

BENGALS CHRONOLOGY

Paul Brown, who left the Cleveland Browns following the 1962 season with an NFL record of 115-49-6, seven conference titles, and three NFL championships, had the urge to get back into football. His son Mike did a study on pro football expansion and recommended Cincinnati as a potential site. In **1965**, Brown met with Ohio Governor James Rhodes and the two agreed the state could accommodate a second pro football team.

1966 Fearful the Reds baseball team would leave town and feeling pressure from local businessmen pushing for a pro football franchise, Cincinnati's city council approved the construction of Riverfront Stadium.

1967 Brown's group was awarded an AFL expansion franchise. Brown called the team the Bengals, the name of Cincinnati's pro teams in the old AFL of the late 1930s. The Bengals acquired their first player late in the year when they traded two draft picks to Miami for QB John Stofa.

1968 The Bengals were awarded 40 veteran players in the allocation draft. In the college draft, they selected Tennessee center Bob Johnson as their first pick. The Bengals lost their first preseason game, 38-14, to Kansas City, before 21,682 fans at Nippert Stadium. The Bengals upset Denver, 24-10, and Buffalo, 34-23, in their first two regular-season home games. Paul Robinson led the AFL in rushing with 1,023 yards and he was named Rookie of the Year.

1969 Brown drafted quarterback Greg Cook of the University of Cincinnati in the first round. The same draft also produced linebacker Bill Bergey. The Bengals jumped out to a 3-0 record, but finished 4-9-1. Brown was named AFL Coach of the Year. Bergey was honored as the AFL Defensive Rookie of the Year, and Cook won the AFL passing title.

1970 The NFL-AFL merger took place before the season, and the Bengals made their first NFL campaign a memorable one. After losing 6 of their first 7 games, they rallied to finish 8-6 and win the new AFC Central Division. In their first playoff game, they lost, 17-0, to eventual Super Bowl champion Baltimore. QB Greg Cook was forced to the Injured Reserve list in training camp with a shoulder injury that would end his career, and Virgil Carter took over as the starter.

1971 The Bengals drafted QB Ken Anderson in the third round. Anderson would go on to play 16 seasons for the club and set numerous team passing records.

1972 Anderson unseated Carter as the starting QB and the Bengals won three of the last four games to finish 8-6. DT Mike Reid and WR Chip Myers were selected for the Pro Bowl.

1973 The Bengals split their first eight games, then

swept their last six and won their second AFC Central Division title. Cincinnati lost to Miami, 34-16, in the AFC playoffs. Rookie Boobie Clark, who finished the year with 988 yards rushing and 45 pass receptions, was named AFC Rookie of the Year. Essex Johnson led Cincinnati with a career-high 997 yards rushing and rookie Isaac Curtis caught 45 passes.

1974 Cincinnati traded Bill Bergey to Philadelphia for two first-round draft choices and a third-round pick in 1977. Jim LeClair replaced Bergey at middle linebacker. Anderson won the NFL passing championship and completed a then club-record 64.9 percent of his attempts. Cornerback Lemar Parrish led the NFL in punt returns.

1975 The Bengals opened with six straight wins and went on to post an 11-3 record, their best regular-season mark. The Bengals qualified as the AFC wild card team for the playoffs, but they lost to Oakland, 31-28, in the playoffs. Anderson won his second NFL passing championship. A serious blow was the loss of defensive tackle Mike Reid, who retired at age 26 to pursue a career in music.

1976 Brown announced his retirement after 41 seasons of coaching and named Bill Johnson, his long-time assistant, as the successor. Brown continued to serve as the club's general manager and vice president. The Bengals acquired defensive end Coy Bacon in a trade with San Diego and drafted halfback Archie Griffin, the two-time Heisman Trophy winner from Ohio State. The Bengals won nine of their first 11 games and finished 10-4, but did not make the playoffs. Cornerback Ken Riley led the AFC with nine interceptions.

