

= 1990 New York Giants season =

The 1990 New York Giants season was one of the most successful seasons in the professional football franchise 's history . The Giants , who play in the National Football Conference ( NFC ) of the National Football League ( NFL ) , won their sixth championship ? and second Super Bowl ? in franchise history during the season . Led by linebacker Lawrence Taylor and quarterbacks Phil Simms and Jeff Hostetler , the Giants posted a 13 ? 3 record and defeated the Chicago Bears and the two time defending Super Bowl champion San Francisco 49ers in the NFC playoffs . In Super Bowl XXV they defeated the Buffalo Bills 20 ? 19 in Tampa Stadium , against a patriotic backdrop inspired by the recently started Gulf War . The story of the season is the subject of a recent book , When the Cheering Stops , by defensive end Leonard Marshall and CBSsports.com co @-@ writer William Bendetson .

After making the playoffs in 1989 , the Giants entered the 1990 season as one of the favorites to win the Super Bowl , although most believed they stood little chance of preventing a threepeat by the 49ers . They began the season with a 27 ? 20 win over the Philadelphia Eagles , then won their next nine games before losing a rematch to Philadelphia 31 ? 13 in week 12 . The Giants also lost close games to the 49ers on the road and Bills at home in the regular season , before defeating both teams in playoff rematches . In Week 15 during the game against Buffalo , starting quarterback Phil Simms was injured and ultimately lost for the season with a broken foot . He was replaced by Hostetler , who won the final two regular season games prior to the playoffs . The Giants defense led the NFL in fewest points allowed ( 211 ) , and the team set an NFL record by committing only 14 turnovers in the regular season . After the season , six Giants were selected to the Pro Bowl .

In 2007 , ESPN.com ranked the 1990 Giants ' defense as the sixth @-@ greatest in NFL history , noting that the team " allowed only 13 @.@ 2 points a game against a very tough schedule ? they played against seven playoff teams during the regular season . Led by Hall of Fame linebacker Lawrence Taylor , New York 's defense also came through in the playoffs , holding the Bears to just three points in the divisional playoff game . Then they allowed a tough 49ers offense just two field goals and one TD , and set up the game @-@ winning score by forcing a late fumble to win the NFC title 15 ? 13 . In Super Bowl XXV , the Giant defense held its own against the Bills ' no @-@ huddle offense , and New York won 20 ? 19 . "

= = Off @-@ season = =

= = = NFL Draft = = =

The Giants had 11 selections in the 12 round 1990 NFL Draft , as opposed to the normal 12 , and took running back Rodney Hampton in the first round with the # 24 overall selection . They took defensive end Mike Fox out of West Virginia University in the second round ( # 51 overall ) and linebacker Greg Mark ( # 79 overall ) out of the University of Miami in the third round .

= = Roster = =

= = Coaching staff = =

= = Regular season = =

All times in North American Eastern Time . ( UTC ? 4 and UTC ? 5 during Standard Time )

= = = Game summaries = = =

===== Week 1 : vs. Philadelphia Eagles =====

The Giants started the season with a 27 ? 20 win against the Philadelphia Eagles . Despite sitting out training camp and the preseason in a contract dispute , linebacker Lawrence Taylor started against the Eagles and finished with three sacks and a forced fumble . The Giants defense forced three turnovers and held the Eagles to 83 rushing yards . The Giants offense scored three touchdowns in a 13 @-@ minute span in the third and early fourth quarters , but head coach Bill Parcells felt its performance was lackluster overall , " Our runners didn 't run the way we wanted them to . They were a little impatient . There were five or six vivid examples of cutting back too soon . You just have to give the play a chance and let it go where it 's supposed to . "

