The fifth-oldest franchise in the NFL, the Steelers were founded on July 8, 1933, by Arthur Joseph Rooney. Originally named the Pittsburgh Pirates, they were a member of the Eastern Division of the 10-team NFL. The other four current NFL teams in existence at that time were the Chicago (Arizona) Cardinals, Green Bay Packers, Chicago Bears and New York Giants.

One of the great pioneers of the sports world, Art Rooney passed away on August 25, 1988, following a stroke at the age of 87. “The Chief”, as he was affectionately known, is enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame and is remembered as one of Pittsburgh’s great people.

Born on January 27, 1901, in Coultersville, Pa., Art Rooney was the oldest of Daniel and Margaret Rooney’s nine children. He grew up in Old Allegheny, now known as Pittsburgh’s North Side, and until his death he lived on the North Side, just a short distance from Three Rivers Stadium.

Rooney attended St. Peter’s Parochial School and Duquesne University Prep School. He studied collegiately at Indiana (Pa.) Normal, which is now Indiana University of Pennsylvania, as well as at Georgetown and Duquesne.

An exceptional all-around athlete, Rooney held middleweight and welterweight titles from the AAU Boxing Championships and was named to the U.S. Olympic Boxing Team in 1920, although he did not participate in the Olympic Games. He played minor league baseball from 1920-25 before a promising career was cut short by an arm injury. Rooney continued playing football for several semi-pro teams in the Pittsburgh area. He was married on June 11, 1931, to Kathleen McNulty, and the couple had five sons — Daniel, Art Jr., Tim, John and Pat. In 1964, Rooney was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame for his contributions to the growth of the NFL and the Pittsburgh Steelers.

By the mid-1960s, Rooney had begun to turn over much of the operation of the Steelers to his oldest son, Dan. After having worked in every area of the organization since 1955, Daniel M. Rooney was named president of the Steelers in 1975. In 2000, Dan Rooney was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame for his contributions to the growth of the NFL and the Pittsburgh Steelers.

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Dan Rooney spent 54 consecutive years with the organization before being named U.S. Ambassador to Ireland in 2009 by President Barack Obama. Rooney was required to move to Ireland in 2009 to fulfill his duties as ambassador.

As an NFL owner, Dan Rooney was widely recognized as one of the league’s most influential executives and one of Pittsburgh’s leading contributors to civic affairs. Among his community activities, Dan Rooney is a board member for The American Ireland Fund, The Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation and The Heinz History Center.

Dan Rooney has been a member of several NFL committees over the past 30-plus years. He has served on the board of directors for the NFL Trust Fund, NFL Films and the Scheduling Committee. He was appointed chairman of the Expansion Committee in 1973, which considered new franchise locations and directed the addition of Seattle and Tampa Bay as expansion teams in 1976. In 1976, Rooney was also named chairman of the Negotiating Committee, and in 1982 he contributed to the negotiations for the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the NFL and the Players’ Association. He again played a key role in the labor agreement reached between NFL owners and players in 1993. Rooney was also largely responsible for developing the realignment plan and scheduling format that the NFL adopted prior to the 2002 season. In October 2002, he was named chairman of the NFL’s Diversity in the Workplace Committee. Rooney is also Chairman of the Hall of Fame Committee. In February 1999, he was named the recipient of the Philadelphia Maxwell Football Club’s Francis J. “Reds” Bagnell Award for outstanding contributions to the game of football.

Daniel M. Rooney was born on Pittsburgh’s North Side on July 20, 1932. He is a 1950 graduate of North Catholic High School, where he played quarterback on the varsity football team. He went on to graduate from Duquesne University in 1955 with a bachelor of arts degree in accounting. Rooney and his wife Patricia live on the North Side. The Rooney have nine children and 17 grandchildren.

Dan Rooney was named Steelers’ Chairman Emeritus in July 2009 after he was named United States Ambassador to Ireland. Rooney served as United States Ambassador until late 2012. He returned to the Steelers and currently serves as chairman.

