

1975 Chicago Bears

coach: Jack Pardee

AFC

Eastern

Baltimore 10- 4-
Miami 10- 4
Buffalo 8- 6
New England 3-11
NY Jets 3-11

Central

Pittsburgh 12- 2
Cincinnati 11- 3
Houston 10- 4
Cleveland 3-11

Western

Oakland 11- 3
Denver 6- 8
Kansas City 5- 9
San Diego 2-12

NFC

Eastern

St. Louis 11- 3
Dallas 10- 4
Washington 8- 6
NY Giants 5- 9
Philadelphia 4-10

Central

Minnesota 12- 2
Detroit 7- 7
Chicago 4-10
Green Bay 4-10

Western

Los Angeles 12- 2
San Francisco 5- 9
Atlanta 4-10
New Orleans 2-12

Offense: AFC: Buffalo 420 points NFC: Minnesota 377 points **Bears** 191 points (24th)
Defense: AFC: Pittsburgh 162 points NFC: Los Angeles 181 points **Bears** 379 points (last)

Club:

- Turnovers: 27/40 (-13)
- From 1975-1983, Bears practiced **at Lake Forest, IL**
- Bears enjoyed one of their most successful drafts in club history; 17 rookies played throughout the season.
- New head coach: 38 year old **Jack Pardee**. Pardee was solid NFL LB, and coached WFL. Record: 20-23. Coach Pardee had approached 6 WFL players he had coached. Bears had to forfeit 6th round pick.
- Inauspicious starts for Payton on 9/24, 10/12, and 11/23. 10/19 game against Pittsburgh: only time in Payton's 13-year career he did not play.
- **Defense** allowed club record 48 TDs (14G season). Old record: 47 in 1964.
 - Opponent's 25 rushing TDs was also a club record; 379 points allowed tied 1964 club (27 ppg).
 - Bears were penalized for attempting to sign WFL players.
 - Club suffered many blowouts: 8 losses were by 20+ points.

Draft: 1st: RB **Walter Payton** (#4, Jackson St); behind QB Steve Bartkowski, LB Randy White and G Ken Huff
2nd: DE **Mike Hartenstein** (Penn State); 12 years, 179 games.
3rd: DB **Virgil Livers** (Western KY); 12 interceptions despite 5'8" frame
5th: OG **Revie Sorey** (Illinois); 109 games.
6th: QB **Bob Avellini** (Maryland); 10 years.
 LB **Tom Hicks** (Illinois); 5 years.
7th: DB Earl Douthitt (Iowa); 1 year
 LB Joe Harris (GA Tech). Played for 4 other teams through 1982.
 DT Roger Stillwell; 2+ years
12th: DB **Doug Plank** (OSU); 8 years; 15 interceptions.
 Defensive Coordinator Buddy Ryan named his famous 46 Defense after Plank's jersey number.
17th: FB **Roland Harper** (Louisiana Tech); 7 years.

Add: RB Cid Edwards, **Steve Schubert**, WR Bob Grim, K **Bob Thomas**, C **Dan Neal**, OL **Noah "Buddha" Jackson**, TE **Greg Latta**, RB Mike Adamle, DB Nemiah Wilson, C Mark Nordquist (Phil), LB John Babinecz, LB Larry Ely, LB Carl Gersbach, and DT **Ron Rydalch**.

Thomas: scored 629 career points with Bears, and later became Justice of Supreme Court for the State of Illinois.
Lost: WR George Farmer (Detroit)

Payton lore: One of the most dynamic, sturdy and charismatic players in NFL history.

Among the several NFL records (many since broken) Payton held: **Career rushing yards:** 16,726; rushing **attempts** (3,838); **most yards rushing** in 1 game (275), **most career** 100-yard rushing games (77), **most career** 1,000-yard rushing/seasons (10). Payton scored 66 TDs while at Jackson State.

Chicago Bear records include: Total TDs (125), rushing TDs (110), rushing TDs in season (14, tied with Gayle Sayers), (2) 200- yard rushing games, (10) games in season rushing for 100+ yards, (9) consecutive games rushing for 100+ yards, 492 receptions/4,538 yards, 15 TDs. Payton was also an accomplished passer: 11-34/331, 8 TDs and 5 interceptions.

Payton entered **Hall of Fame** 1993. Payton died of liver cancer six years later at the age of 45.

Season:

9/21: **Lost to Baltimore 35-7** at home. Colts led 21-0 at the half. Bears' lone TD came on 1-yard TD by Douglas in the 3rd Q. Colts embarrassed the Bears, leading in yards (304-121) and 1st downs (26-6). Turnovers: Bears 2, Colts 0.

