

Dallas Cowboys Coaches History



Dallas Cowboys coaches history is a rich tapestry woven with triumphs, challenges, and transformative leadership. Since their inception in 1960, the Dallas Cowboys have become one of the most iconic franchises in the National Football League (NFL). Much of this success can be attributed to the coaches who have guided the team through various eras, each leaving a distinctive mark on the organization's identity and legacy. This article will delve into the history of the coaches of the Dallas Cowboys, highlighting their contributions, coaching styles, notable achievements, and the impact they had on the franchise and its players.

Early Years and Formation (1960-1965)

The Dallas Cowboys were established in 1960 as an expansion team, and their first head coach was Tom Landry. A former player and defensive coach for the New York Giants, Landry was hired to lead the Cowboys and would remain at the helm for the next 29 years. His innovative approach to the game, particularly his defensive schemes and the introduction of the "flex defense," would set the tone for the franchise's future.

Tom Landry (1960-1988)

- **Innovations:** Landry was known for his strategic mindset and was one of the first coaches to incorporate a sophisticated passing game and a complex defensive scheme.
- **Achievements:** Under Landry's leadership, the Cowboys won two Super Bowl championships (VI in 1972 and XII in 1978) and appeared in five others. He led the team to 20 consecutive winning seasons and helped establish the Cowboys as "America's Team."

- Legacy: Landry's impact on the franchise is immeasurable. His coaching style, characterized by discipline and intelligence, shaped the culture of the Cowboys for decades. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1990.

The Post-Landry Era (1989-1997)

After Landry's departure following the 1988 season, the Cowboys entered a new era of coaching. The team struggled to maintain its previous success, leading to a series of coaching changes.

Jimmy Johnson (1989-1993)

- Background: A former college coach at the University of Miami, Johnson brought a new level of intensity and competitiveness to the Cowboys.
- Achievements: Johnson led the Cowboys to two Super Bowl victories (XXVII in 1993 and XXVIII in 1994) within just four seasons, rebuilding the team into a powerhouse through the NFL Draft and strategic trades, notably the Herschel Walker trade.
- Style: Known for his fiery personality and motivational techniques, Johnson instilled a sense of confidence and aggression in his players.

Barry Switzer (1994-1997)

- Transition: Following Johnson's departure, Switzer, a former college coach at the University of Oklahoma, took over and enjoyed immediate success.
- Achievements: Under Switzer, the Cowboys won Super Bowl XXX in 1995, solidifying their status in the league.
- Challenges: Despite his success, Switzer faced challenges managing the personalities and egos of star players like Deion Sanders and Michael Irvin.

The 2000s and a New Challenge (1998-2007)

The late 1990s and early 2000s were marked by significant instability within the Cowboys organization, leading to a new series of head coaches.

Chan Gailey (1998-1999)

- Background: Gailey, who had previously been a head coach at Georgia Tech, was tasked with revitalizing the team.
- Achievements: He led the Cowboys to two playoff appearances but failed to win any postseason games. His tenure was cut short after just two seasons due to inconsistent performance.

Dave Campo (2000-2002)

- Background: Campo, who had served as the defensive coordinator under Chan Gailey, was promoted to head coach.
- Challenges: Campo struggled to achieve success, finishing with a dismal record of 15-33 over three seasons. His inability to connect with players and implement a winning culture led to his dismissal.

Bill Parcells (2003-2006)

- Revival: Parcells, a two-time Super Bowl-winning coach with the New York Giants, was hired to restore the Cowboys' reputation.
- Achievements: Under Parcells, the Cowboys made the playoffs twice, although they did not advance past the Wild Card round. His coaching style was characterized by discipline and accountability.
- Legacy: Parcells laid the groundwork for the Cowboys' future success, emphasizing a strong running game and a tough defense.

The Jason Garrett Era (2007-2019)

Following Parcells, the Cowboys experienced a period of relative stability with Jason Garrett, who had served as the offensive coordinator before becoming head coach.

Jason Garrett (2010-2019)

- Background: Garrett was a former Cowboys quarterback and had a deep understanding of the franchise's culture.
- Achievements: He led the team to three playoff appearances, although the Cowboys struggled to find sustained postseason success. His tenure included the 2014 season when the Cowboys finished with a 12-4 record and won the NFC East.
- Coaching Style: Garrett's approach was characterized by a focus on player development and a strong

offensive scheme, but he faced criticism for his game management skills.

The Mike McCarthy Era (2020-Present)

In 2020, the Cowboys hired Mike McCarthy, a Super Bowl-winning coach with the Green Bay Packers, to lead the franchise into a new era.

Mike McCarthy (2020-Present)

- Background: McCarthy's extensive experience and previous success in the NFL brought a fresh perspective to the Cowboys.
- Achievements: In his first season, the Cowboys faced significant challenges, including injuries to key players. However, McCarthy's leadership was evident as he worked to rebuild the team's identity.
- Future Outlook: As of 2023, McCarthy aims to revitalize the Cowboys and return them to contention for the Super Bowl, focusing on enhancing the offensive strategy and defense.

Conclusion

The history of Dallas Cowboys coaches is a reflection of the team's evolution and its quest for excellence in the NFL. From the innovative strategies of Tom Landry to the fiery leadership of Jimmy Johnson and the disciplined approach of Bill Parcells, each coach has contributed to the franchise's identity and legacy. As the Cowboys continue to navigate the challenges of the modern NFL under Mike McCarthy, the lessons learned from past coaches will undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping the team's future. The rich history of coaching within the Dallas Cowboys not only illustrates the passion for the game but also highlights the importance of leadership in achieving success on the field.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was the first head coach of the Dallas Cowboys?

The first head coach of the Dallas Cowboys was Tom Landry, who led the team from its inception in 1960 until 1988.

What is notable about Tom Landry's coaching style?

Tom Landry was known for his innovative use of the 4-3 defense and the development of the 'flex

defense' concept, as well as his emphasis on discipline and strategy.

Which Dallas Cowboys coach won the most Super Bowls?

Jimmy Johnson is the Dallas Cowboys coach who won the most Super Bowls, securing back-to-back championships in the 1992 and 1993 seasons.

Who succeeded Barry Switzer as the head coach of the Dallas Cowboys?

Barry Switzer was succeeded by Chan Gailey, who coached the Cowboys from 1998 to 1999.

What impact did Bill Parcells have on the Dallas Cowboys?

Bill Parcells revitalized the Dallas Cowboys during his tenure from 2003 to 2006, leading the team to two playoff appearances and helping to establish a strong foundation for future success.

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