In 2003, Dan Rooney officially turned over the title of Steelers’ team president to his oldest son, Art Rooney II, who had previously served as the team’s vice president and general counsel. Art II also previously served as Chairman of the Board of Klett Rooney Lieber & Schorling (now Buchanan Ingersoll), Attorneys at Law. A 1978 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh where he majored in political science, Art II received his law degree from Duquesne University School of Law in 1982. He currently serves as Chairman of the NFL’s Stadium Committee, and serves on numerous NFL boards, including the Legislative Committee, the Management Council Executive Committee, the International Committee, the NFL Foundation and the Digital Media Committee. His many charitable contributions include sitting on the boards of the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Public Theater, the Extra Mile Education Foundation, the United Way of America (Allegheny County, Pennsylvania) and numerous other ventures. He and his wife Greta have four children.

1901
January 27 – Arthur J. Rooney Sr. is born in Coultersville, Pa. He would eventually be affectionately known as “The Chief.”

1932
July 20 – Dan Rooney is born on Pittsburgh’s North Side.

1933
July 8 – The Pittsburgh Pirates are founded by Art Rooney.

1933
Ray Kemp becomes the first African-American to play for the Steelers.
In 1940 Rooney changed the team name to the Pittsburgh Steelers, representing the heritage of Pittsburgh. The first winning record in the organization’s history came in 1942 when head coach Walt Kiesling led the Steelers to a 7-4 finish with the league-leading rushing of rookie Bill Dudley. But the next year Dudley joined the Armed Forces along with many other NFL players as the nation went to war. With rosters depleted, Rooney merged the Steelers with the Philadelphia Eagles in 1943 (Phil-Pitt “Steagles”) and with the Chicago Cardinals (Card-Pitt) in 1944.

In 1938 Rooney signed Colorado All-America Byron “Whizzer” White to a $15,800 contract, making White the first “big money” player in the NFL. White led the league in rushing that year and became one of the NFL’s most illustrious alumni. He served 31 years as a Justice of the United States Supreme Court before retiring in 1993.

**1940 Rooney changed the team name to the Pittsburgh Steelers, representing the heritage of Pittsburgh.**

Rooney hired legendary Pitt coach Jock Sutherland in 1946, and Dudley returned from the war to earn NFL MVP honors, leading the league in rushing, interceptions, and punt returns. Today, Dudley is a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Sutherland led the 1947 Steelers to an 8-4 record and a share of the Eastern division title, but they lost their first-ever postseason game, 21-0, to Philadelphia. Sutherland died suddenly the following spring while on a scouting trip.

Succeeding Sutherland, John Michelosen was head coach for the 1948-51 seasons, compiling a 20-26-2 record. In 1952 Joe Bach returned for his second stint with the Steelers, having coached the team previously in 1935-36. The Steelers became the last team to abandon the single wing for the T-formation in 1952.

Bach resigned for health reasons following the 1954 season and was replaced by assistant coach Walt Kiesling, who had been the Steelers’ head coach twice previously. Kiesling’s three stints covered the 1939-40, 1941-44, and 1954-56 campaigns.

**1957 Lowell Perry becomes the NFL’s first African-American assistant coach.**

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**1943 STEAGLES PLAYERS**

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**1938 Byron “Whizzer” White paid an unheard-of $15,800 to play one season for the Steelers.**

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**1942 November 22 – The Steelers defeat the Chicago Cards 19-3 to clinch their first winning season in team history.**

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**1944 The Pittsburgh Steelers merge with the Chicago Cardinals (Card-Pitt) as many rosters were still depleted due to World War II.**

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**1947 December 21 – The Steelers play their first postseason game, a 21-0 setback to the Philadelphia Eagles in the Eastern Division Playoffs.**

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**1943 The Pittsburgh Steelers merge with the Philadelphia Eagles to form the “Steagles” as many rosters were depleted due to World War II.**

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Buddy Parker was named head coach in 1957 and over the next eight years he led the Steelers to five non-losing seasons. Hall of Fame quarterback Bobby Layne quarterbacked the team through three of those campaigns, leading the Steelers to a 9-5 mark and a playoff game versus Detroit in 1962, which the Steelers lost 17-10. Parker completed his tenure with a 51-48-6 record and ranks fourth among all-time Steelers coaches for career wins.