1977 A loss to Houston in the final game cost the Bengals a spot in the playoffs. The team finished with an 8-6 record.

1978 QB Ken Anderson missed the first four games with a broken bone in his right hand, and Homer Rice replaced Bill Johnson as head coach after the Bengals started 0-5. The team dipped to marks of 0-8 and 1-12 before rebounding under Rice to win the last three games. In the season finale, the Bengals blasted Cleveland, 48-16, setting series records for points and victory margin.

1979 Fullback Pete Johnson powered his way to 15 touchdowns, but the Bengals struggled to their second straight 4-12 record. After the season, former Cleveland coach Forrest Gregg was named to replace Homer Rice as Bengals head coach.

1980 The Bengals went 6-10 and managed only 244 points, lowest in the AFC. They did upset defending Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh twice. First-round draft choice Anthony Muñoz began his Hall of Fame career.

1981 The Bengals unveiled new uniforms with tiger-striped helmets, jerseys and pants. They had at least a share of the AFC Central lead the entire season and, on Dec. 13, Anderson threw two touchdown passes as the Bengals clinched the division with a 17-10 win over the Steelers. Anderson led the NFL in passing with a 98.5 rating. On Jan. 3, the Bengals beat Buffalo, 28-21, in an AFC Divisional Playoff game. A week later, playing in their first AFC Championship Game, the Bengals defeated San Diego, 27-7, at Riverfront Stadium in a temperature of nine degrees below zero with a wind-chill factor of minus-59. In Super Bowl XVI on Jan. 24 in Pontiac, Mich., the Bengals trailed 20-0 at halftime and lost to San Francisco, 26-21.

1982 The Bengals posted a 7-2 record in a strike-shortened season to earn a postseason berth, but lost to the Jets in the first round of the playoffs, 44-17. Anderson led the AFC in passing for the fourth time as the Bengals boasted the second-best offense in the NFL.

1983 The Bengals started the season by losing six of their first seven games and finished 7-9. Despite the losing record, the Bengals claimed the top overall defense in the NFL. In the offseason, Gregg resigned as head coach and Sam Wyche was named as his replacement.

1984 Pete Johnson was traded to San Diego for running back James Brooks. The Bengals lost their first five games, then bounced back to win eight of the last 11 and force the AFC Central Division championship race into the final week of the season, only to fall a game short of Pittsburgh. Cincinnati finished 8-8.

1985 Wide receiver Isaac Curtis, a premier Bengal for 12 years, retired shortly before training camp opened. Second-year QB Boomer Esiason replaced Ken Anderson. The Bengals set a club scoring record with 441 points.

1986 Boomer Esiason passed for a then team-record 3959 yards and James Brooks rushed for 1087 yards as the Bengals went 10-6, narrowly missing a playoff berth. LB Reggie Williams was selected NFL Man of the Year for his efforts with charity and the community.

1987 The Bengals posted a 4-11 record in a strike-interrupted season. Individual bright spots included Jim Breech leading the AFC in scoring with 97 points, Anthony Muñoz being voted to his seventh straight Pro Bowl, and nose tackle Tim Krumrie making his first Pro Bowl.

1988 The Bengals brought about one of the biggest turnarounds in NFL history by rising from their 4-11 finish of 1987 to a 12-4 regular-season record. They won the AFC Central Division title, and defeated Buffalo, 21-10, for the AFC Championship on Jan. 8 (1989). On Jan. 22 (1989), they appeared in their second Super Bowl and lost, 20-16, to San Francisco when the 49ers

scored a touchdown with 34 seconds remaining in the game. Coach Sam Wyche's team posted a 14-5 mark in regular and postseason play, best in the NFL. Wyche received numerous honors for his brilliant coaching and nine Bengals were selected for the Pro Bowl — QB Boomer Esiason, NT Tim Krumrie, OT Anthony Muñoz, G Max Montoya, TE Rodney Holman, WR Eddie Brown, RB James Brooks, S David Fulcher and CB Eric Thomas. Esiason was voted the NFL's Most Valuable Player. In January of '88, LB Reggie Williams received the "Sportsman of the Year" award from *Sports Illustrated*. Rookie "Ickey" Woods led the Bengals in rushing with 1,066 yards.