===== Week 2 : at Dallas Cowboys =====

In temperatures reaching 122 degrees on the artificial turf at Texas Stadium , the Giants played the Dallas Cowboys on September 16 . In a matchup featuring the Giants , who went 12 ? 4 in 1989 , and the Cowboys , who went 1 ? 15 in 1989 , the Giants dominated from the outset , and used their backup players heavily throughout the game . Lawrence Taylor batted a Troy Aikman pass high into the air that he returned for a touchdown . The Giants defense held the Cowboys to 20 rushing yards and 156 yards of total offense , while their offense gained 369 . In addition , the Cowboys totaled only nine first downs , averaged 1 @.@ 8 yards a rush attempt , and were dominated by the Giants in time of possession ; 41 minutes 40 seconds to 18 minutes 20 seconds . Despite the 28 ? 7 victory , Giants center Bart Oates still felt the Giants offense could improve their play , " [ w ] e missed a lot of assignments . We rushed the ball O.K. , but not like we did against Buffalo in preseason . Phil was pressured some . There were plenty of things we didn 't do . "

===== Week 3 : vs. Miami Dolphins =====

In the first time the Giants had played the Miami Dolphins since that team 's record 1972 season , Miami held the ball for only 19 minutes and 42 seconds , and totalled only 158 yards of total offense against the Giants defense on September 23 . The Giants offense set the tone by holding the ball for 10 minutes and 25 seconds on the opening drive , leading to a field goal by Raul Allegre . They defeated the Dolphins 20 ? 3 in front of 76 @,@ 483 fans at Giants Stadium . Parcells was criticized by the local media for playing Taylor in the final moments , despite the lopsided score , after he injured his hamstring . The Giants defense held the Dolphins passing game , led by eventual Hall of Fame quarterback Dan Marino , to 119 total yards , and 3 @.@ 6 yards per pass attempt .

===== Week 4 : vs. Dallas Cowboys =====

The Giants faced the Dallas Cowboys in week four in front of 75 @,@ 923 fans at Giants Stadium . The Giants defense held the Cowboys to 51 rushing yards on 20 attempts , and the Giants controlled the ball for 35 minutes and 38 seconds of the game . Giants quarterback Phil Simms threw three touchdowns , and backup Jeff Hostetler ran for a 12 @-@ yard score late in the fourth quarter . Although the Giants league @-@ leading defense gave up 284 yards , 84 came on the Cowboys ' final possession when the Giants played a prevent defense . Simms threw touchdown passes to Mark Ingram , and Rodney Hampton , and the Giants built a 31 ? 10 early in the fourth quarter , before pulling their starters and allowing a Dallas touchdown .

===== Week 6 : at Washington Redskins =====

The Giants used their bye week to allow injured players such as linebacker Carl Banks , running back Rodney Hampton , special teamer Reyna Thompson , defensive lineman Erik Howard and offensive tackle Jumbo Elliott to recover from their injuries . They played the Washington Redskins

in Washington , D.C. the following week . The Giants forced four turnovers and won despite losing the time of possession battle to the Redskins 35 minutes 28 seconds to 24 minutes 32 seconds . Defensive coordinator Bill Belichick singled out free safety Greg Jackson , who had two interceptions , after the 24 ? 20 win . " Jackson must have had 10 interceptions in practice , and if ever the cliché held true about a player playing the way he practices , it was so this week . "

= = = = Week 7 : Vs Phoenix Cardinals = = = =

In week seven , the Giants faced the Phoenix Cardinals in front of 76 @, @ 518 fans at Giants Stadium . They rushed for 151 yards on 31 carries , and committed only four penalties for 24 yards . Their defense held the Cardinals to 96 passing yards and 221 yards of total offense . With 5 minutes 38 seconds left in the game , the Cardinals ? 13 @-@ point underdogs going into the game ? extended their lead over the Giants to 19 ? 10 , and had knocked Simms out of the game . However , the Giants came back with a 38 @-@ yard touchdown from Jeff Hostetler to Stephen Baker , and Hostetler then led a late drive culminating in a game @-@ winning 40 @-@ yard field goal by Matt Bahr to win 20 ? 19 . The Giants responses were subdued in their locker room after the win . " It wasn 't pretty , " said Taylor . " But you don 't ask how to win , you just win . "