Passing:	Douglas	8-20/87	0/2	& 2 sacks
Rushing:	Douglas	5/34		
	Payton	8/0		
Receiving:	Latta	3-57		
Defense:	0 interceptions & 4 sacks			

9/28: **Beat Philadelphia 15-13** at home. Bears led 9-6 at the half on 44-yard FG by Bob Thomas and 7-yard pass from Huff to Cid Edwards. *Second-half:* Thomas booted 2 FGs (24 & 26 yards). Eagles led 1st downs (21-14) and 327-294 in yards-gained. Turnovers were even at 2/ea.

Passing:	Huff	19-27/181	1/2	& 2 sacks
Rushing:	Payton	21/95		
Receiving:	Edwards	7-45		
Defense:	2 interceptions (Jimmy Gunn & Doug Plank) & 5 sacks			

10/5: **Lost to Minnesota 28-3** away. Vikings led 21-3 at halftime. Bob Thomas's 46-yard FG came in the 2nd Q. Stats: Minnesota led in 1st downs (23-10) and in yards-gained (355-192). Turnovers were even at 2/ea.

Passing:	Huff	15-27/113	0/1	& 2 sacks
Rushing:	Payton	18/61		
Receiving:	Rather	4-52		
Defense:	1 interception (Ellis) & 5 sacks.			

10/12: **Lost to Detroit 27-7** away. Lions led 14-0 at the half. Bears' TD came in the 4th Q on a 7-yard pass from Huff to Bob Grim. Lions owned the stats: 21-16 in 1st downs and 320-238 in yards-gained. Tough day, yardage-wise, for Payton. Turnovers: Bears 5, Lions 1.

Passing:	Huff	21-37/227	1/3	& 4 sacks
Rushing:	Adamle	4/22		
	Payton	10/0		
Receiving:	Adamle	3-51		
Defense:	0 interceptions & 3 sacks.			

10/19: **Lost to Pittsburgh 34-3** away. Steelers led 10-3 at halftime. Thomas's 32-yard FG gave the Bears an early lead. Payton's only game in his 13-year career that he did not play. Pittsburgh led in 1st downs (25-16) and yards (303-242). Bears were penalized 7 times for 109 yards. Turnovers: Bears 1, Steelers 0.

Passing:	Huff	8-22/46		
Rushing:	Adamle	17/110		
Receiving:	Rather	2-27		
Defense:	0 interceptions			

10/27: **Monday Night Football: Lost to Minnesota 13-9** at home. Vikings led 10-7 at the half. Bear's TD came on 14-yard run by Adamle. *Second-half:* Hartenstine tackled Viking QB Fran Tarkenton for a safety. Minnesota led in 1st downs (18-11) and in yards (331-216). Vikings RB **Chuck Foreman** rushed 26 times for 102 yards. Turnovers: Bears 3, Vikings 1.

Passing:	Huff	10-22/97	0/2	& 2 sacks
Rushing:	Adamle	14/65		
	Payton	10/44		
Receiving:	Rather	4-59		
Defense:	0 interceptions & 4 sacks			

11/2: **Lost to Miami 46-13** at home. Halftime: Dolphins led 20-6. Bears' points came on 2 Thomas FGs (27 & 31 yards). Bear's 2nd-half TD came on 4-yard run by Payton - his 1st NFL TD. Seventh game in a row the Bears' opponents owned the stats. Miami led in 1st downs (20-16) and in yards (439-283). **Nat Moore** caught 4 passes for 113 yards, including a 79-yard TD pass from Bob Griese. Turnovers: Bears 2, Dolphins 1.

Passing: Huff 16-25/166 0/1 & 3 sacks
Avellini 2-5/7 0/1
Rushing: Harper 9/36
Payton 7/26 1TD
Receiving: Rather 6-90
Defense: 0 interceptions

11/9: **Beat Green Bay 27-14** at home. Bears led 17-7 at the half on 34-yard FG by Thomas, a 12-yard TD pass from Huff to Parsons, and a 5-yard run by Payton. *Second-half*: Thomas kicked a 48-yard FG and DB Craig Clemons returned an interception 76 yards. Stats were mixed: First time Bears led in 1st downs (15-13); Packers led in yards (309-261). Turnovers were even at 3/ea.