1989 The Bengals traded their first round draft choice to Atlanta for three later selections. Hit hard by injuries throughout the season, the Bengals went 8-8 and narrowly missed a spot in the playoffs, despite outscoring the opposition 404-285.

1990 The Bengals posted a 9-7 regular-season record to win the AFC Central Division and move into the playoffs, where they defeated the Houston Oilers, 41-14, before losing to the Los Angeles Raiders, 20-10, in the second round.

1991 Paul Brown, founder of the Bengals and a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, died on Aug. 5. The Bengals had a 3-13 season record. Dave Shula replaced Sam Wyche as head coach following the season.

1992 The Bengals had a 5-11 record, but Harold Green rushed for 1,170 yards and was selected to play in the Pro Bowl. All-Pro OT Anthony Muñoz played his final game.

1993 Quarterback Boomer Esiason was traded to the New York Jets for a third-round draft choice. The young Bengals lost their first 10 games before defeating the Raiders. Cincinnati then had wins over the Rams and Falcons in the final weeks of the season to finish 3-13.

1994 The Bengals lost their first eight games of the season. With quarterbacks David Klingler and Erik Wilhelm sidelined with injuries, third-string QB Jeff Blake started in Game 8 against two-time defending Super Bowl champion Dallas and nearly pulled off an upset before losing, 23-20. Blake kept his starting role for the rest of the season, passing for 2154 yards and 14 TDs. The Bengals finished 3-13.

1995 The Bengals traded up in the draft's first round for the first time, and selected Penn State RB Ki-Jana Carter with the No. 1 overall pick, obtained from Carolina. Carter suffered a knee injury in the third preseason game and missed his entire rookie season. Nonetheless, the Bengals made a dramatic improvement over the previous four years, going 7-9 with five losses by just three points each. QB Jeff Blake, WR Carl Pickens and PK Doug Pelfrey posted record Bengal seasons, and Blake and

Pickens went on to start in the Pro Bowl.

1996 On March 19, Hamilton County voters approved a half-cent sales tax increase to fund two new stadiums, taking a major step to ensure the Bengals' future in Cincinnati. The team lost six of its first seven games, but Cincinnati's fortunes took a U-turn after offensive coordinator Bruce Coslet was promoted to head coach on Oct. 21, replacing Dave Shula. Coslet directed the team to a 7-2 finish, including a 5-0 mark at Cinergy Field, and the final 8-8 record was Cincinnati's first .500-or-better season since 1990. The defense set a team record with 34 interceptions, and CB Ashley Ambrose was named a Pro Bowl starter along with WR Carl Pickens, who caught 100 passes to break his own team receptions record.

1997 The Bengals and Hamilton County officials reached agreement on a western riverfront site for a new football stadium and, on May 29, team president Mike Brown signed a lease committing the team through 2026. The team and the county declined to sell naming rights, christening the facility Paul Brown Stadium in honor of the Bengals' founder. The team held training camp in a new complex at Georgetown (Ky.) College, ending its 29-year arrangement at Wilmington (Ohio) College. On the field, the team suffered a 1-7 start but rallied to go 6-2 in the second half and finish 7-9. Rookie HB Corey Dillon rushed for 1129 yards, third-most in club history (at the time), and his 246-yard effort vs. Tennessee on Dec. 4 broke Jim Brown's 40-year-old NFL single-game rookie record. Boomer Esiason started the last five games at QB and posted a 106.9 passer rating for the season.

1998 Demolition work for Paul Brown Stadium began early in the year, and official groundbreaking for the new facility was held April 25. HB Corey Dillon rushed for 1130 yards, then third-most in team history, and became the first Bengal to top the 1000-yard rushing mark in each of his first two seasons.