= = = = Week 8 : Vs Washington Redskins = = = =

At home in front of 75 @, @ 321 fans , the Giants played the Washington Redskins in week eight . Each team totaled 16 first downs , four punts , five penalties , and the margin in time of possession was less than a minute . However , the Giants committed zero turnovers and forced the Redskins into three . Giants cornerback Everson Walls intercepted two passes ? including one that he returned for his first career touchdown ? and free safety Greg Jackson intercepted another . The first interception , by Walls , set up a Giants touchdown to give them a 14 ? 0 lead in the second quarter . Jackson then intercepted a pass in the endzone in the third quarter to preserve a 14 ? 10 lead , and Walls returned his second interception 28 yards for a touchdown that made the score 21 ? 10 and put the game of reach in the fourth quarter .

= = = = Week 9 : At Indianapolis Colts = = = =

at Hooiser Dome , Indianapolis , Indiana

The Giants improved to 8 ? 0 with a 24 ? 7 win over the Indianapolis Colts in front of 56 @, @ 688 in the Hoosier Dome . The Giants defense held the Colts to 11 first downs , 181 total yards , and 55 rushing yards . Simms completed 17 of 21 for 172 yards , with no touchdowns , one interception . Simms ' interception ended a streak of 150 passes without an interception . Defensive end Leonard Marshall sacked Colts quarterback Jeff George twice , Dave Duerson returned a fumble for a touchdown , and the Giants defense held George to 160 yards passing on 37 pass attempts . The Giants controlled the game from the start , ending the first half leading 17 ? 0 , and ahead of the Colts 206 to 45 in total yards , 13 to 1 in first downs , and 20 : 57 to 9 : 03 in time of possession .

= = = = Week 10 : At Los Angeles Rams = = = =

at Anaheim Stadium , Anaheim , California

The Giants traveled to California to face the Los Angeles Rams on November 11 . They defeated the Rams 31 ? 7 in front of 64 @, @ 632 fans in Anaheim Stadium , led by Simm 's efficient passing . Going into the game the Rams had beaten the Giants three times in two years , including eliminating the Giants in the 1989 playoffs . Although the Giants defense was only able to sack Rams quarterback Jim Everett twice , they forced him into 17 of 36 passing for 186 yards , zero touchowns , and three interceptions . " It 's hard to sack him " , Belichick said . " But we kept the pressure on . We had the same coverage we used the last eight years . Nothing radically different . "

===== Week 11 : Vs Detroit Lions =====

The Giants defeated the Detroit Lions 20 ? 0 in week 11 to improve their record to 10 ? 0 , and set a franchise record for wins to start to a season . Simms threw a 57 @-@ yard touchdown pass to receiver Mark Ingram in the second quarter to run the score to 17 ? 0 . After the Giants kicked a field goal to make the score 20 ? 0 , the teams played a scoreless second half . The shutout was the Giants defense first of the season , and coach Parcells commented , " [ t ] he defense played very well . The offense played well when I let them . We played conservatively in the second half . We played pretty much error @-@ free . We didn 't do anything stupid . "

===== Week 12 : At Philadelphia Eagles =====

at Veterans Stadium , Philadelphia

The Giants were dealt their first 1990 regular season loss in a 31 ? 13 defeat against the Philadelphia Eagles on November 25 to set their record at 10 ? 1 . The Eagles broke open a close game by scoring two touchdowns in 22 seconds in the fourth quarter . The game was marked by several scuffles and after the game some of the Giants players complained of the tactics used by the Eagles . The Eagles amassed 179 rushing yards and 405 total yards , and punted the ball just twice in the victory . Eagles quarterback Randall Cunningham rushed for 66 yards while completing 17 of 31 passes for 229 yards , two touchdowns , and zero interceptions . Taylor , who recorded three sacks and seven tackles in the Giants season opening victory over the Eagles , was held to one tackle in the loss .

