



FIRST OVERTIME 50 YEARS AGO. IT’S STILL GOING STRONG

Many football fans regard the 1958 NFL Championship as the first overtime game in NFL history. Indeed it was the first *playoff* overtime game, but it was not the first-ever.

That occurred three years earlier on August 28, 1955 in a preseason game in Portland, Oregon between the Los Angeles Rams and New York Giants.

The game's promoter, **HARRY GLICKMAN**, on a whim, had asked the NFL’s permission to play overtime should the need arise. With the score tied at 17 at the end of regulation, the first overtime period in NFL history took place.

It did not last long. The Rams won the toss and, guided by future Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback **NORM VAN BROCKLIN**, constructed an eight-play, 70-yard drive that culminated with a two-yard TD plunge by **PAUL “TANK” YOUNGER** just 3:28 into the extended play. The first overtime game in history was witnessed by 22,222 fans.

Nineteen years later (1974), overtime was approved for NFL games. There have since been 377 overtime games in regular-season play, with wins split evenly between the teams which won the toss (52.5%) and lost it (43.4%) -- 12 in 2004 season.

A breakdown of them follows:

RESULTS	
Total	
198	Times the team which won the toss won the game (52. 5%).
163	Times the team which lost the toss won the game (43.4%).
16	Games ended tied (4.4%). Last time: Nov. 10, 2002, Atlanta 34 at Pittsburgh 34.
POSSESSIONS	
261	Times both teams had at least one possession (69.2%).
104	Times the team which won the toss drove for winning score (76 FG, 29 TD) (27.7%).
8	Times the defense or special teams won without registering an official possession (5 INT, 1 FR, 1 blocked punt, 1 blocked FG) (2.1%).
1	Times the special teams forced a fumble on the opening kickoff and drove for winning score (0.27%).
1	Times the punting team recovered a muffed punt and drove for winning score with team muffing punt having no official possessions (0.27%).
2	Times the team that won the toss elected to kick and the team receiving the ball drove for winning score (0.54%).
SCORING	
263	Games decided by a field goal (69.8%).
96	Games decided by a touchdown (25.7%).
2	Games decided by a safety (0.54%).
16	Games ended tied (4.4%). Last time: Nov. 10, 2002, Atlanta 34 at Pittsburgh 34.
COIN TOSS	
368	Times the team which won the toss elected to receive (97.6%).
9	Times the team which won the toss elected to kick off (4 wins) (2.5%).



NFL’S “THIRD-QUARTERBACK” RULE -- SOMETIMES MISUNDERSTOOD

The third-quarterback rule was instituted in 1991 to enable teams to have an emergency quarterback available who was not on the 45-man game-day active roster, since many teams, for strategic purposes, only carried two quarterbacks on their game-day roster.

Everybody thinks they understand the NFL’s “third-quarterback” rule. But do they?

The third quarterback rule states that if a third quarterback is inserted before the fourth quarter, a team’s first two quarterbacks cannot be used in the game at any position.

Another aspect of the rule is sometimes misunderstood. It is a **coach’s decision** as to whether a third quarterback will be used. The active quarterbacks **do not have to be injured** for a team to use its third quarterback.