1999 Throughout the year, work continued on Paul Brown Stadium, the team's new, state-of-the-art home on the Cincinnati riverfront. But the final season at Cinergy Field was not a success, as the team endured a 1-10 start before rallying to win three of its last five for a 4-12 finish. Corey Dillon rushed his way to the Pro Bowl with 1200 yards, then the second-most in team history. Kickoff returner Tremain Mack also made the Pro Bowl, leading the AFC with a club-record average of 27.1 yards per return.

2000 The Paul Brown Stadium era began on Aug. 19, as the Bengals christened Cincinnati's new football showplace with a 24-20 preseason win over the Chicago Bears. WR Peter Warrick scored the first Bengals points in PBS on a 14-yard end-around run in the first quarter. In the stadium's Grand Opening regular-season game

Sept. 10 vs. Cleveland, a Cincinnati sports record crowd of 64,006 turned out (since surpassed), but the Browns won the game, 24-7. Rookie WR Ron Dugans scored the first Bengals regular-season points in PBS on a four-yard TD pass from Akili Smith. The Bengals drew four other crowds which exceeded the pre-PBS record for a sports crowd in Cincinnati, but the Browns game stood as the new record. On Sept. 25, following an 0-3 start to the season, Bruce Coslet resigned as head coach and was replaced by assistant head coach/defensive coordinator Dick LeBeau. The team finished 4-9 under LeBeau, including 4-6 in the final 10 games and a 2-2 mark in the final four. On Dec. 20, LeBeau signed a multi-year contract to begin in 2001. LeBeau's first victory, on Oct. 22 vs. Denver, featured a then NFL-record 278 rushing yards by Corey Dillon, who went on to set a Bengals record (since broken) of 1435 yards for the season, earning his second straight trip to the Pro Bowl.

2001 In his first full season as Bengals head coach, Dick LeBeau fashioned a two-game improvement over the previous season with a 6-10 record. It was the Bengals' most wins since 1997. The team displayed a foundation for the future in a young defense that ranked No. 9 in the NFL, the club's highest rank since 1989. HB Corey Dillon led the offense with 1315 rushing yards, and moved to within 238 yards of James Brooks for the all-time team rushing lead. Security procedures at Paul Brown Stadium were significantly increased in response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, but the full home schedule was played without incident. On Oct. 14, the Bengals re-set their own record for the largest crowd ever at a Cincinnati sports event, as 64,217 fans watched Cincinnati defeat Cleveland, 24-14. Due to the terrorist attacks, the Bengals' Sept. 16 game at Tennessee was postponed, and the season was extended a week to allow postponed games to be played the weekend of Jan. 6 (2002).

2002 The Bengals entered the season with high hopes after an encouraging 2001 finish. But despite some noteworthy individual performances, the team sunk to the worst record (2-14) in franchise history. The team was hit hard by injuries, losing the league's second-highest number of games by starters. The offense got off to a very slow start with free agent signee Gus Frerotte at QB, and Cincinnati was outscored 119-23 in the first four games. The offense perked up noticeably after 2001 starter, Jon Kitna, returned to the No. 1 QB role. For the first time since 1989, Cincinnati had a 3000-yard passer (Kitna), a 1000-yard rusher (Corey Dillon) and a 1000-yard receiver (Chad Ochocinco). The Bengals set a team record for pass completions with 350 (since surpassed). But the team was 0-7 before getting a win at Houston. The defense was inconsistent, and with nine touchdowns allowed on special teams or by the offense,

the Bengals as a team allowed the second-most points (456) in club history. On Dec. 30, it was announced that head coach Dick LeBeau would not be retained for 2003.