===== Week 13 : At San Francisco 49ers =====

at Candlestick Park , San Francisco , California

The San Francisco 49ers matched the Giants with their own 10 ? 0 start in the 1990 season . Although both teams lost in week 12 to stand at 10 ? 1 , their week 13 matchup was still highly anticipated . The game took place in front of 66 @,@ 092 fans at Candlestick Park . The 49ers scored the only touchdown of the game in the second quarter on a 23 @-@ yard pass from Joe Montana to John Taylor . With four minutes left , they stopped the Giants on four passes from the 49ers ' 9 @-@ yard line and went on to win , 7 ? 3 , after which 49ers safety Ronnie Lott and Simms had a heated verbal exchange . The Giants defense performed well in the loss . They held the 49ers to 152 passing yards , 88 rushing yards , and limited All @-@ Pro Wide receiver Jerry Rice to one reception for 13 yards . 49ers defensive end Charles Haley recorded five tackles , 1 @.@ 5 sacks , and two forced fumbles in the victory .

===== Week 14 : Vs Minnesota Vikings =====

The Giants hosted the Minnesota Vikings in week 14 . Led by Taylor , who recorded 12 tackles and two sacks , the Giants defense held the Vikings to 132 passing yards . Taylor also forced a fumble by Vikings quarterback Rich Gannon and pressured Gannon into an interception by Gary Reasons at the Viking 17 @-@ yard line , which positioned Matt Bahr for the game @-@ clinching 18 @-@ yard field goal . In addition , Taylor gave several inspirational speeches to his teammates . " He told us : ' I 'm going to start playing the way we 're supposed to play . If anybody wants to come along , fine , ' " inside linebacker Steve DeOssie said . " He changed our attitude . " The Giants won 23 ? 15 to improve to 11 ? 2 . Prior to this game , Parcells had been hospitalized for kidney stones .

===== Week 15 : Vs Buffalo Bills =====

In what would turn out to be a preview of Super Bowl XXV , the Giants lost at home to the Buffalo Bills 17 ? 13 in week 15 . The game was played in inclement weather , which caused 10 @,@ 295 no @-@ shows at Giants Stadium . They led the Bills in total yards ( 313 to 264 ) , rushing yards (

157 to 65 ) , first downs ( 20 to 13 ) and time of possession ( 37 minutes 59 seconds to 22 : 01 ) , but lost nonetheless . Simms broke his foot during the game , causing him to miss the remainder of the season , and was replaced by Jeff Hostetler , who had engineered the Giants ' week seven 4th quarter comeback versus Phoenix . The Bills built a 14 ? 10 second quarter lead behind 74 and 78 yard touchdown drives . The teams alternated field goals to make the score 17 ? 13 . However , the Giants could not score in the fourth quarter despite mounting drives to the Bills ' 18 and 23 yard lines . This was Lionel Manuel 's last game as a Giant , as he was waived afterwards .

= = = Week 16 : At Phoenix Cardinals = = =

at Sun Devil Stadium , Tempe , Arizona

The Giants played the Phoenix Cardinals in Tempe , Arizona in week 16 . Their defense allowed 452 yards , and Cardinals quarterback Timm Rosenbach threw for three touchdowns and set a new career high with 381 yards passing . The Giants noticed in the week leading up to the game that teams had success running with their fullback against the Cardinals , and in the game , Giants ' fullback Maurice Carthon set a career high with 67 rushing yards on 12 carries . They also installed several plays to take advantage of quarterback Jeff Hostetler 's scrambling ability . Hostetler threw for 191 yards and ran for 31 in his first start of the season . The Giants held on to win 24 ? 21 when two of the Cardinals fourth quarter drives resulted in interceptions and their final drive was ended by a Taylor sack . The win clinched the NFC 's # 2 seed ( over the Chicago Bears ) and first @-@ round bye for the playoffs .

