

SPORTING LEGENDS: DAN MARINO

SPORT: AMERICAN FOOTBALL

COMPETITIVE ERA: 1983 - 1999

Daniel Constantine Marino Jr. (born September 15, 1961 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) was an American football quarterback who played for the Miami Dolphins in the National Football League.

Marino attained nearly every measure of football success, but never won a Super Bowl championship. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest passers in football history.



Dan attended Pittsburgh Central Catholic High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he also starred in baseball, and won Parade All-American honors in football.

After a stellar high school career, Marino played college ball at the University of Pittsburgh from the 1979 to 1982 seasons, leading the Panthers to a Sugar Bowl triumph over the Georgia Bulldogs in January 1982.

His senior season during the '82 season was considered a disappointment with regard to the pre-season Heisman Trophy and National Championship hype. His team lost the Cotton Bowl to SMU.

With the down season of his last year at Pitt and unsubstantiated rumors of drug abuse, Marino's selection status in the 1983 NFL draft plummeted. Five other quarterbacks, including Hall of Famers Jim Kelly and John Elway, had been taken before Don Shula and the Miami Dolphins grabbed Marino with the 27th pick overall.

SPORTING LEGENDS: DAN MARINO



Marino had a fierce and unrivalled passion to become the greatest quarterback in the history of the Miami Dolphins.

Being drafted by the defending AFC Champions placed Marino in an ideal situation, where the strong armed rookie could succeed immediately. He posted a 96.0 passer rating which was a rookie record until 2004.

He brought Miami the division title in 1983, and would also do so in 1984, 1985, 1992, and 1994. His Pro Bowl rookie year ended in disappointment, as the Dolphins were upset by the Seattle Seahawks in a rainy game full of Dolphin turnovers.

The following year would be Marino's best season. In 1984, he threw for 48 touchdown passes and 5,084 yards, both of which shattered previous records. The Dolphins scored an NFL record 70 touchdowns and posted a 14-2 record. Marino had another 8 touchdown passes in the post-season, four of which came against his hometown Steelers in the AFC Championship Game.

In Super Bowl XIX Marino and the Dolphins met Joe Montana and the 49ers. The Dolphins, who had 74 rush attempts in the previous two weeks, called only 8 handoffs, placing their chances squarely on Marino. Marino was above average, completing 29 of 50 passes for 318 yards and a touchdown.

Unfortunately, two of his passes were intercepted deep in 49ers territory and he committed the game's lone fumble. It would be Marino's only Super Bowl appearance, as for most of his career, a sparse running attack, or average defense would cost the Dolphins.

Ironically, when Jimmy Johnson became the franchise's third head coach, the defense played well and Marino's efficiency declined.

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Although a great team player, for many fans, Dan Marino WAS the Miami Dolphins.

After the Super Bowl loss, Marino's Dolphins went 12-4. On December 2, 1985 Marino completed 14 of 27 passes for 270 yards and triumphed over the 12-0 Chicago Bears in the highest rated *Monday Night Football* telecast in history.

He also brought the Dolphins back to the AFC Championship game the following year, losing in Miami to New England in another game in which wet conditions made the Dolphins turnover prone.

With Marino at the helm, the Dolphins were a perennial playoff contender, reaching the post-season in 10 of Marino's 17 seasons. In 1992 he made his final appearance in a Championship Game, losing against arch-rival Jim Kelly and the Buffalo Bills.

Kelly's Bills knocked Marino out of the playoffs three times between 1990 and 1995. Marino's final win was Miami's first win in a playoff road game in his career, as he led the 37th and final comeback of his pro career.

In the next round, Marino and the Dolphins were defeated 62-7 in an away game against the Jacksonville Jaguars. Marino decided to retire with that season, after being pushed out of Miami by new coach Dave Wannstedt, and declining offers from Minnesota Vikings and Pittsburgh.

During his professional career (1983-1999) in Miami he was one of the most skilled and revered quarterbacks in the game. He was known for having the quickest release in the sport, throwing bullets, and making the most miraculous passes. Also, despite the fact that he was not known for his scrambling ability, Marino possessed a great awareness in the pocket, often sliding a step or two to avoid the pass rush.

SPORTING LEGENDS: DAN MARINO



Lining up another dynamite pass, Dan Marino's right arm became pure Gold for the Miami Dolphins.

Dan Marino's NFL Records:

Most Attempts, Career: 8,358

Most Completions, Career: 4,967

Most Yards Passing, Career: 61,361

Most Touchdown Passes, Career: 420

Highest Completion Percentage, Rookie Season: 58.45 in 1983 (296-173)

Most Passing Yards Gained, Season: 5,084 in 1984

Most Games, 400 or more Yards Passing, Career: 13

Most Games, 400 or more Yards Passing, Season: 4 in 1984

Most Games, 300 or more Yards Passing, Career: 60

Most Seasons, 3,000 or more Yards Passing: 13 (1984-92, 1994-95, 1997-98)

Most Consecutive Seasons, 3,000 or more Yards Passing: 9 (1984-92)

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13 was only ever an unlucky number for Marino when it came to Super Bowls.

Dan Marino's NFL Records:

Most Games, Four or more Touchdown Passes, Career: 21

Played 242 games, starting 240 of them

First QB in NFL history to have six 4,000-yard seasons (1984-86, 1988, 1992, 1994)

Led 37 fourth-quarter comeback victories, second only to John Elway.

Had 116 wins under Don Shula . the most by a head coach - quarterback combination in NFL history.

On Sunday, September 17, 2000, at halftime of the Dolphins-Baltimore Ravens game at Pro Player Stadium, Dan Marino's jersey number, 13, was retired. The only other Dolphins jersey number retired is 12, Bob Griese.

Marino joined the Dolphins Honor Roll the same day. In a year of accolades from the franchise he led so long and so well, the Dolphins also install a life-size bronze statue of Marino at Pro Player Stadium (now Dolphins Stadium) and renamed Stadium Street, Dan Marino Boulevard.

In 2003, Marino was honored for his outstanding NCAA career at Pitt with an induction into the College Football Hall of Fame.

Dan Marino was a first-ballot selection to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2005. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame on August 7, 2005.

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Scott Burton's Final Thought

Dan Marino was arguably the most famous quarterback in Pro-American football during the 1980s.

Loyal to Miami Dolphins to the very end, Marino became a symbol of hope and inspiration for the entire city.

The bronze stature standing outside Dolphin Stadium is a fitting tribute to the legacy he left behind upon retirement.

Dan Marino, blessed with a strong arm and the ability to throw the ball accurately in a split-second, shattered numerous National Football League (NFL) records.

Marino passed for more yards (5,084) and touchdowns (48) in a single season than any quarterback in history and also holds the career records in these important categories as well (55,416 yards and 385 touchdowns).

A remarkably sturdy quarterback, Marino started 145 straight games before an injury sidelined him temporarily in 1993. A career that started with playing catch with his dad ultimately led Marino to a place in the hall of fame with the all-time greats. That's a great story, and yet another realisation of the so-called American Dream.

Dan Marino will be remembered in Miami for generations to come, and that is the hallmark of a true, sporting legend.



It's going to take an incredible quarterback to match Dan Marino's Miami Dolphins records!