2003 The Bengals launched a new era on Jan. 14, when Marvin Lewis was hired as the ninth head coach in franchise history. The results wound up being nationally noted, as the club drew a then-record regular-season attendance of 479,488 to watch Lewis' first team finish 8-8, six games better than the 2-14 Bengals of 2002. Architect of the Baltimore Ravens' record-setting Super Bowl defense in 2000, Lewis received a broad mandate from ownership to implement his program. Though the Bengals missed the playoffs — eliminated on the final weekend of the season — their six-game improvement was the biggest of any NFL team from '02 to '03. It was also the second-biggest one-year improvement in Bengals history. Lewis finished second to Bill Belichick, coach of the World Champion New England Patriots, in *Associated Press* voting for NFL Coach of the Year. The season included the four largest pro sports crowds in Cincinnati history (to that time), topped by 65,362 on Dec. 28 vs. Cleveland, and the highlight game was a 24-19 win on Nov. 16 over an unbeaten (9-0) Kansas City team. WR Chad Ochocinco led the AFC with 1355 receiving yards, and LOT Willie Anderson joined Johnson in the Pro Bowl. Prior to the season, the Bengals had the No. 1 overall pick in the NFL Draft for the third time in team history, and chose Southern California QB Carson Palmer. Palmer did not play as a rookie, as veteran Jon Kitna was the only NFL QB to play every offensive snap for his team.

2004 In their second season under head coach Marvin Lewis, the Bengals attracted record home attendance. All eight regular-season games at Paul Brown Stadium were sellouts — the first sold-out regular season since 1992 at Riverfront Stadium — and the total regular-season attendance of 524,248 put the team over the half-million mark for the first time. A record home crowd of 65,806 (later topped) saw the Bengals host Denver on Monday night, Oct. 25. The team finished 8-8 on the field, a creditable performance given that injuries were severe (18 players were placed on season-ending medical reserve lists) and that QB Carson Palmer was seeing his first NFL playing time. HB Rudi Johnson rushed for a club-record 1454 yards (since broken), and the team had four players named to the Pro Bowl, its highest total since 1990. The Pro Bowl quartet was HB Rudi Johnson, WR Chad Ochocinco, OT Willie Anderson and CB Tory James. K Shayne Graham set a club record with 122 points (a mark he later broke). Home games were played on a new, synthetic FieldTurf surface, on which installation was complete in early July. The team also made its first significant uniform change since 1981. The signature striped helmet was not changed, but the

jersey design was modernized, black pants were added as a regular option to white pants, and a special-occasion orange jersey was added for up to two games per year.

2005 In head coach Marvin Lewis' third season, the Bengals returned to the playoffs, winning the AFC North Division title with an 11-5 record. Cincinnati lost 31-17 to Pittsburgh in a Wild Card round playoff game at Paul Brown Stadium, losing QB Carson Palmer to a serious knee injury on the club's second offensive snap. Palmer was among five Bengals voted to the Pro Bowl, the largest Bengals contingent since the 1989 team placed six. The other 2005 season Pro Bowlers were OT Willie Anderson, K Shayne Graham, WR Chad Ochocinco and CB Deltha O'Neal. On Dec. 29, just before the end of the regular season, Palmer signed a new agreement with the club, extending his contract through 2014. A number of club individual single-season records were set, including 32 TD passes by Palmer; 1432 receiving yards by Chad Ochocinco (since broken); 1458 rushing yards by Rudi Johnson; 10 INTs by O'Neal; and 131 points by Graham. The club posted a record regular-season attendance of 526,469 (later surpassed), and another sellout for the playoff game vs. Pittsburgh pushed to 20 the team's streak of consecutive regular and postseason home sellouts. The season's home crowds included the top four attendance figures in franchise history (to that time), headed by 66,104 for the Bengals-Steelers game on Oct. 23.

2006 For the first time since 1992, the Bengals sold out all games before the season began, and a waiting list was established for new season ticket buyers. The regular-season attendance mark was 527,870, as the club set a record for the third straight year. It was also announced prior to the season that head coach Marvin Lewis signed a contract extension through 2010. Lewis completed his fourth season by joining Paul Brown as the only Bengals head coaches to go four straight seasons without a losing record, but though the team remained in contention until the final weekend, it missed the playoffs with an 8-8 mark. QB Carson Palmer set a club record with 4035 passing yards (since surpassed), and he boldfaced his status as the cornerstone of the roster by winning the Most Valuable Player Award in the Pro Bowl on Feb. 10, 2007. He was the first Bengal to win the award. Other individual Bengals achievements in '06 included an NFL receiving yards title for Chad Ochocinco (1369), the first such crown in Bengals history, and Ochocinco also became the first NFL player to lead the AFC or NFC in receiving yards for a fourth consecutive season. Palmer, Ochocinco and OT Willie Anderson each were named to the Pro Bowl.

