Parcells #12

The 1993 New England Patriots football team competed in their thirty-fourth season of professional football and their twenty-fourth

season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots hired Bill Parcells to turn the team around after he had brought two world championship Super Bowl victories to the New York Giants in his eight years with the last one being in 1990 at a time in which the Patriots were floundering. So, the 1993 team was led by Bill Parcells in his first of four seasons with the team. James Orthwein was still the owner this year. He sold the team in 1994. Nobody carried the GM title in 1993. The Patriots record was 5-11 even with Bill Parcells running the show. They finished in fourth place in the AFC East Division.

Lots was happening organizationally and preparation-ally in 1993. Bill Parcells was brought to New England to create a champion. Could he do it? Could he wait it out? We'll see soon.

Additional Information

With ownership changes, there are most often rumors of planned moves for the teams affected. They were aplenty when Orthwein from St. Louis took over the Patriots club as owner. There were natural rumors that the team would move to St. Louis and become the Stallions (even to the point of a team logo being unveiled and hats being printed). Despite the confusion, the Patriots ran through the year. It was the first at New England as head coach for Bill Parcells but as an assistant, he had familiarity with Patriot operations.

He had been a linebackers' coach in Foxboro in 1980 under Ron Erhardt. The Patriots drafted Drew Bledsoe as the #1 pick in 1993 and he was named to be the starter in his first year with the club. As noted, big changes were afoot in the organization even before the team took the field this season. Bill Parcells cleaned house.

All coaches from the 1992 season with the exception of Dante Scarnecchia and Bobby Grier were fired and replaced with new ones. Scarnecchia would become a special assistant while Grier would move to the front office. The roster had undergone substantial changes; among the holdovers from the 1992 season were Marv Cook, Ben Coates, Kevin Turner, Michael Timpson, Sam Gash, Greg McMurtry, Vincent Brown, Maurice Hurst, Leonard Russell,

Bruce Armstrong, Mike Arthur, and Pat Harlow. The 1993 season was also the first season the current Patriots logo and font was used (though the current variation would undergo a tweak in 2000 with a slight color change).

The Patriots got off to a poor start when they hit the field. They lost their first four games, even after forcing overtime against the Lions and seeing a last-minute field goal attempt against Seattle bounce off the crossbar.

In Week 5, Drew Bledsoe was injured, Scott Secules was named the starting quarterback, and he managed to win the game with two passing touchdowns and one rushing TD in the team's close 23–21 win over the Cardinals. Scott Secules was then benched after a 28–14 loss to the Oilers. Bledsoe started for the Patriots but did not set any records on fire. In fact, he stunk out the place along with the rest of the team.

The Pats lost seven straight before eking out a 7–2 win against the Bengals (it was the last occurrence until the 2013 Jaguars of a team scoring only a safety in a game). After this win, the team managed a 20–17 victory over the Cleveland Browns coached by Parcells' longtime assistant Bill Belichick and then they unloaded a 38–0 massacre of the Indianapolis Colts in brutal wind-chill conditions.

The season ended none-too-soon on January 2, 1994, with many in the sellout crowd at Foxboro Stadium believing it would be the final ever game for the New England Patriots before moving to St. Louis; unknown to most, though, was that stadium owner Robert Kraft was working to force the selling of the team to him, and his control of the team's lease ensured no move could take place until 2002 at the earliest.

Before we discuss the season finale in Parcells first year, let me bring you up to date on what was happening besides the name changes of Schaefer Stadium to Sullivan Stadium to Foxboro Stadium. The ownership of the stadium was in flux and this fact is one of the only facts that are on the side of New England Fans wanting to keep an NFL franchise in Boston and surrounds.

We know that Sullivan's financial troubles ultimately forced him to sell controlling interest of the Patriots to Victor Kiam in 1988. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the stadium itself lapsed into bankruptcy. Enter Robert Kraft, current owner.

In 1988, Kraft outbid several competitors, including Kiam, to buy the stadium out of bankruptcy court from Sullivan for \$22 million. In other words, from 1988-on, neither Sullivan, nor Kiam, nor Orthwein owned the stadium. It was the sole possession of Robert Kraft. Sullivan was ready to bail as he needed the cash and he wanted as much as he could get for the stadium built less than 20 years earlier for about \$7 million. Kraft was ready to pay a reasonable amount.

For many without alternative motives, the stadium appeared to be cheap and outdated on its opening day. For potential purchasers, the facility was considered to be outdated by reasonable standards for its day and nearly worthless. However, the purchase price for the lucky buyer included the stadium's lease to the Patriots, which ran through 2001. Kraft won the bid.

Those who examined the lease have concluded that it was ironclad enough to end Sullivan's three-decade involvement with the Patriots. And, so, when Sullivan and Kiam tried to move the team to Jacksonville, Kraft refused to let them break the lease. He, as a stadium owner was able to exert a New-England influence on the transaction. As a result, when Kiam was nearly brought down by bad investments of his own, he was forced to sell the Patriots team to somebody. That somebody happened to be James Orthwein.

Ever since Orthwein had bought the team in 1992, there had been constant rumors that he wanted to move the Patriots to St. Louis. In 1994, Orthwein offered a ton of cash to Kraft. In fact, it was \$75 million. He wanted to buy out the remainder of the team's lease at what was now Foxboro Stadium. Had Robert Kraft accepted Orthwein's offer, it would have cleared the last significant hurdle to moving the team to St. Louis, Podunk, or Tim-Buk-Tu. However, Kraft turned it down. New England footballers thank Robert Kraft every day of their lives...at least they should.

There are a lot of great games and great stories in the off years of the Patriots. Having a guy who bagged two Super Bowl Rings already as your head coach means for sure that your team is a contender.

This season finale itself became one of the most dramatic games in the club's history. The Patriots were hosting the Dolphins. When Starter Dan Marino went out for the year in week 5, the Dolphins fell to 9–6. The Dolphins needed a win to make the playoffs.

In the game, the Patriots led 10–7 at halftime and twice stopped the Dolphins on downs, but early in the third, a Bledsoe fumble led to a Dolphins field goal and a tie game. Then a blocked punt by the Dolphins' Darrell Malone led to a touchdown by Scott Mitchell to Mark Ingram. The game was topsy-turvy at this point as the lead had tied or had changed five times in the fourth quarter alone.

In the fourth, the Dolphins were moving and ended a drive with a Terry Kirby touchdown run, even though Andre Tippett had sacked Mitchell for a ten-yard loss – it was the 100th career sack for the future Hall of Fame linebacker.

In the final 3:40 Bledsoe took the Patriots down to a Ben Coates touchdown catch. But it was not enough as the Dolphins forced overtime on a Pete Stoyanovich field goal.

In the overtime the Dolphins punted after Chris Slade forced a fumble. Then, Drew Bledsoe threw a pick to J.B. Brown before the Dolphins lined up to punt again. The Pats got the ball. Vincent Brisby caught a ten-yard pass but fumbled and teammate Leonard Russell recovered the ball and ran 22 yards. The team was moving.

Bledsoe then absorbed a Dolphins blitz and launched a 36-yard touchdown to Michael Timpson, ending a wild 33–27 Patriots win and finishing their season at 5–11, but with four straight wins to close it out and subsequently, the Patriots had eliminated the Dolphins from the playoffs.

Several weeks later owner James Orthwein completed sale of the entire Patriots team to Robert Kraft, Rumor has it included the deeds to all New England properties. That's how much New England was willing to give up for their football team. Later the

residents learned their deeds were safe as Robert Kraft promised to take care of New England and New Englanders as long as he could get a lot of wins out of the franchise. Well, maybe Kraft demanded no such thing, but he got it anyway. For those reading that think the Patriots do not have blood and guts in their roots, think again. Just like Paul Revere and the whole notion of Patriotism, the New Englanders I know would never give up their team, the New England Patriots. Let St. Louis find a few beautiful red Cardinal flying birds to launch their spirits high into the sky.

Drew Bledsoe was a patriot from right after the draft. He was the first overall pick in the 1993 NFL Draft and then for the next eight years, Bledsoe, a fine quarterback was considered the face of the Patriots franchise.

During his nine-year Patriots career, Drew Bledsoe set the records that Tom Brady would eventually eclipse. Bledsoe broke the Patriots' career passing records for attempts (4,518), completions (2,544) and yards (29,657). Keeping Brady from achievements would assure that Bledsoe would still hold the Patriots' single-season passing record for attempts (691) and completions (400) and would keep him as the only player in franchise history to pass for over 400 yards multiple times

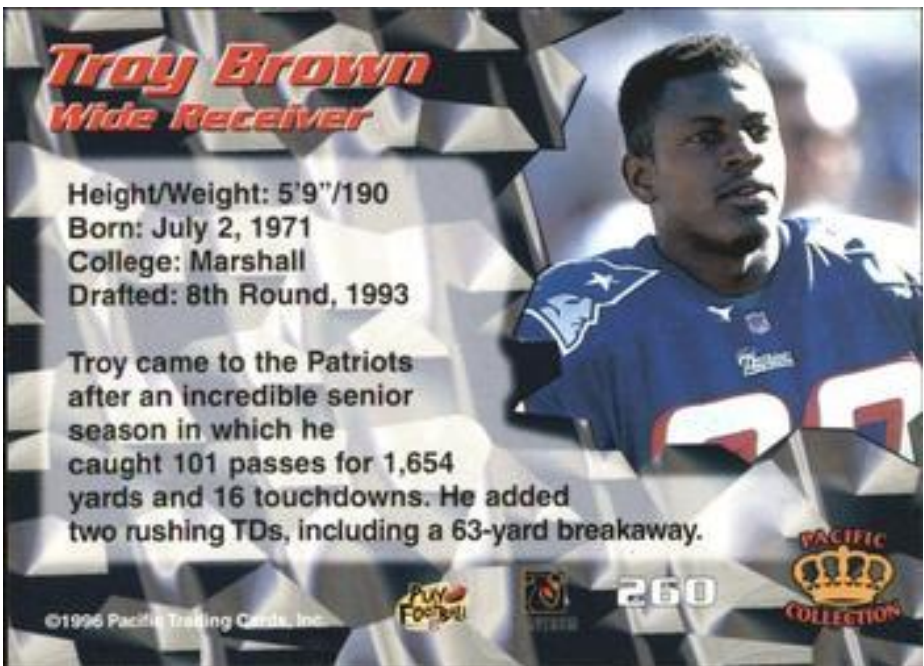
Drew Bledsoe still holds the NFL record for attempts in a season (691 in 1994) and both attempts (70) and completions (45) in a game against Minnesota in 1994 that sparked a seven-game win streak. This propelled the Patriots to their first playoff berth in eight years. Bledsoe led the Patriots to the playoffs four times in his first six seasons, helping the team earn back-to-back division titles and three consecutive playoff berths for the first time in franchise history.

In 1996, he continued his great play by guiding the Patriots to their second AFC Championship in franchise history and a trip to Super Bowl XXXI. Bledsoe is the only quarterback in NFL history with four seasons of at least 600 pass attempts, including three-straight from 1994-96 with the Patriots. If he had not gotten hurt, he might still be playing for the Patriots. Well, maybe not but he would have lasted longer.

Top Patriots Players Troy Brown, WR & DB

Diminutive in stature perhaps but not in ability or desire, Troy Brown spent his entire 15-year career with the Patriots (1993-2007) after being drafted by the team in the eighth round (198th overall) in the 1993 NFL Draft.

At 5-foot-10 inch, 196-pounds, this receiver, punt returner and defensive back retired as the team's all-time leading receiver with 557 career receptions and as the team's all-time leading punt returner with 252 career returns. That's not too shabby.



Brown finished ranked second in Patriots history with 6,366 career receiving yards and was tied for the franchise record with three punt returns for touchdowns. He played in 192 games, placing him fourth on the team's all-time games played list and his 15 seasons with the franchise tied Julius Adams for the second-longest tenure in a Patriots uniform behind Steve Grogan's 16 seasons. That's something!

Brown helped the Patriots to three Super Bowl championships and went to his only Pro Bowl in 2001. In 2004, he added defense to his

resume when he began playing defensive back and finished second on the team with three interceptions. Brown was a difference maker.

Troy Brown's ability to make sizable contributions on offense, defense and special teams as well as his ability to perform in the clutch made him one of the most versatile and valuable players in the Patriot's history.

1994 Bill Parcells #12

The 1994 New England Patriots football team competed in their thirty-fifth season of professional football and their twenty-fifth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Parcells in his second of four years. This was the first year under new owner Robert Kraft who purchased full rights to the team in 1994. Bill Parcells in many ways served as GM. The Patriots record was much improved at 10-6 giving them a 1st place finish (tied for first) in the AFC East Division and qualifying the team for the playoffs.

Robert Kraft as noted, purchased the team after preventing previous owner James Orthwein from moving the Patriots to St. Louis. Yes, folks, Robert Kraft kept the Patriots in New England. The team began the 1994 season with a 3-6 record before getting in gear and winning their final seven games, finishing 10-6 and qualifying the playoffs. Many see Bill Parcells as a miracle worker. With Robert Kraft helping instead of hurting operations, it helps to remember that The Patriots were just two seasons removed from a 2-win season. They made the playoffs for the first time since 1986 and only the seventh time in the franchise history. It was also their first winning season since 1988. The winning streak started with a 26-20 overtime win over the Minnesota Vikings.

Wildcard Playoffs Jan 1, 1995

Cleveland Browns 20, NE Patriots 13

In the AFC Wildcard playoffs, on January 1, 1995, the Browns defeated the Patriots L (13-20) before 77,452 at Cleveland. Their last defeat had been at the hands of the Browns on Nov 6. After winning

seven in a row the Patriots were flat in their 20–13 loss in their first playoff game since 1986. Drew Bledsoe had a tough time locating Patriot receivers and was picked off three times.

1995 Bill Parcells #12

The 1995 New England Patriots football team competed in their thirty-sixth season of professional football and their twenty-sixth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Parcells in his third second of four years. This was the second year under new owner Robert Kraft who purchased full rights to the team in 1994. Bill Parcells in many ways served as GM. The Patriots record was not as positive and came in below 500 at 6-10 giving them a 4th place finish in the AFC East Division. This was Parcells 2nd-worst season. The Pats did not qualify for the playoffs.

Unlike 1994, when Drew Bledsoe was sharp all year, the previous year, he had a poor season. He threw just 13 touchdowns and was picked off 16 times. His completion percentage was just 50.8% of his passes. The bright spot on the team was rookie running back Curtis Martin. The youngster shined with a Pro Bowl season and would be the Patriots' feature back for two more seasons before the Patriots traded him to the New York Jets during Pete Carroll's tenure in 1998.

Top Patriots Players Ty Law, CB

Like many other Ty Law loved his time with the Patriots. So, he spent 10 seasons with the Pats from 1995-2004) after joining the team as a first-round (23rd overall) draft pick out of Michigan in 1995. Law was a three-time Super Bowl Champion (XXXVI, XXXVIII, XXXIX), a four-time Pro Bowl player (1998, 2001, 2002, 2003) and a two-time All-Pro (1998, 2003) during his tenure with the Patriots.

Law tied Raymond Clayborn's career franchise-record with 36 interceptions and finished with the most interception-return yards in team history with 583. His six interceptions returned for touchdowns are also a franchise best. Law had nine interceptions in 1998 to become the first Patriots player to lead the NFL in that category.



He was a playmaker who played some of his best games in the postseason. He helped lead the Patriots to their first Super Bowl title in 2001 when he intercepted a Kurt Warner pass against the Rams and returned it 47 yards for a touchdown for the first points of the game.

In the 2003 AFC Championship Game, Law intercepted three Peyton Manning passes while leading the Patriots to a 24-14 victory over the Indianapolis Colts. Law was part of a record-breaking

Patriots defense in 2003 that led the NFL in five key categories: opponents points per game (14.9), interceptions (29), fewest touchdown receptions allowed (11), opponent's passer rating (56.2) and pass deflections (121) as the team captured its second Super Bowl title in a win over the Carolina Panthers.

Law was great football player and is a member of the NFL's all-decade team for the 2000s as well as the Patriots' all-1990s and all-2000s decade teams. He was also selected to the Patriots' 50th Anniversary Team. He was inducted into the Patriots Hall of Fame in 2014.

1996 Bill Parcells #12

The 1996 New England Patriots football team competed in their thirty-seventh season of professional football and their twenty-seventh season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Parcells in his last of four seasons. This was the third year under new owner Robert Kraft who purchased full rights to the team in 1994. Bill Parcells in many ways served as GM. Under Kraft in addition to being head coach. The Patriots record was 11-5 and they finished in first place in the AFC East Division. This was Parcells best season. The Pats qualified for the playoffs and would take the challenge right to the Super Bowl. Bill Parcells would not return to the Patriots after the Super Bowl.

After a very disappointing 1995 season, Drew Bledsoe bounced back with confidence and 4,086 passing yards. He also threw 27 touchdown passes to just 15 interceptions while Curtis Martin had another outstanding Pro Bowl season. The team went the distance in the playoffs but then lost Super Bowl XXXI to the Green Bay Packers.

Team owner Robert Kraft and coach Bill Parcells had a good relationship that simply collapsed as Parcells was able to guide the team as he saw fit... until... In the NFL draft, Parcells was determined to draft a defensive lineman, but Kraft overruled him, giving head scout Bobby Grier the choice of a player. Receiver Terry Glenn was selected. Parcells stormed out of the Patriots draft war room after the choice was made and vowed to reporter Will McDonough that he was done with New England after 1996. He kept his word.

Despite this issue before the practice season even began, Parcells prepared the team for a championship as was his style. When the season got off to a poor start, the Patriots rallied from their 0-2 start to finish 11-5. They then proceeded to defeat the Pittsburgh Steelers and the upstart Jacksonville Jaguars to advance to Super Bowl XXXI. The season saw the arrival of former Cleveland Browns coach Bill Belichick as an integral part of the coaching squad taking over the coaching of New England's defensive backs. This was the second time that Belichick had worked for Parcells and the two respected each other.

The date was February 16, 1996: Parcells and Belichick were accustomed to working with each other for years in the Patriots and Giants organization. It is no wonder that just one day after being fired as head coach of the Browns, Belichick was hired by Parcells as the Patriots' assistant head coach and secondary coach. We know from the record book that in the Giants organization the two brought championships when they worked together. In their only season together with the Patriots, New England reached Super Bowl XXXI, losing to the Packers in the end.

The Rest of the story

Since a good part of the story about Bill Parcells is in this chapter and he is joined by Bill Belichick in 1996 and since Bill Belichick has such a great history with the New England Patriots, and we all know that Bill Belichick is the current highly successful New England Patriots coach... I would like to take the time now to tell you the rest of the story of Parcells and Belichick. It is far from over in 1996 and it is very interesting. It is also very germane as we go over the forthcoming great moments in New England Patriots football.

Just five days after coaching the Patriots in the Super Bowl, on January 31, 1997, Bill Parcells stepped down as head coach. There was heavy speculation centering on Parcells, who had a reputation as a fixer, that the talented coach was on his way to New York, this time to coach the Jets. Though Parcells had told him earlier in the year, he was finished, Patriots owner Robert Kraft did not want to have to replace the coach who had finally brought wins to the franchise. So, Kraft asked the NFL to review Parcells' contract and to step in and block him from coaching anywhere in 1997. The NFL sided with New England, and the ruling forbade Parcells from coaching anywhere else in 1997.

There is so much history in such a short period of time here that even long-time Patriots history buffs have some room for confusion. Though I knew for example that Pate Carroll would be the next coach, the conditions were perfect with Bill Belichick already on the scene for Robert Kraft to bring him in a few years earlier to be the new England Head coach. Instead, he hired Pete Carroll.

Here's how that went down. We have been over some of this already. We know that Bill Parcells had already signed out from the Patriots after becoming frustrated with owner Robert Kraft's not permitting him to, as they say, "shop for the groceries" in compiling a roster, or at least having yes/no on names. In early 1997 after the Super Bowl, Parcells and Robert Kraft agreed to disagree Kraft wanted to maintain owner control of the roster but eventually agreed to a deal brokered by then-NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue, in which the New York Jets sent the Patriots four draft picks in exchange for Kraft releasing Parcells from his contract. Parcells thus became the Jets' head coach, and Kraft was able to hire Pete Carroll to follow the legend.

Rich Cimini, an ESPN staff writer offers this quote as to the value of simply having Bill Parcells become the coach of your team, even if no Super Bowl is forthcoming. Parcells had to be special when Bill Belichick kept signing up for refresher course lessons from the master. Cimini: "Before Bill Parcells arrived in 1997, the New York Jets provided plenty of fodder for David Letterman's Top Ten list. They were hilariously inept. Parcells changed that the minute he walked in the building. For that, the franchise's long-suffering fans should be eternally grateful."

For the record, Bill Belichick sometimes regrets his decision to bail from New England after the Super Bowl. It could have been both fun and productive (my words). It was not long ago that in an interview Parcells told USA Today that he regretted quitting the New England Patriots after the '96 Super Bowl run. Why? "because it was a young, talented team still on the rise."

However, he was OK with his decision to leave the Jets when chances are he may have brought in another champion. He offered remorse and said he never second-guessed himself for leaving the Jets' job.

"No, I've never thought of that, I really haven't," Parcells said in a phone interview. "It's a transient business nowadays. There was new ownership, and you never know what's going to happen when that happens. It was time where they could start again with their own philosophy and a new owner."

Going back to the original confusion in February 1997 the Jets had hired Belichick as their head coach and since Parcells was banned from coaching originally, the Jets skirted the rules and hired Parcells as a consultant. The Patriots were not happy playing against a Parcells team anywhere as they believed he should be coaching for New England.

They filed another NFL complaint asking that Parcells not be allowed to work at all for the Jets, but the negotiated Tagliabue deal eventually ended that dispute. By the time it was all over on Feb 10, 1997, Parcells was named Jets head coach and Belichick, a very loyal "friend" of Bill Parcells was named as his assistant coach.