On October 25, 1964, the Steelers made team history when they retired jersey No. 70 in honor of former defensive tackle Ernie Stautner. Stautner, who was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1969, remains the only Steelers player to have his jersey retired.

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Brief head coaching stints by Mike Nixon in 1965 and Bill Austin from 1966-68 preceded the hiring of 37-year-old Chuck Noll on January 27, 1969. Noll began to rebuild the Steelers through the draft, starting with the defense when he selected defensive tackle Joe Greene with his first choice in 1969. Today, Greene is a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Two significant changes took place in 1970. The Steelers moved from the NFL Century Division to the AFC Central with the merger of the American Football League and the NFL. The Steelers also moved into a new home as Three Rivers Stadium opened. Previously, the Steelers had played home games at Forbes Field from 1933-57 and at both Forbes Field and Pitt Stadium from 1958-63. From 1964-69 the Steelers played at Pitt Stadium until Three Rivers opened in 1970.

Gradual improvement in the early 1970s resulted in the team’s first division title in 1972 with an 11-3 record. In the first playoff game at Three Rivers the Steelers defeated the Oakland Raiders, 13-7, with Franco Harris’ “Immaculate Reception” in the final minute. Despite a 21-17 loss the following week to the undefeated Miami Dolphins, the Steelers had reached a new plateau.
It took 40 years for the Steelers to finally win their first division title, but over the next decade they achieved a level of success unprecedented in professional football.

In 1973 the Steelers won a wild card playoff berth with a 10-4 record. Oakland avenged their loss from the previous year, however, with a 33-14 defeat of the Steelers in the playoffs.

The Steelers won their first of six consecutive AFC Central titles in 1974 and marched past Buffalo (32-14) and Oakland (24-13) en route to their first Super Bowl appearance in Super Bowl IX. The fierce Pittsburgh defense led the way to a 16-6 victory over the Minnesota Vikings, and Art Rooney was presented the Vince Lombardi Trophy for the first time.

In 1975 the Steelers won 11 straight games to finish 12-2 and claim their second consecutive division crown. After defeating Baltimore (28-10) and Oakland (16-10) in the playoffs, the Steelers became the third team in NFL history, joining Green Bay and Miami, to win back-to-back Super Bowls with a 21-17 defeat of the Dallas Cowboys in Super Bowl X.

The 1976 Steelers struggled to a 1-4 start before reeling off nine straight victories, including five shutouts, to win the division with a 10-4 mark. They defeated Baltimore 40-14 in the playoffs, but lost to Oakland, 24-7, after both starting running backs, Franco Harris and Rocky Bleier, were injured. The following year the Steelers dropped a 34-21 decision to Denver in the first round of the playoffs after posting a 9-5 regular-season record.

In 1978 the Steelers made history after a league-best 14-2 regular season and playoff wins versus Denver [33-10] and Houston [34-5]. Their 35-31 Super Bowl XIII win versus Dallas made the Steelers the first team to win three Super Bowls.

Yet another standard was set the following year when the 1979 Steelers defeated the Los Angeles Rams, 31-19, in Super Bowl XIV to make them the first team in history to win four Super Bowls and the only team to win back-to-back Super Bowls twice. The Super Bowl victory followed a 12-4 regular season and playoff wins versus Miami [34-14] and Houston [27-13]. With six consecutive AFC Central crowns, eight straight years of playoff appearances and four Super Bowl championships, the Steelers were tagged the “Team of the Decade” for the 1970s.

