

History Of Raiders Quarterbacks



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The Las Vegas Raiders, originally founded in 1960 as part of the American Football League (AFL), have had a storied history filled with triumphs, challenges, and legendary players. Among these players, the quarterbacks stand out as the essential leaders on the field. From the early days in Oakland to the modern era in Las Vegas, the history of Raiders quarterbacks is a compelling narrative of talent, resilience, and evolution.

Early Years: The AFL Era (1960-1969)

The Raiders were established in 1960, and their first quarterback was Tom Flores, who played from 1960-1966. As one of the first Mexican-American quarterbacks in professional football, Flores paved the way for future generations. He helped the team achieve its first playoff appearance in 1967.

Key Quarterbacks of the AFL Era:

1. Tom Flores (1960-1966)

- Played a pivotal role in the team's early success.
- Notable for his leadership and ability to manage the game.

2. Daryle Lamonica (1967-1974)

- Known as the "Mad Bomber" for his deep-passing ability.
- Led the Raiders to the AFL Championship in 1967 and was named AFL MVP in 1969.
- His tenure solidified the Raiders' reputation as a high-octane offense.

3. Ken Stabler (1970-1979)

- One of the most iconic quarterbacks in Raiders history.
- Nicknamed "The Snake" for his elusive scrambling ability.
- Led the Raiders to a Super Bowl victory in 1976 and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2016.

The Silver and Black Dynasty: The 1970s

The 1970s were the golden years for the Raiders, and the quarterback position was crucial during this time. Ken Stabler's leadership defined the franchise, and he was known for his ability to perform under pressure.

Achievements During the 1970s:

- Super Bowl XI Champion (1976)
- Five consecutive playoff appearances (1970-1974)
- Stabler's selection to the Pro Bowl multiple times.

The Post-Stabler Era: The 1980s

After Stabler's departure, the Raiders experienced a transition period in the 1980s, with several

quarterbacks taking the helm.

Key Quarterbacks of the 1980s:

1. Jim Plunkett (1978-1986)

- Became the starting quarterback in the early 1980s.
- Led the Raiders to two Super Bowl victories (XV in 1980 and XVIII in 1983).
- Known for his toughness and ability to perform in clutch situations.

2. Marc Wilson (1980-1987)

- Started the majority of the games in the mid-1980s.
- Helped the team reach the playoffs in 1983, but was less successful than Plunkett.

3. Jeff Hostetler (1984-1992)

- Took over the quarterback role in the late 1980s.
- Known for his leadership and ability to win key games, including the 1990 playoff run.

The 1980s were marked by a struggle to find a consistent starting quarterback, but Jim Plunkett's contributions solidified his place in Raiders lore.

The 1990s: A Decade of Change

As the Raiders transitioned into the 1990s, the team faced challenges in maintaining its previous success. The quarterback position saw numerous changes as the franchise sought stability.

Key Quarterbacks of the 1990s:

1. Rich Gannon (1997-2004)

- Gannon's arrival marked a turning point for the franchise.
- He won the NFL MVP award in 2002 and led the Raiders to Super Bowl XXXVII.
- Gannon's ability to read defenses and his accurate passing made him one of the most effective quarterbacks in the league.

2. Jeff George (1997-2000)

- Known for his powerful arm and ability to make big plays.
- Played for the Raiders during a tumultuous time, but provided some memorable moments.

3. Troy Aikman (1994-1995)

- Played briefly for the Raiders and is often remembered for his time with the Dallas Cowboys, but his stint with the Raiders is part of the franchise's history.

The 1990s were defined by inconsistency at the quarterback position, but Rich Gannon's emergence provided hope and a semblance of stability.

The 2000s: A Struggle for Identity

The early 2000s were marked by a search for identity, and the Raiders struggled to find a quarterback who could replicate Gannon's success.

Key Quarterbacks of the 2000s:

1. Kerry Collins (2004-2006)

- Helped the Raiders reach Super Bowl XXXVII.
- Known for his experience and ability to lead the offense.

2. Aaron Brooks (2006-2007)

- Had a brief tenure with the Raiders after previous success with the New Orleans Saints.
- His time with the Raiders was marked by inconsistency.

3. JaMarcus Russell (2007-2009)

- Selected first overall in the 2007 NFL Draft.
- Struggled with performance and work ethic, ultimately leading to his release.

The 2000s were a challenging period for the Raiders, with the team unable to find a quarterback

capable of leading them back to glory.

Modern Era: 2010s to Present

As the Raiders moved into the 2010s, they began to find stability at the quarterback position again, starting with the drafting of Derek Carr in 2014.

Key Quarterbacks of the Modern Era:

1. Derek Carr (2014-Present)

- Quickly became the face of the franchise.
- Known for his strong arm and ability to throw accurately under pressure.
- Two-time Pro Bowl selection and led the Raiders to their first playoff appearance since 2002.

2. Marcus Mariota (2020-Present)

- Joined the Raiders as a backup quarterback and provided a dual-threat option.
- Known for his athleticism and ability to change the pace of the game.

3. Jimmy Garoppolo (2023-Present)

- Signed in 2023, bringing experience from his time with the New England Patriots and San Francisco 49ers.
- Expected to lead the Raiders with a fresh perspective and veteran leadership.

The modern era has seen the Raiders make significant strides, with Carr leading the team and setting franchise records for passing yards and touchdowns.

Conclusion: Legacy of Raiders Quarterbacks

The history of Raiders quarterbacks is a rich tapestry woven with triumphs and tribulations. From the

early days of Tom Flores and Daryle Lamonica to the legendary Ken Stabler, the franchise has seen a wide array of talents under center. The struggles of the 1990s and 2000s have given way to a new era, with Derek Carr and now Jimmy Garoppolo at the forefront.

As the Raiders continue to evolve and adapt in the modern NFL landscape, the legacy of their quarterbacks remains a vital part of their identity. The journey of the Raiders quarterbacks reflects the broader narrative of the franchise itself: a tale of resilience, transformation, and an unwavering pursuit of excellence.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was the first starting quarterback for the Raiders?

The first starting quarterback for the Raiders was Tom Flores, who played for the team when they were established in 1960.

Which Raiders quarterback is known for leading the team to its first Super Bowl victory?

Ken Stabler is known for leading the Raiders to their first Super Bowl victory in Super Bowl XI in 1977.

What significant impact did Jim Plunkett have on the Raiders?

Jim Plunkett led the Raiders to two Super Bowl championships (XV in 1980 and XVIII in 1983) and is celebrated for his resilience and leadership.

Who holds the franchise record for most career touchdown passes for the Raiders?

Derek Carr holds the franchise record for most career touchdown passes for the Raiders.

What was notable about Rich Gannon's time as the Raiders quarterback?

Rich Gannon won the NFL MVP award in 2002 and led the Raiders to Super Bowl XXXVII during his tenure with the team.

Which quarterback was famously known as 'The Snake'?

Ken Stabler was famously known as 'The Snake' for his elusive playing style and knack for making clutch plays.

What role did Al Davis play in shaping the Raiders' quarterback history?

Al Davis, the team's owner and coach, was instrumental in selecting and developing quarterbacks, emphasizing a strong passing game and often favoring players with unique talents.

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