



Charlie Joiner

Charlie played pro football for 18 years, longer than any other wide receiver in history at the time of his retirement. When he retired at the age of 39 after the 1986 season with the San Diego Chargers, he ranked as the leading receiver of all-time with 750 catches, the most career receiving yards with 12,146 yards and the most games played by a wide receiver in league history with 239. He was inducted in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1996.

Blessed with excellent speed and tantalizing moves, Joiner averaged 16.2 yards per catch and accounted for 12,146 yards and 65 touchdowns on his receptions. He ranked sixth in career reception yardage.

The Houston Oilers targeted Joiner for the defensive backfield when they picked the 5-11, 180-pounder from Grambling in the fourth round of the 1969 AFL-NFL Draft. Joiner played briefly on defense and the kickoff return team but soon became established as a premier pass catcher.

In his fourth season in 1972, Houston sent him to the Cincinnati Bengals in a four-player swap. Four years later in 1976, he was traded to San Diego. With the Chargers, Joiner blossomed into super-stardom. He and quarterback Dan Fouts formed a lethal pass-catch team that accounted for the preponderance of his 586 receptions as a Charger.

During his 11 years in San Diego, Joiner caught 50 or more passes seven times and had 70 or more receptions three seasons. Injuries cut into his playing time at the beginning but, in a 193-game span over his final 13 seasons, Joiner missed only one game. He was an All-NFL pick in 1980 and a Pro Bowl choice three times. In the 1980 AFC title game, he led the Chargers with six receptions for 130 yards and two touchdowns.

Joiner, who was born October 14, 1947, in Many, Louisiana, was once described by San Francisco 49ers coaching great Bill Walsh as “the most intelligent, the smartest, the most calculating receiver the game has ever known.”

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