The 1970’s Steelers were tagged “Team of the Decade.”
A 9-7 finish in 1990 left the Steelers in a three-way tie for the AFC Central lead, but they were eliminated from playoff contention by a 2-4 division record. The 1991 team finished second in the division despite a 7-9 record, winning the last two games under Noll at home against the Cincinnati Bengals and Cleveland Browns.

On December 26, 1991 Noll announced his retirement from football after 39 consecutive seasons, the last 23 as the Steelers’ head coach, which made him one of only four men to coach the same team for 23 consecutive years. He left as the fifth-winningest coach in NFL history with an overall record of 209-156-1, and as the only coach to win four Super Bowls. Noll was rewarded in 1993 with his election to the Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility.

A new era began in 1992 with the retirement of Noll and the arrival of 34-year-old Bill Cowher, the National Football League’s youngest head coach at the time he assumed control. In the first season of the new era, the Steelers won the AFC Central division crown for the first time since 1984 with an 11-5 record. While the team enjoyed new-found success, Cowher was recognized by the Associated Press as the NFL’s Coach of the Year and six Steelers played in the Pro Bowl, the most in more than a decade.

Under Cowher the Steelers became the first AFC team since the 1970 merger to claim its 10th division title. Their 11-5 record equaled the best in the conference and gave the Steelers home field advantage throughout the playoffs. However, in the first postseason game at Three Rivers in exactly 10 years, the Steelers were defeated by eventual AFC champion Buffalo, 24-3.
In 1993, the Steelers earned a wild card playoff berth, marking their first consecutive playoff appearances since the 1983-84 seasons. A 9-7 record was good for second place in the division, but the season ended in a 27-24 overtime loss at Kansas City in the AFC Wild Card game.

The 1994 Steelers won seven of their final eight regular-season games for their strongest finish since 1978. They captured their second division title in three years with an AFC-best 12-4 record. After a 29-9 victory over the Cleveland Browns in the first round of the playoffs, Pittsburgh hosted its first AFC Championship game since 1979. The game went down to the wire and the Steelers lost to the San Diego Chargers, 17-13.

At 38, Bill Cowher became the youngest head coach to lead his team to a Super Bowl in 1995. Along the way, Cowher’s team captured their third AFC Central division title in four years, made their fourth straight playoff appearance and won the Steelers’ first AFC title since 1979. After a first-round bye, they defeated the Buffalo Bills (40-21) and the Indianapolis Colts (20-16), before losing to the Dallas Cowboys, 27-17, in Super Bowl XXX in Tempe, Ariz.

In 1996, the Steelers finished 10-6 and earned their fifth consecutive trip to the playoffs. Cowher ended the season with 57 career victories, ranking him as the second winningest coach in team history, behind his predecessor Noll.

The Steelers captured their fourth consecutive AFC Central title in 1997 while posting an 11-5 record. They were one play away from earning their sixth Super Bowl appearance but lost to Denver, 24-21, in the AFC Championship game.

In 1998, the Steelers finished a disappointing 7-9, losing their last five regular-season games and missing the playoffs for the first time under Bill Cowher.

The Steelers suffered their second consecutive losing season in 1999, when their record fell to 6-10.
After starting the 2000 season with a 0-3 record, the Steelers rebounded to finish the year at 9-7 and barely missed the playoffs. However, 2000 will be remembered most for being the final season for the Steelers at Three Rivers Stadium. The Steelers were 4-4 during their final season at Three Rivers Stadium, including victories in four of their final six home games. The Steelers won their final game at Three Rivers, 24-3, against the Washington Redskins on Dec. 16.

The Steelers finished 31 seasons at Three Rivers Stadium (1970-2000) with a 182-73 home record, including the postseason. The Steelers recorded their largest regular-season home attendance figures (440,428) since 1998 in the final season, including a season-high 58,183 fans during the final game in stadium history.