= = = Week 17 : At New England Patriots = = =

at Foxboro Stadium , Foxboro , Massachusetts

The Giants travelled to Massachusetts to face the New England Patriots at Foxboro Stadium in week 17 . The game was a de facto home game , as many Giants fans made the trip up to Foxborough to sell the stadium out . The game had no playoff implications for the Giants , who could not surpass the 49ers for the # 1 seed in the NFC playoffs . The Giants rushed for a season high yards 213 yards , led by Hostetler 's 82 yards on 10 carries . The Patriots ' Jason Stauder missed a potential game @-@ tying 42 @-@ yard field goal in the fourth quarter , and Hostetler then ran a 30 @-@ yard bootleg on a key third down play to allow the Giants to run out the clock and secure the victory 13 ? 10 .

= = = Standings = = =

= = Playoffs = =

The Giants finished the regular season having committed an NFL record low 14 turnovers , and their defense led the league in fewest points allowed ( 211 ) . Following the season , six Giants ? defensive lineman Erik Howard , center Bart Oates , offensive guard William Roberts , linebackers Pepper Johnson and Lawrence Taylor , and special teamer Reyna Thompson ? were selected to the Pro Bowl .

= = = NFC Divisional Playoff : Vs Chicago Bears = = =

The Giants defeated the Chicago Bears 31 ? 3 at home in the NFC Divisional playoff game on January 13 , 1991 . Ottis Anderson rushed for 80 yards on 21 carries , and the Giants rushed for 194 yards overall , and dominated the Bears in time of possession ; 38 minutes and 22 seconds to 21 minutes and 38 seconds . Parcells at the suggestion of Belichick used a four @-@ man defensive line most of the game ? as opposed to their traditional 3 @-@ 4 defense ? confusing the unprepared Bears who had trouble with their blocking assignments . The Giants were 4 for 4 on

fourth down plays and converted 6 of 14 third downs . The Giants defense stopped the Bears on the goal line on a fourth down attempt in the second quarter , and held Bears quarterback Mike Tomczak to 17 of 36 passing for 205 yards , and two interceptions , and running back Neal Anderson to a season @-@ low 19 yards on 12 carries . Hostetler threw for two touchdowns and ran for a third .

= = = NFC Championship Game : At San Francisco 49ers = = =

at Candlestick Park , San Francisco , California

The Giants advanced to face the two @-@ time defending champion San Francisco 49ers in the NFC Championship game on January 20 , 1991 in front of 65 @,@ 750 fans at Candlestick Park . The game was a rematch of the 7 ? 3 49ers win one month earlier . The teams alternated field goals in the first and second quarter to make the score 6 ? 6 at halftime . Less than five minutes into the third quarter 49ers Joe Montana threw a 61 @-@ yard touchdown pass to receiver John Taylor to give the 49ers a 13 ? 6 lead . A Giants ' field goal made the score 13 ? 9 at the end of the third quarter . With 9 : 42 remaining in the game , Leonard Marshall sacked Montana and knocked him from the game due to several injuries . The Giants got the ball back , but were stopped on a key third down and one . On fourth down , Parcells called a fake punt , which resulted in a long run by Gary Reasons to set up another Giants ' field goal , making the score 13 ? 12 . The 49ers gained possession of the ball and attempted to run out the clock , but nose tackle Erik Howard made a key play , fighting through a double @-@ team to knock the ball out of running back Roger Craig 's possession . Lawrence Taylor caught the fumble in mid @-@ air , which gave the ball to the Giants at their own 43 @-@ yard line . Hostetler completed passes to Bavaro and Baker which took them to the San Francisco 24 @-@ yard line . Matt Bahr then made his fifth field goal from the 25 @-@ yard line a few plays later as time expired , giving the Giants a 15 ? 13 victory .

