

worst kicker in nfl history

worst kicker in nfl history is a topic that frequently sparks debate among football fans and analysts alike. The role of a kicker in the NFL is crucial, often determining the outcome of close games with field goals and extra points. However, not every kicker has enjoyed success at the professional level. This article explores some of the most notorious kickers who struggled to find consistency, accuracy, and reliability on the field. It delves into statistical performances, memorable misses, and the impact these players had on their teams. By examining the careers of some of the least effective kickers, this discussion provides insight into the challenges and pressures unique to NFL kicking. The following sections will cover the definition of kicking performance, notable examples of poor kickers, factors contributing to kicking failures, and the evolution of kicking standards in the league.

- Understanding Kicking Performance in the NFL
- Notable Kickers Considered the Worst in NFL History
- Common Factors Behind Poor Kicking Performances
- The Impact of a Poor Kicker on NFL Teams
- Advancements and Changes in NFL Kicking Standards

Understanding Kicking Performance in the NFL

Kicking in the NFL is a specialized skill that requires precision, consistency, and mental toughness. Kickers are responsible for scoring field goals and extra points, often under high-pressure circumstances. Evaluating kicking performance involves analyzing metrics such as field goal percentage, distance accuracy, and clutch kicking success. The pressure to convert kicks not only affects game outcomes but also a kicker's reputation and career longevity. Given the importance of these factors, a kicker's failure to meet performance expectations can quickly label them as one of the worst kickers in NFL history.

Key Metrics to Evaluate NFL Kickers

Several statistics are used to assess kicking performance, including:

- **Field Goal Percentage:** The ratio of successful field goals to attempts, a primary indicator of accuracy.
- **Extra Point Accuracy:** The success rate of kicking extra points after touchdowns, crucial in close games.
- **Distance Range:** Effectiveness from various distances, particularly from long-range kicks above 40 yards.

- **Clutch Performance:** Success rate in high-pressure situations, such as game-winning or game-tying kicks.

These metrics help differentiate reliable kickers from those who struggled and contributed to the label of “worst kicker in NFL history.”

Notable Kickers Considered the Worst in NFL History

Throughout NFL history, several kickers stand out for their notably poor performances, often remembered for critical misses and low accuracy rates. While the league has seen many talented kickers, those with below-average success rates and inconsistency earned a reputation as some of the worst.

Chris Boniol

Chris Boniol had a promising start to his career but later experienced a significant decline in performance. Known for missing several critical kicks during his tenure, Boniol struggled with consistency, which affected the teams he played for. His career field goal percentage dipped below league averages, contributing to his inclusion in discussions about poor NFL kickers.

Gary Anderson

Despite being one of the most accurate kickers for much of his career, Gary Anderson is often mentioned because of his infamous miss during the 1998 NFC Championship Game. This missed field goal was especially notable because it was his first miss of the entire season, overshadowing an otherwise successful career and earning him unwanted notoriety.

Joey “Fog” Foglia

Joey Foglia is remembered primarily for his struggles with field goal accuracy during brief stints in the NFL. His attempts often fell short, and missed extra points were common, leading to a quick exit from the league. His lack of consistency made him a prime example when discussing the worst kickers in NFL history.

Additional Kickers with Notable Struggles

- Scott Norwood – remembered for the “wide right” miss in Super Bowl XXV.
- Rian Lindell – had periods of inconsistency despite a lengthy career.
- Pat Leahy – occasional misses during clutch moments despite overall decent stats.

Common Factors Behind Poor Kicking Performances

Multiple elements contribute to why some NFL kickers struggle more than others. Understanding these factors provides context for the challenges faced and explains why certain kickers are labeled among the worst in league history.

Technical and Physical Challenges

Kicking requires precise technique, including proper foot placement, timing, and leg strength. Physical limitations or injuries can impair a kicker's ability to perform consistently. Even minor flaws in form can lead to missed kicks, reducing accuracy and reliability.

Mental Pressure and Psychological Impact

The mental aspect of kicking is significant. Kickers often face intense pressure during critical moments, and the fear of failure can lead to performance anxiety. Missed kicks can negatively affect confidence, resulting in a cycle of poor performance.

Environmental and Game Conditions

Field conditions, weather, and stadium environment also impact kicking success. Wind, rain, and turf quality can make it difficult to maintain consistent accuracy. Kickers who fail to adjust effectively to these conditions may have lower success rates.

Team Dynamics and Snap Accuracy

A kicker's performance is also dependent on the snap and hold executed by the special teams unit. Poor snaps or holds can disrupt timing, leading to missed attempts. Teams with less reliable special teams units can inadvertently contribute to a kicker's poor statistics.

The Impact of a Poor Kicker on NFL Teams

A struggling kicker can have significant consequences for an NFL team's performance and morale. Missed field goals and extra points can change the outcome of games, affect playoff chances, and place additional pressure on offensive and defensive units.

Game Outcomes and Scoring Deficits

Missed kicks often translate directly into lost points, which in close games can be the difference between victory and defeat. Teams with unreliable kickers may struggle to close out games or capitalize on scoring opportunities, leading to a negative impact on their overall records.

Pressure on Other Players

When kickers are inconsistent, teams may feel compelled to take riskier offensive plays rather than settling for field goal attempts. This shift can increase the burden on quarterbacks and offensive coordinators, sometimes resulting in turnovers or failed drives.

Fan and Media Scrutiny

Poor kicking performances often attract intense criticism from fans and media. This scrutiny can affect team morale and put additional psychological pressure on the kicker and special teams unit, perpetuating performance issues.