Meanwhile back at New England, Pete Carroll was the man on the scene. He had just year of NFL head coaching experience, having gone 6-10 with the Jets in 1994. Parcells had taken what might exaggeratingly be called a moribund New England franchise -- one that hadn't been to the playoffs since 1986 and which had posted a meager 14-50 record in the four seasons before Parcells' arrival -- and he took the team to a Super Bowl. We begin three sections in the next chapter about the Pete Carroll New England experience

Finally, after three years of Pete Carroll, on Jan 3, 2000, New England fires Pete Carroll and sends a fax to the Jets requesting permission to interview Belichick for its recently opened head-coaching job. However, Parcells retires as Jets head coach. "Bill's not coming back," Parcells said at the time. "You can write that on your chalkboard." The six-year contract Belichick signed with the Jets in 1997 called for him to be elevated to Jets head coach whenever Parcells decided to leave, preventing the Pats from speaking with him about their opening.

Belichick is a smart cookie and he did not want to be boxed into any job. So, on Jan. 4, 2000, he resigned as head coach of the New York Jets one day after being elevated to the job. He was concerned and said that it was questions about the Jets' future, including the team's impending sale that convince him to leave. "I just don't feel I can lead the Jets in the year 2000," Belichick said at the time. "I just know what I need to do. I just don't feel I can do it right now."

Knowing he was still boxed in, on Jan. 6, 2000, Bill Belichick filed a grievance with the NFL in an attempt to get out of the contract he had negotiated with the Jets. The NFL is owned by the owners not the coaches and so on Jan. 21, 2000, as expected, NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue ruled in favor of the Jets, rejecting Belichick's grievance.

Bill Belichick was not ready for slave labor encampment and so he filed suit against the Jets and the NFL looking for relief via a temporary restraining order. He wanted out of the Jets, and he wanted to be able to be free to negotiate with other teams who may want him as their coach.

By January 27, 2000, it became an owner v owner and owner v NFL issue. Even before resolution, Belichick was named to be the head coach of the Patriots after New England and the Jets agreed on compensation. The Patriots really wanted coach Belichick as they gave New York their No. 1 draft pick in the 2000 draft and a fourth- and seventh-rounder in 2001. The Jets gave the Patriots a No. 5 in 2001 and a No. 7 in 2002. Clearly the Patriots saw the same bright light of winning seasons and a winning mentality as Bill Parcells saw in Bill Belichick as Parcells mentored him in his early years.

Just like Bill Belichick is a smart man, so is owner Robert Kraft: "For a No. 1 draft choice, we can bring in a man that I feel certain can do something, rather than the uncertainty of a draft choice," Kraft said at the time. "And it wasn't even close when I thought about it that way."

The good connection continued as in Feb. 12, 2000, Scott Pioli, Parcells' son-in-law, who also served as the Jets' director of pro personnel, was hired by Bill Belichick as the Patriots' director of pro personnel.

After having graduated several times from the Bill Parcells school of great football ideas and attitudes, and having been a major instructor, it was not a surprise that as the Patriots coach on February 3, 2002 both the newly charged Patriots and Bill Belichick would win Super Bowl XXXVI.

Bill Parcells was not finished with his fixer career and he must have enjoyed it because he permitted himself to be hired again on Jan. 2, 2003. The Dallas Cowboys hired Bill Parcells, and so he was not thinking it was a slave-labor deal they threw in a four-year, \$17.1 million deal.

This is not a book about the Dallas Cowboys and so far, I am not inclined to write one, but it is a book about the New England Patriots and we all know that their current successful head coach is a former disciple of Bill Parcells. Therefore, this little set of paragraphs sets up a fitting ending for the Bill Parcells period at New England.

In the Parcells period at Dallas, there were supportive writers who had penned “Before the past two years, the Cowboys have been 8-8, just missing the playoffs with a disappointing finish in the final week of each season, bringing the frustration level within Cowboys Nation to seemingly an all-time high...

But imagine being 5-11 for three straight years and not even coming close to the postseason.”

When the Cowboys were looking for a Bill Parcells’ type, the real deal, the real Bill Parcells was still available and ready to go to work.

The Cowboys were exactly there following the 2002 campaign. Jerry Jones who hates to lose, knew that a huge change was in order. He also knew it was time to make a splash that would not only change the current perception of the team, but more importantly the culture, and the team’s ability to win, win, and then win again. Only a Bill Parcells type change would do.

Why was Parcells happy at Dallas? Here it is in his words: “...But Jerry isn’t like that. You want to be somewhere where it’s important to the people and certainly it’s a high-profile franchise without question. I just felt like those are the kind of things I look forward to. I was trying to do something at a place like that. I like them. I think they’re a good group. I think they’re passionate. I think they’re trying to be successful in the business. Hey, that’s all a coach can ask for.”

Without a Super Bowl, Bill Parcells in Dallas was productive and successful. Parcells affects team attitudes to get into the soul of the team. As for his time in Dallas, he never got the acclaim for the same postseason success. The Cowboys' drought for playoff wins continued on Parcells' watch. But nobody who is a Parcells watcher thinks that his time with America's Team wasn't exceptionally meaningful.

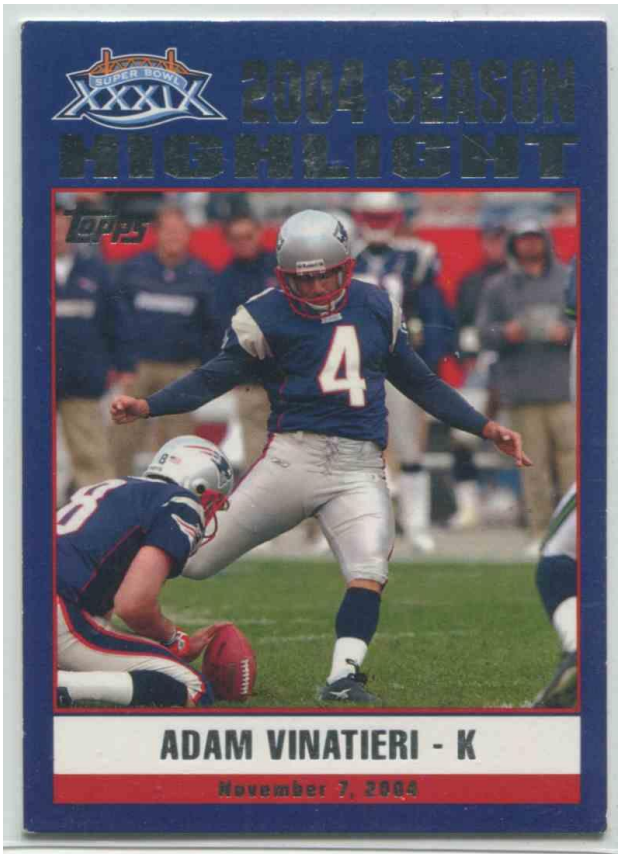
Whether you like the Cowboys or not, Bill Parcells was not a fan of any team. He was a professional. He quietly turned Dallas into a competitive franchise again and he did it almost immediately. The Cowboys went 10-6 in his first year of 2003, never bragging but knowing they had been magically changed after just one year. This came after a disappointing 6-10 finish in 2004. After the 10-6, the club went 9-7 in each of the next two seasons, 2005-06.

The latter included another demoralizing playoff defeat, this time to the Seahawks, which would be Parcells' final game as a head coach. Parcells may regret not staying at Dallas to see the seeds bear fruit as he wished the same for New England and the Jets. Parcells talent seeds are all over the NFL. The New England Patriots enjoy the product of Bill Parcells coaching seeds in Bill Belichick whose loyalty to the game of football through the great vision of Bill Parcells is unquestioned.

Top Patriots Players Adam Vinatieri, K

Adam Matthew Vinatieri was born on December 28, 1972, right after Christmas and before New Year's. He is still an active NFL placekicker for the Indianapolis Colts but for years he was a big star for the New England Patriots and he is responsible for many of their big wins and their biggest wins.

Vinatieri played in five Super Bowls: four with the New England Patriots and one with the Colts. Vinatieri won Super Bowls in 2001, 2003, and 2004 with the Patriots, as well as in 2006 with the Colts. Among placekickers, Adam holds NFL records for most Super Bowl appearances (5) and most Super Bowl wins (4).



Additionally, he also holds NFL records, among all players, for most postseason points scored (234), and most overtime field goals made (12). He is the only player ever to score 1,000 points with two different teams. As of the 2017 season, Vinatieri, 45, is still healthy and active as the oldest player in the NFL.

As a kicker, he is almost at the top of all standings, yet he is #2. Morten Anderson has six more and so in the 2018 season,

Vinatieri should become #1. Right now, he has converted the 2nd most field-goals in NFL history (553) as well as attempted the 3rd most field-goals in NFL history (655).

Vinatieri has been called "Mr. Clutch" by the media due to his reputation for success when kicking under pressure during his tenure in the NFL. His other nickname, "Automatic Adam" tells his story of unprecedented accuracy. He is also known as "Iceman" for his poise under pressure. I can't think of better nicknames for Vinatieri.

Vinatieri has converted several of the most crucial field goals in NFL history, including the game-tying and winning kicks in blizzard conditions in the famous "Tuck Rule Game", and game-winning kicks in the final seconds of two Super Bowls (XXXVI and XXXVIII)

Adam Vinatieri, or “Automatic Adam” as he became known, is probably just one of a handful of kickers who might make it into the top 15 in any franchise’s history — much less the prodigious Patriots. That’s a testament to just how good he was.

Vinatieri was a rookie in 1996, going to the Super Bowl with Bledsoe. He was along for the ride with Brady later on; he played the first 10 years of his career in New England and collected three Super Bowl wins — kicking game-winning field goals in two of them. Vinatieri later played for the Indianapolis Colts for 11 seasons, where he won another Super Bowl. Let’s hope Adam beats the record in 2018.

Top Patriots Players Tedy Bruschi LB

One of the names I cannot forget from watching the Belichick Patriots in the somewhat recent past is Tedy Bruschi. I would agree with others that he is the consummate Patriot during my time observing his expertise. It was for his entire 13 seasons in New England. It was so much for the Patriots that Coach Bill Belichick called him the “perfect player” at Bruschi’s retirement press conference in 2009.

Bruschi was a nobody who was a somebody because he was never a nobody. He served as team captain seven times and his relentless work ethic, on-field intensity, and full-tilt-full-time approach set the tone for his team while making him a fan favorite in New England.

Bruschi was not born a Patriot but, like others in the franchise, he might have chosen to be so born. Bruschi was originally drafted by the Patriots in the third round of the 1996 NFL Draft. He played in his first of five Super Bowls that season and is one of a select few Patriots to own three World Championship rings. They don’t give them out if you lose the game.

Bruschi as noted was a difference maker. In 13 seasons, he helped his teammates propel the Patriots to 11 winning records, nine playoff appearances, including eight as division championships, five

conference crowns and those three Super Bowl titles. He hated to lose and fought to the tooth to make his team succeed.

In 211 career games (including regular-season and playoffs), the Patriots had a 144-67 (.682) record, including a 16-6 (.727) playoff mark with Tedy on the field. Bruschi earned his first Pro Bowl honor following the 2004 season after co-captaining a Patriots defense that allowed just 16.25 points per game, the third fewest in franchise history.



Bruschi loved playing for the Pats and still he had a knack for making big plays in critical situations. He is the only player in NFL history to return four consecutive interceptions for touchdowns and his career total of four picks returned for scores ranks second in Patriots history.

After Bruschi suffered a stroke in February 2005, a stroke that made all Patriots check out their vitals, he put together Tedy's Team," which is dedicated to raising funds and awareness to fight stroke along with the American Stroke Association.

Top Patriots Players Willie McGinest, LB, DE

William Lee McGinest, Jr. was born December 11, 1971. He is a former NFL linebacker who played fourteen seasons, mostly with the New England Patriots. He was drafted by the New England Patriots fourth overall in the first round of the 1994 NFL Draft. He played college football at USC.

Willie McGinest played 12 of his 15 NFL seasons with the Patriots and was one of the cornerstones of the team's success during Super Bowl championships in 2001, 2003 and 2004. He ranks third in team history with 78 sacks and led the team in sacks six times, including a career high 11 in 1995.

WILLIE MCGINEST 89

NFL CAREER STATISTICS

YR	TEAM	G	TCK	AST	SACKS	INT	RET	AV	TD
'94	PATRIOTS	16	99	14	4.5	0	-	0	
'95	PATRIOTS	16	70	18	11.0	0	-	0	
'96	PATRIOTS	16	49	18	9.5	1	46.0	1	
TOTALS		48	148	50	25.0	1	46.0	1	

Willie was the top sacker on the Patriots' resurgent defense, which allowed just nine points and no touchdowns in two playoff victories to carry New England to the Super Bowl. Moved from linebacker to defensive end, he led the club with 9.5 sacks in the regular season, then had another in the Super Bowl.

McGinest's 16 postseason sacks is an NFL record and he set the NFL mark for most sacks in a postseason game with 4 1/2 in a 2005 Wild Card win vs. Jacksonville.

One of his most memorable plays came in a 2003 regular-season game when he stuffed Indianapolis running back Edgerrin James on the goal line with 11 seconds remaining to preserve a 38-34 win. He

was a versatile player, who played defensive end and linebacker and earned Pro Bowl honors in 1996 and 2003.

MgGinest helped the Patriots post nine winning seasons in 12 years, and led the team to six division titles, four conference championships and three Super Bowl championships during his career.

The Playoffs

In the Divisional Playoffs on January 5, 1997, the Patriots defeated the Pittsburgh Steelers W 28–3 at 12:30pm at Foxboro Stadium before 60,188. In the Conference Championship on January 12, 1997, the Patriots defeated the Jacksonville Jaguars W 20–6 at 4:00pm in Foxboro Stadium before 60,190. This brought the Patriots to Bill Parcells Super Bowl XXXI game played on January 26, 1997, against the Green Bay Packers in which they lost by two touchdowns L (21–35) at 6:00pm in the Louisiana Superdome before a crowd of 72,301

Super Bowl XXXI January 26, 1979

This is a SUPER BOWL FLASHBACK

by Anthony Gulizia from the Boston Globe January 27, 2015

Green Bay packed a punch against Patriots in XXXI

Think Deflategate was a distraction?

It's a good thing Twitter wasn't around when the Patriots were preparing for Super Bowl XXXI with coach Bill Parcells's imminent departure hovering like a thunder cloud over old Foxboro Stadium.

On Jan. 26, 1997, Parcells's 11-5 Patriots lost to Mike Holmgren's 13-3 Packers, 35-21, and five days later, the Big Tuna stepped down to become coach of the New York Jets. "It

kind of clouded the run to the game, which is disappointing, because you get to that game and want to enjoy the ride,” said quarterback Drew Bledsoe.

And what a ride it was.

In the first home playoff win in team history, Bledsoe and the Patriots defeated the Pittsburgh Steelers, 28-3, in a game Bledsoe remembered most for the thick fog that blanketed the stadium.

“The fog held the noise in and it was the loudest I ever heard that stadium,” Bledsoe said.

The next week against the Jaguars, there was a brief power outage at the old stadium and the New England defense turned the lights out on the Jacksonville offense. Otis Smith’s 47-yard fumble return in the final minutes sealed a 20-6 AFC Championship victory.

In the Super Bowl, it was Reggie White and the Packers defense that worried Bledsoe.

After Green Bay took a 10-0 lead, Bledsoe answered with touchdowns on the next two drives, and it looked as if this would be a shootout between him and Brett Favre.

But the Packers scored the next 17 points before a Curtis Martin touchdown cut the lead to 27-21 in the third quarter.

Then Desmond Howard returned the ensuing kickoff 99 yards to bury the Patriots. New England never crossed midfield in the fourth quarter.

“That really took the wind out of our sails,” Bledsoe said. “It’s bittersweet. I’m still really proud of the fact we made it. The truth is I’ve never watched that Super Bowl. It’s too painful.”

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Chapter 13 Coach Pete Carroll 1997 to 1999

Coach #13 Pete Carroll

Year	Coach	Leag	Dic/Conf	Place	Record
1997	Pete Carroll	NFL	AFC/ East	1st	10 6 0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won Wild Card Playoffs(Dolphins) 17-3 • Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Steelers) 6-7
1998	Pete Carroll	NFL	AFC/East	4th	9 7 0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost Wild Card Playoffs (at Jaguars) 10-25
1999	Pete Carroll	NFL	AFC/East	5th	8 8 0
<u>1997-1999 Pete Carroll final record (27-21-0)</u>					



Coach Pete Carroll with the Patriots

1997 Pete Carroll #13

The 1997 New England Patriots football team competed in their thirty-eighth season of professional football and their twenty-eighth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Pete Carroll in his first of three seasons. Robert Kraft was the owner. The Patriots record was 10-6, one win less than

Parcells' last year at the helm. The Patriots again finished in first place in the AFC East Division. They won the Wild Card game W (17-3) v the Miami Dolphins, and lost in the Division Playoffs in a tough match L (6-7) against the Pittsburgh Steelers. Pete Carroll got off to a fine start as New England's head coach

A Lookback at Parcells

It was no secret in January, when the Patriots were preparing to face the Green Bay Packers in Super Bowl XXXI, that head coach Bill Parcells was at least mentally preparing to move to another team after the game. Parcells beef was that he was not given enough control over personnel matters.

We have already discussed that in the 1996 NFL Draft, the fiery talented coach's relationship with owner Robert Kraft soured when Kraft selected wide receiver Terry Glenn against Parcells' wishes. When the Patriots lost to Green Bay in Super Bowl XXXI, Parcells resigned from the Patriots, using the phrase "If they want you to cook the dinner, at least they ought to let you shop for some of the groceries."

Pete Carroll took Parcells' place with the Patriots. Ironically, Carroll had been the Jets' head coach in 1994 and now, Parcells was the Jets' coach. Carroll's Patriots began the season 5-1 but featured a 6-5 record later in the season. The Patriots came back and finished 10-6 and sewed up first in the AFC East for the second straight season. With the third seed in the AFC playoffs, the Patriots defeated the Miami Dolphins 17-3 in the Wild Card Game but, were defeated by the Pittsburgh Steelers, 7-6, on the road the next week. Again, let me say, it was a great start for Pete Carroll.

AFC Wild Card Playoff Game Dec. 28, 1997.

Played at home in Foxboro Stadium, the Patriots beat the Miami Dolphins W (17-3) before 60,041.

Checking out the regular season, it seemed like less than a week before, the Patriots had narrowly slugged out a 14-12 defeated of the Dolphins in a tough defensive struggle. It was the last Monday night

game of the regular season, and now six days later the two teams were at it again in the Wildcard playoffs.

The Patriots' prevailed with a defense that held Miami to 162 total yards of offense, 42 rushing yards and forced three Dolphins turnovers. Dolphins quarterback Dan Marino completed only 17 of 43 passes for 141 yards and he was intercepted twice. He also fumbled the ball twice, coughing up the ball on one of them.

This was the first time in Marino's 15-year career (including 14 postseason games) that he did not throw a touchdown pass in a playoff game. The Patriots played without star running back Curtis Martin, and though they pulled out a win, the squad could only generate 228 offensive yards. Key to the win for the Patriots was their ball security. They avoided losing any turnovers for the entire game.

AFC Divisional Playoff Game January 3, 1998.

Played at Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh, the Steelers managed to win a close game against the Patriots L (6-7) before 61,228

The Patriots suffered a devastating late-season home loss to the Steelers which meant the playoff rematch, if it were earned, would be played in Pittsburgh. Three plays into this game, Steelers cornerback Chad Scott intercepted Drew Bledsoe at the Steelers 11 and returned it to his own 38. Eight plays later, Pittsburgh faced a second-and-10 from the Patriots 40. Steelers mobile quarterback Kordell Stewart avoided a heavy pass rush and broke around the left end and up the sideline where it appeared he'd run out of bounds. On the play, Pats linebacker Todd Collins had a chance to knock him out but pulled up to avoid a penalty. No good deed goes unpunished.

1998 Pete Carroll #13

The 1998 New England Patriots football team competed in their thirty-ninth season of professional football and their twenty-ninth

season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Pete Carroll in his second of three seasons. Robert Kraft was the owner. The Patriots record was 9-7, one win less than the prior year. The Patriots finished in fourth place in the AFC East Division. They made the playoffs and lost the Wildcard game against the Jaguars, L (10-25). That ended the 1998 season for the Patriots.

In the offseason, the Patriots put restricted free agent running back Curtis Martin up for the highest possible tender. This gained the Patriots a first and third-round draft pick if any team were to sign him and the Patriots were to decide not to match the offer. There had been a long-standing rivalry between the NY Jets and the Patriots from the Parcels days. The Jets went ahead and signed Martin, who had been the 1995 NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year. Because the signing was restricted, they were compelled to give their first and third-round picks in the 1998 NFL Draft to the Patriots.

With the first-round pick the Patriots selected another running back Robert Edwards, who rushed very well for over 1,000 yards in his rookie campaign.

Drew Bledsoe suffered a broken finger in November, and was thus unable to start the team's final two regular season games. He was replaced by Scott Zolak. With their 9-7 record, the Patriots finished fourth in the AFC East, but they still were able to earn a sixth seed in the AFC playoffs. With Zolak still at the helm, the Patriots were defeated on the road by the Jacksonville Jaguars, the second straight playoff defeat for second-year head coach Pete Carroll, and as of 2017, the only game the Patriots have ever lost to the Jaguars.

1998 Playoff Games – Wildcard Jan 3, 1999 Jacksonville 25; New England 10

Jaguars Running back Fred Taylor ran for 162 yards and a touchdown as the Jags won their first home playoff game in team history. Jacksonville kicker Mike Hollis popped in four field goals while the opposite luck befell the Patriots. E.G. running back Robert Edwards, who rushed for 1,115 yards and nine touchdowns during the season, was held to 28 yards on 17 carries.