2007 In a Harris Interactive survey released in February, Paul Brown Stadium was the only football stadium to make a list of "America's favorite 150 buildings and structures." PBS ranked 101st on the list, whose

range included all manner of major structures (the Empire State Building ranking first). Among all sports venues, only Wrigley Field (31) and the old Yankee Stadium (84) ranked higher than PBS. For the second straight season, the Bengals sold out all games before the season began, and the team ran to 36 its streak of consecutive home sellouts (regular and postseason). The team entered the season with high expectations, with its first two home games selected for ESPN Monday Night Football. But the season's first half ended with a disappointing 2-6 record, and a second-half rally lifted the club only to 7-9, the first losing season for head coach Marvin Lewis. WR T.J. Houshmandzadeh tied for the league receptions title (112) — becoming the first Bengal ever to lead or share the league lead. Other notable statistical accomplishments included Chad Ochocinco breaking his own team record with 1440 receiving yards, Carson Palmer re-setting two of his own marks with 4131 passing yards and 373 completions, and Shayne Graham kicking a club-record 31 field goals while re-setting his own mark for season field goal accuracy (91.2 percent). Houshmandzadeh and Chad Ochocinco earned trips to the Pro Bowl.

2008 With a club-record 23 players sent to the Reserve/Injured list, the Bengals struggled to a 4-11-1 finish. That list of 23 did not include the biggest missing name, QB Carson Palmer, who stayed on the roster all season but played in only four games due to an elbow injury. Ryan Fitzpatrick replaced Palmer at QB. The team partly salvaged the season, going 4-3-1 in the campaign's second half, but that was after an 0-8 start. Though the offense was near record lows in many statistical categories, the defense was promising under new coordinator Mike Zimmer, rising to a No. 12 NFL yardage ranking, the team's best since 2001. All home games were declared sold out before the season began. The Bengals' 13-13 tie on Nov. 16 vs. Philadelphia was the NFL's first deadlock since 2002.

2009 The Bengals won their second division championship under head coach Marvin Lewis, finishing with a 10-6 record. Their march to the AFC North title included a 6-0 mark in division games, marking the first time in franchise history for Cincinnati to sweep its divisional opponents. The club was led by its defense, which continued rapid improvement under second-year coordinator Mike Zimmer. The Bengals finished fourth in the NFL in fewest yards allowed (301.4 per game). The Bengals were eliminated in the first round of the playoffs, losing 24-14 to the visiting New York Jets, who went on to reach the AFC Championship Game. All nine home games (regular season and postseason) were sellouts, extending the club's franchise-record sellout streak to 53.

2010 Marvin Lewis directed his eighth season as Bengals head coach, tying Paul Brown (1968-75) and Sam Wyche (1984-91) for the longest head coaching tenure in club history. The '10 club won two of the first three games, but finished the season with a 4-12 mark. Injuries played a part, as the Bengals were forced to place 17 players on the Reserve/Injured list, and nine were veteran defensive players who would have started or seen significant action if healthy. The club recorded a franchise-record 57th consecutive sellout (regular and postseason) for a Monday night game on Nov. 8 vs. Pittsburgh, but the streak ended when the Nov. 21 Buffalo game failed to sell out. Still intact at season's end was the club's dominance since December of 2004 in local television ratings. The Nielsen rating for the Jan. 2 season finale at Baltimore meant that for the last 96 TV ratings weeks which included a Bengals regular season or postseason broadcast, the Bengals game was the top-rated show among all programming in the Cincinnati market. The 2010 Bengals played five preseason games, their most since 1988, as the club was selected to open the NFL preseason against Dallas in the Pro Football Hall of Fame Game on Aug. 8 at Canton, Ohio.