



## **MARSHALL’S RECORD – 25 YEARS OLD – MAY NEVER BE BROKEN**

When rookie defensive end **JIM MARSHALL** took the field for the Cleveland Browns on September 25, 1960, it was his first in a streak of **282 consecutive games played – the longest streak in NFL history**. Marshall’s career spanned 20 seasons and he never missed a game. **HE NEVER MISSED A GAME!**

Marshall was traded to the expansion Minnesota Vikings prior to the 1961 season. He played in every game in Vikings history through 1979, including 20 playoff games. He also competed in two Pro Bowls for a career total of 304 consecutive games. His streak ended almost 25 years ago at New England’s Foxboro Stadium on December 16, 1979.

“He had great enthusiasm,” says Marshall’s former head coach **BUD GRANT**. “Nobody enjoyed playing football more than Jim Marshall. He enjoyed practice. He enjoyed the locker room. He enjoyed being a football player.”

“I never wanted to miss a game,” says Marshall. “It was a thrill for me every time I had an opportunity to go out on the field. I just never wanted to be sitting on the sidelines.”

Marshall’s 19 seasons with Minnesota are tied for third all-time for most seasons with one club (**BRUCE MATTHEWS**, Houston), behind **JACKIE SLATER**, L.A. Rams and **DARRELL GREEN**, Washington Redskins.

Marshall was injured or sick numerous times during his streak, but according to Grant, the NFL’s Iron Man played better when he was under the weather. “The trainer would say to me, ‘Marshall has a 105 degree fever,’” said Grant. “I’d say, ‘Great,’ because he would invariably have a great game. He played better when he was hurt because he focused on not letting the injury get the better of him.

“Many times people ask coaches who their greatest player was. It’s normally very hard to choose, but I don’t hesitate to say Jim Marshall.”

## **TAGLIABUE ENTERS 15TH YEAR WITH NUMEROUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**PAUL TAGLIABUE** will complete his 15th year as NFL commissioner on November 5, and what a decade and a half it has been!

Under his guidance, the league has achieved an unparalleled level of success, growing from 28 to 32 teams, revising its divisional alignment and scheduling formula, operating under successive long-term labor agreements with the NFL Players Association, and securing the largest television contracts in entertainment history.

During this time, the NFL also has expanded league and team commitments to community service, refocused the NFL’s efforts in developing public-private partnerships for new stadiums, and emerged as the new media leader in sports by creating the first league-wide internet network for fans, first satellite television subscription service and launching the NFL Network television channel.

A review of some of Commissioner Tagliabue’s accomplishments since taking office on November 5, 1989:

- Expansion of the NFL from 28 to 32 teams.
- Uninterrupted labor peace. The landmark 1993 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the NFL Players Association has been extended four times and currently runs through the 2007 season.
- Largest television contracts in entertainment history. The NFL remains the only professional sports league that televises all of its games on free, over-the-air television. In addition, NFL games routinely draw the highest television ratings in sports.
- Attendance growth and fewer blackouts. In 2003, paid attendance for NFL regular-season games increased to an all-time record of 66,329 per game, while total paid attendance increased to 16,913,944, also an all-time mark. Local telecasts of home games (blackout lifts) have increased to a record level of 90 percent (nine of every 10 games).
- Revised divisional alignments and a new scheduling formula. The scheduling formula guaranteed for the first time that all teams would play each other on a regular, rotating basis.
- Expanded NFL and team commitments to community service, including the formation of the \$150 million Youth Football Fund to support the game at amateur levels.
- Twenty-one new or significantly renovated stadiums. The greatest stadium-building period in league history included an innovative league financing program to assist public-private partnerships
- Creation of a range of services to assist players and their families. This included the enforcement of stringent policies on steroids and other drugs, as well as a personal conduct policy.
- New media leader. The NFL became the first sports league with a fan internet site and first with a satellite television subscription service.
- Launch of NFL Network. Airing seven days a week, 24 hours a day on a year-round basis, NFL Network became the first television network fully dedicated to the NFL and the sport of football.
- Expanded NFL’s international presence through the NFL Europe League, on alliance with the Canadian Football League, plus worldwide television, licensing, sponsorship and youth football arrangements.
- Increased emphasis on player safety and sportsmanship rules.

“Commissioner Tagliabue has been the right man for the right time,” says New York Giants President **WELLINGTON MARA**. “Pete Rozelle (who preceded Tagliabue) was right for his time and it turns out that Paul has been right for his.”