1999 Pete Carroll #13

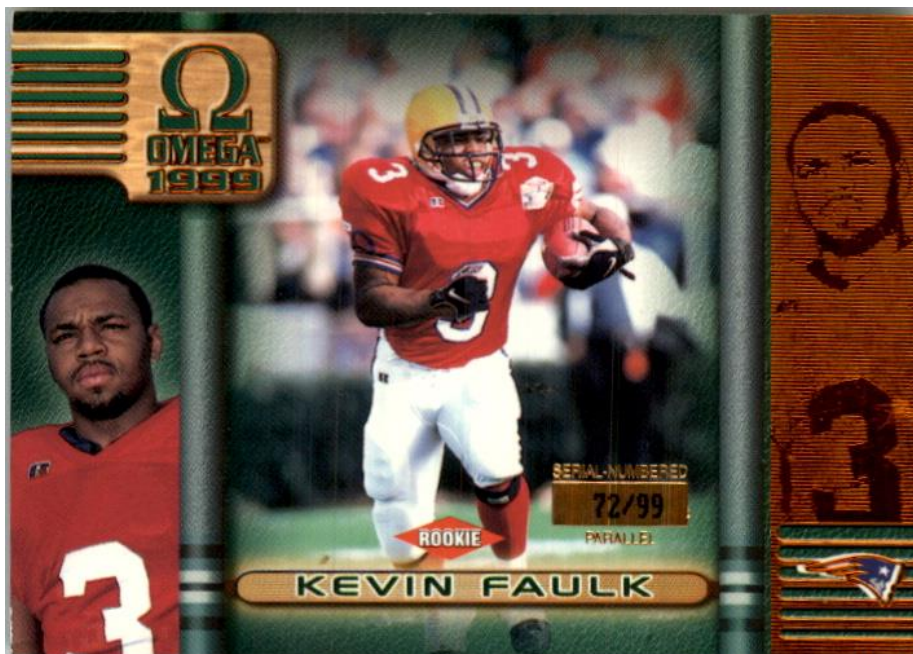
The 1999 New England Patriots football team competed in their fortieth season of professional football and their thirtieth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Pete Carroll in his last of three seasons. Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 8-8—again it was one win less than the prior year. The Patriots finished tied for fourth place in the AFC East Division.

The Pats came into the 1999 season without second-year running back Robert Edwards due to a knee injury. He had rushed for over 1,100 yards in 1998. He got a serious knee injury playing in a rookie beach game in Hawaii after the 1998 season. Taking his place were veteran Terry Allen and rookie Kevin Faulk, but neither was able to gain 1,000 yards rushing. And, so, overall the Patriots' rushing offense denigrated to 23rd in the NFL.

Nonetheless, the team started off very well with a 6–2 record, but then they stumbled down the stretch and finished 8–8 and were out of the playoffs for the first time since 1995. Following the last game of the season, third year head coach Pete Carroll was fired, while the vice president of player personnel, Bobby Grier was retained only until the 2000 NFL Draft was completed.

In May, the Patriots publicized their plans for the future. They announced their intention to pull out of a publicly financed stadium deal in Hartford, Connecticut. Instead the organization decided to work towards building a privately financed new stadium, which would be called Gillette Stadium. The new facility would be at the site of the existing Foxboro Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts.

Top Patriots Players Kevin Faulk, RB



Kevin Troy Faulk was born June 5, 1976. He is a former NFL running back. Kevin spent his entire 13-year professional career playing for the New England Patriots.

He was drafted by the Patriots in the second round of the 1999 NFL Draft. He played college football at Louisiana State University.

Faulk concluded his 13-year career with the Patriots in 2011 as one of the most productive players in team history. He filled various roles after joining the team in 1999 as a second-round pick (46th overall) out of Louisiana State. He is the Patriots' all-time leader in all-purpose yards (12,349) and kickoff return yards (4,098) and is the Patriots' all-time leading return specialist, totaling 5,041 combined return yards (4,098 kick return yards and 943 punt return yards).

Kevin Faulk had a great football career, ranking fifth in Patriots history in rushing yards (3,607), fifth in receptions (431), 12th in receiving yards (3,701) and eighth in punt return yards (943). He played in 161 regular season games and accumulated 3,607 yards rushing on 864 attempts for a 4.2-yard average with 16 touchdowns, caught 431 passes for 3,701 receiving yards and 15 touchdowns,

returned 181 kicks for 4,098 yards and two touchdowns. He returned 101 punts for 943 yards.

Faulk is the Patriots' all-time leader in receptions by a running back and is one of just 30 running backs in NFL history to reach the 400-reception plateau. In the 2000s, he was one of just six players to rush for more than 3,000 yards and gain more than 3,000 yards receiving, joining Tiki Barber, Marshall Faulk, Michael Pittman, LaDainian Tomlinson and Brian Westbrook.

Faulk helped the Patriots big time in 11 winning seasons, including three Super Bowls titles and five AFC Championships during his 13-year career with New England. He is a member of the Patriots' all-decade (2000s) and 50th Anniversary teams as a return specialist.

Chapter 14 Coach Bill Belichick Part I 2000 to 2005

Coach Bill Belichick # 14

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>League</u>	<u>Conf-Div</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Record</u>
2000	Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC-East	5th	5 11 0
2001	Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC-East	1 st	11 5 0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won Divisional Playoffs (Raiders) 16–13 (OT) • Tom Brady(SB MVP)[20] • Won Conference Championship (at Steelers) 24–17 • Won Super Bowl XXXVI (1) (vs. Rams) 20–17
2002	Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC-East	2nd	9 7 0
2003	Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC-East	1st	14 2 0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won Divisional Playoffs (Titans) 17–14 • Tom Brady (SB MVP) • Won Conference Championship(Colts) 24–14 • Bill Belichick(COY) • Won Super Bowl XXXVIII (2) (vs. Panthers) 32–29
2004	Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC-East	1st	14 2 0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won Divisional Playoffs (Colts) 20–3 • Deion Branch (SB MVP) • Won Conference Championship (at Steelers) 41–27 • Won Super Bowl XXXIX (3) (vs. Patriots) 24–21
2005	Bill Belichick	NFL	AFC-East	1st	10 6 0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won Wild Card Playoffs(Jaguars) 28–3 • Tedy Bruschi(CBPOY) • Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Broncos) 13–27



Brady, coach Bill Belichick, and John Friesz at training camp in July 2000

Nothing happens without great people and the coach is the most important item for a football team as long as there is a good owner.

The Patriots hired Bill Belichick as their Head Coach in 2000. This was a big deal. Belichick has proven to be one of the greatest coaches in the history of the NFL. His achievements are extensive and his ability to consistently put together a contending team in unparalleled.

He's won for New England five Super Bowl Championships and has been awarded the coach of the year title 3 times. Belichick has created a culture of winning in New England, one that demands perfection from every member of the team. He's established the Patriots as a true dynasty and placed them near the top of best franchises in the NFL. In many ways, Belichick should be the model for coaching methodologies for any coach of any sport.

2000 Bill Belichick #14

The 2000 New England Patriots football team competed in their forty-first season of professional football and their thirty-first season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his first of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 5-11—three wins less than Pate Carroll's last year. The Patriots finished in fifth place (last) in the AFC East Division. The Patriots did not qualify for the playoffs this year. Bill Belichick would move the Patriots way out of the cellar in future years.

I never met Patriots owner Bob Kraft but from what I see, he is a fine person, who has his own mind about things. But Kraft can be talked out of certain things if the alternative is good/better and the pitch is well done. From the picture of Bob Kraft that I have in my head, he was very familiar with Bill Belichick's body of work over the years especially what he did when he was with the Patriots as a protégé of Bill Parcells. I have inserted two paragraphs below of a post that explores the Parcells (Two Bills) relationship fully.

Below Two paragraphs of a posted by Michael David Smith on January 22, 2018, 6:43 PM EDT



ESPN

“Bill Belichick is getting ready to try to win his sixth Super Bowl with the Patriots. But a victory at Super Bowl LII would actually earn Belichick his eighth Super Bowl ring, as he won two as defensive coordinator for Bill Parcells with the Giants.

“The long relationship between Belichick and Parcells is explored in the new 30 for 30 documentary--“The Two Bills,” which premiered on ESPN on February 1. It details the decades-long relationship with the two men, which started when Belichick applied for a job on Parcells’ staff at Air Force, moved to Belichick working for Parcells with the Giants, saw them coach against each other when Belichick was in Cleveland and Parcells was in New England, and then saw Belichick work for Parcells again with the Jets before leaving for the Patriots.”

Bob Kraft was well aware of Bill Belichick and during the Pete Carroll era, he wanted him to be coaching the Patriots. Who can blame him? Following the firing of three-year head coach Pete Carroll in January 2000, Patriots owner Bob Kraft decided to do his best to make Jets one-time assistant head coach Bill Belichick the Patriots' head coach. Pete Carroll left the Patriots with one of the best records of any coach at Boston or New England. So, he did not get fired because he did not do a good job for the Pats. Bob Kraft was ready to do better and so he sought out Bill Belichick to help make the Patriot dream happen.

As for Belichick learning he got the position in New England, we get the idea of just how close he and Bill Parcells actually are. It was not Bob Kraft or another Patriots' official who broke the news. It was none other than "The Big Tuna" who called Bill Belichick with the news that got the job at New England. Belichick was flabbergasted when he got the call at 7 a.m. from Parcells. Kraft wasted no time and called Belichick at 10 a.m. Belichick wasted no time after the call. He was in Foxboro, Mass., within hours. At 6 p.m., Belichick was introduced as the Patriots' coach. It was for real.

In previous chapters, we discussed that Bill Belichick was an assistant coach under Bill Parcells with the Patriots in 1997. He then followed Parcells to the Jets and was contractually named as Parcells' successor in case Parcells resigned from the Jets. Just one day after the 1999 season, Parcells did resign as head coach of the Jets and he then made his second retirement from NFL coaching.

In the next best edition of "Musical Chairs," Bill Belichick, who had been assistant head coach of the Jets, immediately became the Jets' next head coach. It was all so fast that the following day, at a press conference called to announce his hiring, Belichick quickly penned a resignation note on a napkin ("I resign as HC of the NYJ.") That was it.

He then talked for a half-hour in what was viewed as a resignation speech to the press. Even then, there were rumors that he had been offered the Patriots' vacant head coaching position. In the speech, Belichick cited the Jets' uncertain ownership situation following the death of owner Leon Hess earlier that year as the reason for his resignation.

In the "nothing easy is easy" category, the Jets had denied Belichick permission to speak with other NFL teams, and the NFL upheld Belichick's contractual obligations to the Jets. Belichick then filed an antitrust lawsuit against the NFL in federal court. Because of the uncertainty of the outcome of the suit, Bob Kraft was holding off on his decision to pony up a first-round draft choice to resolve the Jets / Patriots coach dispute

Bill Parcells became the peacemaker and the broker as he and owner Bob Kraft spoke seriously for the first time since Parcells' resignation from the Patriots. They agreed to settle their differences. The Pats and the Jets agreed to a compensation package that was anything but simple. It allowed Bill Belichick to become the Patriots' head coach.

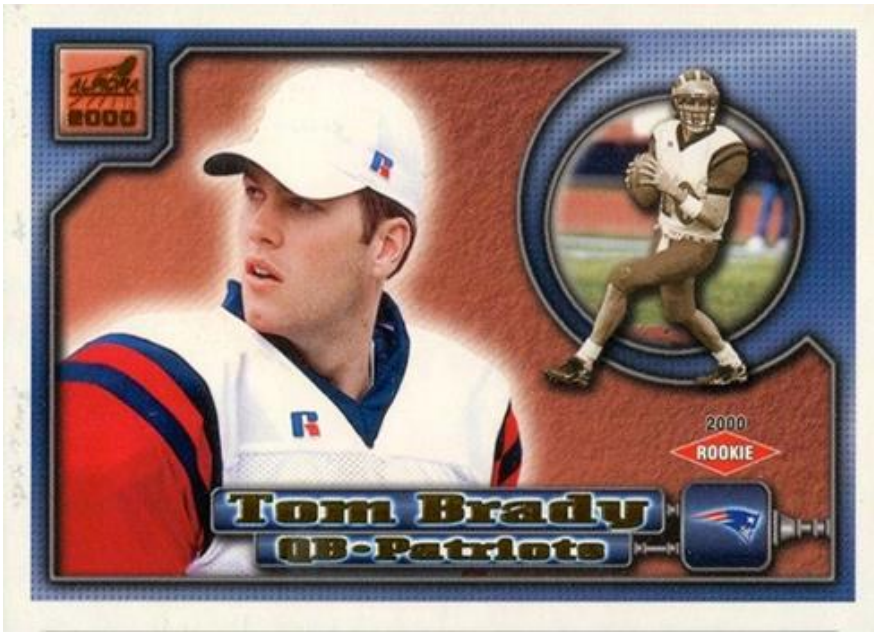
For their part, Bob Kraft sent the Patriots' first-round pick in the 2000 NFL Draft and fourth and seventh-round picks in the 2001 NFL Draft to the Jets, while he also received the Jets' fifth-round selection in 2001 and a seventh-round pick in the 2002 NFL Draft.

Belichick got his modeling clay out when it was done, and afterwards in the off-season, he restructured the team's personnel department. When it was time for the Patriots players to report to camp, a number of them showed up out of shape. Coach Belichick then proclaimed so that it was well understood, that the team "could not win with 40 good players while the other team has 53."

He was not kidding. In 2000, the Patriots went on to finish the season 5–11, as the 5th and last team in AFC East and missing the playoffs for the second straight season. As of 2017, this year, "2000," represents the Patriots' most recent losing season. The team has been showing up in shape for training camp ever since.

Top Patriots Players, Tom Brady, QB

His full name is Thomas Edward Patrick Brady Jr. He was born on August 3, 1977). His occupation is a National Football League football quarterback for the New England Patriots. Tom Brady is the best active football player in the game and there are those what might say he is the best all time football player ever.



He is just one of only two players to win five Super Bowls (the other being defensive player Charles Haley) and he is the only player to win them all playing for one team, the indescribable New England Patriots.

He played college ball at the University of Michigan. Afterwards, he was drafted by the Patriots in the sixth round of the 2000 NFL Draft. Because he was drafted so late, Tom Brady is looked upon today as being the biggest "steal" in the history of the NFL Draft.

Drew Bledsoe, a great NE QB in his own right was leading the Patriots when Brady became available and so he did not start right away. During the second game of the 2001 season, Bledsoe was hit by New York Jets linebacker Mo Lewis and suffered a sheared blood vessel in his chest - which almost resulted in his death. Replacing Bledsoe, backup Tom Brady took the starting position and led New England to the playoffs and he's been leading New England ever since.

It took Drew Bledsoe 51 days to be cleared to play again but by that time Tom Brady had developed a rhythm with the team that any coach would not look to disrupt. The great news for the team and for Bledsoe was that for the first time in 51 days, he was cleared to play

football. Because of team dynamics, the only question that seemed to remain was when, though some who were fully tuned into Brady's excellent performance in relief might also have added the question, "If?"



In the "51-day" press conference Bledsoe let it be known how he felt: "I'm itching to get back in there," Bledsoe said. "I feel healthy, I'm putting weight back on – I'm about 10 pounds from where I was when I got hit – I feel strong and I've been working out for the last couple of weeks and I feel great." Bledsoe had also been seen by five specialists, who all agreed with the current plan of care. Drew Bledsoe was ready to take over if that's what the coach was to decide. Bledsoe felt for sure that he deserved a chance to recapture his starting job, but he also understood that in pro-football, there were no guarantees.

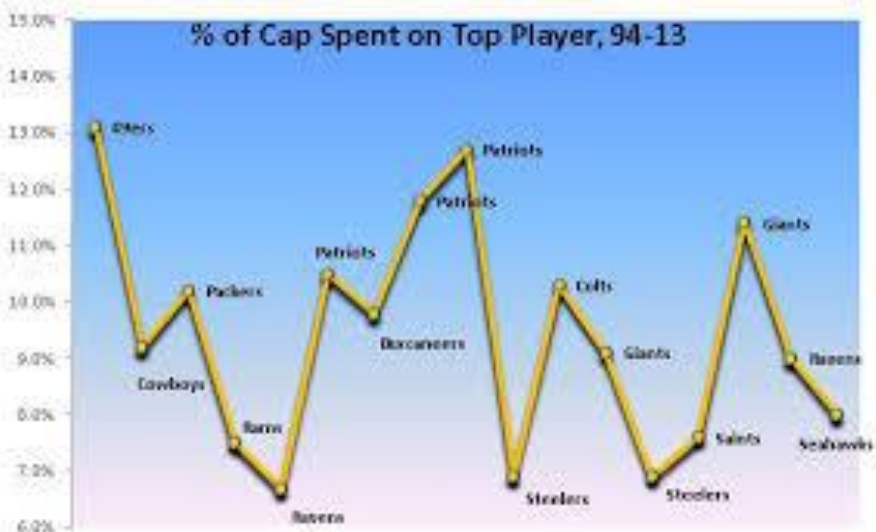
Bledsoe said: "" have to prove it again. I have to prove that I'm the best guy to go out and win football games... "The team's done great and Brady's played excellent football and I'm ecstatic about that. At the same time, it's been bittersweet because I'm not out there. But I have to make it difficult for Brady to stay on the field by playing better."

It would not be easy for coach Belichick. The Head Coach said that he expected Brady to take the majority of the snaps the first week in practice and start Sunday's game. The most likely scenario for Bledsoe would be for him to regain his form in practice this week and slowly work his way back into the picture. So, what happened back in 2001 that shaped the future that we see today? Well, one-week later Bill Belichick announced that Tom Brady was his man for the rest of the year. That ended that—or so it seemed. The pundits were second guessing all over the place.

Jonathan Cohn of slate.com offered this poignant summary of Bledsoe's choices after hearing the coach's verdict. "If Bledsoe really wants to stay with the Patriots—and, to his credit, he's been the epitome of a loyal, club-friendly athlete for his entire stay in Foxboro—he's welcome to take a pay cut. Otherwise, he should go. Harsh? Perhaps. But that's the new reality of the NFL. Someday, the Tom Brady decision will turn out to be an object lesson too. There was no guarantee that Tom Brady was not a flash in the pan, but he was surely filling the bill for the time being.

There was a big plus for the Patriots by letting Bledsoe go. M-O-N-E-Y. No Bledsoe would take \$7.5 million per year contract off the books. In 2001, Brady was making only \$300,000 per year. This savings from the salary cap would be able to free up money for a desperately needed offensive lineman or two, plus a playmaker at wide receiver.

Technically, because of the complicated rules of the cap, the Patriots could get rid of Bledsoe next year or the year after without taking a debilitating hit, though it depends in part on how they would pass him off. In other words, when you are trading proven greatness at quarterback for four or five starters, there is a lot to gain.



Even if Brady turned out to be mediocre, all the new extra quality players would more than likely make the transaction a net winner for the Patriots, and the best and surest way to turn this year's squad—which is performing far beyond its talents into a real dynasty...into a real serious Super Bowl contender. Well, we know what happened don't we.

By the way, Drew Bledsoe did all right for himself, just not in a Patriot's uniform. He spent three years with Buffalo and two years with Bill Parcells, his old coach at Dallas. He did great at QB for his former division rival Buffalo. He was rejuvenated in 2002. He had one of his best seasons ever, passing for 4,359 yards and 24 touchdowns and making his fourth trip to the Pro Bowl. Drew Bledsoe was a fine QB.

In Tom Brady's 16 seasons as a starter, he quarterbacked the Patriots to eight Super Bowl appearances, the most for any player in the history of football. He has been honored with four Super Bowl MVP awards (Super Bowl XXXVI, XXXVIII, XLIX, and LI), the most ever by a single player, has won three league MVP awards (2007, 2010, 2017), has been selected to 13 Pro Bowls, and has led his team to more division titles (15) than any other quarterback in NFL history. Bill Belichick had a tough personal decision re Bledsoe but he had a great football decision to make. Two great talents.

Now at the end of the 2017 regular season, Brady is fourth all-time in total career passing yards, tied for third (with Drew Brees) in career touchdown passes, and third in career passer rating. His career postseason record is 27–10, winning more playoff games than any other quarterback, and he has appeared in more playoff games than any player at any position. Brady has never had a losing season as a starting quarterback in the NFL. His combined regular-season and postseason wins are also the most of any quarterback in NFL history. Because of his accomplishments and accolades, many analysts and sportswriters consider Brady to be among the greatest quarterbacks of all time.

A cursory look of Tom Brady's superlative football statistics cannot be cursory because the list goes on and on and on and on. Let me just give you a peak at what I am talking about and I ask you to consider that these are just a few career highlights. There are a ton of them and there are also huge lists of season highlights, and game highlights. Many books can be written about Tom Brady for sure and they would all be exciting.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Brady is a 16-time Patriots team captain, elected to the position by his teammates every season since 2002.
- Three-time NFL MVP (2007, 2010, 2017).
- Brady's 221 career wins are the most all time by a starting quarterback. He surpassed Peyton Manning (200) in New England's win vs. Los Angeles (12/4/16) to become the NFL's all-time winningest quarterback.
- Brady is the first quarterback in NFL history to lead his team to five Super Bowl wins, surpassing Terry Bradshaw (4) and Joe Montana (4).
- Brady owns four Pete Rozelle Awards as Super Bowl MVP (XXXVI, XXXVIII, XLIX and LI) and is the first player in Super Bowl history to earn four MVP awards, one more than Pro Football Hall of Famer Joe Montana (3).
- Brady is the all-time leader in Super Bowl passing yards (2,071), touchdown passes (15) and starts (7) by a

quarterback. His 11-conference title game starts, and seven conference championships are the most of any starting quarterback in the Super Bowl era.

- Brady is 25-9 (.735) in the playoffs, the most playoff wins in NFL history by a starting quarterback.
- Holds all-time postseason records for starts by a quarterback (34), wins (25), passing yards (9,094), completions (831), touchdowns (63), multi-TD passing games (20) and 300-yard passing games (12) ...

As the late Yul Brynner would say, Etc. Etc. Etc.

2001 Bill Belichick #14

The 2001 New England Patriots football team competed in their forty-second season of professional football and their thirty-second season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his second of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 11-5. They finished in first place in the AFC East Division, advanced to the Super Bowl and won the World Championship in Bill Belichick's second year at the helm. Things would never be the same

What an amazing year. A Super Bowl XXXVI victory after a 5-11 fifth (last) place finish. In the span of one season, the New England Patriots under Bill Belichick went from the last to the first—from the worst in the league to the best in the league

If expectations were realized, the Patriots would still be waiting for this Super Bowl Victory as nobody expected such great things after the 2000 season. But, it came nonetheless.