Passing: Huff 9-15/119 1/1 & 2 sacks
Rushing: Adamle 17/56
Payton 14/49 1 TD
Receiving: Parsons 4-55 1 TD
Defense: 1 interception (Clemons) & 2 sacks

11/16: **Lost to San Francisco 31-3** away. Niners led 10-3 at the half. Thomas's 33-yard FG came in the 2nd Q. **Noteworthy**: Payton recorded his 1st of 77 100-yard games. San Francisco led in 1st downs (21-11) and yards (335-200). Turnovers: Bears 2, Niners 3.

Passing: Huff 9-18/71 0/0 & 3 sacks
Rushing: **Payton 23/105**
Receiving: Grim 1-19
Defense: 2 interceptions (Ellis & John Babinecz) & 2 sacks

11/23: **Lost to Los Angeles 38-10** away. LA led 21-3 at the half. Thomas's club-record 55-yard FG made the score 14-3. Final points came in the 4th Q on Avellini's 32-yard pass to Rather. Rams led yards (340-216) and 1st downs (17-12). After a hard tackle, Payton was no longer assigned to return kicks. Rams RB **Lawrence McCutcheon**: 15 rushes for 114 yards and 1 TD. Turnovers: Bears 3, Rams 1.

Passing: Avellini 9-17/94 1/2 & 4 sacks
Huff 7-13/63
Rushing: Harper 18/84
Payton 4/2
Receiving: Harper 6-55
Rather 3-58
Defense: 1 interception (Buffone)

11/30: **Lost to Green Bay 28-7** away. Wind chill -2 at game-time. Packers led 28-0 at the half. Payton scored the Bear's TD on a 1-yard run in the 3rd Q. Green Bay led in 1st downs (22-11) and yards (309-132). Packers RB **John Brockington** rushed 26 times for 111 yards and 3 TDs. Turnovers: Bears 6, Packers 4.

Passing: Avellini 9-25/109 0/3 & 4 sacks
Rushing: Payton 12/40 1TD
Receiving: Payton 2-45
Defense: 2 interceptions (Plank & Carl Gersbach) & 2 sacks

12/7: **Beat Detroit 25-21** at home. Bears led 10-7 at the half on a 36-yard FG by Thomas and 4-yard run by Payton. *Second-half*: Thomas kicked a 41-yard FG, Payton scored from 5 yards out, and Harper followed with a 27-yard run. Stats belonged to the Lions: 1st downs (19-15) and yards (345-313). Lions WR **Marlin Briscoe** caught 5 passes for 119 yards and 2 TDs. Turnovers: Bears 4, Lions 3.

Passing: Avellini 11-19/204 0/2 & 3 sacks
Rushing: Payton 27/65 2TD
Receiving: **Rather 4/123**
Defense: 1 interception (Livers) & 2 sacks

12/14: **Lost to St. Louis 34-20** at home. Cards led 17-0 at the half and 34-0 into the 4th Q before the Bears answered on Avellini TD passes to Bob Grim (24 yards) and Bo Rather (48 yards) and a 10-yard run by Payton. St. Louis led in 1st downs (19-18) and in net yards-gained (362-326). Cards RB **Jim Otis** rushed 33 times for 147 yards & 2 TDs. Turnovers: Bears 2, Cards 1.

Passing: Avellini 19-35/255 2/1 & 1 sack
 Rushing: Payton 17/58 1 TD
 Receiving: Rather 4-90 1 TD
 Defense: 0 interceptions

12/21: **Beat New Orleans 42-17** away. Bears led 21-10 at the half on a 1-yard run by Avellini and two TD passes from Avellini to Greg Latta (13 yards & 5 yards).

Second-half: Livers returned an interception 40 yards, Avellini connected again with Latta (20 yards), and Payton ran 54 yards for the Bears' final TD. First and only time during the season Bears led in both 1st downs (19-17) and yards (458-197). Payton's rushing yards were most by a Bear since 1968. Turnovers: Bears 3, Saints 5.

Passing: Avellini 15-23/268 3/2 & 1 sack
 Rushing: **Payton 25/134 1TD**
 Receiving: Grim 2-72
 Latta 5/67 3 TDs
 Defense: 3 interceptions (Clemons, Livers, and Larry Ely) & 3 sacks

End of season stats:

Passing: Gary Huff 114-205/1083 56% 3/9 57.0
 Bob Avellini 67-126/942 53 6/11 57.0
 Bobby Douglas 8-20/87 40 0/2 14.0

Rushing: Walter Payton 196/679 3.5 7 TDs
 Rolland Harper 100/453 4.5 1 TD
 Mike Adamle 94/353 3.8 1 TD
 Bobby Douglas 5/34 6.8 1 TD
 Bob Avellini 1 TD