= = = Super Bowl XXV = = =

at Tampa Stadium , Tampa , Florida

Super Bowl XXV took place amidst a background of war and patriotism in front of 73 @,@ 813 fans at Tampa Stadium , in Tampa , Florida . The Gulf War had begun less than two weeks previous and the nation rallied around the Super Bowl as a symbol of America . Adding to the patriotism was Whitney Houston 's stirring rendition of the National Anthem , which became known as one of the greatest renditions in Super Bowl history . The game lived up to the stirring Anthem , as it went down as the most competitive Super Bowl in history . The Giants got off to a quick 3 ? 0 lead . However , the Bills scored the next 12 points , on a field goal , a touchdown by backup running back Don Smith , and a safety after Jeff Hostetler was sacked in the end zone by Bruce Smith , to give the Bills a 12 ? 3 lead . The Giants then ran a drive that took nearly 8 minutes , and culminated in a 14 @-@ yard touchdown pass from Hostetler to Stephen Baker making the score 12 ? 10 at halftime .

The Giants received the second half kickoff and mounted a record @-@ setting drive , during which they converted on five third down plays . The opening drive ran for over 9 minutes ( a Super Bowl record ) and culminated in a 1 @-@ yard touchdown run by Ottis Anderson , giving the Giants a 17 ? 12 lead . The signature play of the drive came on a third down play , when Giants receiver Mark Ingram appeared about to be tackled well short of a first down . However , Ingram evaded several tacklers , and dragged one defender just enough to get the Giants the first down , and kept the drive alive . By this time , the Giants strategy to handle the Bills offense had become clear : keep them off the field . Indeed , the Giants two touchdown drives consumed over 17 minutes .

The Bills struck back quickly . On the first play of the fourth quarter , Thurman Thomas ran for a 31 @-@ yard touchdown that put the Bills back in front , 19 ? 17 . A few possessions later , the Giants drove down to the Bills 4 yard line , but were unable to score a touchdown and had to settle for a 21 @-@ yard field goal by Matt Bahr that gave the Giants a 20 ? 19 lead . Both teams exchanged possessions before the Bills began one final drive . The Bills drove down to the Giants 30 @-@ yard

line to set up what would be a potentially game @-@ winning 47 @-@ yard field goal attempt by Scott Norwood . Just before the kick , ABC showed a graphic indicating that , on grass that season , Norwood had only made 3 ? of ? 7 field goals from at least 40 yards , and that the 47 @-@ yarder would be Norwood 's longest ever on grass . A few moments later , in what became the game 's signature moment , Norwood 's attempt missed wide right , and the Giants won their second Super Bowl in five years , 20 ? 19 .

The Giants set a Super Bowl record for time of possession with a mark of 40 : 33 , and Ottis Anderson was named MVP of the game after rushing for 102 yards and a touchdown .

= = Season Facts = =

This year was the second of four times that the Giants faced a team in the regular season that they later played in the Super Bowl . The Giants are 2 ? 2 in the regular season and 4 ? 0 in the Super Bowl .

The Giants played the Miami Dolphins for the first time since their first meeting in 1972 .

The Giants set a NFL Record for the fewest turnovers in a 16 game season with 14 .

The Giants had a 13 @-@ game regular season winning streak : 3 wins in 1989 and 10 wins in 1990 .

The Giants 10 ? 0 start was their best start in team history and their 13 ? 3 final standings was their second best finish in a 16 game season .

The Giants victory over the Chicago Bears in the NFC Divisional Playoff Game was their first win over the Bears in the playoffs since 1956 .

= = Awards and honors = =

Ottis Anderson , Super Bowl Most Valuable Player

Reyna Thompson , 1990 All @-@ Madden Team

Reyna Thompson , 1990 NFC Pro Bowl selection

Eric Howard , 1990 All @-@ Madden Team

Matt Bahr , 1990 All @-@ Madden Team