Things began with bad news on August 6, when QB coach, Dick Rehbein, died of cardiomyopathy at the young age of age of 45. In the second game of the regular season, nine-year starting QB, Drew Bledsoe, who had received a 10-year contract extension in March, was injured after a big hit by New York Jets linebacker Mo Lewis. To replace Bledsoe, backup Tom Brady, who was a sixth-round draft pick in 2000, got the call to finish the game.

The Patriots did not come back and found their record at 0–2, after the second game. Tom Brady was spot on and he was durable and able to start the final 14 games of the season. His record as a starter was 11–3. He surely answered the call. His great play and Belichick's tenacious coaching combined to propel the Patriots to a clinch of the 2nd seed in the AFC playoffs and a first round bye. It was one for the record books as the Patriots became only the 2nd team in NFL history to win the Super Bowl after starting the season 2–3, behind the 1980 Oakland Raiders.

With a great push in the AFC playoffs, the Patriots faced-off against the Oakland Raiders at home in Foxboro Stadium after a first-round bye in the final game at Foxboro Stadium. It was in a snowstorm, when a Patriots drive late in the fourth quarter was kept alive in an application of the now-famous tuck rule.

This rule was used in overturning a Brady fumble into an incomplete pass. Shortly after the ruling, Adam Vinatieri pounded in a 45-yard field goal through the snow. This went down as one of the most clutch field goals in NFL history, and it sent the game into OT. In OT, another Vinatieri field goal won the game.

After defeating the top-seeded Pittsburgh Steelers in the AFC Championship Game, the Patriots faced the heavily favored St. Louis Rams. The game became known as "The Greatest Show on Turf", aka Super Bowl XXXVI. Guess how it ended? Once again, Vinatieri kicked a game-winning field goal. This 48-yarder sailed through the uprights as time hit all zeroes. Exciting!

This kick and all the play beforehand, gave the Patriots their first ever Super Bowl victory in what has been considered by many to be a "Cinderella" season. This of course means that the situation in which New England engaged enabled them to achieve far greater success than would reasonably have been expected.

Though Bill Belichick was respected by the many coaches in the league, he was an unknown to most fans across the US and the globe. He had always been the man behind Bill Parcells but this accomplishment this year was all-Belichick. Tom Brady, a 6th round draft pick from Michigan at QB was another unknown. He was

expected to be groomed and be able to take over some time over the next ten years as Drew Bledsoe played as many of his ten contract years as he could.

As it would turn out the 2001 season served as a launching pad for the team, the once unknown coach, and the once unknown star quarterback. In the next 16 seasons, this combination would win their division 14 times, win the AFC Championship 7 more times, win 4 additional Super Bowl titles, and achieve an undefeated regular season (followed by a 2–1 playoff record) in 2007. How's them apples?

End of Season Playoff Game Summaries

East v West

In the East v West contest at 8:00 pm on EST January 19, 2002, the Patriots defeated the Oakland Raiders in OT W (16–13) at Foxboro Stadium in a packed house of 60,292.

The Boston Globe always sees things on the side of New England or we would stop buying the paper. Here is their crisp summary of this great game:

“Because it was a beautiful sendoff for Foxboro Stadium. Because it was a football game played in a snow globe. Because the Tuck Rule was the correct interpretation of a silly rule. Because East Boston’s Jermaine Wiggins caught 10 passes in the snow, as if he’d played in the stuff his entire childhood. Because J.R. Redmond was everything Kevin Faulk would eventually be, Tom Brady earned his first postseason pelt, and Adam Vinatieri was good, so good, from 45 to tie and 23 to win. Because it’s when a decade of greatness officially began.”

Conference AFC v NFC

In the Conference Championship, at 12:30 pm on EST January 27, 2002 at Pittsburgh, the NE Patriots beat the Steelers W 24-17 at Heinz Field before 64,704.



JIM DAVIS/GLOBE STAFF ---

Drew Bledsoe celebrated with Fred Coleman after tossing a touchdown pass to David Patten.

PITTSBURGH - Quarterback Drew Bledsoe hoisted the AFC Championship trophy and pumped it three times on the podium as

teammates, owner Robert Kraft, and coach Bill Belichick waved, pumped their fists, and soaked in an improbable moment in an improbable season.

Players were hollering and screaming with joy and happiness. Feelings of accomplishment, and some of revenge, flowed like the champagne that was tactfully absent as the Patriots celebrated a 24-17 win over the Pittsburgh Steelers yesterday at Heinz Field, putting them into Super Bowl XXXVI in New Orleans.

In the end safety Lawyer Milloy, one of several players who want to complete unfinished business from the Super Bowl in New Orleans after the 1996 season, got his respect from the perhaps-overconfident Steelers.

Belichick got to the Super Bowl with the Patriots again, this time as the head coach, not a Bill Parcells underling.

Super Bowl XXXVI

The Game Winning Field Goal in this Super Bowl (36) (XXXVI) against the Rams in 2002 was historical. This game had a huge impact on the Patriots as a franchise. From the top, it was the beginning of a Tom Brady we're all now accustomed to watching.

You may recall that the Rams had just tied the game at 17 – 17 with a little over a minute left in the fourth quarter. Despite being young and out of timeouts, Brady knew what was at stake and he methodically drove his team down the field to set up the game-winning field goal. So much more importantly, this victory marked the beginning of what today is the Patriots dynasty. This group of can-do players transformed from simply a good team, to the team to beat, a role that they've now held for basically an entire decade.

The Super Bowl XXXVI kickoff was at 5:30 pm CST February 3, 2002. Led by first-year starter Tom Brady, the Bill Belichick-led NE Patriots defeated the St. Louis Rams in the Louisiana Superdome before 72,922. Smiles were reported being observed on all of the

Patriot Players, even the coaches, even Bill Belichick! Owner Bob Kraft like many, had a difficult time containing his pleasure after working so hard for such a result. Please enjoy this game recount from the Boston Globe's Nick Cafardo. Thank you, Nick and the Globe, for a great fact-based article.

From the Boston Globe:

Patriots shock NFL, defeat Rams to win Super Bowl
Final-second field goal caps historic upset

By Nick Cafardo GLOBE STAFF FEBRUARY 04, 2002

Tom Brady led the Patriots to a win in Super Bowl XXXVI. NEW ORLEANS - "The Impossible Dream" has a new meaning in Boston sports lore.

Maligned, disrespected, and disbelieved, the New England Patriots won Super Bowl XXXVI last night, 20-17, over the highly favored St. Louis Rams at the Superdome. And, not surprisingly, they did it on the final play of the game.

Adam Vinatieri settled the score with a 48-yard field goal as time expired, sealing one of the biggest upsets in NFL history and completing one of the all-time worst-to-first stories.

"We shocked the world," summed up veteran cornerback Otis Smith.

It was the latest in a succession of games that cast the Patriots as the underdog, but once again they outcoached, outsmashed, and outwilled the opposition. It did not matter that they were playing a team with the fastest players in football and one of the greatest offenses in NFL history. The Rams were unable to use their speed because they found themselves on the turf, face-down, so often.

And in terms of intangibles such as will, desire, and heart, the Patriots were through the roof.

The players hugged and kissed in jubilation on the Superdome turf, celebrating the first league championship since the organization's

inception in 1960. It took Bill Belichick just two years to win the championship, which comes a year after his team finished in last place in the AFC East with a 5-11 record.

Young Tom Brady (16 of 27, 145 yards, one TD, no interceptions) calmly directed the Patriots to the winning score after the Rams had tied the game, 17-17, with 1:30 remaining. With short passes of 5, 8, and 11 yards to J.R. Redmond, plus key completions to Troy Brown and Jermaine Wiggins, Brady directed the no-huddle offense with no timeouts. He took the Patriots from their 17-yard line to the Rams' 30, setting up Vinatieri with 7 seconds left.

"It's just an overwhelming feeling," said Brady, the Super Bowl MVP in his first year as a starter. "I can't describe it. It's everybody just playing together like we have all season, overcoming the odds."

A clutch kick was nothing new for Vinatieri, who nailed a 45-yarder in a snowstorm to set up an overtime victory over the Oakland Raiders in these playoffs. He won three games - including the one against Oakland - with overtime field goals this season.

"They blocked great up front, the snap and the hold were great," said Vinatieri. "Once I kicked it, I knew it was good. I looked up and it was time to celebrate."



JIM DAVIS/GLOBE STAFF

“We thought before the game he had 55-yard range,” said Patriots offensive coordinator Charlie Weis. “That guy has been unbelievable.”

Vinatieri’s heroics came after the Rams rallied behind league MVP Kurt Warner to tie the game with two fourth-quarter touchdowns after falling behind, 17-3. All of the Patriots’ scoring to that point

was set up by turnovers. New England picked off two passes - one of which was returned 47 yards for a touchdown by Ty Law - and recovered one of the Rams' two fumbles.

The Rams had no takeaways.

The first line of Weis's play chart for the game read, "Take Care of the Ball. No Turnovers."

He said, "How many did we have? That's right. None."

When the Patriots got the ball back with 1:21 left, Weis and Belichick had a short conversation and decided to go for the win rather than take their chances in overtime.

"They had the momentum and we had to stop their momentum and win the game," said Weis. "We needed to play to win."

After the Patriots built a 14-3 halftime lead - on Law's return and an 8-yard TD pass to David Patten - the Rams appeared to be getting into a rhythm midway through the third quarter. But Otis Smith picked off a Warner pass after Torry Holt fell down, setting up a 37-yard field goal by Vinatieri that made it 17-3.

On their first drive of the fourth quarter, the Rams moved to a fourth-and-goal from the 3, when Warner made a dash for the end zone himself. A jarring hit by Roman Phifer knocked the ball loose at the 2, and Tebucky Jones grabbed it and bolted all the way for an apparent touchdown return.

But Willie McGinest was called for holding Marshall Faulk, and the Rams were given the ball on the 1, first and goal. Two plays later, Warner took it in for his team's first touchdown.

"I'm not the referee, so I don't know if it was holding or not," said McGinest. "I played him the same way all game. It was disappointing at the time, but my teammates told me to forget about it and go to the next play."

The Patriots went from having a 24-3 lead to having a 17-10 lead.

The Rams appeared fired up. Their defense smothered the Patriots on the next series. Defensive end Leonard Little, who hadn't been heard from often, hurried Brady into a bad throw on third and 2. Brady, who had played mistake-free and looked poised for much of the game, looked frazzled on that series.

After a Ken Walter punt pinned the Rams deep in their own territory, McGinest soon redeemed himself with about 4 minutes to go when he sacked Warner for a 16-yard loss after the Rams had driven to the Patriots' 39. Warner threw incomplete to Holt on third down, and the Rams chose to punt instead of going for it with less than four minutes to go.

"It felt good because it took them out of field goal range," said McGinest.

But the Rams defense held again, and Warner got the ball back with 1:51 to go. It took him just three plays to tie it, hitting Proehl with a 26-yard scoring pass.

But St. Louis left enough time for Brady and Vinatieri to work their magic.

The Patriots' stunning 14-3 lead at halftime came despite a sluggish offensive performance.

The Rams scored the only points of the first quarter - a 50-yard Jeff Wilkins field goal - as the Patriots looked for a big play or a big mistake. They got both in the second quarter, courtesy of their defense.

Warner dropped back to throw with 8:49 remaining in the half, but all he saw was linebacker Mike Vrabel closing in. Vrabel had faked substitute right tackle Rod Jones, who was playing with a strained right groin, and managed to hit Warner as he released the ball. The pass, intended for Isaac Bruce, went instead to Law, who ran unimpeded 47 yards to give the Patriots a 7-3 lead.

”I never saw Vrabel,” said Law, “but I knew we were going to pressure him. I was just out there waiting for the play to unfold, so to speak, and the ball just came my way and I took it in.”

With less than two minutes left, Warner completed a slant to Proehl, but Antwan Harris knocked the ball loose with a nice hit as Proehl was falling to the turf. Terrell Buckley chased the ball down and returned it to the Rams 40.

The Patriots offense clicked just in time.

Brady hit Brown on an inside route for 16 yards to the 24, connected with Wiggins for 8, and pitched to Kevin Faulk for 8 more down the left sideline. On first and goal from the 8, Brady tossed a soft pass over Dexter McCleon’s reach into the hands of Patten, who made a circus catch as he tumbled in the corner of the end zone.

The Patriots walked off with the shocking 14-3 halftime lead, and the Rams never really recovered.

”That’s a hell of a football team we just played,” said Smith. “But we’re No. 1 in the world and in the NFL.”

And that is why they now have dibs on the “Impossible Dream” label.

Maybe forever!

Top Patriots Players Matt Light, LT

Matthew Charles "Matt" Light was born June 23, 1978. He is a former National Football League offensive tackle. Matt spent his entire eleven-year football career playing for the New England Patriots of the NFL.

Matt played his college ball at Purdue University. Light was picked by the Patriots in the second round of the 2001 NFL Draft.



The most important player on the offensive line is the left tackle because he's charged with guarding the quarterback's blind side. From 2001–11, the player keeping Tom Brady off the ground was Matt Light. During his tenure with the Pats team he made the Pro Bowl three times and was part of three Super Bowl–winning teams. Although he retired at 33 years of age, Light spent his entire career with the Patriots. He was a major part of the core that built the Belichick dynasty.

When he first came on board, he started 12 of 14 games played during his rookie season in 2001. He helped the Patriots running game substantially. The Pats averaged 112.2 yards per game. He was the starting left tackle for an offensive line that led the way for 133 yards on 25 carries (5.3-yard average) in the Patriots 20–17 victory in Super Bowl XXXVI over the St. Louis Rams.

Light was great from day one with a Patriots' uniform and was named to the Football News 2001 NFL All-Rookie Team following the season. Light returned in 2002 to start all 16 games at left tackle for the Patriots, who missed the playoffs. He played until 2011, receiving many honors and helping his team win many championships.

2002 Bill Belichick #14

The 2002 New England Patriots football team competed in their forty-third season of professional football and their thirty-third season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his third of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 9-7 after their Super Bowl victory. They finished in second place in the AFC East Division and did not make the playoffs.

After stoking away their victory in Super Bowl XXXVI just seven months earlier, the Patriots had to face the reality of again being a competitive football team, not a bunch of championship players ready to tip their hats for applause. Baptism of fire was when they played their first game in their new Gillette Stadium in the NFL's prime-time Monday Night Football opener against the Pittsburgh Steelers. The Patriots ate the fire and were ready for more.

They soon had won two more to begin the season, including a 44-7 road womping against the division rival New York Jets. Life does not always stay good. The Patriots went forward and lost five of its next seven games, allowing an average of 137 rushing yards a game during that span. Temporarily, they forgot their roots and Bill Belichick was well aware of what he needed to do.

In the final week of the season, the Patriots defeated the Miami Dolphins on an overtime FG by Adam Vinatieri to give both teams a 9-7 record. Ironically, it was just a few hours later when the Jets, who had defeated the Patriots the week prior, also finished with a 9-7 record with a win over the Green Bay Packers.

Due to their record against common opponents, the Jets won the tiebreaker for the division title, which unfortunately eliminated the Patriots and Dolphins from the playoffs. As of 2017 this was the last season the Patriots failed to win at least 10 games. That is how good the Belichick / Brady combination was, is and still is.

2003 Bill Belichick #14

The 2003 New England Patriots football team competed in their forty-fourth season of professional football and their thirty-fourth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his fourth of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 14-2. They finished in first place in the AFC East Division, advanced to the Super Bowl and won the World Championship in Bill Belichick's fourth year at the helm. Bill Belichick, like his mentor, Bill Parcells had learned to make a habit of winning the big ones. The 14-2 record was the best record ever at the time for a Patriot's squad under any coach.

In rapid fire succession, Bill Belichick brought his charges and fans another Super Bowl this season, just two seasons after winning Super Bowl XXXVI. In 2002, the team had a bit of a letdown, but the Patriots rolled into 2003 ready for game after missing the playoffs in 2002.

In a salary cap-related move, captain and Pro Bowl safety Lawyer Milloy was released five days before the start of the 2003 regular season. This was followed by some second-guessing of head coach Bill Belichick among Patriot fans. Additionally, there was an ESPN report by Tom Jackson that the Patriots players "hated their coach." The report was later denied by the players.

Milloy signed with the Buffalo Bills. Some attribute Milloy's playing for Buffalo as a big reason why Buffalo pummeled the Patriots, 31-0, in the season opener. Obviously in this Super Bowl season. the Patriots would rebound. In fact, they did not lose another game after starting with a 2-2 record.

This year also saw the Patriots suffer more injuries than normal. Because of all the disabled, the Patriots started 42 different players during the season. The NFL keeps records on everything. This was an NFL record for a division winner until the Patriots started 45 different players in 2005.

The Patriots were undefeated at home, leading nose tackle Ted Washington to coin the phrase "Homeland Defense" for a Patriots'

defense, which had been boosted by the acquisitions of Washington and San Diego Chargers castoff safety Rodney Harrison in the offseason. The Patriots “D” gave up a league-low 14.9 points per game en route to a 14–2 regular season record.

Thirty-one to zip became the bookend score for the beginning game and ending game of the season. Losing 0-31 in the first game, and then winning 0-31 against the Bills in both games, the fans were looking to Rod Serling for an explanation, but he had passed away in 1975. The last win gave the Patriots a perfect 8–0 record at home in the regular season as noted, the 14–2 season was a club record. In fact, it was the first time the Patriots ever won more than 11 games in a season.

After a first-round bye in the AFC playoffs, the Patriots faced the Tennessee Titans at home in one of the coldest games in NFL history and won, setting up an AFC Championship Game matchup with the Indianapolis Colts. The top-seeded Patriots intercepted Colts quarterback Peyton Manning, the league's co-MVP, four times, winning 24–14 and advancing to Super Bowl XXXVIII against the Carolina Panthers. With a tied game late in the fourth quarter, Adam Vinatieri kicked the game-winning field goal with seconds remaining, giving the Patriots their second Super Bowl victory in three seasons. Vinatieri was one heck of a big weapon for the Patriots throughout the years.

In the season opener on Sept 7, 2003 at Buffalo, the Bills pounded the Patriots L (0–31) at Ralph Wilson Stadium. At Philadelphia on Sept 14, the Patriots beat the Eagles W (31–10) at Lincoln Financial Field. On Sept 21, the Patriots defeated the New York Jets W (23–16) at home in Gillette Stadium. Then, at Washington, on Sept 28, the Redskins edged out the Patriots L (17–20) in FedEx Field. With a 2-2 record, New England had gotten all their bumbles out for the season. The next twelve games would be all wins.

On Oct 5, New England defeated Tennessee W (38–30) at home in Gillette Stadium. At home on Oct 12, the Patriots beat the New York Giants in Gillette Stadium. At Miami on Oct 19, the Patriots beat the Dolphins W (19–13) in OT at Pro Player Stadium. At home

on Oct 26, New England defeated the Cleveland Browns W (9–3) in Gillette Stadium.

At Denver on Nov 3, the Patriots defeated the Broncos W (30–26) in Invesco Field at Mile High Stadium. On Nov 10, the team drew a bye. On Nov 16, the Patriots shut out the Dallas Cowboys W (12–0) at home in Gillette Stadium. At Houston, on Nov 23, the Patriots beat the Texans in OT at Reliant Stadium W (9-2). At Indianapolis on Nov 30, the Patriots defeated the Colts W (38–34) at the RCA Dome.

On Dec 7, New England defeated Miami at home W (12-0), in Gillette Stadium. On Dec 14, at home, the Patriots beat the Jacksonville Jaguars W (27–13) at Gillette Stadium. At New York on Dec 20, the Pats beat the Jets W 21–16 at Giants Stadium. In the season finale, on Dec 27, in the second Buffalo bookend game, the Patriots whooped the Bills W (31–0) at home in Gillette Stadium, thereby finishing a great regulars season of 14-2. The Patriots then went on to the playoffs

The 2003 Season Playoffs

Divisional Round vs. Tennessee Titans

	1	2	3	4	Total
Titans	7	0	7	0	14
Patriots	7	7	0	3	17

This game began at 8:00 PM on January 10, 2004 at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 4 °F, and it was clear and very cold. There was a packed house at the new stadium of 68,436.

This playoff round goes down in pro football history as one of the coldest games in NFL history. Nonetheless, it was a home game and the Patriots did what had to be done to win the game. Steve McNair of the losing Titans put on quite a show and was named co-MVP. He was more difficult for the Patriots than the bitter cold. In the end, the Patriots had to count on yet another clutch field goal from kicker

Adam Vinatieri late in the fourth quarter, coupled with a stiff defensive stand.

Tom Brady started like a ball of fire with a 19-yard completion to Kevin Faulk with his first pass attempt. A few plays later, the Titans defensive forced him to burn a well-spent timeout. On the very next play, Brady tossed a 41-yard TD pass to Bethel Johnson. McNair wasted no time moving the Titans.

It began with a 15-yard completion to Derrick Mason, followed by a 24-yard pass to RB Eddie George, taking the ball to the Patriots 22-yard line. The Patriots' Roman Phifer almost ended the drive by intercepting a pass from McNair, but it was called back. Lineman Richard Seymour was penalized for roughing the passer and the Titans got the ball back with a first down on the New England 9-yard line. Two plays later, Chris Brown took it in on a crisp 5-yard touchdown run to tie the game.

After the kickoff for the TD, Tom Brady completed two passes to Dedric Ward for 30 yards. It was part of a 38-yard drive to the Titans 26-yard line. The drive ended with no points when Adam Vinatieri missed a 44-yard field goal attempt. On the very next play, safety Rodney Harrison intercepted McNair and returned the ball 7 yards to the Patriots 43-yard line. Brady clicked on four of six passes for 49 yards and rushed for 3 more on the way to a 1-yard touchdown scamper by Antowain Smith. This gave the Patriots back the lead. less than two minutes into the second quarter.

Later in the 2nd period, the Titans drove 51 yards in nine plays to the Patriots 13-yard line. This drive featured a 29-yard completion from McNair to Mason. But New England's defense stiffened to keep the Titans out of the end zone. They then blocked Gary Anderson's 31-yard field goal attempt.

