

biggest upsets in nfl history by spread

Biggest upsets in NFL history by spread are events that have shocked fans and analysts alike, turning the world of professional football on its head. The NFL is known for its unpredictability, and while some teams dominate the league year after year, there are always moments where the underdog rises up against the odds. Understanding these upsets can provide a deeper insight into the nature of competition in the NFL and the various factors that contribute to surprising game outcomes.

What is an Upset in Sports Betting?

In the context of sports betting, an upset occurs when a team that is expected to lose (as indicated by the point spread) manages to win the game. The point spread is essentially a handicap placed on the favored team, and when the underdog not only covers this spread but wins outright, it is classified as an upset. For example, if Team A is favored to win by 7 points against Team B, and Team B wins the game, it is considered an upset.

Factors Contributing to Upsets

Several factors can contribute to these surprising outcomes, including:

- **Injuries:** Key player injuries can significantly alter the dynamics of a game.
- **Weather Conditions:** Inclement weather can level the playing field, especially if one team relies heavily on the passing game.
- **Team Morale:** A team on a winning streak might be more motivated than a favored team that has been struggling.
- **Coaching Decisions:** Strategic decisions made by coaches can play a pivotal role in the outcome of a game.
- **Home Field Advantage:** Teams playing at home often have better performances due to familiar surroundings and fan support.

Understanding these elements can provide insights into why some teams pull off stunning victories against the odds.

Top 5 Biggest Upsets in NFL History by Spread

While there have been countless upsets in NFL history, some stand out due to the magnitude of their

impact and the significance of the spread. Here are five of the most notable upsets:

1. New York Jets vs. Baltimore Colts (Super Bowl III, 1969)

The New York Jets were heavy underdogs in Super Bowl III, facing the Baltimore Colts. The Colts were favored by 18 points, marking one of the largest spreads in Super Bowl history. The Jets, led by quarterback Joe Namath, shocked the world by winning 16-7. Namath famously guaranteed the victory, and the Jets' win is still considered one of the biggest upsets in sports history.

2. New England Patriots vs. St. Louis Rams (Super Bowl XXXVI, 2002)

In another monumental upset, the New England Patriots faced the St. Louis Rams, who were favored by 14 points. The Rams, known for their explosive offense, were expected to dominate. However, the Patriots, led by a young Tom Brady, pulled off a stunning 20-17 victory. This win not only marked the beginning of the Patriots' dynasty but also solidified Brady's status as a clutch performer.

3. San Francisco 49ers vs. New York Giants (1986 NFC Championship Game)

In the 1986 NFC Championship Game, the San Francisco 49ers were 10-point favorites against the New York Giants. The 49ers had a powerful offense and were expected to win easily. However, the Giants played a gritty game and managed to upset the 49ers with a 17-3 victory, earning a place in Super Bowl XXI. This game is often remembered for the Giants' incredible defense and their ability to disrupt the 49ers' offense.

4. New York Giants vs. New England Patriots (Super Bowl XLII, 2008)

The New York Giants entered Super Bowl XLII as 12-point underdogs against the undefeated New England Patriots. The Patriots were chasing perfection with a 16-0 record and were expected to dominate the game. However, the Giants pulled off one of the biggest surprises in NFL history, defeating the Patriots 17-14. Eli Manning's game-winning touchdown pass to Plaxico Burress remains one of the most iconic moments in NFL history.

5. Kansas City Chiefs vs. Minnesota Vikings (Super Bowl IV, 1970)

In Super Bowl IV, the Kansas City Chiefs were 12-point underdogs against the Minnesota Vikings. The Chiefs, led by quarterback Len Dawson, surprised everyone by winning the game 23-7. This victory

not only marked the first Super Bowl win for the Chiefs but also demonstrated that the AFL could compete with the established NFL teams.

Other Notable Upsets

While the aforementioned games are some of the most significant upsets in NFL history, there are many other instances worth mentioning:

- **Miami Dolphins vs. San Diego Chargers (1982 AFC Championship Game):** The Dolphins were underdogs and managed to win in a grueling game that went to overtime.
- **Buffalo Bills vs. Houston Oilers (1992 AFC Wild Card Game):** The Bills, down 32 points, came back to win, marking one of the largest comebacks in NFL history.
- **New Orleans Saints vs. Minnesota Vikings (2010 NFC Championship Game):** The Saints were underdogs but won in overtime, securing their first Super Bowl appearance.

The Impact of Upsets on the NFL

The biggest upsets in NFL history by spread have far-reaching impacts, not just on the teams involved but on the entire league. They can alter the trajectories of franchises, shift fan loyalties, and even influence betting markets. Upsets create compelling storylines that enhance the drama of the season and keep fans engaged.

Conclusion

The unpredictability of the NFL is one of its most appealing aspects, and the biggest upsets in NFL history by spread serve as a testament to this unpredictability. These moments remind fans that anything can happen on game day, regardless of statistics or expectations. Whether it's a Super Bowl victory or a surprising playoff win, these upsets continue to be celebrated in the annals of NFL history. As the league evolves, new upsets will undoubtedly emerge, keeping the spirit of competition alive and thrilling fans for generations to come.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is considered the biggest upset in NFL history by spread?

The biggest upset in NFL history by spread occurred during Super Bowl III when the New York Jets

defeated the Baltimore Colts as 18-point underdogs.

Which game in the 2017 NFL season featured a major upset by spread?

In the 2017 NFL season, the New York Jets defeated the Kansas City Chiefs as 15-point underdogs, marking a significant upset by spread.

How often do double-digit underdogs win in the NFL?

Double-digit underdogs win in the NFL approximately 10-15% of the time, making such victories noteworthy and often categorized as upsets.

What was the spread for the New England Patriots vs. New York Giants in Super Bowl XLII?

The New England Patriots were favored by 12 points in Super Bowl XLII, where they ultimately lost to the New York Giants, making it one of the biggest upsets in Super Bowl history.

Can you name a notable upset in the playoffs by spread?

One notable playoff upset by spread occurred in the 2012 AFC Wild Card game when the Baltimore Ravens defeated the Denver Broncos as 9-point underdogs.

Which team caused a significant upset during the 1995 season?

In the 1995 season, the Carolina Panthers defeated the Dallas Cowboys as 12-point underdogs, which was considered a major upset.

What factors contribute to an upset victory in the NFL?

Factors that contribute to an upset victory in the NFL include injuries to key players, weather conditions, team morale, and underestimating the opponent.

Which team was the biggest favorite to lose in NFL history?

The biggest favorite to lose in NFL history is the 1976 Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who were 24-point underdogs against the Pittsburgh Steelers and lost the game.

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