Others: Cid Edwards (27/73), and Johnny Musso (6/33)

Receiving: Bo Rather 39/685 17.6 2 TDs
 Bob Grim 28/374 13.4 2 TDs
 Greg Latta 16/202 12.6 3 TDs
 Bob Parsons 13/184 14.2 1 TD
 Cid Edwards 11/86 7.8 1 TD

Others: Payton (33/213), Harper (27/191), Adamle (15/111)

KR: Payton 14/444 31.7 **Led NFL in return average**
 Schubert 9/146 16.2
 Livers 26/529 20.3

PR Schubert 6/33 5.5
 Livers 42/456 10.9

Punting: Parsons 93/3625 39.0 led NFL in number of punts

Kicking: Thomas 13-23 FG 18-22 PAT

Interceptions: Plank 2/50, Livers 2/40 TD, Ellis 2/4, Clemons 2/109 TD, Gunn, Buffone, Babinecz, Ely, and Gersbach 1/ea.
Hartenstine safety

Sacks: Chambers 14

Scoring: Thomas 18 PAT, 13 FG 57 points

Pro Bowl: DT Wally Chambers

League:

- Players played the 1974 season without a signed Collective Bargaining Agreement. New contract offer was rejected in mid-September. **Players' strike** delayed start of training camp. This was NFL's 4th walkout in 8 years.

US District Court found NFL's **Reserve Clause System** illegal.

NFL's Reserve Clause: a player was bound to his NFL team for the full length of his contract plus 1 year.

- The **Rozelle Rule:** if a player signed with another team, the new club must compensate the old. If the two teams could not agree on the compensation, the commissioner would then make the final determination. Judge determined that the Rule prevented other clubs from bidding for free agents and impeded players from earning their true market value.

Outcome:

- If a player played the extra year without signing a new contract, he was allowed to negotiate with a team of his choosing.
- Federal court also ruled NFL's portion of the college draft was in violation of anti-trust laws.
A player drafted by one team was prohibited from seeking better contract from another,

NFL appealed the court's ruling. Outcome: The draft and transfer stayed, but the League granted additional benefits to players with 5+ years of service. Result – no strike, no lockout.

RULES: Double-shifting inside the 20-yard line was legal; penalties for ineligible player downfield on pass plays and offensive pass interference was reduced from 15 yards to 10 yards.

- **Divisional winners** with the best records were the home team during playoffs.
- Cincinnati Bengals coach **Paul Brown** stepped down after the season and was replaced by Bill Johnson.
- **Bum Phillips** began coaching Houston Oilers.
- Cowboys re-introduced the **Shotgun offense** –a scheme first utilized by San Francisco vs. Baltimore in 1960.
- **World Football League** (version 2) failed early, despite signing marquee players like Calvin Hill, WR John Gilliam and RB Anthony Davis. **Chicago Wind** offered NYJ QB **Joe Namath** \$4M to play. Namath chose instead to remain in the NFL. **WFL** folded in week 12 of their 20-week season. NFL teams were allowed to bid for WFL players

Streaks: **Minnesota** began 10-0. **Pittsburgh** won 11 in a row. **Baltimore** won 9 in a row.
Baltimore's +8 turnaround was a NFL record. **San Diego** lost 11 in a row.

Noteworthy games:

- 9/28: **Buffalo** beat Pittsburgh 30-21. Bills RB **OJ Simpson** rushed 28 times for 227 yards.
- 10/6: **Dallas** beat Detroit 36-10. Cowboys' defense sacked QB Greg Landry 11 times.
- 10/19: **Miami** beat NY Jets 43-0, out-gaining Jets 437-176. Jets QB **Joe Namath** (8-33 for 60 yards) was intercepted 6 times.
- 11/17: **Cincinnati** beat Buffalo 33-24. Bengals QB **Ken Anderson**: 30-46 for 447 yards & 2 TDs.
- 11/23: **Minnesota** beat San Diego 28-13. Vikings QB **Fran Tarkenton** broke Johnny Unitas's NFL record for completions (2,831).
- 11/30: **San Diego** lost to Denver 13-10 in OT despite out-gaining Broncos 336-123 (24-3 in 1st downs) and 80 plays to 41.
Chargers downfall was their passing: 8-20/8 yards (net) and 6 interceptions.
- 12/7: **San Diego** beat Kansas City 28-20. Chargers' 1st win.
Chargers avoided becoming NFL's 1st team to go through season without a win.
- 12/14: **Cleveland** beat Kansas City 40-14. Browns RB **Greg Pruitt** rushed 26 times for 214 yards & 3 TDs.
- 12/20: **Minnesota** beat Buffalo 35-13. Vikings QB **Fran Tarkenton** broke another Johnny Unitas' record: 291st TD pass.
- 12/21: **Oakland** beat Kansas City 28-20. Oakland Raiders K **George Blanda** scored his 2,000th career point.
- 12/28: Divisional playoff: **Dallas** beat Vikings 17-14. Cowboy QB Roger Staubach threw a 50-yard "Hail Mary" TD pass to Drew Pearson with 0:24 left. The term "Hail Mary" stuck.
- Buffalo set new NFL record for yards gained 5,467 (old: SF, 1965).
RB **OJ Simpson** scored NFL record 23 TDs (old: 22, Gale Sayers, Bears 1965).
Minnesota Vikings RB **Chuck Foreman** scored 22 TDs.
 - **Billy "White Shoes" Johnson's** 4 TDs on returns tied NFL record held by Travis Williams (GB) & Cecil Turner (Bears).