After the 2nd half kickoff, early in 3Q, McNair moved the Titans on a 70-yard scoring drive with 5 straight completions for 59 yards, followed by an 11-yard touchdown pass to Mason. The rest of the third quarter was scoreless.

Half way through the fourth quarter, Troy Brown's brought a punt back 10-yards, giving the Patriots great field position at the Titans 40-yard line. They did not move the ball well and the drive stalled. Vinatieri then popped in a 46-yard field goal, giving New England a 17–14 lead with 4:02 left in regulation.

The Titans were not done. They took the ensuing kickoff and drove to the Patriots 33-yard line. After two penalties, including a 10-yard intentional grounding call and a holding penalty, pushed them back 20 yards. McNair threw an 11-yard completion, but after that, Drew Bennett dropped a potential first down catch on fourth down and 12, and the Titans turned the ball over on downs with 1:38 left. The Patriots left the field as victors ready to move to the Conference Championship game.

***** This goes down as one of the great moments in Patriots football *****

The event is known as the “Snow Kick” against the Raiders in the 2002 AFC Divisional Round.

This game is infamous and has many implications. On the final drive of regulation, Charles Woodson strip sacked Tom Brady, which ultimately led to a Raiders recovery. However, the call was overturned under the notorious tuck rule. But, tuck rule aside, this was a great game of football. Adam Vinatieri hit two clutch field goals in the snow!

The first one, which occurred shortly after the tuck rule, was from 45 yards out! A kick from that distance isn't even easy to hit in clear weather conditions, but to do it in the pouring snow, that's something. Vinatieri's second kick came in OT and sealed the Patriots victory, a victory that went on to become a Super Bowl Championship. These kicks cemented Vinatieri as a top placekicker, with ice in his veins (that must explain why he kicks so well in the snow).

Tell me about the tuck rule

The tuck rule was a controversial rule in American football used by the National Football League from 1999 until 2013. It stated:

NFL Rule 3, Section 22, Article 2, Note 2. When [an offensive] player is holding the ball to pass it forward, any intentional forward movement of his arm starts a forward pass, even if the player loses possession of the ball as he is attempting to tuck it back toward his body. Also, if the player has tucked the ball into his body and then loses possession, it is a fumble.

Sunday January 18, 2004

***** This goes down as one of the best Patriot Games ever. *****

AFC Championship: New England Patriots 24, Indianapolis Colts 14

	1	2	3	4	Total
Colts	0	0	7	7	14
Patriots	7	8	6	3	24

This game began at 3:00 PM on January 18, 2004 at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 32 °F, and it was cloudy with occasional snow. There was a packed house at the new stadium of 68,436.

New England's offense did not have to show for most of the game but they did anyway. The defense was compelling, allowing only 14 points, intercepting four passes, recording four sacks, and forcing a safety. That is a major mission accomplished.

Although New England's offense was not much better, they did outscore the Colts 24-14. Yet, they were only able to put up one touchdown. It was steady eddy ice-man Adam Vinatieri's five field goals that made up for the difference as the Patriots won, 24-14, to advance to their second Super Bowl appearance in just three seasons.

After the opening kickoff, the Patriots scored on their first try, driving the ball 65 yards in 13 plays. Tom Brady was hot, completing four passes to receiver David Givens for 40 yards on the drive, including a 7-yard touchdown pass. The Pats also converted a fourth down on their own 44-yard line with a Brady authored 2-yard run.

Peyton Manning seemed immediately prepared to counter. He advanced the team 68 yards to the New England 5-yard line, but he did not close the deal and on third down and 3, he was intercepted by Rodney Harrison in the end zone. After the interception, the Patriots moved 67 yards to the Colts 13-yard line. Vinatieri put in a 31-yard field goal to increase the Pats lead to 10-0.

New England's defense continued to dominate the Colts in the second quarter. On the first play after the ensuing kickoff, Law intercepted a pass from Manning and took it six yards to the 41-yard line. The Patriots then began another drive. This was 52 yards and when it stalled, they increased their lead to 13-0 with a second Vinatieri field goal.

Brady completed three passes for 42 yards on the drive, including a 17-yarder to Givens and a 16-yard completion to Troy Brown on fourth down and 8. For the first time in the entire postseason, the Colts were forced to punt on their next drive. Not being good at punting for lack of practice, the snap from center Justin Snow sailed over the head of punter Hunter Smith. The ball went into the end zone, and Smith was forced to knock it out of bounds for a safety, thus making the score 15-0. The Colts had to kick off to the Patriots.

They got the ball back quickly. The Colts had a great chance to score when defensive back David Macklin recovered a fumble from receiver Bethel Johnson three plays after the free kick, giving Indianapolis a first down on the Patriots 41-yard line. Five plays

later, Harrison forced a fumble while tackling Marvin Harrison, and cornerback Tyrone Poole recovered it.

Down 15–0 at halftime, the Colts finally began to get some stuff done in the third quarter. First, Dominic Rhodes returned the second half kickoff 35 yards to the 49-yard line. After this, running back Edgerrin James was the major instrument in a 52-yard scoring drive, carrying the ball on seven of 12 plays for 32 yards and capping it off with a 2-yard touchdown run. This cut the score to 15–7. The Patriots were in charge the rest of the quarter.

After Patrick Pass brought the ball back on the kickoff 21 yards to the 43-yard line, Tom Brady got in gear, completing passes to Larry Centers for 28 yards, Brown for 17, and Kevin Faulk for 8. This action set up Vinatieri's third field goal making the score 18–7.

Indianapolis was three and out after the kickoff and forced to punt. The Patriots Antowain Smith then rushed four times for 53 yards on New England's next chance with the ball bringing the pigskin to the Colts 3-yard line. Adam Vinatieri then kicked his fourth field goal.

Two plays after the next kickoff, Law grabbed his second interception from Manning on the Colts 31-yard line. But this time, the Patriots failed to score any points as defensive back Walt Harris picked off a Brady pass in the end zone.

After the turnover, the Colts took off on a 57-yard drive to the New England 31-yard line. But then Peyton Manning uncorked his third interception to Law with half of the fourth quarter remaining. After the Colts forced a punt, Manning took over and brought the Colts back, completing eight of nine passes for 64 yards and capping the drive with a 7-yard touchdown pass to Marcus Pollard. There were now just 2:22 left in regulation.

The Colts failed to recover their attempted onside kick attempt but forced a Patriots punt with 2:01 left. At this point the Patriots defense stopped Manning, forcing four consecutive incompletions, forcing the Colts to turn the ball over on downs.

After making Indianapolis use up all of their timeouts, Vinatieri's fifth field goal increased the Patriots lead to 24–14. The Colts attempted one last desperation drive, but it too failed as they turned the ball over on downs again with seven seconds left in the game.

Brady was on the mark for 22 of 37 passes for 237 yards, a touchdown, and an interception. Smith rushed for 100 yards. Pollard caught six passes for 90 yards and a touchdown. Rhodes returned five kickoffs for 121 yards, rushed for 16 yards, and caught two passes for 17 yards.

Colts players would later publicly complain that the game officials did not properly call illegal contact, pass interference, and defensive holding penalties on the Patriots' defensive backs. This, and similar complaints made by other NFL teams, would prompt the NFL during the 2004 offseason to instruct all of the league's officials to strictly enforce these types of fouls.

The games against the Colts marked one of the greatest rivalries ever in any professional sport. It was classic Peyton Manning versus Tom Brady. Two of the best quarterbacks to ever play the game competing against one another time after time throughout the primes of their careers.

But this game wasn't about Brady, it was about Ty Law. Manning was coming into his own this season, proving to the league he had an arm to be reckoned with. However, after Law's amazing one-handed interception, Manning appeared rattled. Three picks later (2 more going to Law), and a final score of 24 – 14 Patriots, proved Manning wasn't ready for the big stage yet. But, he would be soon.

Super Bowl XXXVIII

The SB XXXVIII kickoff was at 6:25 EST February 1, 2004. Led by first-year starter Tom Brady, the Bill Belichick-led NE Patriots defeated the Houston Texans at the Reliant Stadium, Houston, TX. before a packed house of 71,525.



Back in Boston, thousands of Patriots fans celebrate in the streets around Faneuil Hall after the Super Bowl XXXVIII win.

This fine write-up from the Boston Globe gave New England fans enough of the Super Bowl that they felt they were there. Nice job Bob Ryan. He titled his article:

Perhaps the greatest Super Bowl ever played

Subtitle: Patriots' win against Panthers was epic NFL game



By [Bob Ryan](#) GLOBE COLUMNIST FEBRUARY 02, 2004

HOUSTON -- And that, ladies and gentlemen, is why a couple of billion people around the globe are hooked on sport.

Hype doesn't matter. Prognostications don't matter. Talk doesn't matter. When the game starts, performance is all that matters, and the two teams playing in Super Bowl XXXVIII gave everything they could possibly summon, sometimes from who-knows-where, to produce what may very well go down in history as the greatest of all Super Bowls.

Even Bill Belichick took note. "That was a terrific football game to watch," said the coach whose team gave him a 32-29 victory that makes him a two-time Super Bowl championship mentor. "But it was not a terrific game to coach. I was having a heart attack out there."



These teams sure gave us a decent bang for the buck. For a game that remained scoreless longer than any previous Super Bowl, it turned into a wild west shootout with 61 points over the last 33 minutes, with the subplot being the greatest quarterback duel the title game has ever seen. Game MVP Tom Brady played the game we've come to expect (32 of 48, 354 yards, 3 touchdown passes, and 1 near-disastrous interception), but he had to be an MVP-type because Panthers counterpart Jake Delhomme made the most improbable personal in-game turnaround ever.

After starting out 1 for 9 with huge negative yardage, he connected on 15 of his final 24 passes, good for 323 yards and three TDs. He accomplished what neither Steve McNair nor Peyton Manning could, eating up huge chunks of real estate against a suddenly baffled Patriots defense that was helpless to stop him.

Like, what happened?

"They made some nice adjustments," acknowledged defensive coordinator Romeo Crennel. "We played a little bit more conservative in the second half, but they made adjustments and found some soft spots in our zone."

"We just started moving around, hitting seams," said Carolina veteran wideout Ricky Proehl, who caught the tying touchdown with 1:08 remaining. "We started getting into a rhythm, and they got a little tired."

Once the offenses got rolling, the defenses had no answer. "It was supposed to be defense vs. defense," said Patriots offensive coordinator Charlie Weis, "but it turned out to be offense vs. offense." It meant the coordinators did what they had to do, which, in the Patriots' case, meant utilizing linebacker Mike Vrabel as a pass receiver in the red zone. Vrabel drifted out of the line of scrimmage to catch a 1-yard touchdown with 2:51 remaining.

"136 X-cross Z-flag," explained Vrabel. "The play was put in, and I knew on that one I'd have a chance."

The defenses simply lost control of the game, which suddenly turned into an Indianapolis-Kansas City shootout, completely unlike anything the Patriots had engaged in all year. Sure, they had to hold off the Colts in that famous 38-34 game Nov. 30, but they had been ahead, 31-10, before they got careless and Manning got hot. Once this one got rolling, it was a matter of "Can you top this?"

"Two good, tough football teams," said Vrabel. "It was Ali-Frazier. We hit them. They hit us. We hit them. They hit us. But I'll take my chances with Tom Brady, Troy Brown, David Givens, and Adam Vinatieri any day of the week."

It was, frankly, a humbling experience for both defenses.

"It was a horrifying game," acknowledged Ty Law, who found himself on the field with the likes of Asante Samuel and Shawn Mayer after regulars Rodney Harrison (broken arm) and Eugene Wilson (hip flexor) were forced out of the game. "Both defenses were tired. We knew it would come down to the end and we knew we'd have the advantage because we have Adam Vinatieri."

Oh, him. After missing a 31-yard try and having another one blocked, Vinatieri was summoned to the field in a virtual instant replay of the proceedings in New Orleans two years ago. He, of course, knocked the Super Bowl-winning field goal right down Broadway, or whatever happens to be the main drag in Rapid City, S.D. And in another *deja-vu-all-over-again* scenario, Proehl was once again a member of the victimized team.

"I will have nightmares about Adam Vinatieri for a long time," Proehl acknowledged.

There really is no way for the participants to have grasped just what they were a part of. It just doesn't work that way, because it's just too hard doing it, let alone analyzing it. The one thing the Patriots know is that they have some key people to trust when things get sticky, like, say, with 1:08 remaining and the score tied at 29.

"Tom's a winner," acknowledged Belichick. "The quarterback's job is to do what he needs to do to help his team win, and that's what Tom does."

And Troy Brown. He is the most flat-out reliable Patriot receiver ever. He's not the most talented, but he is the most reliable.

"I want the ball in the big situations," Brown said. "A lot of people depend on me, and I don't want to let them down."

He came through when he had to, as did David Givens, as did Tom Brady, as did Adam Vinatieri.

“We made one more play than they did,” said Law with a smile.

What they all did, Patriots and Panthers alike, was elevate sport into something noble. Lawdy, Lawdy, was this a football game, or what?

-- end of Boston Globe Article SB XXXVIII

2004 Bill Belichick #14

The 2004 New England Patriots football team competed in their forty-fifth season of professional football and their thirty-fifth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his fifth of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot’s owner. The Patriots record was 14-2. They finished in first place in the AFC East Division, advanced to the Super Bowl and won the World Championship in Bill Belichick’s fourth year at the helm. Bill Belichick, like his mentor, Bill Parcells had learned to make a habit of winning the big ones. The 14-2 record tied the best record ever (2002) at the time for a Patriot’s squad under any coach. This was the Patriots second straight 14–2 record before advancing to and winning Super Bowl XXXIX, their third Super Bowl victory in four years.

There is always room for improvement and with players getting a year older every year, eventually, positions need to be refreshed. After the 2003 Super Bowl win, the Patriots looked to improve their running game in the offseason. Replacing Antowain Smith with longtime but disgruntled Cincinnati Bengals running back Corey Dillon was their major option. He was acquired in a trade days before the 2004 NFL Draft. It was a good move. Dillon would rush for a career-high 1,635 yards in 2004.

The Pats won their first six games of the season. With this, they set an NFL record for consecutive regular season victories (18), which

was later broken by the 2006–2008 Patriots (21), and consecutive regular season and playoff victories before losing to the Pittsburgh Steelers on October 31. In that game, Pro Bowl cornerback Ty Law injured his foot and was lost for the season. Just two weeks earlier, the team had lost the services of the other starting cornerback Tyrone Poole. And, so, the Patriots were forced to complete the regular season and playoffs by using second-year cornerback Asante Samuel, undrafted free agent Randall Gay, and longtime Patriots wide receiver Troy Brown at cornerback, among others.

Their 14–2 record was excellent, and they gained second seed in the AFC playoffs. And, so, New England defeated the Indianapolis Colts at home in the playoffs for the second-straight year. They held the Colts' top offense to three points. The Patriots kept it rolling by then defeating the top-seeded Pittsburgh Steelers on the road, 41–27, in the AFC Championship Game.

Prior to the Patriots' matchup with the Philadelphia Eagles in Super Bowl XXXIX, Eagles wide receiver Freddie Mitchell was heard saying that he did not know the names of the Patriots' defensive backs. This was taken as a sign of disrespect by the Patriots' "replacement" secondary. The Patriots would go on to defeat the Eagles 24–21 in their second straight Super Bowl victory and third championship in four seasons, leading to some labeling the Patriots of the era a sports dynasty. Of course; they were!

Top Patriots Players Vince Wilfork, NT



His full name is Vincent Lamar Wilfork.

This great NFL football player was born on November 4, 1981. He is a former National Football League Nose Tackle. Wilfork was resilient and tough enough to play that demanding NT position for thirteen seasons.

He was always a great football player and he excelled when playing college football for the University of Miami. And, so he was drafted by the New England Patriots in the first round of the 2004 NFL Draft, and he spent the first 11 years of his career there. By the late 2000s, Wilfork was considered to be one of the premier defensive tackles in the NFL, and he was named both to the Pro Bowl and the All-Pro team in 2007, 2010, 2011, and 2012. He also played two seasons for the Houston Texans as he was closing out his NFL career.

By the time Tedy Bruschi's was getting ready to consider retirement, along comes Wilfork. another defensive stud. Nose tackle Vince Wilfork, showed up at the right time, fought his way into a starting

position and became the go-to-guy (the backbone) for the Patriots' defensive unit.

As noted, he was drafted in the first round in 2004, Wilfork forged his way into the regular starting lineup by his second season in the league. By his fourth year, he had developed into a Pro Bowler.

During his 11-year run with the Patriots, Wilfork made the Pro Bowl five times and finished with 16 sacks and 355 tackles. His solid performance opened things up for New England's defensive ends and linebackers to make big plays. He owns a big share in the Patriots' success during this period.

The 2004 Season Division Playoff Jan 16, 2005 AFC: New England Patriots 20, Indianapolis Colts 14

This game began at 4:30 PM on January 16, 2005 at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 25 °F, and it was cloudy and snowing. There was a packed house at the new stadium of 68,756 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts.

There was a New England snowstorm going on at Foxborough on January 16 that day and early evening when Bill Belichick and the Patriots set their mind on dismantling the league's highest scoring team. The Patriots forced three turnovers and held the Indianapolis Colts to just 276 yards and 3 points. It was the Colts lowest point production since their opening game of the 2003 season.

AFC Championship: Jan 23, 2005 New England Patriots 41, Pittsburgh Steelers 27

This game began at 6:30 PM on January 23, 2005 at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The weather was 11 °F, and it was cold and fair. There was a packed house of 65,242 at Heinz.

Even for football, the temperatures in Pittsburgh during this game were raw, hovering around 11 °F (-12 °C). As far as record cold goes, this was the second-coldest game ever in Pittsburgh and the coldest ever in Steel City playoff annals. Despite the cold being

owned by Pittsburgh, the Patriots delivered rookie Ben Roethlisberger his first loss as a starter after a 14-game winning streak. This was the longest win streak by a rookie QB in NFL history.

Super Bowl XXXVIII Feb 6, 2005

The Super Bowl XXXIX kickoff was at 6:38 EST February 6, 2005. Led by Tom Brady, the Bill Belichick NE Patriots defeated the Philadelphia Eagles in Alltel Stadium in Jacksonville Florida before a packed house of 78,125.

This fine write-up from the Boston Globe again gave New England fans enough of the Super Bowl that they felt they were there. Nice job Nick Cafardo. He titled his article:

Patriots reign again after beating Eagles,

Picture below , JIM DAVIS/GLOBE STAFF 0



Safety Rodney Harrison was ready to intercept this Donovan McNabb pass in the final minutes of Super Bowl XXXIX.

By [Nick Cafardo](#) GLOBE STAFF FEBRUARY 07, 2005

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The red, white, and blue confetti floated in the sky and dropped ever so gently on their latest field of dreams. There were hugs, pats on the backs, and family moments with children hugging their hero dads, and wives kissing their hero husbands.

There was Bill Belichick, Romeo Crennel, and Charlie Weis, the brain trust of the Super Bowl XXXIX champions embracing for the final time, with Weis off to Notre Dame and Crennel off to Cleveland.

In pic below, Tedy Bruschi celebrated after the Patriots won their third Super Bowl in four years.



<<< PIC STAN
GROSSFELD
/GLOBE STAFF

The Vince Lombardi Trophy was touched, kissed, and embraced like a loved one.

The New England Patriots, draped in blood, sweat, and tears, won the Super Bowl for the 3rd time in four years, beating the Philadelphia Eagles, 24-21, last night before 78,125 at Alltel Stadium.

Dynasty?

“We’re champions now,” said Patriots safety Rodney Harrison. “I don’t know about dynasty right now.”

Football historians will look back upon the current run by the Patriots and decide if it is indeed a dynasty. But for now, it’s clear that no football team in the world is better.

The Patriots broke a 14-14 tie and took control with two fourth-quarter scores against the Eagles, who couldn’t stop Tom Brady and Co. when it counted most.

Brady, who played with a heavy heart with his 94-year-old grandmother passing away Wednesday, completed 23 of 33 passes for 236 yards and two touchdowns for a 110.2 quarterback rating.

He was the calm, cool quarterback who had been there and done that. His Eagles counterpart, Donovan McNabb (30 of 51 for 357 yards, three touchdowns, and three interceptions), looked jittery at times in his Super Bowl debut.

Brady’s favorite target was Deion Branch, who tied a Super Bowl record with 11 catches for 133 yards and was named the game’s most valuable player.

” It doesn’t make a difference who gets what,” said Branch. “Our plan was to come in here and win the game. We had a lot of doubters and we showed them that we are a big team and we came out and won tonight.”

The Patriots boosted their lead to 24-14 in the fourth quarter courtesy of Adam Vinatieri’s 22-yard field goal, which capped an eight-play, 43-yard drive.

McNabb, who has a history of overthrowing receivers at crucial times, got the ball with 5:40 remaining and tried to rally the Eagles.

The Patriots played another stout defensive game, showing McNabb looks — including lining up two linemen and five linebackers — he may have never seen on film. They had to adapt after losing free safety Eugene Wilson for more than half the game with what was thought to be a broken arm.

The Eagles pulled within 24-21 with 1:48 remaining when McNabb found Greg Lewis for a 30-yard touchdown pass over rookie safety Dexter Reid — Wilson's replacement. That capped a 13-play, 79-yard drive that consumed 3 minutes 52 seconds.

The Eagles attempted an onside kick, but it was recovered by Christian Fauria at the Eagles' 41. While the Eagles forced a Patriots punt, McNabb couldn't pull off the heroics, with Harrison icing the game with his second interception.

While the Eagles received a strong performance from Terrell Owens (nine catches, 122 yards), the flamboyant receiver never found the end zone.

“Obviously we had a lot of turnovers,” said Owens. “My hat goes off to the New England Patriots. They're a good team. It was a hard-fought ballgame. We just gave it away.”

“I think we had everyone on the edge of their seats when we went back out there with 50 seconds left. We possibly could have won that game,” McNabb said.

But it wasn't to be.



