

arizona wildcats quarterbacks history

Arizona Wildcats quarterbacks history is a tale of evolution, triumph, and the pursuit of excellence in college football. The University of Arizona's football program, established in 1889, has a rich heritage that has seen numerous talented quarterbacks grace the field. From early pioneers to modern-day stars, each quarterback has left an indelible mark on the Wildcats' legacy. This article delves deep into the history of Arizona Wildcats quarterbacks, highlighting key players, memorable seasons, and the evolution of the position within the program.

The Early Years of Arizona Wildcats Quarterbacks

The history of Arizona Wildcats quarterbacks can be traced back to the early days of the program. In the 20th century, the Wildcats began to establish their identity, and the quarterback position began to take shape.

Key Players from the Early Era

- Jack "The Throwing Man" Kelsey (1940s): One of the earliest standout quarterbacks, Kelsey was known for his passing ability and leadership on the field. He helped lay the foundation for future Wildcats quarterbacks.
- Don Heinrich (1950s): A prolific passer who earned All-American honors, Heinrich set numerous passing records during his time at Arizona, showcasing the importance of the quarterback position.

The Rise of the Wildcats in the 1970s and 1980s

The 1970s and 1980s marked a turning point for Arizona football, as the program began to gain national recognition. This era produced several quarterbacks who would become legends in their own right.

Notable Quarterbacks of the 70s and 80s

1. Jim McMahon: Though he didn't play for the Wildcats, his influence during this time period is undeniable, as he paved the way for Arizona quarterbacks with his dynamic play style at BYU.
2. Tommy McMillan (1980s): McMillan was known for his dual-threat capabilities, combining passing and running skills that helped elevate the Wildcats' offensive game.
3. Troy Aikman (1980s): Aikman, who later found fame in the NFL, started his college career at Arizona before transferring to UCLA, highlighting the program's ability to attract top talent.

The 1990s: A Decade of Transformation

The 1990s were a transformative period for the Arizona Wildcats, as the program transitioned into a competitive force in college football. The quarterback position saw significant development during this time.

Standout Quarterbacks of the 90s

- Dan White (1990-1993): White set several school records during his career, including single-season passing yards. His leadership helped the Wildcats achieve a 10-win season in 1993.
- Keith Smith (1994-1996): Known for his strong arm and ability to make big plays, Smith was a key player during a time when Arizona was becoming a perennial contender in the Pac-10.

The 2000s: Continued Success and New Faces

As the Wildcats entered the new millennium, the quarterback position continued to evolve, with new talent emerging and taking the reins.

Prominent Quarterbacks of the 2000s

1. Jason Johnson (2001-2004): Johnson had a remarkable career, leading the Wildcats to significant victories and establishing himself as one of the program's all-time greats.
2. Matt Scott (2010-2013): In the later years of the 2000s, Scott emerged as a dual-threat quarterback who could both throw and run effectively, solidifying the modern style of play for Arizona.

The 2010s: A New Era of Offense

With the hiring of head coach Rich Rodriguez in 2012, the Wildcats' offense underwent a radical transformation. The quarterback position became even more pivotal in this new offensive scheme.

Key Quarterbacks of the 2010s

- B.J. Denker (2013): Denker thrived in Rodriguez's system, leading the Wildcats to a Pac-12 Championship game appearance and earning accolades for his performance.
- Anu Solomon (2014-2016): Solomon was the first freshman quarterback to start for Arizona. He had a remarkable debut season, breaking multiple records and leading the Wildcats to a bowl game.

The Current Landscape: 2020s and Beyond

As the Wildcats move into the 2020s, the quarterback position remains crucial to the team's success. With a blend of experienced players and incoming recruits, the program is poised for a bright future.

Recent Developments in Quarterback Play

- Grant Gunnell (2019-2020): Gunnell was a promising talent who showcased his skills during his time as a starter, demonstrating the potential for the Wildcats' offense.
- Will Plummer (2020-present): As a current player, Plummer represents the next generation of Arizona quarterbacks, with hopes of continuing the program's legacy.

The Legacy of Arizona Wildcats Quarterbacks

The **Arizona Wildcats quarterbacks history** is not merely a list of names and statistics; it is a narrative woven into the fabric of college football. Each quarterback has contributed to the legacy of the program, inspiring future generations of players and fans.

Impact on College Football

- Innovative Play Styles: The evolution of the quarterback position at Arizona has mirrored changes in college football, with the shift towards dual-threat capabilities and innovative offensive schemes.
- Producing NFL Talent: The Wildcats have produced numerous quarterbacks who have gone on to have successful careers in the NFL, further solidifying the program's reputation for developing talent.

Conclusion

The history of Arizona Wildcats quarterbacks is a testament to the program's evolution and resilience. From the early days of the sport to the modern era of college football, these athletes have played a crucial role in shaping the Wildcats' identity. As the program continues to grow, the legacy of its quarterbacks will undoubtedly inspire future players and fans, ensuring that the Arizona Wildcats remain a competitive force in the world of college football.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was the first starting quarterback for the Arizona Wildcats?

The first starting quarterback for the Arizona Wildcats was John D. 'Jack' McAlister, who played in the

1914 season.

Which Arizona Wildcats quarterback set the school record for career passing yards?

Matt Scott set the school record for career passing yards with 9,970 yards from 2010 to 2013.

Who was the Arizona Wildcats quarterback during their 1994 Fiesta Bowl appearance?

The quarterback during the 1994 Fiesta Bowl appearance was Keith Smith.

What significant achievement did Nick Foles accomplish as an Arizona Wildcats quarterback?

Nick Foles led the Wildcats to a 2012 win in the New Mexico Bowl and set multiple school records during his tenure from 2009 to 2011.

Which quarterback led the Arizona Wildcats to a Pac-12 South title in 2014?

Anu Solomon led the Arizona Wildcats to a Pac-12 South title in 2014.

Who was the Arizona Wildcats' starting quarterback during their 1980 Holiday Bowl victory?

The starting quarterback during the 1980 Holiday Bowl victory was Tom Tunnicliffe.

What years did the Arizona Wildcats have quarterback Ka'Deem Carey leading the team?

Ka'Deem Carey was primarily a running back, but he played alongside quarterbacks like B.J. Denker from 2011 to 2013.

Which Arizona Wildcats quarterback was known for his mobility and played from 2007 to 2009?

The Arizona Wildcats quarterback known for his mobility during that period was Willie Tuitama.

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