The Steelers began a new era in team history in 2001 with the opening of their new stadium, Heinz Field. The Steelers posted an AFC-best 13-3 regular-season record, including a 7-1 mark at home, and advanced to the AFC Championship Game. The inaugural game at Heinz Field was originally scheduled to be a nationally televised Sunday Night game on Sept. 16. However, the September 11 terrorist attacks on America forced the NFL to postpone all games that weekend — which were eventually rescheduled for the end of the season. As a result, the Steelers opened Heinz Field on Sunday, Oct. 7 with a 16-7 win against the Cincinnati Bengals.

The Steelers defeated the defending Super Bowl Champion Baltimore Ravens, 27-10, in the AFC Divisional Playoffs, in the first-ever postseason game played at Heinz Field. However, they suffered a disappointing 24-17 loss at home in the AFC Championship Game to the eventual Super Bowl-champion New England Patriots.

After a 0-2 start in 2002, the Steelers rallied to make the playoffs for the second consecutive season. However, the team’s Super Bowl hopes ended when they lost, 34-31, in overtime to the Tennessee Titans on the road.

The Steelers began the 2003 season with a 34-15 victory against AFC North rival Baltimore Ravens. However, the team never regained that magic and finished the season with a 6-10 record and missed the playoffs for the first time in three years.

The Steelers set a team record in 2004 by becoming the first AFC team to win 15 games (15-1) in the regular season. They ultimately advanced to the AFC Championship Game where they lost to the New England Patriots, 41-27. Nine Steelers were selected to play in the AFC-NFC Pro Bowl, the team’s most since the 1979 season.

Pittsburgh found itself sitting at 7-5 after 12 games in 2005, but it rallied to win its final four regular-season games to earn the AFC’s sixth seed in the playoffs. The Steelers then won an unprecedented three straight road playoff games to gain a berth in Super Bowl XL in Detroit versus the Seattle Seahawks.

Art Rooney II was named President of the Pittsburgh Steelers in 2003.
The Steelers captured their fifth Super Bowl title with a 21-10 victory over the Seahawks as wide receiver Hines Ward was named MVP, finishing with five receptions for 123 yards. Ward also hauled in a game-clinching 43-yard TD pass from Antwaan Randle El on a gadget play midway through the fourth quarter.

The 2006 season saw the Bill Cowher era come to an end with the Steelers finishing the season winning six of their final eight games to post an 8-8 record on the year. On January 5, 2006, Bill Cowher resigned as Steelers head coach with a 161-99-1 overall record, second-best in team history.

The Steelers hired 34-year old Mike Tomlin as the team’s coach. Tomlin was the NFL’s youngest head coach at the time he was hired on Jan. 22, 2007.

Tomlin became the second first-year coach in team history to make the playoffs. The Steelers finished with a 10-6 overall record and won the AFC North division title.

Mike Tomlin became the first coach in franchise history to win a division title in each of his first two seasons when the Steelers captured their second consecutive AFC North division title with a 12-4 record. They went on to defeat the San Diego Chargers and Baltimore Ravens to gain a berth in Super Bowl XLIII in Tampa, Florida versus the Arizona Cardinals.

The Steelers became the first NFL franchise to capture six Super Bowl titles when they defeated the Cardinals, 27-23. With the victory, Head Coach Mike Tomlin became the youngest coach to win a Super Bowl in NFL history. Wide receiver Santonio Holmes was named MVP after hauling in the game-winning six-yard touchdown pass from Ben Roethlisberger with 35 seconds remaining in regulation.

The Steelers added to their legacy, making it all the way to Super Bowl XLV after a 12-4 record during the 2010 season. The Steelers though could not overcome an early 18-point deficit and fell to the Green Bay Packers 31-25. Despite the loss, the Steelers still hold the NFL record for most Super Bowl victories with six.