<<< PIC JIM
DAVIS /GLOBE
STAFF /FILE

<<< Tom Brady held up the Vince Lombardi Trophy for the third time. You could sense the Patriots were taking over late in the second quarter, and by the time Paul McCartney had finished “Hey Jude” at halftime,

Belichick’s troops were ready to take the field and carry on the momentum.

Offensive coordinator Weis said the 25-minute halftime allowed him time to figure out how to beat the Philadelphia blitz. He did it with short passes and screen passes.

The Eagles were still intent on blitzing, and the Patriots were happy to see it.

“They were blitzing up the middle with [Jeremiah Trotter] in an attempt to make Brady get out of the pocket and so we had to do something to combat it. We used the screens and the shorter passing game, and it really opened things up for us,” Weis said.

Brady was picking it up very nicely, spotting Branch for gains of 27 and 21, the latter giving the Patriots a first down at the Philadelphia 2-yard line. From there, Brady went to designated short-yardage tight end Mike Vrabel, who gathered a tipped pass for his second touchdown reception in as many Super Bowls, giving the champs a 14-7 lead with 11:09 left in the third.

A fired-up Brady returned to the sideline and screamed to his teammates, "Let's keep it going! Let's keep it going!"

Yet the Eagles answered quickly, evening things at 14 with 3:35 remaining in the third. It was turning into a heavyweight title fight, and McNabb appeared poised for the challenge.

The Eagles targeted rookie corner Randall Gay, throwing at him often during the drive. McNabb completed passes of 15, 4, and 10 to Brian Westbrook, the last catch good for 6 points. He also found Lewis and Owens twice each on the drive. His favorite first-half target, Todd Pinkston, was cramping up and was in the locker room receiving intravenous fluids.

The chains kept moving and even with a blitzing Willie McGinest coming at him, McNabb managed to drill a pass to Westbrook between two Patriots for the tying score.

With the score even after three quarters (a Super Bowl first), the Patriots started a well-orchestrated drive to regain the lead. Brady was very methodical in leading the Patriots 66 yards, using Kevin Faulk as a key component.

Faulk caught passes of 13 and 14 yards (both beating Eagle blitzes) and ran twice for 20 yards in picking up three first downs on the drive. Corey Dillon capped it with a 2-yard touchdown run off left tackle with 13:44 remaining, giving the Patriots a 21-14 lead.

"We were 0 for 4 on first downs in the first quarter and we really couldn't get into any rhythm offensively," said Brady. "We just didn't move the ball. We tried to run it and didn't gain a whole lot of yards. We made a few more plays in the second half."

At one point in the first quarter, the Eagles led the battle of first downs, 9-1. The Patriots committed costly penalties early and Pinkston made two beautiful catches on the first scoring drive, which culminated in McNabb hitting L.J. Smith in the end zone with 9:55 remaining in the first quarter.

On their next possession, the Patriots tried to answer but Brady fumbled when his hand hit Faulk's hip at the Eagles' 5-yard line (New England's first turnover of the postseason).

New England finally scored when Brady hit David Givens for 4-yard score to make it 7-7 with 1:10 left before intermission.

That was not respectable for the three-time Super Bowl champions. In the end, they adjusted, they executed, and they conquered.

2005 Bill Belichick #14

The 2005 New England Patriots football team competed in their forty-sixth season of professional football and their thirty-sixth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his sixth of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 14-2. They finished in first place in the AFC East Division, son the Wild Card playoffs against the Jaguars W (28-3) but lost the Divisional Playoffs to the Broncos L (13-27).

Life is not always good even for good people. It was widely reported that popular and talented linebacker Tedy Bruschi suffered a stroke just ten days after the Patriots victory in Super Bowl XXXIX. He initially planned to miss the entire season. However, a determined and well-cared for Bruschi returned to the field against the Buffalo Bills on October 30.

Cornerback Ty Law was released in the offseason, and injuries at the cornerback position, as well as a season-ending injury to safety Rodney Harrison in Week 3, forced the Patriots to break-in a number of players in the secondary very early in the season. Overall, injuries caused the Patriots to start 45 different players at one point or another during the season. This was an NFL record for a division champion (breaking the record of 42 set by the Patriots in 2003).

And, so things did not begin as well as they could have for the Patriots after a Super Bowl victory. They got off to a slow 4-4 start. Among other things, the Pats lost their first game at home since

2002 against the San Diego Chargers in Week 4. They did make a fine comeback by ending the season on a 6-2 run for an overall 10–6 record. This was not at all shabby as it gave them their third straight AFC East title. In another one for the record books, (The Patriots were the first team in NFL history to alternate wins and losses in each of their first nine games.

They were announced as fourth seed in the AFC playoffs. In the Wild Card Playoffs, the Patriots defeated the Jacksonville Jaguars, but they could not keep up the playoff streak and the lost to the Denver Broncos on the road in the Divisional Playoffs, after having committed five turnovers in the game.

Top Patriots Players Logan Mankins, G



<<< Logan Lee Mankins was born March 10, 1982. He is a former National Football League guard. Mankins played eleven seasons in the National Football League (NFL). He played college football at Fresno State, and was drafted by the New England Patriots in the first round of the 2005 NFL Draft. Mankins also played for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

His favorite side of the line was at the left guard position, It might not be traditionally as important as the left tackle but

it is very important. Besides that does not change just how great Logan Mankins was at this job. After suiting up for his first game, Mankins quickly established himself as the best left guard in the game.

In his nine seasons with the Patriots, he made the Pro Bowl six times. Mankins helped lead the team to the Super Bowl twice in 2007 and 2011 — losing both times to the New York Giants. He

moved on to play two final seasons with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers before he retired from the NFL in 2015.

Wild Card Playoffs

In the Wild Card playoffs at 8:00 PM EST, on January 7, 2006 the New England Patriots defeated the Jacksonville Jaguars W 28–3 at Gillette Stadium

The three-time Super Bowl champion Patriots, this time would have to win three games to advance to the Super Bowl, defeated the Jaguars 28–3 in the wild card match. Linebacker Willie McGinest set NFL playoff records for sacks in a game (4.5, 1 sack ahead of the old record held by Richard Dent and Rich Milot) and career postseason sacks (16, two ahead of the old record held by Bruce Smith). Meanwhile Tom Brady threw for 201 yards and three touchdown passes.

This game also marked three career playoff records: Brady and Patriots head coach Bill Belichick set records for 10 straight postseason victories, beating Vince Lombardi's run in the 1960s.

Divisional Playoffs

In the AFC Divisional Playoffs at 8:00 PM EST on Jan 14, 2006 at Denver, the Broncos beat the Pats L (13–27) at Mile High Stadium

The Patriots turned the ball over five times in this poor showing in mid-January. The Broncos were on the ball and they converted four out of the five turnovers into 24 points as they eliminated the two-time defending Super Bowl champion Patriots, 27–13. The turnovers were the game. The Broncos won their first playoff game since defeating the Atlanta Falcons in Super Bowl XXXIII. This game also ended New England's league-record ten-game postseason winning streak and gave quarterback Tom Brady his first ever postseason loss.

The Patriots were trailing most of the game. With 8:33 left, Tom Brady tried to get it going for the victory. He completed a 73-yard pass to Deion Branch and then he fired a 4-yard touchdown pass to David Givens. This brought the game to 24–13. But the Patriots were not finished. Plummer got a 42-yard completion to Smith set up another Elam field goal. Then the Patriots all but clinched the game when safety John Lynch intercepted a Brady pass with less than 3 minutes remaining.

Tom Brady did not play a bad game, but it was not enough. He finished the game completing 20 out of 36 passes for 341 yards, one touchdown, and two interceptions, but he suffered his first NFL postseason game loss. Also, Patriots head coach Bill Belichick lost his first postseason game since taking over the team in 2000. Both the coach and his QB had amassed 10 straight playoff wins before this (with three 3–0 runs of the playoffs plus the Super Bowl titles and the previous win over Jacksonville).

In this game, Branch caught 8 passes for 153 yards, while Rod Smith caught 6 passes for 96 yards and a touchdown. This would become the Patriots' first postseason loss since 1998 when the team lost to the Jaguars in the Wild Card Round. Each time any team loses and does not win the Super Bowl, there is disappointment. In 2005 after this game, it was no consolation to the Patriots or their fans that they would be in seven more Super Bowls and they would win two more of these Super games before the 2018 season.

Chapter 15 Coach Bill Belichick Part II 2006-2011...

Coach Bill Belichick # 14

2006 Bill Belichick	NFL AFC East	1st	12 4 0
• Won Wild Card Playoffs (Jets) 37–16			
• Won Divisional Playoffs (at Chargers) 24–21			
• Lost Conference Championship (at Colts) 34–38			
2007 Bill Belichick	NFL AFC East	1st	16 0 0
• Won Divisional Playoffs(Jaguars) 31–20			
• Tom Brady(MVP, OPOY)			
• Won Conference Championship(Chargers) 21–12			
• Bill Belichick(COY)			
• Lost Super Bowl XLII (vs. Giants) 14–17			
2008 Bill Belichick	NFL AFC East	2nd	11 5 0
Jerod Mayo(DROY)			
2009 Bill Belichick	NFL AFC East	1st	10 6 0
• Lost Wild Card Playoffs (Ravens) 14–33			
• Tom Brady(CBPOY)[27]			
2010 Bill Belichick	NFL AFC East	1st	14 2 0
Lost Divisional Playoffs (Jets) 21–28			
• Tom Brady(MVP, OPOY)			
• Bill Belichick(COY)			
2011 Bill Belichick	NFL AFC East	1st	13 3 0
• Won Divisional Playoffs(Broncos) 45–10			
• Won Conference Championship(Ravens) 23–20			
• Lost Super Bowl XLVI (vs. Giants) 17–21			
2012 Bill Belichick	NFL AFC East	1st	12 4 0
• Won Divisional Playoffs (Texans) 41–28			
• Lost Conference Championship(Ravens) 13–28			



2006 Bill Belichick #14

The 2006 New England Patriots football team competed in their forty-seventh season of professional football and their thirty-seventh season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his seventh of eighteen seasons (so far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 12-4. They finished in first place in the AFC East Division, won the Wild Card playoffs against the Jets W (37-16; won the Divisional playoffs against the Chargers W (24-21) & then the Patriots lost the Conference Championship to the Colts L (34-38).

The Patriots were short from the beginning of the season without their two starting wide receivers from 2005; David Givens, who left in free agency and Deion Branch, who held out for a new contract before being traded in early September. No player shifts are easy. Replacing them eventually were Reche Caldwell and Jabar Gaffney. They signed as free agents in October.

It was a tough season to endure. There were back-to-back losses in November, which ended the team's streak of 57 games without consecutive losses. The Pats were three games shy of the NFL record in this marker.

With a 12–4 record and being the champs for the fourth time in a row in the AFC East, the Patriots entered the playoffs as the fourth seed. They proceeded to defeat the New York Jets in the Wild Card Playoffs. They then achieved a close win over the top-seeded San Diego Chargers on the road. This win set the Patriots up to face their rival Indianapolis Colts in the AFC Championship. Nothing is assured despite the odds. Despite having a 21–3 lead, the Patriots floundered down the stretch at the RCA Dome and the Colts grabbed the 38–34 victory. The Patriots were o-u-t for 2006.

Post Season

In the playoffs, the Patriots won the Wild Card Playoffs against the New York Jets. 37–16. They also won the Divisional Playoffs against the San Diego Chargers, 24–21. And in the Conference Championship, Peyton Manning's good fortune in winning his first

Conference Championship was bad luck for the Patriots, who lost the conference L (34–38). As an aside, this year, Peyton Manning who prior to this season had a playoff jinx, bagged his first Super Bowl XLI v the Chicago Bears 29-17.

2007 Bill Belichick #14

The 2007 New England Patriots football team competed in their forty-eighth season of professional football and their thirty-eighth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his eighth of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 16-0-0. They finished in first place in the AFC East Division, and they won the Championship for the sixth of the past seven years. They won the Wild Divisional Playoffs against the Jaguars W (31-20); won the Conference Playoffs against the Chargers W (21-12); & then the Patriots lost Super Bowl XLII to the New York Giants by three points L (17-14).

The Patriots finished the 2007 regular season by winning all sixteen of their games. The regular season was perfect, but the total season was not perfect because the Patriots lost their last game—the Super Bowl. So we have the proper perspective, a perfect season is a sports season that includes any requisite playoff portion, in which a team remains and finishes undefeated and untied. The feat as you might expect, is extremely rare at the professional level of any team sport. It has occurred more commonly at the collegiate and scholastic levels in the United States. A perfect regular season (known by other names outside the United States of America) is a season excluding any playoffs, where a team remains undefeated and untied; it is less rare than a complete perfect season but still exceptional.

A multi-season winning streak may include a perfect season. Exhibition games are generally not counted toward standings, for or against. For example, the 1972 Miami Dolphins had a perfect season of 14 regular season games and three playoff games on their way to the world championship. In this season, Miami lost three of their preseason ("exhibition" games in 1972 NFL vernacular) games but are considered to have had a perfect season.

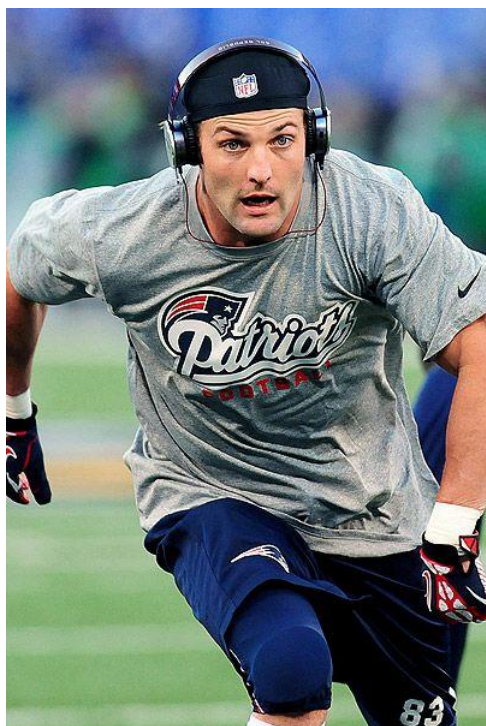
The Patriots became only the fourth team in NFL history to finish a regular season undefeated, and first to do so since the 1972 Miami Dolphins. The Patriots were also the first team with a perfect regular season since the NFL expanded its schedule to sixteen games in 1978.

Thus, they broke the record for victories in a single regular season that had been shared by the 1984 San Francisco 49ers, the 1985 Chicago Bears, the 1998 Minnesota Vikings, and the 2004 Pittsburgh Steelers, and later tied by the 2011 Green Bay Packers and 2015 Carolina Panthers. They each finished with a record of 15–1. The 1984 49ers and 1985 Bears would win Super Bowl XIX and Super Bowl XX, respectively, the 1998 Vikings and 2004 Steelers would lose their conference championship games, the 2011 Green Bay Packers would lose their first playoff game, and the 2015 Panthers would lose Super Bowl 50. The Patriots are in rare company with the 2007 season and 16 wins. Wow!

After so many great years in a row, the Patriots unfortunately were not able to join the 1984 49ers and 1985 Bears as Super Bowl champions, losing the Super Bowl and failing to go 19–0 and claim their fourth Super Bowl victory. At the time, they would have become just the fourth team to win at least four Super Bowls (joining the 49ers, Steelers, and Dallas Cowboys, each of whom had won five at the time). In Super Bowl XLII, the New York Giants defeated the Patriots 17–14 in one of the biggest upsets in NFL history. Between 2008 and 2017, the Patriots would be a perennial contender and make it to four more Super Bowls, winning two of the four for the New England fans.

Top Patriot Players Wes Welker, SB

When Wes Welker was 25 years of age, he had already developed into an effective slot receiver for the Miami Dolphins. For their own reasons, Miami traded Welker to the New England Patriots for second- and seventh-round draft picks.



At new England, he became one of the best in the game. Welker immediately was in synch with Tom Brady, leading the league in receptions in three of his six seasons in New England and going over 100 catches in five of his six years. Welker was a Pro Bowler five times and is #1 on the Patriots' all-time receptions list.

After he joined the Patriots in 2007, Welker caught more passes than any player in the league, and still ranks in the top five in yardage. Welker reached 500 receptions with the Patriots in just 70 games, an NFL record. He holds the

franchise record for consecutive games with receptions, having caught a pass in every game (regular season and postseason) he has played as a Patriot.

As of Week 2 of the 2012 regular season, Welker also holds the all-time Patriots franchise record for receptions, breaking in just 79 games the record of Troy Brown who played more than twice as many games as a Patriot (192 regular-season games). Welker ranks third in receiving yards behind Brown and Stanley Morgan.

The Playoffs Overview

In the postseason, the Patriots won the Divisional Playoffs v the Jaguars, W (31–20). Tom Brady was named Offensive player of the year. The Patriots won the Conference Championship against the Chargers—W (21–12). Bill Belichick was named NFL Coach of the Year. The Patriots wrapped up the season with a very close match in the Super Bowl against the New York Giants, in a losing effort L (14-17).

Super Bowl XLII

The SB XLII kickoff was at 6:39 EST February 3, 2008. Led by starter Tom Brady, the Bill Belichick-led NE Patriots were defeated. At the University of Phoenix Stadium, Glendale AZ before a packed house of 71,101. Giants won 17-14.

2008 Bill Belichick #14

The 2008 New England Patriots football team competed in their forty-ninth season of professional football and their thirty-ninth eighth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his ninth of eighteen seasons (so far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 11-5-0. They finished second in the AFC East Division, and they did not qualify for the playoffs.

The Patriots were the defending AFC champions. They had a fine record in 2008 but not good enough. At 11-5, they did not qualify even for a Wild Card berth. For this they set a record as the first 11-win team since the expansion to a 12-team playoff in 1990 to not make the playoffs, as well as only the second team (after the 1985 Denver Broncos) since the NFL expanded to a 16-game regular season in 1978. Considering that just one year prior, the team finished with the only 16-0 regular-season record in NFL history, not making the playoffs was unexpected.

Of course, the Patriots had one major excuse for not getting that one extra win. In the season opener, quarterback Tom Brady, who was the NFL's MVP in 2007, suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament against the Chiefs. Brady missed the rest of the season. Backup quarterback Matt Cassel replaced Brady and did as well as could be expected. The team did not fall apart.

Cassel took the team to a win in Week 2 against the New York Jets. It was his first start since high school. The following week against the Miami Dolphins, the Patriots had their 21-game regular-season winning streak broken. This record stood until the Indianapolis Colts broke it 2009.

The Patriots had a three-week winning streak going when it engaged the last week of the season. However, the Belichick's squad were not in control of their own destiny. In addition to needing a Week 17 win, they also needed either a Dolphins loss to win the AFC East, or a Baltimore Ravens loss to earn a wild card berth. However, both Baltimore and Miami won, and the Dolphins, Ravens and Patriots each finished the season with an 11–5 record.

Miami qualified for the playoffs by winning the AFC East division over the Patriots on the fourth divisional tiebreaker (better conference record: 8–4 to 7–5). Baltimore qualified for the playoffs as a wild card team, defeating the Patriots on the second wild card tiebreaker (better conference record: 8–4 to 7–5).

Since Tom Brady and Bill Belichick teamed and played a Super Bowl in 2001, this is, as of 2017/2018, the only season since 2002 that New England failed to qualify for the playoffs. What a team. Like the Patriots or hate them, they are the best football team in the modern era because of two people—Bill Belichick and Tom Brady. Like most Patriot fans, I sure hope that they both continue for as many years as possible.

2009 Bill Belichick #14

The 2009 New England Patriots football team competed in their fiftieth season of professional football and their fortieth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his tenth of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 10-6. They finished first in the AFC East Division, and they qualified for the playoffs. The Wild Card game was played on January 10, 2010, against the Baltimore Ravens. The Patriots won the game L (14-33).

As noted in the 2008 section for Bill Belichick, the Patriots missed the playoffs that year. This was not looked upon as a random happening by management and so the offseason was marked by a number of front office, coaching, and personnel changes. Vice President of Player Personnel Scott Pioli, who had been head coach

Bill Belichick's personnel director since 2000, took off to become the general manager of the Kansas City Chiefs, while offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels was named head coach of the Denver Broncos.

QB Matt Cassel, knew after his fine season after Brady was injured that he could manage a pro team as QB. He led the team to 11 wins in 2008. With Brady coming back, the Patriots traded Cassel along with veteran linebacker Mike Vrabel in March. Defensive starters Tedy Bruschi and Rodney Harrison both retired, while All-Pro defensive end Richard Seymour was traded to the Oakland Raiders for a first round pick in the 2011 NFL Draft...just days before the start of the regular season.

When the season opener came, it was broadcast on a Monday Night Football program, as the Patriots celebrated their 50th anniversary season. It was an American Football League "legacy game" against the Buffalo Bills. It did not all go as planned for an anniversary as the Pats were down 11 points late in the fourth quarter. Nonetheless, they put it all together and scored two TDs to secure a victory in Brady's first game back from his injury.

In November, the 6–2 Patriots had a scheduled road trip to Indianapolis to face the undefeated Colts. In this game, with a six-point lead late in the fourth quarter, the Pats tried to convert a 4th and 2 inside their own 30-yard line but failed. This circumstance set up a Colts TD and brought the Patriots' their third loss of the season.

New England lost another two games out of three, but then they went on to win their next three games, securing a division title.

Someone once said: “the harder you work the luckier you get.” Many great football coaches do not discount the role of chance or luck in football. Others find it hokey. The Patriots with Bill Belichick work hard and they were lucky to win three Super Bowls as of 2008. They put in the hard work and the good play but sometimes the element of luck is not there, like this year and despite how well or how hard they play, they lose anyway—not intending to lose.

This year, the Patriots finished with their fourth perfect regular season record at home in seven years. They are still a great team and were a great team in 2008. With their third seed in the AFC playoffs, the Patriots faced the Baltimore Ravens at home in the Wild Card Playoffs. The Ravens opened a 24–0 lead in the first quarter and the Patriots could not recover, ending their season.

***** This goes down as one of the top games in Patriot History *****

At home on Oct 18, New England squashed the Tennessee Titans† W (59–0) in Gillette Stadium.

