

dallas cowboys coach history

Dallas Cowboys coach history is a fascinating journey that intertwines with the rich legacy of one of the most iconic franchises in the National Football League (NFL). The Dallas Cowboys, established in 1960, have not only become synonymous with success on the field but have also developed a strong culture of coaching excellence. This article explores the evolution of coaching in the Cowboys organization, highlighting significant coaches, their contributions, and the impact they had on the team's storied history.

Foundational Years: The 1960s

The Cowboys began their journey under the leadership of their first head coach, Tom Landry. Appointed in 1960, Landry was pivotal in shaping the team's identity, introducing innovative strategies that would become hallmarks of Cowboys football.

Tom Landry (1960–1988)

- Background: Before joining the Cowboys, Landry was a defensive coordinator for the New York Giants. His knowledge of the game and innovative ideas soon transformed the Cowboys into a competitive team.
- Impact: Under Landry's guidance, the Cowboys became known for their "Flex Defense" and the "Shotgun Formation," strategies that were revolutionary at the time.
- Achievements: Landry led the Cowboys to five Super Bowl appearances and two Super Bowl victories (VI and XII), establishing the franchise as a powerhouse in the league.

The Transition Era: 1989–1997

Following Landry's departure, the Cowboys entered a new era, marked by a change in coaching styles and philosophies.

Jimmy Johnson (1989–1993)

- Background: Jimmy Johnson, previously the head coach at the University of Miami, succeeded Landry and brought a fiery personality and a rigorous approach to the team.
- Impact: Johnson is credited with building the roster that would dominate the early 1990s, including the famous trade with the Minnesota Vikings that brought in running back Herschel Walker.
- Achievements: Under Johnson, the Cowboys won back-to-back Super Bowls (XXVII and XXVIII), cementing his legacy as one of the great coaches in franchise history.

Barry Switzer (1994–1997)

- Background: Switzer, a former head coach at the University of Oklahoma, took over after Johnson's departure. He was known for his ability to manage star players and for his charismatic leadership style.
- Impact: Switzer maintained the winning culture instilled by Johnson and managed to keep the team competitive.
- Achievements: He led the Cowboys to a Super Bowl victory (XXX) in 1995, making him one of the few coaches to win a national championship and a Super Bowl.

The Post-Super Bowl Era: 1998–2006

After Switzer's tenure, the Cowboys faced challenges as they tried to rebuild after their championship years.

Chan Gailey (1998–1999)

- Background: Gailey, a former offensive coordinator, was brought in to revitalize the team.
- Impact: While he had some success in his first season, the team struggled to regain its former glory.
- Legacy: Gailey's time was short-lived, and he was replaced after two seasons.

Dave Campo (2000–2002)

- Background: Campo, who had been a defensive coordinator under Johnson, was promoted to head coach.
- Impact: His tenure was marked by instability and inconsistency, with the team failing to post a winning record in any of his three seasons.
- Legacy: Campo's era was seen as a transition period as the Cowboys attempted to find their footing in the post-Johnson era.

Bill Parcells (2003–2006)

- Background: Parcells, a two-time Super Bowl-winning coach with the New York Giants, was hired to bring discipline and structure back to the franchise.
- Impact: Parcells was instrumental in revamping the roster and instilling a new work ethic within the team.
- Achievements: He led the Cowboys to two playoff appearances during his tenure, thus reviving fan interest in the franchise.

The New Millennium: 2007–2019

The Cowboys entered a more stable period with a strong roster and a series of notable coaches.

Wade Phillips (2007–2010)

- Background: Phillips, a long-time defensive coordinator, became head coach after Parcells retired.
- Impact: His laid-back coaching style resonated with players and led to immediate success.
- Achievements: Under Phillips, the Cowboys achieved a 13-3 record in 2007 and made it to the playoffs, although they struggled to advance in subsequent years.

Jason Garrett (2010–2019)

- Background: Initially serving as interim head coach after Phillips' dismissal, Garrett was eventually given the permanent role.
- Impact: Garrett's tenure was marked by a blend of offensive innovation and challenges in the postseason.
- Achievements: He led the Cowboys to three NFC East titles and several playoff appearances, although the team never advanced beyond the divisional round during his tenure.

The Recent Era: 2020–Present

The Cowboys continue to seek success in the highly competitive landscape of the NFL.

Mike McCarthy (2020–Present)

- Background: McCarthy, who previously led the Green Bay Packers to a Super Bowl title, was hired to bring a fresh perspective to the Cowboys.
- Impact: His experience and offensive acumen have aimed to revitalize the team's performance.
- Achievements: McCarthy's leadership has seen the Cowboys return to the playoffs, with a focus on developing quarterback Dak Prescott and a strong offensive unit.

Coaching Philosophy and Legacy

Throughout their history, the Cowboys have emphasized several key coaching philosophies that have defined their success:

- Innovation: Coaches like Tom Landry and Jimmy Johnson introduced groundbreaking strategies that changed the way football was played.
- Player Management: Successful coaches have managed to create strong relationships with their players, fostering loyalty and team cohesion.
- Adaptability: The ability to adapt to changing game dynamics and player capabilities has been crucial for the franchise's longevity.

Conclusion

The Dallas Cowboys coach history is not merely a chronicle of wins and losses; it is a saga of leadership, innovation, and resilience. From Tom Landry's strategic brilliance to Mike McCarthy's modern approach, each coach has left an indelible mark on the franchise. As the Cowboys look toward the future, their coaching legacy will undoubtedly continue to play a significant role in shaping the team's path and maintaining its status as "America's Team." The journey of the Cowboys and their coaches illustrates not just the pursuit of victory but the deep-rooted passion for the game of football that unites fans and players alike.

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 1960 to 1988.

How many Super Bowl championships did Tom Landry win with the Cowboys?

Tom Landry won two Super Bowl championships with the Cowboys, in Super Bowl VI and Super Bowl XII.

Who succeeded Tom Landry as the head coach of the Cowboys?

Barry Switzer succeeded Tom Landry as the head coach of the Dallas Cowboys, taking over in 1994.

Which Cowboys coach has the highest winning percentage in franchise history?

Jimmy Johnson has the highest winning percentage among Cowboys coaches, with a .750 winning percentage during his tenure from 1989 to 1993.

What notable achievement did Bill Parcells accomplish during his time with the Cowboys?

Bill Parcells led the Cowboys to the playoffs in 2003 and 2004, marking a significant turnaround for the franchise.

Who is the current head coach of the Dallas Cowboys?

As of October 2023, the current head coach of the Dallas Cowboys is Mike McCarthy, who took over in 2020.

How many head coaches have the Dallas Cowboys had since their inception?

Since their inception in 1960, the Dallas Cowboys have had a total of nine head coaches.

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