

miami dolphins quarterbacks history

miami dolphins quarterbacks history is a fascinating journey through one of the NFL's iconic franchises, known for both legendary performances and transitional periods. Since their inception in 1966, the Miami Dolphins have seen a variety of quarterbacks who have shaped the team's identity and on-field success. This article explores the evolution of the Dolphins' quarterback position, highlighting key players, significant eras, and the impact of different signal-callers on the franchise's fortunes. From the dominance of Hall of Famers to the challenges faced during rebuilding years, the quarterback history of the Miami Dolphins reflects broader trends in professional football and team strategy. Understanding this history provides context for the Dolphins' current roster and future potential. The following sections will cover the franchise's early years, the Dan Marino era, recent quarterbacks, and notable records and achievements.

- Early Miami Dolphins Quarterbacks (1966–1976)
- The Dan Marino Era (1983–1999)
- Post-Marino Quarterbacks (2000–2010)
- Recent Quarterbacks and Current Landscape (2011–Present)
- Notable Records and Achievements by Miami Dolphins Quarterbacks

Early Miami Dolphins Quarterbacks (1966–1976)

The foundation of the Miami Dolphins franchise was laid during the late 1960s and early 1970s, a period marked by experimentation and gradual improvement at the quarterback position. In these formative years, the Dolphins struggled to find a consistent and effective starting quarterback, which initially hindered their competitiveness.

Key Quarterbacks of the Early Years

Several quarterbacks played pivotal roles during the Dolphins' early seasons, including:

- **John Stofa** – The Dolphins' very first starting quarterback, who helped launch the franchise in 1966.
- **Rick Norton** – Another early signal-caller who saw considerable playing time in the late 1960s.

- **Bob Griese** – Drafted in 1967, Griese quickly became the cornerstone of the Dolphins' offense and led the team to unprecedented success.

Bob Griese and the Perfect Season

Bob Griese's tenure is one of the highlights of Miami Dolphins quarterbacks history. He was instrumental in the Dolphins' perfect season in 1972, the only undefeated season in NFL history. Griese's leadership, accuracy, and decision-making helped the Dolphins secure two Super Bowl championships during the 1972 and 1973 seasons. His impact on the franchise is profound and enduring, earning him a place in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

The Dan Marino Era (1983–1999)

Dan Marino is arguably the most iconic quarterback in Miami Dolphins quarterbacks history. Drafted in 1983, Marino revolutionized the position with his strong arm and quick release, setting numerous passing records and becoming one of the most prolific passers in NFL history.

Draft and Early Career

Marino was a surprise first-round pick for the Dolphins and quickly took over as the starting quarterback. His rookie season showed promise, but it was in the following years that he truly excelled, breaking records for touchdown passes and passing yards.

Career Highlights and Achievements

Throughout his 17-season career with Miami, Marino achieved:

- 9 Pro Bowl selections
- A league MVP award in 1984
- Multiple single-season passing records, including 48 touchdown passes in 1984
- Leading the Dolphins to the Super Bowl XIX

Despite never winning a Super Bowl, Marino's impact on the franchise and the quarterback position remains immense.

Post-Marino Quarterbacks (2000–2010)

After Marino's retirement, the Miami Dolphins experienced a period of instability at quarterback, struggling to find a long-term successor. This decade was marked by frequent changes and mixed results under center.

Notable Quarterbacks in the Post-Marino Era

- **Jay Fiedler** – Provided some stability in the early 2000s, leading the Dolphins to playoff appearances.
- **A.J. Feeley** – Served as a reliable backup and occasional starter during transitional years.
- **Chad Pennington** – Known for his accuracy and leadership, Pennington had some success but was hampered by injuries.
- **Cleo Lemon** and **Chad Henne** – Both saw time as starters but could not solidify the role long-term.

Challenges and Team Performance

The post-Marino era was characterized by fluctuating offensive production and coaching changes, which affected quarterback development. The Dolphins often relied on short-term solutions and backups, limiting their offensive potential during this time.

Recent Quarterbacks and Current Landscape (2011–Present)

In recent years, the Miami Dolphins have focused on rebuilding and finding a franchise quarterback to return the team to playoff contention. This period includes notable draft picks, free agent acquisitions, and developing young talent.

Key Quarterbacks of the Recent Era

- **Ryan Tannehill** – Drafted in 2012, Tannehill became the Dolphins' starter for several seasons and showed steady improvement before being traded in 2019.
- **Jay Cutler** – Signed as a veteran in 2017, Cutler provided short-term

experience but was not a long-term solution.

- **Tua Tagovailoa** – Drafted fifth overall in 2020, Tua represents the franchise's hope for a dynamic and franchise-caliber quarterback moving forward.

The Future Outlook

The Dolphins' current focus is on developing Tua Tagovailoa and surrounding him with a strong supporting cast to maximize his potential. The franchise's quarterback history provides lessons and context as Miami aims to build a contender in the highly competitive AFC East division.

Notable Records and Achievements by Miami Dolphins Quarterbacks

Throughout their history, Miami Dolphins quarterbacks have set numerous records and earned significant honors that have contributed to the team's legacy.

Key Records and Honors

- **Bob Griese:** Led the Dolphins to two Super Bowl victories and holds franchise records for playoff wins.
- **Dan Marino:** Holds multiple NFL records at the time of his retirement, including most career touchdown passes and passing yards.
- **Ryan Tannehill:** Set franchise records for completion percentage and passer rating during his tenure.
- **Tua Tagovailoa:** Youngest Dolphins quarterback to start a season opener and showing promise in early career milestones.

