

# Five Reasons Every Titans' Fan Should Love Marcus Mariota

If you had polled Titans' fans prior to last season, I am convinced that an overwhelming majority of them would have been "all in" on Marcus Mariota. They would have believed he had proven that he was the franchise quarterback this team has been looking for since the Steve McNair era. Then the 2017-2018 season happened and the narrative about Mariota changed. Drastically. He went from being one of the most exciting young QB's in the game to one of the most head-scratching. He threw more interceptions than touchdowns last season, his accuracy seemed to get worse, and he clearly did not have the same sort of electric speed and mobility of his first two professional seasons. Now, it is not uncommon to hear Titans' fans talk about Mariota being a bust or that the team needs to draft his replacement. We live in crazy times.

I am firmly in the camp that believes that last season was an aberration. Due to a myriad (yes, I used myriad – deal with it) of factors, Mariota took a step back in his development last year. Here's a quick recap of a few of those factors:

**He had no offseason.** Mariota ended his Sophomore season with a broken leg. He spent the entire offseason rehabbing. Everything from timing with receivers, comfort in the pocket, and confidence in his legs all took a significant blow due to that injury and the loss of an offseason.

**He played in one of the most archaic offenses in the league.** I'm not going to take cheap shots at Mularkey and Robiskie, but their offensive system was a bad fit for Mariota. They consistently put him in positions where he had to be perfect to make plays work, and last season, he just didn't

have what it took to be perfect that often.

**He had really bad luck.** According to at least one analyst, Mariota threw less “interceptable” passes than most QB’s in the NFL last season but still ended up with more interceptions than most of them. Basically, when he threw bad passes, they were picked off. It’s rare that it happens like that. Every QB throws bad passes that are not intercepted. Nearly every mistake Marcus made ended up costing the team. See below and the rest of the rankings [here](#):

*“Andy Dalton threw the ball to defenders 32 times last year, he had 12 interceptions. Derek Carr threw the ball to defenders 36 times last year, he had 13 interceptions. Mariota finished the year with 16 interceptions. He threw the ball to defenders 14 times. How is that possible? He was by far the least fortunate quarterback in the league. Of Mariota’s 14 interceptable passes, 13 were caught. 92.9 percent of the time he threw the ball to a defender the defender caught it, 27 of the 36 qualifying quarterbacks had less than half of their interceptable passes caught by defenders. Compounding Mariota’s misfortune, he also had three interceptions that were direct results of one of his teammates making an egregious error. ”*

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That’s enough of the bad stuff. Last year was a disappointment from a statistical perspective for Marcus Mariota. But not everything was bad. In fact, a lot of good stuff happened last year for Mariota and I think things are about to look even better.

**Reason Number One: He is the perfect face of the franchise.**

Marcus Mariota is sort of a boy scout. He is quiet, soft-

spoken, and considerate. Read [this article](#) if you want to see the kind of guy he is behind the scenes. He is not going to embarrass the team or city with a DUI, an arrest for domestic violence, for crashing his motorcycle, for allegedly assaulting multiple women, or any number of other stupid, corrupt, and evil things. The worst thing Marcus will do is say he was “p\*\*\*\*\* off” after a game where he played poorly and then come back the next day and apologize for being angry and for saying those words – because his mother raised him to be better than that.

### **Reason Number Two: He is clutch.**

Mariota led the NFL with 4th quarter and overtime comebacks last year during the regular season. He added another comeback for the first Tennessee Titans’ playoff win in over a decade. The Titans have a chance in most games if number 8 is under center. He is that kind of player.

### **Reason Number Three: Even with a down season, he is still putting up good career numbers.**

Even factoring in a miserable statistical season last year, Mariota’s career numbers are just fine and show that he is talented and has a long career ahead of him. His numbers in key areas measure up just fine when compared to other “young” and talented QB’s in the NFL.

- **Mariota has a better career completion % than Andrew Luck, Derek Carr, and Jameis Winston.**
- **Mariota has the same or better TD % than Derek Carr, Jameis Winston, and Matthew Stafford.**
- **Mariota has a better career QB rating than Andrew Luck, Derek Carr, Jameis Winston, and Matthew Stafford.**

Mariota can improve, sure, but the rumors of his demise are greatly exaggerated.

#### **Reason Number Four: He makes no excuses.**

This is the area where Marcus reminds me the most of Steve McNair. McNair never took the credit for the win and always took the blame for the loss. Mariota is exactly the same way. That is what you want from your leader. You want accountability no matter what. Mariota demands perfection from himself and his teammates see that and they respond to it. The fans should respond to it. At least, those of us that have not lost our minds...

**Reason Number Five: This. (Click the link in the video to watch it on YouTube. The NFL is weird about this stuff.)**

**And this.**

**And THIS!!! (It's ridiculous how giddy I get watching this one.)**

I think those plays speak for themselves. I deliberately chose plays from last season when Marcus was statistically at his worst. Even at his lowest, he did those things. He made those plays. He willed his team to win those games.

What else do you want, Titans' fans? Get on board now because the Mariota hype train is about to leave the station.