

dallas cowboys head coach history

Dallas Cowboys head coach history is a tale of triumphs and challenges, marked by iconic figures who have shaped the franchise into one of the most storied teams in the National Football League (NFL). Founded in 1960, the Cowboys have experienced a rollercoaster of coaching leadership, with some head coaches achieving legendary status while others struggled to find success. This article delves into the history of Dallas Cowboys head coaches, highlighting their contributions, coaching styles, and the impacts they had on the team's legacy.

Early Years and Establishment

The Dallas Cowboys were established in 1960, and the franchise's first head coach was Tom Landry. Landry's innovative coaching style and commitment to excellence laid the groundwork for the team's future success.

Tom Landry (1960-1988)

- Tenure: 29 seasons
- Record: 250 wins, 162 losses, 6 ties
- Achievements:
 - Super Bowl Champion (VI, XII)
 - 5 NFC Championships
 - 20 playoff appearances

Tom Landry is arguably the most significant figure in the history of the Dallas Cowboys. He introduced the 4-3 defense and the "flex defense," which revolutionized the way the game was played. Under his leadership, the Cowboys became known as "America's Team" due to their consistent success and high-profile players. Landry's calm demeanor and strategic genius earned him respect across the league, and his legacy continues to influence coaching philosophies to this day.

The 1980s and 1990s: New Directions

After Landry's departure in 1988, the Cowboys went through a series of head coaches, each trying to fill the void left by the iconic coach.

Jimmy Johnson (1989-1993)

- Tenure: 5 seasons
- Record: 44 wins, 36 losses
- Achievements:
 - 2 Super Bowl Championships (XXVII, XXVIII)

- 3 NFC Championships

Jimmy Johnson was hired as head coach after a successful stint at the University of Miami. He quickly made his mark by emphasizing a strong defense and a dynamic offense, leading the Cowboys to back-to-back Super Bowl victories in the early 1990s. Johnson's fiery personality and no-nonsense approach resonated with players and fans alike, establishing a new culture of winning.

Barry Switzer (1994-1997)

- Tenure: 4 seasons
- Record: 40 wins, 24 losses
- Achievements:
 - Super Bowl Champion (XXX)
 - 1 NFC Championship

Following Johnson's departure, Barry Switzer took over the head coaching duties. Switzer, who had a successful college coaching career at Oklahoma, capitalized on the foundation laid by Johnson. Under Switzer, the Cowboys won Super Bowl XXX, solidifying the team's dominance in the 1990s. However, his tenure was marred by controversies and challenges related to player discipline.

The Turn of the Century: A Struggle for Identity

The late 1990s and early 2000s were a challenging time for the Cowboys, as the team struggled to find a consistent identity and direction.

Chan Gailey (1998-1999)

- Tenure: 2 seasons
- Record: 18 wins, 14 losses

Chan Gailey took over after Switzer but could not replicate the success of his predecessors. He focused on rebuilding the roster but faced challenges with player performance and injuries. Gailey's tenure was short-lived, as he was replaced after just two seasons.

Dave Campo (2000-2002)

- Tenure: 3 seasons
- Record: 15 wins, 33 losses

Dave Campo stepped in as head coach but struggled to improve the team's performance. His tenure was marked by a lack of offensive consistency and defensive struggles. Campo's time as head coach ended after three seasons, and the search for a new identity continued.

Resurgence and the 2000s

The Cowboys underwent a coaching revival in the mid-2000s, leading to a resurgence in the franchise's fortunes.

Bill Parcells (2003-2006)

- Tenure: 4 seasons
- Record: 34 wins, 30 losses
- Achievements:
- 2 playoff appearances

Bill Parcells, a two-time Super Bowl champion with the New York Giants, brought a wealth of experience and discipline to the Cowboys. His focus on accountability and team culture revitalized the franchise. Parcells led the Cowboys to the playoffs twice during his tenure, setting the stage for future success.

Wade Phillips (2007-2010)

- Tenure: 4 seasons
- Record: 34 wins, 22 losses
- Achievements:
- 1 NFC East title
- 3 playoff appearances

Wade Phillips succeeded Parcells and aimed to build on the foundation set by his predecessor. The Cowboys had one of their most successful seasons in 2007, finishing with a 13-3 record. However, postseason disappointments ultimately led to Phillips' departure after the 2010 season.

Recent Years: Jason Garrett and Beyond

The Cowboys transitioned to a new era with the hiring of Jason Garrett, who had previously been the team's offensive coordinator.

Jason Garrett (2010-2019)

- Tenure: 9 seasons
- Record: 85 wins, 67 losses
- Achievements:
- 3 NFC East titles
- 3 playoff appearances

Garrett's tenure was marked by a blend of offensive innovation and defensive inconsistency. He was known for his ability to develop young talent, including quarterback Dak Prescott. While Garrett led the Cowboys to multiple playoff appearances, he faced criticism for the team's inability to advance deep into the postseason.

Mike McCarthy (2020-present)

- Tenure: 2020-present
- Record: Varied (as of October 2023)

After Garrett's departure, the Cowboys hired Mike McCarthy, a Super Bowl-winning coach with the Green Bay Packers. McCarthy's approach centers on offensive creativity and adaptability, aiming to maximize the potential of the Cowboys' star players. His tenure has seen mixed results, but the franchise remains optimistic about its future under his guidance.

Conclusion: A Legacy of Leadership

The history of the Dallas Cowboys head coaches reflects a rich tapestry of leadership, innovation, and resilience. From Tom Landry's foundational years to the current leadership of Mike McCarthy, each coach has left an indelible mark on the franchise. The Cowboys' commitment to excellence and their quest for championships continue to shape the legacy of this iconic NFL team, inspiring future generations of players and coaches alike. As the Cowboys move forward, the lessons learned from past successes and failures will undoubtedly influence their path toward reclaiming their place among the NFL elite.

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.

How many Super Bowls did Tom Landry win as the head coach of the Dallas Cowboys?

Tom Landry won two Super Bowls (VI and XII) during his tenure as head coach of the Dallas Cowboys.

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

Jimmy Johnson succeeded Tom Landry as the head coach of the Dallas Cowboys in 1989.

What was the impact of Jimmy Johnson's coaching on the Cowboys?

Jimmy Johnson led the Cowboys to two consecutive Super Bowl victories (XXVII and XXVIII) and was instrumental in building the team's success during the 1990s.

Who is the current head coach of the Dallas Cowboys as of 2023?

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

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