Rookie Class: QB Steve Grogan & TE Russ Francis (NE), LB Thomas "Hollywood" Henderson (Dal), LB Robert Brazile (Houston), RB Anthony Davis (NYJ), G Ken Huff (Balt), KR/PR Rick Upchurch (Den), DB Dave Brown & Steve Foley, WR Freddy Solomon, QB Pat Hayden.

Hall-bound: RB Walter Payton (Bears), DT Randy White (Dallas), and DE Fred Dean (SD).

Last Season: Coach Paul Brown, DT Mike Reid, DT Buck Buchanan, WR Otis Taylor & QB Len Dawson, K George Blanda, QB Charlie Johnson, Ed Podolak

NFL Top 2:

Rushing:

AFC:	OJ Simpson	Buffalo	329/1817	5.5	16 TDs
	Lydell Mitchell	Baltimore	289/1193	4.1	11 TDs
NFC:	Jim Otis	St Louis	269/1076	4.0	5 TDs
	Chuck Foreman	Minnesota	280/1070	3.8	13 TDs

Passing:

AFC:	Ken Anderson	Cincinnati	228-337/3169	60.5%	21/11	93.9
	Bert Jones	Baltimore	203-344/2483	59.0	18/8	89.1
NFC:	Fran Tarkenton	Minnesota	273-425/2994	64.2%	25/13	91.8
	Roger Staubach	Dallas	198-348/2666	56.9	17/16	78.5

Receiving:

AFC:	Reggie Rucker	Cleveland	60/770	12.8	3 TDs
	Ken Burrough	Houston	53/1063	20.1	8 TDs
NFC:	Chuck Foreman	Minnesota	73/691	9.5	9 TDs
	Ken Payne	Green Bay	58/766	13.2	0 TDs

Scoring:

AFC:	OJ Simpson	Buffalo	138 points (23 TDs)
NFC:	Chuck Foreman	Minnesota	132 points (22 TDs)

Interceptions:

Mel Blount	Pittsburgh	11
Paul Krause	Minnesota	10

NFL Man of the Year: QB Ken Anderson, Cincinnati

Comeback Player: RB Dave Hampton, Atlanta

1st Pick in NFL Draft: QB Steve Bartkowski (California), Atlanta

Rookie/Year: QB Steve Bartkowski, Atlanta

Defensive Rookie: LB Robert Brazile, Houston

Offensive Rookie: RB Mike Thomas, Washington, and QB Steve Bartkowski, Atlanta

AFC/NFC Coaches: AFC: Ted Marchibroda, Baltimore; NFC: Tom Landry, Dallas

Coach/Year: Ted Marchibroda, Baltimore

MVP: QB Fran Tarkenton, Minnesota

Offensive MVP: QB Fran Tarkenton, Minnesota, RB OJ Simpson, Buffalo

Defensive MVP: CB Mel Blount (Pitt), Curly Culp (Hou), LB Jack Ham (Pitt), DE Jack Youngblood (LA)

AFC & NFC MVPs: RB OJ Simpson, Buffalo, QB Fran Tarkenton, Minnesota

Hall of Fame: Roosevelt Brown, George Connor, Dante Lavelli, Lenny Moore

NFC Championship: Dallas beat Los Angeles 37-7

AFC Championship: Pittsburgh beat Oakland 16-10

Super Bowl: Pittsburgh beat Dallas 21-17. Cowboys were 1st Wild Card team to play in Super Bowl.
Shares: \$15K/\$7.5K