Advancements and Changes in NFL Kicking Standards

The NFL has witnessed significant changes in kicking standards and training methods over the years. These advancements have raised the bar for accuracy and consistency, making it more challenging for poor performers to sustain careers as kickers.

Improved Training and Technique

Modern kickers benefit from specialized coaching, video analysis, and strength conditioning programs. These resources help refine technique and improve consistency, reducing the frequency of missed kicks compared to earlier eras.

Rule Changes and Game Strategies

Adjustments to rules, such as moving the extra point kick back to the 15-yard line in 2015, have increased difficulty and emphasized the importance of reliable kicking. Teams have also adapted strategies to maximize scoring opportunities, placing greater emphasis on kicker performance.

Technology and Equipment Advances

Enhanced kicking shoes, improved football designs, and better playing surfaces contribute to higher accuracy rates. These technological improvements have helped reduce the number of kickers considered among the worst in NFL history.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is considered the worst kicker in NFL history?

Many consider Tony Franklin to be one of the worst kickers in NFL history due to his inconsistent performance and missed crucial kicks during his career.

What factors contribute to a kicker being labeled the worst in NFL history?

Factors include low field goal percentage, missed game-winning kicks, lack of consistency, and poor performance under pressure.

Which NFL kicker holds the record for the lowest field goal percentage in a single season?

In recent history, some kickers have had notably low field goal percentages in a season, but one example is Mike Vanderjagt, who had a rough season in 2006 with the Dallas Cowboys.

Have any kickers been released due to poor performance and labeled the worst?

Yes, several kickers have been released mid-season or after a poor run of games, such as Roberto Aguayo, who struggled significantly early in his career and was labeled one of the worst draft picks due to his performance.

Are there any famous missed kicks that contributed to a kicker's reputation as the worst?

Yes, for example, Scott Norwood is remembered for missing a crucial field goal in Super Bowl XXV, which contributed to his negative legacy despite a generally solid career.

How do NFL teams evaluate and decide when to replace a struggling kicker?

Teams evaluate kickers based on field goal accuracy, kickoff performance, consistency, and clutch kicking. A prolonged slump or critical misses often lead to replacement decisions.

Has any kicker considered the worst made a significant comeback in their career?

Some kickers have rebounded after poor starts. For instance, Jay Feely struggled early but eventually became a reliable kicker in the NFL, showing that early struggles don't always define a career.

Additional Resources

1. *Misfires on the Gridiron: The Story of the NFL's Struggling Kickers*

This book delves into the careers of some of the most infamous kickers in NFL history, exploring the pressures and challenges that led to their struggles. Through detailed accounts and interviews, it examines how a few missed kicks shaped games and careers. The narrative provides insight into the mental and physical aspects of kicking under intense scrutiny.

2. *The Longest Miss: Tales from the NFL's Worst Kickers*

A compelling collection of stories focusing on the kickers who couldn't quite make the clutch field goals when it mattered most. The book highlights key moments of failure and how these athletes coped with public criticism and personal disappointment. It also discusses the impact of these misses on team dynamics and fan reactions.

3. *Off the Mark: Analyzing the NFL's Most Inaccurate Kickers*

This analytical book breaks down the statistics and techniques behind some of the least accurate kickers in NFL history. Using game footage and expert commentary, it identifies common errors and external factors contributing to poor performance. The author also suggests how modern training methods could prevent such issues.

4. *Frozen Feet: The NFL Kicker's Nightmare*

"Frozen Feet" focuses on the psychological pressures NFL kickers face, especially those labeled as the worst in the league. It investigates the phenomenon of "choking" during critical moments and how it affects kicking performance. Through interviews with former players and sports psychologists, the book offers a deep dive into the mental struggles behind missed kicks.

5. *The Kick That Haunts: NFL's Most Notorious Misses*

This book recounts some of the most memorable missed field goals in NFL history and the kickers responsible for them. It narrates the aftermath of these misses, including the media frenzy and fan backlash. The stories reveal how these moments have become part of NFL lore and the personal toll on the players involved.

6. *From Glory to Gaffes: The Rise and Fall of NFL Kickers*

Tracing the career trajectories of several NFL kickers who went from promising starts to disappointing finishes, this book provides a comprehensive look at the volatility of the position. It explores factors such as injuries, coaching changes, and confidence issues that contributed to their decline. The book also celebrates their determination to overcome adversity.

7. *Missed Opportunities: Lessons from the NFL's Worst Kickers*

A motivational and educational book that uses the failures of NFL kickers to teach lessons about resilience and perseverance. It highlights how these players handled setbacks and what aspiring athletes can learn from their experiences. The book also includes practical advice from coaches and sports psychologists on overcoming failure.

8. *The Anatomy of a Miss: Breaking Down the NFL's Worst Field Goals*

This detailed examination of some of the worst field goal attempts in NFL history uses video analysis and expert input to dissect what went wrong. The book covers technical errors, environmental conditions, and psychological factors leading to missed kicks. It serves as a valuable resource for players, coaches, and fans interested in the mechanics of kicking.

9. *Kickoff to Catastrophe: The NFL's Most Infamous Kicking Blunders*

"Kickoff to Catastrophe" chronicles the most shocking and costly kicking errors in NFL games, highlighting the dramatic consequences for teams and players. It provides a narrative-driven account of each blunder, capturing the tension and heartbreak experienced on the field. The book also explores how these moments influenced rule changes and team strategies.

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