Tom Brady threw 5 Touchdowns in a Quarter against the Titans in this game in 2009. You may know that recently, Madden Football released a “G.O.A.T” edition of their storied video game franchise. On the cover is none other than Tom Brady.

His performance against the Titans in 2009 exemplifies this title. Brady was simply unstoppable in this game. In the second quarter, Brady threw a barrage of perfect passes to set the record for most TD passes in a quarter. His first was a 41-yard bomb to Randy Moss, which then became the recipient for Brady’s second TD on a 28-yard pass. After his third score, Brady managed to sneak in his final two touchdowns to Wes Welker in the final 2 minutes of the game, the fifth score came with only 16 seconds left on the clock!

This was an incredible game, even if you hate Brady, no fan of football can deny his incredible passing prowess, one that has dubbed him as the greatest of all time!

On Oct 25, 2009 at a game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, the Patriots whipped the Bucs W (35–7) in Wembley Stadium— London, England. On Nov 1, the team drew a bye. Then, at home, on Nov 8, the Patriots defeated the Miami Dolphins W (27–17) in Gillette Stadium.

Then at Indianapolis, on Nov 15, the Colts picked up a one-point-match victory against the Patriots L (34–35) in Lucas Oil Stadium. At home on Nov 22, the New York Jets were smothered by the New England Patriots W (31–14) at Gillette Stadium. At New Orleans on Nov 30, the Saints hammered the Patriots L (17–38) at the Louisiana Superdome.

At Miami on Dec 6, the Dolphins picked up a one-point victory over New England L (21–22) in Land Shark Stadium. At home on Dec 13, the Patriots beat the Carolina Panthers W (20–10) in Gillette Stadium. Then, at Buffalo, on Dec 20, the Patriots got the win against the Bills W (17–10) in the Ralph Wilson Stadium. At home on Dec 27, 2009 New England pummeled Jacksonville W (35–7) in Gillette Stadium. Then, in the season ender, at Houston, the Texans got the best of the Patriots L (27–34) at Reliant Stadium. And, so the next game for the Patriots would be the Wild Card playoffs.

The Wild Card Playoffs 2009 January 10, 2010

The Wild Card playoffs commenced with a 1:00 pm EST kickoff on January 10, 2010. The New England Patriots prepared to take on the Baltimore Ravens but the gods of New England were someplace else that day as the Patriots lost L (14–33) at Gillette Stadium before a packed house of 68, 756. The temperature was 20 °F (–7 °C), sunny and cold.

2010 Bill Belichick #14

The 2010 New England Patriots football team competed in their fifty-first season of professional football and their forty-first season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his eleventh of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 14-2. They finished first in the AFC East Division, and they qualified for the playoffs. Luck, the invisible marker in all football games appeared on the opposite side of the preferable Patriots fate. The New England Patriots lost their only playoff game this year in the Divisional Playoffs to the New York Jets, L (21-28). It would take another year for the Patriots to have another go at a few more of those huge, and meaningful, Super Bowl Rings.

This year was one of those rebuilding years for a team that never dropped too far from the very top. After losing to Baltimore in the 2009 playoffs, the Patriots lost their offensive and defensive coordinators. The trading blocks were also busy.

Wide Receiver Randy Moss, who was not long with the team was sent to Minnesota on October 6 and this action eventually led to the return of trade sent All-Pro wide receiver Randy Moss to the Minnesota Vikings, and eventually led to the return of Deion Branch from the Seattle Seahawks in a separate deal. After re-acquiring Branch, the Patriots won 11 of their last 12 games of the season to finish with a 14–2 record. This was a great record and secured them homefield advantage throughout the playoffs.

Tom Brady was at his best this year. He finished the regular season with an NFL-record 335 consecutive pass attempts without an interception. Additionally, Brady broke his own 2007 TD to INT ratio record with 9:1 and was named NFL MVP.

The Patriots held on to the ball this year, committing NFL-record low 10 turnovers on the season. They also snagged another NFL record with seven consecutive games without a single turnover.

Luck always has something to do with football. When players are not themselves or things just are not right, we might suggest that Mr. Luck is at work. In their Divisional playoff game against the Jets, the Patriots were a victim of bad luck. They got down 14–3 by halftime and they could not recover. Moreover, they were held to their lowest scoring total in their last 11 weeks, dropping this contest 28–21 to the underdog Jets.

Statistics site Football Outsiders calculated that the Patriots 2010 offense was not only more efficient, play-for-play, than their record-setting 2007 offense, but was actually the best offense they calculated in their history. As of 2017, this is the last season the Patriots failed to reach the AFC Championship game. What a shame after such a fine season.

The Divisional Playoffs January 16, 2010

Patriots 21 Jets 28

This divisional playoff game began at 4:30 PM on January 16, 2010 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 30 °F, clear and cold. There was a packed house of 68,756 at this Patriots home game. After a 14-2 regular season record, the Patriots were tripped up by the New York Jets L (21-28).

2011 Bill Belichick #14

The 2011 New England Patriots football team competed in their fifty-second season of professional football and their forty-second season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his twelfth of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 13-3. They finished first in the AFC East Division, and they qualified for the playoffs and went on to play in the Super Bowl, where they lost by just four points L (17-21) to the Giants. It was the seventh Super Bowl trip in franchise history, and the fifth for head coach Bill Belichick and quarterback Tom Brady.

There was a tone of sadness to the 2011 Patriots season as the team dedicated the season The Patriots dedicated their 2011 season to the memory of Myra Kraft, the wife of owner Robert Kraft, who died on July 20, 2011 after a long fight against cancer. It gave an idea of how much the Patriots respect and appreciate the owner family. At both home and away games, in commemoration, the Patriots wore patches bearing Kraft's initials, MHK, on their uniforms. In fact, The Patriots elected to wear their Super Bowl patches on the right side of their uniforms, so that they could keep the MHK patch on the left side as it had been all season.

The Patriots continued superiority came through again this season as they were the only 2011 division winner that had won their division the previous season. As noted, in a heartbreaking defeat, The Patriots lost in the Super Bowl to the New York Giants by a score of 21-17.

As was the case in their previous appearance against these same Giants in Super Bowl XLII, the Pats had a chance to join the San Francisco 49ers, the Dallas Cowboys, the Pittsburgh Steelers, and the Green Bay Packers as the only teams to win at least four Super Bowls. The Packers had entered the 2011 season as the defending champions had not yet won a fourth Super Bowl when the Patriots had last appeared.

Instead, without a victory this year, the Patriots tied what was then an NFL record for most losses in a Super Bowl. This record had been set by the Minnesota Vikings and tied by the Denver Broncos and Buffalo Bills, each of whom had lost four.

With the loss, along with losses in 1985, 1996, and 2007, the Patriots tied with the Denver Broncos, Buffalo Bills and Minnesota Vikings for most Super Bowl losses at four (although the Broncos would lose their fifth against the Seattle Seahawks two years later).

In the six years from 2012 through 2017, the Patriots would make the playoffs all six times and would play three times in the Super Bowl. They would win two of their three Super Bowl encounters with the last one being after the 2016 season.

The Divisional Playoffs January 14, 2012

This divisional playoff game began at 8:00 PM on January 14, 2012 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 24 °F, partly cloudy and cold. There was a packed house of 68,756 at this Patriots home game. After a 13-3 regular season record, the Patriots walloped the Denver Broncos W (45-10).

AFC Championship Playoffs January 22, 2012

This AFC Championship game began at 3:00 PM on January 22, 2012 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 29 °F, cloudy and cold. There was a packed house of 68,756 at this Patriots home game. After a 13-3 regular season record, the

Patriots played a close match with the Baltimore Ravens, winning the contest W (23-20).

Super Bowl XLVI February 5, 2012

	1	2	3	4	Total
Giants	9	0	6	6	21
Patriots	0	10	7	0	17

The Super Bowl XLVI kickoff was at 6:30 EST February 5, 2012. Led by starter Tom Brady, the Bill Belichick-led NE Patriots were defeated. Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis Indiana, before a packed house of 68, 658. After a 13-3 regular season record, the Patriots played a close match with the New York Giants, losing the contest W (17-21).

Chapter 16 Coach Bill Belichick Part III 2012-2017...

Coach Bill Belichick # 13

- 2012 Bill Belichick NFL AFC East 1st 12 4 0
- Won Divisional Playoffs (Texans) 41–28
 - Lost Conference Championship(Ravens) 13–28
- 2013 Bill Belichick NFL AFC East 1st 12 4 0
- Won Divisional Playoffs (Colts) 43–22
 - Lost Conference Championship (at Broncos) 16–26
- 2014 Bill Belichick NFL AFC East 1st 12 4 0
- Won Divisional Playoffs (Ravens) 35–31
 - Rob Gronkowski(CBPOY)
 - Won Conference Championship(Colts) 45–7
 - Tom Brady(SB MVP)[29]
 - Won Super Bowl XLIX (4) (vs. Seahawks) 28–24
- 2015 Bill Belichick NFL AFC East 1st 12 4 0
- Won Divisional Playoffs (Chiefs) 27–20
 - Lost Conference Championship (at Broncos) 18–20
- 2016 Bill Belichick NFL AFC East 1st 14 2 0
- Won Divisional Playoffs (Texans) 34–16
 - Tom Brady(SB MVP)
 - Won Conference Championship(Steelers) 36–17
 - Won Super Bowl LI (5) (vs. Falcons) 34–28 (OT)
- 2017 Bill Belichick NFL AFC East 1st 13 3 0
- Won Divisional Playoffs (Titans) 35–14
 - Tom Brady(MVP)
 - Won Conference Championship(Jaguars) 24–20
 - Lost Super Bowl LII (vs. Patriots) 33–41
- 2000-2017 Bill Belichick final record (214-74-0)**



2012 Bill Belichick #14

The 2012 New England Patriots football team competed in their fifty-third season of professional football and their forty-third season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his thirteenth of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 12-4. They finished first in the AFC East Division, and they qualified for the playoffs. They first won the AFC Divisional Playoffs against the Texans 41–28, and then in the AFC Championship, they lost to the Ravens 13–28, and again, the Patriots missed the big dance, the rings, and the sweet cigars. But soon again!

This was the 11th season in which the Patriots played all of their home games at Gillette Stadium. The 2012 Patriots featured a prolific offense that had it all together and were ready to take it all the way. Then again, there is that luck factor.

The Patriots broke the record for first downs in a season, with 444, and they finished third all-time in scoring, with 557 points, finishing only behind the 2011 Green Bay Packers and their previous 2007 record setting season. Additionally, this was the third consecutive season that the Patriots exceeded 500 points scored, which tied the record set by the 1999–2001 St. Louis Rams.

The Patriots did what was important until their second playoff game. They also ranked first in the league with a turnover margin of +25. This 12-win season marked the Patriots' tenth consecutive 10-win season, a feat exceeded only by the San Francisco 49ers' streak of 16, from 1983 to 1998, and it was their twelfth consecutive winning season. They are still a football phenomenon and as you will see, their Super Bowl days at this point are not behind them.

Unfortunately, on January 20, 2013, they were defeated by the Baltimore Ravens in the AFC Championship Game, marking their first AFC title game loss at home. The Patriots, Bill Belichick, Tom Brady, and company would be back with a vengeance.

The Divisional Playoffs January 13, 2013

New England Patriots 41 Houston Texans 28

This divisional playoff game began at 4:30 PM on January 13, 2012 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 51 °F, cloudy and mild. There was a packed house of 68,756 at this Patriots home game. After a 12-4 regular season record, the Patriots overwhelmed the Texans in this game W (41-28).

AFC Championship Playoffs January 20, 2013

This Conference Championship Game began at 6:30 PM on January 20, 2010 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 41 °F, clear and windy. There was a packed house of 68,756 at this Patriots home game. After a 12-4 regular season record, the New England Patriots were overpowered by the Baltimore Ravens in this game L (13-28).

2013 Bill Belichick #14

The 2013 New England Patriots football team competed in their fifty-fourth season of professional football and their forty-fourth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his fourteenth of eighteen seasons (so far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 12-4 for the second year in a row and the team grabbed the #2 seed for the 2nd year in a row along with a first round playoff bye for the fourth year in a row. T

They finished first in the AFC East Division, and they qualified for the playoffs. They first won the AFC Divisional Playoffs against the Colts W (43-22), and then in the AFC Championship, they lost to the Broncos L (16-26), and again, the Patriots missed the big dance, the rings, and the sweet cigars. But soon again! How about the next year?

The Divisional Playoffs January 11, 2014

Divisional Round vs. Indianapolis Colts

This divisional playoff game began at 8:15 PM on January 11, 2014 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 57 °F, rainy and windy. There was a packed house of 68,756 at this Patriots home game. After a 12-4 regular season record, the Patriots overwhelmed the Colts in this game W (43-22).

AFC Championship Playoffs January 19, 2014

This Conference Championship Game began at 3:00 PM on January 19, 2014 at Sports Authority Field at Mile High Stadium in Denver Colorado. The weather was 63 °F, sunny There was a packed house of 77,110 at this Denver home game. After a 12-4 regular season record, the New England Patriots were overpowered by the Denver Broncos in this game L (16-26).

2014 Bill Belichick #14

The 2014 New England Patriots football team competed in their fifty-fifth season of professional football and their forty-fifth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his fifteenth of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 12-4 for the third year in a row and the team grabbed the #1 seed for the 2nd year in a row along with a first round playoff bye for the fifth year in a row. The bye for five years in a row, was the first such occurrence for any team since the league switched to a 12-team playoff format in 1990. They finished fourth overall in the NFL in scoring (468 points) and eighth in points allowed (313), and first in point differential (with an average margin of victory of 9.7 points).

This was a year of firsts and bests. They finished first in the AFC East Division, and they naturally qualified for the playoffs. They first won their sixth straight AFC Divisional Title in the playoffs against the Colts W (35-31), and then in the AFC Championship, they pounded the Indianapolis Colts W (45-7), and this time, the

Patriots were invited to the big dance, The Super Bowl, with the rings, and the sweet cigars. In Super Bowl XLIX, the Patriots won a hard-fought battle against former Pats coach Pete Carroll's Seattle Seahawks, W (28-24) This great win gave New England their fourth championship in franchise history.

We present a newspaper article from the Boston Globe depicting just how the Patriots won the Super Bowl. To whet your appetite, it helps to remember that after tying the game 14-14 at halftime and falling behind ten points in the third quarter, the Patriots rallied in the final quarter of the game to secure a 28-24 lead. For you avid writers out there, in this season and this Super Bowl Victory, that is all she wrote.

The Divisional Playoffs January 10, 2015

Divisional Round vs. Baltimore Ravens

This divisional playoff game began at 4:35 PM on January 10, 2015 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 20 °F, clear, windy, and cold. There was a packed house of 68,756 at this Patriots home game. After a 12-4 regular season record, the Patriots squeaked by the Ravens in this game W (35-21).

AFC Championship Playoffs January 19, 2015

This Conference Championship Game began at 6:50 PM on January 18, 2015 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough Massachusetts. The weather was 51 °F, rain. There was a packed house of 68,756 at this Patriot home game. After a 12-4 regular season record, and the victory in the Division Playoffs, the New England Patriots soundly defeated the Indianapolis Colts in this game W (45-7).

Super Bowl XLIX February 1, 2015

	1	2	3	4	Total
Patriots	0	14	0	14	28
Seahawks	0	14	10	0	24

The Super Bowl XLIX kickoff was at 6:30 EST February 5, 2012. The weather was 66 degrees and the retractable roof was open. Led by starter Tom Brady, the Bill Belichick-led NE Patriots overcame the Seattle Seahawks in a tight match 28-24 at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale Arizona. before a packed house of 70,288. After a 12-4 regular season record, the Patriots played a great match with the New York Giants, winning the contest W (28-24) in a comeback effort.

The Patriots faced the defending-Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks in Super Bowl XLIX (49) 49. For the second year in a row the Seahawks boasted the #1 ranked defense (1st against the pass, 3rd against the run). This was the Patriots' first Super Bowl appearance since 2011, when they lost to the NY Giants. This was the stadium where the 18-0 Patriots lost to the Giants in Super Bowl XLII.

2015 Bill Belichick #14

The 2015 New England Patriots football team competed in their fifty-sixth season of professional football and their forty-sixth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his sixteenth of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 12-4 for the fourth year in a row and the team grabbed the #2 seed along with a first round playoff bye for the fifth year in a row. They entered the season as the defending Super Bowl Champions.

This year looked like it might be another 16-0 season. However, after going 10-0 to begin the season, the Patriots' first loss of the season came against the Denver Broncos in overtime in Week 12 (counting the bye week). The loss seemed to have an effect on the team's production after this. The Patriots would go on to lose four of their last six games, ultimately finishing the regular season with a 12-4 record for the fourth straight year.

In Week 14, the Patriots clinched their seventh straight AFC East division title. By way of this, they tied the 1979 Los Angeles Rams for most consecutive division titles. As the second seeded team in the AFC, they did secure a first-round bye for the playoffs and home-field advantage for their first playoff game.

In the divisional round of the playoffs, the Patriots beat the Kansas City Chiefs 27-20 to advance to the AFC Championship for the fifth straight year. However, they fell on the road to the eventual Super Bowl 50 champion Denver Broncos by just two points, 20-18.

The Divisional Playoffs January 16, 2016

Divisional Round vs. Kansas City Chiefs

This divisional playoff game began at 4:35 PM on January 16, 2016 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 38 °F, partly cloudy. There was a reasonably packed house of 66,829 at this Patriots home game. After a 12-4 regular season record, the Patriots squeaked by the Chiefs in this game W (27-20).

The Patriots would upset the Chiefs, who came into this game having won 10 in a row to end the regular season, and a playoff game at Houston the previous week. Ironically, the Patriots had won ten in a row at the top of the season. The game was a shootout, as both quarterbacks played well. The Patriots would lead for most of the game. The Chiefs mounted a brief come back later in the game to try to tie it, but the Patriots held them off and won 27-20. With the win, New England advanced to its 6th straight AFC Championship game, and it prepared to face Denver in the Conference Championship for the second time in 3 seasons.

AFC Championship Playoffs January 24, 2016

AFC Championship vs. Denver Broncos

This Conference Championship Game began at 3:05 PM on January 24, 2016 at Sports Authority Field at Mile High Stadium in Denver, Colorado. The weather was 46 °F, mostly sunny. There was a packed house of 77,112 at this Broncos home game. After a 12-4 regular season record, and the victory in the Division Playoffs, the New England Patriots were defeated by the Denver Broncos in this game W (20-18). The Broncos advanced to the Super Bowl and became the Super Bowl Champions.

They advanced to Super Bowl L (50). This would be the last time that Tom Brady and Peyton Manning would play each other, as Manning would retire the following season. Manning would ultimately end his career 3-1 against Brady in the AFC

Championship game. Both are great talents and great competitors. With the loss, the Patriots ended their season with an overall record of 13-5. But, they would be back with a vengeance the next season to win all the marbles.

2016 Bill Belichick #14

The 2016 New England Patriots football team competed in their fifty-seventh season of professional football and their forty-seventh season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his seventeenth of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 14-2, gaining two-more wins than in 2015. They earned the #1 seed along with a first round playoff bye for the sixth year in a row. They also gained home field advantage through the playoffs. The Patriots were not defending Super Bowl Champions when the 2016 season began but they were when it was over.

There was a lot happening in the 2016 season. The New England Patriots are a winning machine. They became the first team that originated from the American Football League to reach 500 franchise wins—regular season and playoffs. It happened in Week 12 with the win over the New York Jets.

In Week 15, the Patriots clinched their eighth straight AFC East division title, and in doing so surpassed the 1979 Los Angeles Rams for the most consecutive division titles. They were not finished.

In Week 17, the last win of the season over the Miami Dolphins, gave the Patriots home field advantage throughout the entire AFC playoffs and they ended the regular season with a league-best record of 14–2. As the Patriots had learned well in prior years, the home field advantage no longer offers an advantage when a team loses. SO, they kept winning.

With their win over the Houston Texans in the Divisional Round, the Patriots advanced to the AFC Championship Game for the sixth consecutive year, surpassing the 1977 Oakland Raiders for most consecutive appearances in conference championship games.

After their win over the Pittsburgh Steelers in the AFC Championship Game, the Patriots became the first organization to clinch a ninth Super Bowl berth. They surpassed the Pittsburgh Steelers, Dallas Cowboys, and Denver Broncos who are all tied at 8. IMHO, the Patriots with Bill Belichick and Tom Brady are amazing.

Furthermore, Bill Belichick broke the record for a head coach by coaching his seventh Super Bowl, breaking a tie with Don Shula. You may recall the “Deflategate” which cost Patriots starting quarterback Tom Brady a suspension for the first four games of the season due to his alleged role in the “Deflategate” scandal.

Under backup quarterbacks Jimmy Garoppolo and Jacoby Brissett, the team managed a nice 3–1 record during Brady's suspension. During the season, Bill Belichick moved into fourth place on the list for most wins as a head coach, and Tom Brady set the record for most wins by a starting quarterback (208 following the 2016-2017 Super Bowl win).

This year, the Patriots were 8–0 on the road, matching a feat they first accomplished in the 2007 season. They became the seventh NFL team to accomplish this feat.

The Patriots also set a record for the most pass attempts by a team without an interception to start a season, and, collectively, Garoppolo, Brissett, and Brady combined to set a single season record for fewest interceptions thrown by a team, with just 2. Considering three cooks in the mix, that is especially good.

Tom Brady also set the record for the best touchdown–interception ratio in a single season, with 28 touchdowns and 2 interceptions (a 14:1 ratio), breaking Nick Foles' mark of 27 touchdowns to 2 interceptions (13.5:1), set in 2013 while he was with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Meanwhile, the defense led the league for fewest points allowed (250) for the first time since the 2003 season. The Patriots were not only ready; they came through.

In Super Bowl LI, the team rallied from a 28–3 deficit – with 2:12 left in the third quarter – to win in overtime, with a score of 34–28. Many of us stared at the TV in wonderment after it appeared that Atlanta had the game sewed up. This was the franchise's fifth Super Bowl title.

