

# Chicago Cubs Playoff History



**Chicago Cubs playoff history** is a saga filled with heartbreak, resilience, and ultimately triumph. The Cubs, one of Major League Baseball's most iconic franchises, have a storied past that includes a long championship drought, numerous playoff appearances, and a passionate fan base that has remained loyal through thick and thin. This article will delve into the Cubs' playoff history, exploring key moments, memorable players, and the evolution of the franchise from its inception to the present day.

## Early Years and the Championship Drought

The Chicago Cubs were established in 1870, originally playing as the Chicago White Stockings. They adopted the name Cubs in 1902 and quickly became a dominant force in baseball. The team's early success was marked by several pennants and championships, with their first World Series victory occurring in 1907.

### The Glory Years (1907-1910)

- 1907: The Cubs won their first World Series by defeating the Detroit Tigers.
- 1908: They captured back-to-back championships, again overcoming the Tigers.
- 1910: The Cubs won their last pennant before a long dry spell, finishing the decade as a powerhouse in the National League.

Despite their early success, the Cubs would not win another World Series for over a century, leading to the development of the "Curse of the Billy Goat."

## **The Curse of the Billy Goat**

The Cubs' struggles in the postseason began to take on a mythical quality with the introduction of the "Curse of the Billy Goat." This curse originated in 1945 when Billy Sianis, a local tavern owner, brought his pet goat to a World Series game at Wrigley Field. When he was asked to leave, he famously declared that the Cubs would never win a championship again.

This curse seemed to manifest itself in various playoff failures over the decades, including:

- 1969: The Cubs led the National League East for most of the season but faltered down the stretch, finishing in second place behind the New York Mets.
- 1984: The Cubs reached the National League Championship Series (NLCS) but were eliminated by the San Diego Padres in a heartbreaking five-game series.
- 2003: The infamous "Steve Bartman game" occurred during the NLCS against the Florida Marlins. Bartman's interference with a foul ball was followed by a disastrous inning that ultimately cost the Cubs the series.

These moments contributed to the perception of the Cubs as a cursed franchise, with fans enduring decades of disappointment.

## **Breaking the Curse: The 2016 World Series Championship**

The 2015 season brought renewed hope for the Cubs, culminating in a trip to the playoffs. However, it was the 2016 season that would become the most iconic in Cubs history.

### **Regular Season Success**

The Cubs finished the 2016 regular season with a remarkable 103-58 record, marking their best season in over a century. Under manager Joe Maddon, the team showcased a blend of veteran leadership and young talent, including stars like Kris Bryant, Anthony Rizzo, and Jake Arrieta.

### **Playoff Road to the Championship**

- National League Division Series (NLDS): The Cubs faced the San Francisco Giants and won the series 3-1, showcasing their resilience and skill.
- National League Championship Series (NLCS): The Cubs battled the Los Angeles Dodgers, winning the series 4-2 to earn their first pennant since 1945.
- World Series: The Cubs faced the Cleveland Indians in a thrilling seven-game series. After falling behind 3-1, the Cubs rallied to win Games 5 and 6, setting the stage for a dramatic Game 7.

## **Game 7: A Historic Moment**

Game 7 of the 2016 World Series was a nail-biter that went down in history. The Cubs fell behind early but tied the game in the eighth inning. A rain delay added to the tension, but the Cubs emerged victorious with an 8-7 win, ending a 108-year championship drought. The triumph was celebrated not just in Chicago but by baseball fans across the globe.

## **Recent Playoff Appearances**

Since their historic victory in 2016, the Cubs have made several playoff appearances, although none have resulted in another championship as of 2023.

### **2017 Season**

The Cubs returned to the playoffs in 2017, winning the National League Central Division. They faced the Washington Nationals in the NLDS but were eliminated in a hard-fought five-game series.

### **2018 Season**

In 2018, the Cubs again reached the postseason, finishing with a strong 95-68 record. They faced the Milwaukee Brewers in a tightly contested NL Central tie-breaker and lost, leading to a Wild Card game against the Colorado Rockies. The Cubs were eliminated in the Wild Card game, ending another promising season.

### **2020 Season**

The COVID-19 pandemic shortened the 2020 season, but the Cubs still managed to secure a playoff berth. They faced the Miami Marlins in the NL Wild Card Series but were swept, marking another disappointing end to their playoff

run.

## Notable Players in Cubs Playoff History

Throughout their playoff history, the Cubs have been home to many legendary players who left an indelible mark on the franchise.

- Ernie Banks: Known as "Mr. Cub," Banks played for the Cubs from 1953 to 1971 and is celebrated as one of the greatest players in baseball history.
- Ron Santo: A key figure in the Cubs' history, Santo was a nine-time All-Star third baseman whose contributions to the team extended beyond his playing career.
- Kerry Wood: A standout pitcher, Wood set a record with 20 strikeouts in a single game in 1998 and was instrumental in the Cubs' playoff efforts in the early 2000s.
- Jake Arrieta: The ace of the pitching staff during the Cubs' 2016 championship run, Arrieta was known for his dominant performances on the mound.

## The Future of the Chicago Cubs

As of 2023, the Chicago Cubs are in a transitional phase, focusing on rebuilding and developing young talent while aiming to return to postseason contention. With a dedicated fan base and a rich history, the Cubs remain one of baseball's most beloved franchises.

The lessons learned from their past failures and triumphs will undoubtedly shape their future endeavors in the ever-competitive landscape of Major League Baseball.

## Conclusion

The Chicago Cubs' playoff history is a reflection of the challenges and triumphs inherent in sports. From the early 20th-century glory days to the heart-wrenching defeats and, finally, the exhilarating championship in 2016, the Cubs' journey has been anything but ordinary. Their story is one of perseverance, hope, and the relentless pursuit of excellence, making them a cherished part of baseball history and a symbol of resilience for fans everywhere. As the franchise looks to the future, the echoes of their past will continue to inspire a new generation of Cubs players and fans alike.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What year did the Chicago Cubs last win the World Series?**

The Chicago Cubs last won the World Series in 2016, ending a 108-year championship drought.

## **How many times have the Chicago Cubs appeared in the World Series?**

The Chicago Cubs have appeared in the World Series a total of 36 times as of 2023.

## **What is the significance of the 1908 World Series for the Cubs?**

The 1908 World Series is significant as it was the last time the Cubs won the championship before their 108-year drought.

## **Which year did the Cubs break the 'Curse of the Billy Goat'?**

The Cubs broke the 'Curse of the Billy Goat' in 2016 when they won the World Series.

## **Who was the manager of the Cubs during their 2016 World Series victory?**

Joe Maddon was the manager of the Chicago Cubs during their 2016 World Series victory.

## **What was the Cubs' longest playoff drought before winning the World Series in 2016?**

Before winning the World Series in 2016, the Cubs had the longest playoff drought in Major League Baseball history, with 108 years without a championship.

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