The Miami Dolphins quarterbacks history is rich with notable performances and milestones that reflect the evolution of the passing game within the franchise. Each era has contributed unique chapters to the team's quarterback legacy, shaping the Dolphins' identity in the NFL.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was the first quarterback for the Miami Dolphins?

The first quarterback for the Miami Dolphins was Dick Wood, who played in the team's inaugural season in 1966.

Which Miami Dolphins quarterback holds the franchise record for most passing yards in a single season?

Dan Marino holds the franchise record for most passing yards in a single season, throwing for 5,084 yards in 1984.

How many Super Bowls have the Miami Dolphins won with their quarterbacks?

The Miami Dolphins have won two Super Bowls (VII and VIII), both with quarterback Bob Griese leading the team.

Who is considered the greatest quarterback in Miami Dolphins history?

Dan Marino is widely considered the greatest quarterback in Miami Dolphins history due to his prolific passing career and numerous NFL records.

Did Dan Marino ever win a Super Bowl with the Miami Dolphins?

No, despite his outstanding career, Dan Marino never won a Super Bowl with the Miami Dolphins.

Which Miami Dolphins quarterback was known for the 'Perfect Season'?

Bob Griese was the starting quarterback during the Miami Dolphins' perfect 1972 season, where the team went undefeated and won Super Bowl VII.

Who succeeded Dan Marino as the Miami Dolphins' starting quarterback?

After Dan Marino retired, Jay Fiedler initially succeeded him as the Miami Dolphins' starting quarterback.

Which Miami Dolphins quarterback was drafted first overall in the NFL Draft?

The Miami Dolphins selected Ryan Tannehill as their first overall pick in the 2012 NFL Draft.

How has the Miami Dolphins quarterback position evolved in recent years?

In recent years, the Miami Dolphins have transitioned through several quarterbacks including Ryan Tannehill, Tua Tagovailoa, and others as they seek a franchise leader to replicate past successes.

Additional Resources

1. *"Dolphin Signal: The Evolution of Miami's Quarterbacks"*

This book delves into the history of Miami Dolphins quarterbacks, tracing the franchise's journey from its inception to the present day. It highlights legendary players like Bob Griese and Dan Marino, exploring their impact on the team and the NFL. Through interviews and archival footage, readers gain insight into how the quarterback role evolved within the Dolphins' system.

2. *"Marino Magic: The Rise of a Dolphins Legend"*

A detailed biography focusing on Dan Marino, one of the greatest quarterbacks in NFL history and a cornerstone of the Miami Dolphins. The book covers his college days, draft experience, record-breaking career, and life after football. It also reflects on how Marino's style revolutionized the quarterback position in Miami and across the league.

3. *"From Griese to Tannehill: Miami's Quarterback Generations"*

This title offers a comprehensive overview of the Miami Dolphins' quarterbacks across different eras. Beginning with Bob Griese's leadership in the 1970s and moving through to Ryan Tannehill's modern-day contributions, the book examines changes in play style, coaching, and team dynamics. It also discusses how each quarterback adapted to the evolving NFL landscape.

4. *"Quarterback Chronicles: Miami Dolphins' Signal Callers"*

An anthology of stories and anecdotes from various Miami Dolphins quarterbacks throughout history. Featuring firsthand accounts, coaching insights, and game-changing moments, this book provides an intimate look at the challenges and triumphs faced by the franchise's signal callers. Fans get a behind-the-scenes perspective on what it takes to lead the Dolphins on the field.

5. *"The Dan Marino Effect: Shaping Miami's Passing Game"*

Focusing on Dan Marino's influence, this book analyzes how his exceptional talent shaped the Dolphins' offensive strategies. It explores the tactical adjustments made by coaches to capitalize on Marino's arm strength and quick

decision-making. The book also compares Marino's style with other Dolphins quarterbacks before and after his era.

6. *"Miami Dolphins Quarterbacks: A Statistical Legacy"*

This book provides an in-depth statistical analysis of every Miami Dolphins quarterback, highlighting key performance metrics and career milestones. It includes charts, records, and comparisons that help readers understand the quantitative impact of each quarterback on the franchise. The book is ideal for fans and analysts interested in the numbers behind the game.

7. *"Behind the Helmet: Miami Dolphins Quarterbacks' Untold Stories"*

Offering a humanizing perspective, this book shares lesser-known stories about the personal lives, struggles, and successes of Miami Dolphins quarterbacks. It reveals the pressures of playing in Miami, the media spotlight, and the camaraderie within the team. The narrative shows the men behind the helmets beyond their on-field personas.

8. *"The Dolphins' Signal Callers: Building a Winning Tradition"*

This book explores how Miami's quarterbacks contributed to the team's culture and success over the decades. It examines leadership qualities, teamwork, and resilience demonstrated by key players. Emphasizing the importance of the quarterback position, the book celebrates the role these athletes played in shaping the Dolphins' identity.

9. *"Miami's Passing Game: Quarterbacks Who Made History"*

Highlighting the most memorable passing moments in Miami Dolphins history, this book focuses on the quarterbacks responsible for game-winning throws and record-setting plays. It features detailed game analyses and player profiles that capture the excitement and drama of Miami's aerial attack. The book is a tribute to the quarterbacks who left a lasting mark on the franchise's legacy.

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