Super Bowl LI was the first Super Bowl that was decided in overtime and it was the first time the winner erased a deficit higher than ten points. I am still in awe of a guy who first sat out four games and then was solely responsible for their Super Bowl game victory.

This would also be a record fifth Super Bowl victory for the Brady–Belichick quarterback-head coach combo. For Tom Brady, this would be his fifth. With the Super Bowl win, he broke his tie with hall of fame quarterbacks Joe Montana and Terry Bradshaw who both have four Super Bowl wins each. Additionally, head coach Bill Belichick's fifth Super Bowl in 2016-2017 meant that he surpassed Hall of Fame coach Chuck Noll from Pittsburgh, for most wins in the Super Bowl by a head coach. Congratulations, Mr. Belichick. You are outstanding the old-fashioned way. You earn it! Please continue.

The Divisional Playoffs January 14, 2017

Divisional Round vs. Houston Texans

This divisional playoff game began at 8:15 PM on January 14, 2017 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 28 °F, cloudy. There was a reasonably packed house of 66,829 at this Patriots home game. After a 14-2 regular season record, the Patriots solidly defeated the Texans in this game W (34-16).

AFC Championship Playoffs Jan 24 2016

This Conference Championship Game began at 6:40 PM on January 24, 2016 at Sports Authority Field at Mile High Stadium in Denver, Colorado. The weather was 41 °F, cloudy. There was a packed house of 66,829,112 at this Patriots home game. After a 14-2 regular season record, and the victory in the Division Playoffs, the New England Patriots defeated the Pittsburgh Steelers in this game W (36-17). The Patriots advanced to the Super Bowl and became the Super Bowl Champions.

Super Bowl LI February 5, 2017

	1	2	3	4	OT	Totals
Patriots	0	3	6	19	6	34
Falcons	0	21	7	0	0	28

Any Patriot fan who was alive in February 2017, saw the greatest comeback game of all time.

I have been watching football since even before my older brother Ed, ignored my pleas when I was five years old at Meyers Stadium in Wilkes-Barre, PA at the annual Thanksgiving Day Game of Meyers

v GAR on a blustery day in November. My feet were freezing and nonetheless I had no choice but to stay until the end of that game. That's how important football games are. Never in my life of watching football on TV or in a live stadium before or since then have I ever seen a game like the one on February 2017 -- Super Bowl LI. I don't think I'll ever see anything top that game in any sport.

I would suspect that Falcon supporters and Patriot haters would disagree, but Super Bowl LI is arguably the best game of the century. Considering the Patriots have played pro football for just 58 years as Boston and Now New England, that is a major statement.

The initial shock, the acceptance of a probable defeat, the denial of the impossible, and the comeback to top all comebacks—what more could a football fan ask for? What more could a football game offer?

After the first half, viewers in NRG Stadium and across the nation were simply stunned. The disciplined and dynamic Patriots were falling woefully short of stopping MVP Matt Ryan's offense. Matt Ryan in the first half was performing like Tom Brady always performed.

Early into the third, the Falcons commanded a 28 – 3 lead, and they were unfaltering. I can recall the shocked pundits not believe they were actually saying that it was all but official in that the Falcons would earn their first title win. The Falcons were about to blow-out the Patriots, Tom Brady, and Bill Belichick too.

However, Tom Brady and the Patriots' defense found the grit to continue. They were not ready to quietly walk off the field without another Lombardi trophy. With an utter shutout and a record breaking performance (416 passing yards, most in a championship game), the Patriots forced the first ever overtime in a Super Bowl, and subsequently capped off their victory surge in the opening drive. It was truly an incredible game. To top off this recap, we use a great report by the Boston Globe. Thank them when you have a chance.

The Super Bowl XLIX kickoff was at 6:30 EST February 5, 2017. The weather did not matter as the game was played with the retractable roof closed. Led by starter Tom Brady, the Bill Belichick-led NE Patriots overcame the Atlanta Falcons in a tight match 34-28

at NRG Stadium in Houston Texas. before a packed house of 70,807. After a 14-2 regular season record, having won the Division and Conference, the Patriots played one of the greatest comeback matches in NFL history with the Atlanta Falcons, winning the contest W (34-28), gaining their fifth Super Bowl Conquest as a franchise.

Super Bowl LI: New England Patriots 34, Atlanta Falcons 28 (OT)

Despite the Falcons taking a 28–3 lead midway through the third quarter, the Patriots scored 25 unanswered points to tie the game at 28 with less than a minute left in regulation and take the game to the first overtime period in Super Bowl history. On the first possession of overtime, Patriots running back James White punched in the game-winning score to give his team a 34–28 comeback victory.

2017 Bill Belichick #14

The 2017 New England Patriots football team competed in their fifty-eighth season of professional football and their forty-eighth season in the National Football League (NFL). The Patriots were led by Coach Bill Belichick in his eighteenth of eighteen seasons (so-far). Robert Kraft was the happy defending Super Bowl Patriot's owner. The Patriots record was 13-3, gaining one less win than in 2016. They earned the #1 AFC seed along with a first round playoff bye for the seventh year in a row. They also gained home field advantage through the playoffs. The Patriots were the defending Super Bowl Champions when the 2017 season began but, after a great season with fifteen total wins, they were not the champs when the season was over.

The defending Super Bowl champion New England Patriots entered the season feeling pretty invincible, having had a great 2016 season winning the Cigar, the rings, and all the marbles. They almost matched their excellent 14-2 showing with a fine 13-3 record in 2017. It was a Week 14 loss to Miami that set them back. Nonetheless, the Patriots again won the AFC Title. This was their 9th consecutive AFC East title, and it was their 15th of the last 17 seasons with Tom Belichick.

When they got their win over the Buffalo Bills in week 16, the Patriots had achieved their 8th consecutive 12-or-more win season stretching all the way from 2010, an NFL record. Their Week 17 victory over the New York Jets clinched their top seed in the AFC for the second straight year, thus, as noted, giving the Patriots home-field advantage throughout the entire AFC playoffs for the second year in a row. There was nothing at all for the Patriots to complain about, and nobody was complaining.

The Pats defeated the Titans in the Divisional Round 35–14, and they topped the Jacksonville Jaguars in the AFC Championship Game 24–20, grabbing their second consecutive AFC title. The game was their seventh consecutive AFC Championship appearance, adding onto their record from the previous year.

The win also made Tom Brady the oldest quarterback (40 years, 163 days) to win a playoff game, surpassing Brett Favre for the record. It looks to many like Brady is getting younger. He sure is enjoying football as is his compadre, Bill Belichick.

On top of all the other good things happening for the Patriots, this was also the second time they advanced to the Super Bowl two consecutive seasons since 2004. They faced the Philadelphia Eagles in a rematch of Super Bowl XXXIX. This game—SB LII, also made the Patriots the only team in NFL history to appear in ten Super Bowls, and it gave the Patriots a chance to repeat as Super Bowl Champions for the second time in franchise history, and for the first time since 2004. In addition, they had the chance to tie the Pittsburgh Steelers for the record of most Super Bowl wins by a team in NFL history with 6.

Unfortunately, the win did not happen. Pointing to one cause, we would have to say it was because of a late strip-sack of Brady by Brandon Graham and a failed Hail Mary pass. The Eagles were playing at the top of their game with a substitute QB who had once been an Eagles star. This rebuilt team was molded to win by a young coach, Doug Pederson, who got the job done. The Eagles thus defeated the Patriots in Super Bowl LII by 41–33, ending their chance at a sixth Super Bowl title and resulting in their first Super Bowl loss since 2011.

The loss was devastating to the Patriots as it prevented New England from repeating their three-in-four Super Bowl run that they managed from 2001–2004. Also, with the loss, the Patriots tied the NFL record for most Super Bowl losses with five. Considering that the Patriots also have five big wins, that is not a bad record. The Patriots will be back in tact in 2018. I would expect a Belichick/Brady combo to be right up there ready to bring home all the marbles again. Don't you think?

The Divisional Playoffs January 13, 2018

Divisional Round vs. Tennessee Titans

This divisional playoff game began at 8:15 PM on January 13, 2018 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 24 °F, clear & cold. There was a reasonably packed house of 65,878 at this Patriots home game. After a 13-3 regular season record, the Patriots solidly defeated the Titans in this playoff game W (35-14).

This was the third playoff game between the two teams, the first since 2003, with the Patriots in this meeting, holding a 2–1 advantage. They split the first two games, both in the Divisional round, including the first game against the Titans' predecessor, the Houston Oilers. Everybody in the stands and in the national audience knew this would be a good game.

New England racked up eight sacks, 438 yards, and 31 first downs as they advanced to their seventh consecutive AFC Championship game.

AFC Championship Playoffs January 21, 2018

AFC Championship vs. Jacksonville Jaguars

This Conference Championship Game began at 3:05 PM on January 21, 2016 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts. The weather was 48 °F, clear & cool. There was a packed house of 65,878 at this Patriots home game. After a 13-3 regular season record,

and the victory in the Division Playoffs, the New England Patriots defeated the Jacksonville Jaguars in this game W (24-20). The Patriots advanced to the Super Bowl and lost the Super Bowl Championship to the Philadelphia Eagles in a tight match.

This marked the fifth playoff meeting between the two clubs with the Patriots now holding a 4-1 advantage. This was their second meeting in the AFC Championship Game, the Patriots winning in 1996 as well. The Pats overall record improved to 15-3.

Super Bowl LII February 4, 2018

	1	2	3	4	Totals
Eagles	9	13	7	12	41
Patriots	3	9	14	7	33

At U.S. Bank Stadium, Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Super Bowl LII kickoff was at 6:30 EST February 4, 2018. The weather did not matter as the game was played indoors with the retractable roof closed. Led by starter Tom Brady, the Bill Belichick-led NE Patriots had the Eagles on the ropes at times but lost at the end of the game L (33-41) to the Philadelphia Eagles in a tight match 33-41 at US Bank Stadium, Minneapolis, Minnesota before a packed house of 67,212. After a 13-2 regular season record, having won the Division and the Conference championships, the Patriots played tough but could not come back despite a valiant Hail Mary attempt. The Eagles won their first Super Bowl Contest ever this year.

I enjoyed researching the Boston Papers to get the scoop the way it actually happened in 2018. This fine write-up from the Boston Globe at the time it was written gave New England fans enough of the Super Bowl that they felt they were there. Nice job Rachel G. Bowers. She titled her article:

Eagles stun Patriots in a Super Bowl LII thriller

Picture below by *JIM DAVIS/GLOBE STAFF*

By Rachel G. Bowers GLOBE STAFF FEBRUARY 04, 2018

It was an offensive battle that set the record for most combined yards in an NFL playoff game — over 1,000 — as Tom Brady and Bill Belichick came up short of winning their sixth Lombardi Trophy.

“It’s disappointing, but proud of the way we competed,” Belichick said.

“We just came up a little bit short tonight. Tough way to end a lot of really good things that have happened this season. But that’s what this game is about.”



Eagles defeated the Patriots, 41-33, in Super Bowl LII on Sunday in Minneapolis.

“Today we had our opportunities. Never really got control of the game. Never really played on our terms. Just didn’t make enough plays when needed to,” Brady said.

“The Eagles played a better game today, they deserved to win. That’s why they’re the champs.”

For the Eagles, it is their first Super Bowl win and first NFL championship since 1906 — and it came with backup quarterback Nick Foles—playing the game of his life, earning him MVP honors.

“I have the best players in the world,” Eagles coach Doug Pederson said. “This is a resilient group.”

Foles, playing in place of the injured Carson Wentz, completed 28 of 43 passes for 373 yards, three touchdowns, and an interception.

“I felt calm, we have such a great group of guys, such a great coaching staff, we felt confident going in,” Foles said.

The play of the contest came at a time when Brady seemed poised to put together another game-winning drive. Trailing, 38-33, with just more than 2 minutes remaining, Brady and his offense took the field with 75 yards and the Philadelphia defense standing between them and a come-from-behind victory.

On the second play of the possession, defensive end Brandon Graham recorded the only sack of the game — and it was a strip-sack of Brady recovered by rookie Derek Barnett. The Eagles turned that into a field goal and an eight-point lead.

“Just kept going,” Graham said on the field after. “We said we needed a play. We got one more opportunity; we were going to give it everything we got and I just so happened to get there. I’m just thankful because we got a team that’s resilient. We going to stick around for a long time. We world champs, baby, and it feels so good.

“I’m just happy because we are world champs and we worked our butt off and everybody that doubted us, we world champs, baby, that’s all I got to say.”

“They made one good play at the right time,” Brady said.

The Eagles’ go-ahead touchdown with 2:21 remaining came on an 11-yard pass from Foles to tight end Zach Ertz that officials reviewed before ultimately upholding the call on the field.

“If they had overturned that [touchdown], I don’t know what would have happened to the city of Philadelphia,” said Ertz, who finished with seven catches for 67 yards and the touchdown.

Coin toss

The Eagles called tails and the coin came up heads. The Patriots chose to defer to the second half. Philadelphia will receive the opening kickoff.

Here is a look at the coin that was used for the coin toss:



1st quarter: Patriots 3, Eagles 3

The team that scores first in the Super Bowl is 34-17.

New England answered Philadelphia’s opening possession with a 67-yard drive of its own, but it ended in much the same fashion: A field goal. Stephen Gostkowski made a 26-yarder to tie it up. Quarterback Tom Brady and the offense utilized their up-tempo attack and even caught the Eagles with too many men on the field. The Patriots covered the 67 yards in nine plays, two of which went for more than 15 yards. Brady targeted tight end Rob Gronkowski on third and goal from the 8-yard line, but cornerback Jalen Mills broke up the pass.

Running back James White and receiver Chris Hogan were the primary weapons on the possession with White getting three touches for 21 yards and Hogan getting two touches for 32 yards. Rowe was in coverage on both of the drive's third-down conversions. Of note: Rowe started over cornerback Malcolm Butler, who arrived late to Minneapolis as he was dealing with an illness.

1st quarter: Eagles 9, Patriots 3

It did not take long for Philadelphia to regain the lead. In fact, just three plays.

Quarterback Nick Foles found Alshon Jeffery for a 34-yard touchdown, but kicker Jake Elliott missed the extra point wide right. Cornerback Eric Rowe was in coverage on Jeffery.

The drive opened with Foles and Nelson Agholor connecting for 7 yards. Then LeGarrette Blount's 36-yard run set up the touchdown. So far, the Eagles have gained 149 yards, which is the fifth most ever in the Super Bowl. The 1994 49ers (193 yards) hold the record.

2nd quarter: Eagles 9, Patriots 3

Stephen Gostkowski's 26-yard field goal attempt hit the left upright and was no good. It would have capped a 74-yard drive and trimmed the Philadelphia lead.

On third and 2 from the 9-yard line, the Patriots ran a jet sweep to Brandin Cooks to the right end. But Cooks tried to hurdle safety Rodney McLeod, who corralled Cooks in the air and brought him to the ground for just a 1-yard gain.

Gostkowski, in his 12th season, has missed three other field goals in his postseason career: a 53-yarder against the Titans in this season's divisional round, a 44-yarder against the Ravens in the 2010 wild card, and a 35-yarder against the Jaguars in the 2007 divisional round. The Patriots went 2-1 in those contests.

2nd quarter: Eagles 15, Patriots 3

LeGarrette Blount scampered 21 yards for a touchdown to cap a six-play, 65-yard drive and extend the Eagles' lead. Philadelphia attempted a two-point conversion, but Nick Foles and Alshon Jeffrey could not connect.

Three of the Eagles' six plays on the drive went for 19 or more yards: A 19-yard completion to Zach Ertz, a 22-yard completion to Jeffrey, and Blount's touchdown run. For the game, Philadelphia has notched eight plays of 15-plus yards, four plays of 20-plus yards, and two of 30-plus yards.

Blount so far has 58 rushing yards, a Super Bowl career-high, and the Eagles have 73 yards on the ground. The Eagles rushed for 100-plus yards 13 times in the regular season and went 12-1 in those games. They went 3-2 when held below 100 yards rushing. Cooks ruled out

Patriots receiver Brandin Cooks was ruled out with a head injury after absorbing a big hit from Eagles safety Malcolm Jenkins early in the second quarter. Cooks, who has one catch for 23 yards, was slow to get up but walked off the field under his own power and went straight to the locker room.

2nd quarter: Eagles 15, Patriots 6

Stephen Gostkowski made a 45-yard field goal to cap a five-play, 48-yard drive by the Patriots.

The drive opened with a 46-yard catch-and-run by Rex Burkhead, but the Patriots could not sustain the momentum. Quarterback Tom Brady missed on two of his subsequent three pass attempts. So far, Brady is 9-of-16 passing for 191 yards, the most of his career in a first half of a Super Bowl and the 10th most in Super Bowl history.

2nd quarter: Eagles 15, Patriots 12

Running back James White got loose for a 26-yard touchdown run, capping a seven-play, 90-yard drive and capitalizing on Duron Harmon's interception.

Stephen Gostkowski's extra point was wide left, his second miscue of the game.

White's touchdown was set up by a beautiful 43-yard throw from Tom Brady to Chris Hogan, their second-longest connection of the season.

The game's first turnover

Patriots safety Duron Harmon came up with a bobbled Nick Foles pass intended for Alson Jeffrey. The Patriots took over at their own 10-yard line

On first and 10 at the New England 43-yard line, Foles targeted Jeffrey inside the 5-yard line. But Jeffrey, who was covered on the play by his college roommate, Stephon Gilmore, could not come up with it and essentially batted it into Harmon's hands.
2nd quarter: Eagles 22, Patriots 12

Coach Doug Pederson and the Eagles gambled on fourth and goal from the 1-yard line and won.

On a trick play, running Corey Clement took a direct snap, handed off to tight end Trey Burton, who then tossed a 1-yard touchdown pass to Nick Foles. It came with just 34 seconds left in the second quarter. It was the sixth time in Super Bowl history that a team scored a touchdown when going for it on fourth down, and first since Emmitt Smith in Super Bowl XXVIII.

The touchdown capped a seven-play, 70-yard drive that included a 55-yard catch-and-run by Clement on third down.

3rd quarter: Eagles 22, Patriots 19

When in an offensive rut, go to Rob Gronkowski.

The Patriots opened the second half with an eight-play, 75-yard drive that ended on a 5-yard touchdown throw from Tom Brady to the big All-Pro tight end.

After making just one catch for 9 yards on five targets in the first half, Gronkowski was targeted five times on the drive, reeling in four catches for 68 yards and the touchdown.

Brady now has 344 passing yards, the eighth most in Super Bowl history. The record he set last year — 466 yards — is within reach.

Patriots safety Patrick Chung was injured on the possession but returned on the next defensive series.

3rd quarter: Eagles 29, Patriots 19

Quarterback Nick Foles threw a 22-yard pass to running back Corey Clement in double coverage to make it a two-score game. Clement's catch was reviewed by officials, who ruled the call on the field stands.

The touchdown capped an 11-play, 85-yard drive.

3rd quarter: Eagles 29, Patriots 26

Quarterback Tom Brady found receiver Chris Hogan for a 26-yard touchdown to again trim Philadelphia's lead. The touchdown finished off a seven-play, 75-yard drive.

Brady now has 404 yards passing and has connected with seven different receivers. For Hogan, who now has five catches for 125 yards, this is his first 100-yard game in the playoffs.

4th quarter: Eagles 32, Patriots 26

Jake Elliott connected on a 42-yard field goal to extend the Eagles' lead.

Elliott's attempt came after Marquis Flowers dropped Nelson Agholor for an 8-yard loss on third and 3.

The Eagles and Patriots have combined for more than 1,000 yards of offense, breaking the record for most yards in a Super Bowl. For Brady and Gronkowski, it was the 12th time they have connected for a touchdown in the postseason, tying Joe Montana and Jerry Rice for most by a quarterback/receiver.



The field goal capped an eight-play, 51-yard drive.

4th quarter: Patriots 33, Eagles 32

New England has its first lead in Super Bowl LII. It came on a 4-yard touchdown pass from Tom Brady to Rob Gronkowski, their second touchdown connection of the game.

It was a 10-play, 75-yard drive for the Patriots, who have found the end zone on all three of their second-half possessions.

4th quarter: Eagles 38, Patriots 33

Tight end Zach Ertz scored on an 11-yard touchdown pass from Nick Foles for the Eagles to retake the lead with just more than 2 minutes left in the game. Philadelphia's two-point attempt failed. Patriots safety Patrick Chung has been ruled out with a head injury.

4th quarter: Eagles 38, Patriots 33

The first sack of Super Bowl LII came at an inopportune time for New England.

Defensive end Brandon Graham came up with a strip-sack of Tom Brady with 2:21 left in the game. Rookie Derek Barnett recovered the fumble.

4th quarter: Eagles 41, Patriots 33

With 2:16 to play. When the Patriots had the ball, Brandon Graham drew cheers from Eagles fans as he sacked Tom Brady, who fumbled the ball. The ball was recovered by Eagles' Derek Barnett at the Patriots 31-yard line.

Philadelphia would then increase its lead after Elliott's 46-yard field goal, making the game score 41–33.

With seconds left, the Patriots were able to move the ball down to midfield. With just under 10 seconds remaining, Tom Brady gave it his best shot with a huge Hail Mary pass that would have sent the game into OT with a touchdown plus 2. However, the Eagles swarmed Gronkowski and the human blanket in the end zone caused a pass with a chance, to fall incomplete. This sealed the game and prompted a lot of happy sounds from Eagles and Eagles fans in the stadium and across the world. It was a heartbreaking experience for the Patriots who had come so close.

The 5-time Super Bowl champions were defeated by a score of 41–33. Nick Foles, a story unto himself this fall as *The Little Engine That Could*, was named Super Bowl MVP after the game. With this win, the Eagles finally won their first Super Bowl, and their first NFL title since 1960. The Patriots put up the good fight all year long.

And, then?

With Bill Belichick as the coach taking on Doug Pederson every year in a Super Bowl match, the games ought to be really good and nobody knows who will win. One thing is for sure. It is the Patriots's turn in 2018. Go Patriots!

Thank you for taking the time to enjoy this book about the best historical team in pro football today!

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Brian has written 159 books in total. Other books can be found at amazon.com/author/brianwkelly

