



# The Jim Plunkett Story: The Saga of a Man Who Came Back

*Dave Newhouse, Jim Plunkett*

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James William Jim Plunkett (born 1947 in San Jose, California) is a former American football quarterback who played college football for Stanford University, where he won the Heisman Trophy, and professionally for three National Football League teams: the New England Patriots, San Francisco 49ers and Oakland/Los Angeles Raiders. He led the Raiders to two Super Bowl victories (XV and XVIII). He is the only eligible quarterback to start (and win) two Super Bowls without being inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. Before Plunkett entered the NFL, he played in James Lick High School, and is in their hall of fame wall in the James Lick gymnasium, also UCLA coach Tommy Prothro had called him the best pro quarterback prospect I've ever seen, echoing Sweeney's words from the year prior. His excellent arm strength and precision made him attractive to pro teams that relied much more heavily on the passing game than most college teams of the late 1960s. In 1971, he was drafted with the first overall pick in the NFL draft by the New England Patriots (the team was still known as the Boston Patriots at the time of the draft; the name change to New England did not become official until March 21 of that year). Plunkett owns the distinction of being the only player of Hispanic heritage to be drafted with the first overall pick in the NFL draft. The Patriots finished the season at 6-8, fourth place in the AFC East. Plunkett's first game was a 20-6 victory over the Oakland Raiders, the Patriots' first regular-season contest at Schaefer Stadium. New England also influenced the AFC East championship race, as Plunkett's 88-yard fourth-quarter touchdown pass to former Stanford teammate Randy Vataha on the final day of the season dropped the Baltimore Colts to a 10-4-0 record and into second place in the division behind the 10-3-1 Miami Dolphins. Two weeks before the Patriots defeated the Colts, Plunkett engineered a 34-13 victory over the Dolphins.

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