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# Indianapolis Colts In The Manning Era

Most football fans are familiar with the current state of the Indianapolis Colts, and what they have accomplished since 1998. That was the year they made the decision to draft Peyton Manning, using their first selection in the draft to do so. Since that point, Indianapolis has gone on to evolve into what can easily be considered a modern football dynasty. With seven straight seasons that have resulted in at least twelve wins each year, the team has also won its first Super Bowl in more than three and a half decades while placing themselves in position for the sport's top trophy in almost every season.

#### The decision to draft

When Bill Polian, the team's general manager, sat down to determine how best to turn around the team that had only a year before managed to lose all but three of their regular season games, he made the fateful decision to do so through the draft process. In the modern era of free agency and high profile teams, this was considered a risky proposition. After all, many bottom-of-the-cellar teams simply throw money around in the offseason to buy the talent they need to compete for the next few years. Polian's faith in the draft system was questioned even more when he chose to draft the University of Tennessee's Peyton Manning - a quarterback who had posted winning records and gaudy statistics during his college career, but who also had a reputation as someone who couldn't win the big games when they really mattered.

#### Peyton adapts quickly

Manning's first season was less than spectacular, to say the least. The team once again posted only three victories. The following campaign would be completely different, as the team went from 3-13 to 13-3, earning their way into the playoffs - only to lose to the Tennessee Titans. Nevertheless, that was the beginning of the team's new level of success as they compiled winning seasons in all but the 2001 campaign - a rare season under Manning in which the Colts won only six. That year would prove to be the exception in a run of seasons from 1999 until last year that saw the Colts victorious in ten or more contests in each season. That stretch of success also included their 2007 run to Super Bowl victory.

#### Peyton and the Big One

The Colts were among the favorites as the 2006 season got under way, and they didn't disappoint. They stormed out to a nine win and zero loss start, and then finished the campaign with a twelve win season. As a three-seed, they made it to the AFC Championship of the playoffs, and won the AFC crown by coming back from eighteen points down in that game. As rain fell on the Super Bowl in 2007, Manning delivered a victory over the Bears, as the Colts scored twenty-nine to the Bears' seventeen. The game is notable for several things.

The Colts had won the Championship despite their League-worst defense against the run. As a domed team, they were the first to win the NFL title in a game played outdoors. Last, and most relevant for longtime fans of Peyton Manning who had stood by him during the rough college years, the quarterback had at last demonstrated that he was more than capable of playing well when the championship was on the line.

Freddie Brister is a huge fan of all sports and recommends checking out his [Indianapolis Colts Bedding](#) and [Chicago White Sox blanket](#) at his shop.

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