

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!



THE ROAD TO 40

This season, on February 5, 2006, the 40th Super Bowl in NFL history will be played. On the “Road to Forty” -- the season-long theme of 2005 -- there have been many thrilling performances in the first 39 Super Bowls.

The following is a rundown of the Most Valuable Player performances from Super Bowls I-XXXIX, with game developments:

SUPER BOWL I: QB BART STARR, Green Bay Packers – In what was originally called the “AFL-NFL World Championship,” Starr propelled the Packers to a 35-10 victory over the Chiefs. Completing 16 of 23 attempts, Starr amassed 250 yards through the air to go along with three passing touchdowns. Starr hooked up with reserve wide receiver Max McGee, whose one-armed first-quarter touchdown reception is one of the most memorable plays in Super Bowl history, seven times for 138 yards.

SUPER BOWL II: QB BART STARR, Green Bay Packers – Guiding Green Bay to its second Super Bowl win in a row (and third consecutive NFL championship), Starr’s star shone the brightest in the second half. The high-powered Green Bay offense rattled off 17 unanswered points in the third and fourth quarters to pull away from the Raiders for a 33-14 victory. Starr completed 13 of his 24 passes, including a 62-yard scoring strike to Boyd Dowler.

SUPER BOWL III: QB JOE NAMATH, New York Jets – In a game that will be forever remembered because of Namath’s “guarantee” of victory, the Jets toppled the seemingly unbeatable Baltimore Colts by a score of 16-7. Even future Hall of Famer Johnny Unitas could not spark a second half comeback by Baltimore. Because of Namath’s leadership (and five Baltimore turnovers), the Jets secured the first victory for the AFL in the young history of the Super Bowl. “Broadway Joe” finished 17-of-28 for 206 yards passing.

SUPER BOWL IV: QB LEN DAWSON, Kansas City Chiefs – In the last game before the AFL-NFL merger, Dawson’s workmanlike performance helped Kansas City beat the Vikings, 23-7. Dawson (12 of 17, 122 yards passing) orchestrated four scoring drives in the first half alone, three of which resulted in Jan Stenerud field goals. Utilizing a running back-by-committee approach, Dawson’s Chiefs outgained the Vikings on the ground (151-67). After building a 16-0 lead at the half, Dawson punctuated the victory with a 46-yard touchdown pass to Otis Taylor.

SUPER BOWL V: LB CHUCK HOWLEY, Dallas Cowboys – Howley made history twice in one day with his MVP-worthy performance in this championship. Not only was did this gritty linebacker become the first defensive MVP in Super Bowl history, Howley is still the only player in NFL history to win the award for a losing team. Baltimore’s Jim O’Brien nailed a 32-yard field goal with only five seconds left in the game to close out a 16-13 come-from-behind win for the Colts. Howley intercepted two passes and recovered a fumble in the losing effort.

SUPER BOWL VI: QB ROGER STAUBACH, Dallas Cowboys – Bouncing back from a devastating defeat a year earlier, Dallas brought home its first of five Super Bowl titles with a 24-3 win over the Dolphins. Outdueling his Miami counterpart Bob Griese. Staubach found wide receiver Lance Alworth and tight end Mike Ditka in the end zone for passing touchdowns. In addition to his 119 yards through the air, Staubach directed the potent Cowboys’ rushing game up and down the field in this victory.

SUPER BOWL VII: S JAKE SCOTT, Miami Dolphins – An important cog in Miami’s “No Name Defense,” Scott picked off two of Redskins quarterback Billy Kilmer’s passes in this 14-7 Miami victory. Scott’s second interception came in the Dolphins’ end zone, quashing Washington’s best offensive drive. Mike Bass scored the lone Redskins’ touchdown, corralling Miami kicker Garo Yepremian’s ill-fated forward pass that slipped out of his hand after a botched field goal attempt. The 1972 Dolphins remain the only unbeaten, untied team in NFL history.

SUPER BOWL VIII: RB LARRY CSONKA, Miami Dolphins – Racking up over 100 yards rushing for two Super Bowls in a row, Csonka’s 33 carries wore down the Vikings. The bruising back finished with 145 yards and two touchdowns in Miami’s second consecutive Super Bowl victory (24-7). Miami quarterback Bob Griese attempted only seven passes. Minnesota quarterback Fran Tarkenton scampered in for a score in the fourth quarter, but the Dolphins lead was insurmountable because of its steady rushing attack.

SUPER BOWL IX: RB FRANCO HARRIS, Pittsburgh Steelers – Harris and running back Rocky Bleier combined for more than 200 yards in Pittsburgh’s first of four Super Bowl wins (16-6) in the 1970s. With the Steelers nursing a 2-0 lead in the second half, Harris helped his squad pull away with a nine-yard touchdown run. Remembered best for reeling in the “Immaculate Reception” earlier in his career, Harris’ 158 rushing yards eclipsed the Super Bowl record established by Csonka only one year earlier. Pittsburgh outrushed the Vikings by over 200 yards.

SUPER BOWL X: WR LYNN SWANN, Pittsburgh Steelers – Famous for his acrobatic catches, Swann did not disappoint in the Steelers’ 21-17 win over the Cowboys. Racking up a Super Bowl record 161 yards receiving on only four catches, Swann’s 64-yard touchdown reception from Terry Bradshaw made the difference in the close contest. Swann’s score capped a 14-0 run for the Steelers in the fourth quarter.

SUPER BOWL XI: WR FRED BILETNIKOFF, Oakland Raiders – Biletnikoff’s numbers weren’t overwhelming (four catches, 79 yards), but three of those receptions set up short touchdowns for the Raiders in a 32-14 victory over Minnesota. After jumping out to a 16-0 first half lead, Oakland never looked back.

SUPER BOWL XII: DE RANDY WHITE and DT HARVEY MARTIN, Dallas Cowboys – For the first and only time in Super Bowl history, two players shared the MVP award. White and Martin were instrumental in Dallas limiting the Broncos to only 156 yards of total offense (2.7 yards per play) in a 27-10 win. Dallas’ “Doomsday Defense” forced eight turnovers – four interceptions and four fumble recoveries. White’s and Martin’s relentless pass rushing also helped force Denver’s quarterbacks to finish eight for 24 throwing the football combined.