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Vikings And The Decade Of Brilliance

When most fans of football think of the Minnesota Vikings, they often think of the recent teams that have always fielded potent offenses and competent defenses, but which have never seemed to be able to live up to their potential. The Vikings, however, have consistently been among the best in the NFL - as evidenced by their overall franchise winning percentage which is the fifth-best in the NFL. Perhaps the best years of the Vikings franchise began within eight years of the team's 1961 entry into the NFL. During that period, which began in 1969, the Vikings would consistently dominate the NFL, appearing in four Super Bowls within an eight year period. Though they lost all of those games - and have, in fact, never won a Super Bowl title, the period between 1969 and 1977 can rightfully be thought of as the Age of the Vikings.

The beginnings of an era

It all began in the 1969 season. The Vikings managed to compile twelve straight wins during the campaign, and finished with a 12-2 record that propelled them into the postseason. After defeating the Browns of Cleveland to become the NFL titlist of 1970 - the final NFL title ever awarded, given that the AFL-NFL merger took place at the end of that season, the Vikings represented the League in its contest against the AFL title-winning Chiefs of Kansas City. The Chiefs won that Super Bowl, but the Vikings had clearly set the stage for the most prolific years of their franchise.

The 1970s

Minnesota would return to the playoffs in both of the next two seasons, powered in large part by their mighty defense - known as the Purple People Eaters. The 1972 campaign was disappointing due to the fact that the Vikings split their wins and losses at seven apiece. This was in no small part the result of turbulence in the roster as the Vikings reacquired the great Fran Tarkenton from the Giants. That trade paid dividends in 1973, however, as the team was once again rolling through the NFL after a nine-win start, ended with another 12-2 finish, and went on to play against the Dolphins in Super Bowl VIII - which they once again lost.

The elusive Super Bowl win

Losing the Super Bowl seemed to be the Vikings' destiny, as they returned in the following year, only to fall before the Pittsburgh Steelers in Super Bowl IX. After an easy divisional win in 1975, the Vikings surprised the football world by being defeated by Dallas in the playoffs. That was the game in which Staubach threw the now infamous Hail Mary pass that ended the Vikings' season. Though they did not appear in Super Bowl X, the Vikings returned for Super Bowl XI. This time, they would face the Oakland Raiders - against whom they would once again fall short.

After three shots at the title in four years - and four shots in a period of eight years - some might think that those losses would define the team as perennial losers. In fact, though, the appearances themselves - and the regular season performances that warranted them- stand as evidence that the Vikings teams of the time were indeed dominant in the League, in spite of the fact that they never won the crown jewel of professional football.

Freddie Brister is a huge fan of all sports and recommends checking out his [Minnesota Vikings Blanket](#) and [Kansas City Royals bedding](#) at his shop.

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