

dallas cowboys tight end history

Dallas Cowboys tight end history is a fascinating journey through the evolution of one of the NFL's most storied franchises. The tight end position has played a pivotal role in the success of the Dallas Cowboys, contributing not only to the passing game but also to the team's overall offensive strategy. From the early days of the franchise to the modern era, the history of tight ends in Dallas is filled with memorable players who have made significant impacts on the field and left lasting legacies. This article will explore the evolution of tight ends for the Cowboys, highlighting key players, their achievements, and the role they have played in the team's success.

The Early Years: Establishing the Position

When the Dallas Cowboys were established in 1960, the tight end position was not as prominently featured in the offense as it is today. However, early players began to pave the way for future tight ends.

1960s: The Foundation

- Dick Bielski: One of the first tight ends for the Cowboys, Bielski played from 1960 to 1963. He was known for his blocking abilities and contributed to the team's running game.
- Mike Ditka: Although he spent only one season (1961) with the Cowboys before moving on to legendary status with the Chicago Bears, Ditka's influence on the tight end position cannot be overstated. He was one of the first players to redefine the role by being a potent receiving threat.

1970s: The Rise of the Cowboys

The 1970s marked a significant turning point for the Dallas Cowboys, both as a team and for the tight end position.

- Jay Saldi: Saldi became a key contributor in the mid-1970s, providing a reliable option in the passing game. His ability to stretch the field added a new dimension to the Cowboys' offense.
- Billy Joe DuPree: Playing from 1973 to 1983, DuPree was instrumental in the Cowboys' success during the late 1970s and early 1980s. He was a two-time Pro Bowler and was known for his excellent hands and route-running ability.

The 1980s: A Decade of Change

The 1980s brought new coaching philosophies and a different approach to the tight end

position.

Emergence of a New Style

- Doug Cosbie: Drafted in 1979, Cosbie became one of the most productive tight ends in the 1980s. He was known for his versatility, being able to effectively block and catch passes. Cosbie amassed over 3,000 receiving yards during his career and was a key player for the Cowboys during their run to Super Bowl XXVII.
- Jimmie Giles: Although not a Cowboy for long, Giles played a crucial role in the early 1980s before becoming a Pro Bowl tight end with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. His time in Dallas helped establish the need for a dynamic receiving tight end.

The 1990s: The Glory Years

The 1990s were a golden era for the Dallas Cowboys, as they captured three Super Bowl championships. The tight end position was vital during this time.

Stalwarts of the 90s

- Jay Novacek: Perhaps the most iconic tight end in Cowboys history, Novacek played a critical role in the team's success during the early 1990s. He was a reliable target for quarterback Troy Aikman and was known for his exceptional route-running and catching ability. Novacek was a five-time Pro Bowler and was inducted into the Cowboys Ring of Honor.
- Eric Bjornson: Bjornson played alongside Novacek and contributed to the team's success, especially in the passing game. His ability to block and catch made him a valuable asset during the Cowboys' Super Bowl runs.

The 2000s: Transition and Evolution

As the NFL evolved in the 2000s, so did the role of tight ends in the Cowboys' offense.

New Faces, New Roles

- Jason Witten: Drafted in 2003, Witten would go on to become one of the greatest tight ends in NFL history. With over 1,200 receptions and 13 Pro Bowl selections, Witten redefined the position with his combination of size, speed, and catching ability. He became a safety net for quarterbacks and a leader in the locker room. His durability and consistent performance solidified his legacy in Dallas.
- Anthony Fasano: A solid contributor during his time in Dallas from 2006 to 2008, Fasano showcased his receiving ability and blocking skills. He later found success with other teams

but made a mark during his time with the Cowboys.

Recent Years: The Modern Tight End

The tight end position has continued to evolve in the NFL, with teams increasingly utilizing tight ends in the passing game.

Current Stars

- Dalton Schultz: Selected in the fourth round of the 2018 NFL Draft, Schultz has emerged as a reliable target for the Cowboys. His ability to run precise routes and make difficult catches has made him an integral part of the Cowboys' offense. He has quickly gained recognition for his contributions and was a key player in the team's offensive schemes.
- Jake Ferguson: As the next generation of Cowboys tight ends, Ferguson has shown promise since being drafted in 2022. With a solid foundation in blocking and receiving, he is poised to continue the legacy of successful tight ends in Dallas.

Conclusion: A Legacy of Excellence

The **Dallas Cowboys tight end history** is rich with talent, dedication, and success. From the early years of the franchise to the modern era, tight ends have played a crucial role in shaping the team's identity. The evolution of the position has seen players like Jay Novacek and Jason Witten leave indelible marks on the franchise, setting high standards for future generations. As the Cowboys continue to build for the future, the legacy of their tight ends will undoubtedly remain a critical component of their offensive strategy for years to come. The combination of tradition and innovation ensures that the tight end position will continue to thrive in Dallas, contributing to the Cowboys' pursuit of championships.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was the first notable tight end for the Dallas Cowboys?

The first notable tight end for the Dallas Cowboys was Mike Ditka, who played for the team from 1961 to 1966.

Which Dallas Cowboys tight end holds the franchise record for most receptions?

Jason Witten holds the franchise record for most receptions, with 1,228 catches during his career with the Cowboys.

What year did the Dallas Cowboys select Jason Witten in the NFL Draft?

The Dallas Cowboys selected Jason Witten in the third round of the 2003 NFL Draft.

How many Pro Bowl selections did Jason Witten achieve during his career?

Jason Witten was selected to the Pro Bowl 11 times during his career.

Who was the tight end for the Dallas Cowboys during their Super Bowl XXVII victory?

The tight end for the Dallas Cowboys during their Super Bowl XXVII victory was Jay Novacek.

Which Dallas Cowboys tight end had the most receiving yards in a single season?

Jason Witten also holds the record for the most receiving yards in a single season for a tight end with 1,088 yards in 2012.

What year did the Cowboys draft tight end Gavin Escobar?

The Dallas Cowboys drafted tight end Gavin Escobar in the second round of the 2013 NFL Draft.

Who is the Cowboys' tight end known for his blocking as well as receiving skills in the late 1990s?

The Cowboys' tight end known for his blocking and receiving skills in the late 1990s is David LaFleur.

Which tight end was a part of the Cowboys' roster during their back-to-back Super Bowl wins in the early 1990s?

Jay Novacek was the tight end on the Cowboys' roster during their back-to-back Super Bowl wins in the early 1990s.

What was significant about the Dallas Cowboys' tight end position in the 2021 season?

In the 2021 season, the Dallas Cowboys had a tight end duo of Dalton Schultz and Blake

Jarwin, which was significant for their contributions to the team's offensive scheme.

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