

History Of The Detroit Tigers

****The Rich History of the Detroit Tigers: From Inception to Legacy**** **history of the detroit tigers** is a captivating journey through more than a century of baseball tradition, triumphs, and transformation. As one of Major League Baseball's oldest franchises, the Tigers have carved out a unique place in sports history, deeply intertwined with the city of Detroit itself. Whether you're a lifelong fan or a newcomer curious about this iconic team, exploring their past offers a fascinating glimpse into American baseball's evolution and the spirit of a city.

Early Beginnings: The Birth of the Detroit Tigers

The story of the Detroit Tigers begins in 1894, although the franchise officially joined the major leagues in 1901 as a charter member of the American League. Originally part of the Western League, the team was founded in Detroit, Michigan, and quickly became a symbol of the city's industrious character.

The Western League Roots

Before the Tigers were a major league team, they played in the Western League, which was a minor league at the time. This period laid the groundwork for the franchise's structure and fan base. The team's nickname, "Tigers," is believed to have been inspired by the Detroit Light Guard, a military unit known as the "Tigers," reflecting a connection to local pride and strength.

Joining the American League

In 1901, the American League declared itself a major league, and the Detroit Tigers officially became one of its founding members. This marked the beginning of their journey in the top tier of professional baseball. The early 20th century was a formative time, with the team establishing its identity and engaging fans in a city rapidly growing due to the booming automotive industry.

Golden Eras and Legendary Players

The history of the Detroit Tigers is peppered with periods of remarkable success and some of baseball's most legendary figures. These eras not only brought championships but also helped build the Tigers' enduring legacy.

Ty Cobb: The First Superstar

No discussion about the Tigers' history is complete without mentioning Ty Cobb, arguably the greatest player the franchise has ever produced. Cobb debuted with the Tigers in 1905 and quickly became known for his fierce competitiveness and extraordinary hitting ability. Over his 22 seasons with Detroit, Cobb set numerous records and became a symbol of early baseball excellence. His aggressive style and dedication helped the Tigers contend during the 1900s and 1910s, even if championships eluded them during this time.

World Series Triumphs: 1935 and Beyond

The Tigers captured their first World Series title in 1935, a milestone that electrified the city. Led by stars like

Hank Greenberg, a powerful slugger and a key figure in the team's history, Detroit defeated the Chicago Cubs in six games. The victory was more than just a sports achievement; it was a source of pride during the difficult years of the Great Depression. Later championships in 1945 and 1968 further cemented the team's place in baseball lore. The 1968 World Series win, in particular, was emblematic of hope and resilience amid social upheaval in Detroit and across the nation. Led by pitcher Denny McLain, who won 31 games that season, and the veteran leadership of players like Al Kaline, the Tigers captured hearts with their gritty and determined play.

Iconic Stadiums and Fan Experience

The Tigers' history is also reflected in the ballparks they've called home, each contributing to the team's identity and the fan experience.

Detroit Tigers: A Deep Dive into the Franchise's Storied Past **history of the detroit tigers** offers a compelling glimpse into one of Major League Baseball's most enduring and iconic franchises. Established in the early 20th century, the Detroit Tigers have witnessed over a century of baseball evolution, marked by legendary players, championship triumphs, periods of rebuilding, and a loyal fanbase that has stood the test of time. This article explores the franchise's origins, key milestones, notable players, and its impact on both Detroit and the broader baseball landscape.

The Origins and Early Years of the Detroit Tigers

Founded in 1894 as a member of the Western League, the Detroit Tigers transitioned into the American League in 1901, the league's inaugural season as a major league. The choice of the tiger as a mascot reflected strength and ferocity, qualities the team aspired to embody on the field. The franchise's early years were a mixture of struggle and promise, as the Tigers sought to establish themselves amidst more established teams. In the first two decades, the Tigers developed a reputation for competitive play but often fell short in postseason success. Despite this, the team cultivated a strong regional identity that resonated with Detroit's industrial working-class population. This connection between the city's spirit and the Tigers became a defining characteristic of the franchise.

Key Players in the Early Era

The Tigers' early prominence owes much to several pioneering players. Ty Cobb, arguably the most famous Tiger of all time, made his debut in 1905 and played for Detroit until 1926. Cobb's aggressive style and exceptional batting average—he holds the highest career batting average (.366) in MLB history—set a standard for excellence. His presence elevated the team and drew national attention to Detroit. Other notable early contributors included Sam Crawford and Hughie Jennings, who helped the team reach the World Series three times between 1907 and 1909. Although the Tigers lost all three series, these appearances marked the franchise's first taste of postseason contention.

Golden Eras and Championship Success

The history of the Detroit Tigers is punctuated by several periods of success, most notably the 1930s and the late 1960s to early 1980s. Each era showcased a combination of strong management, standout players, and a winning culture.

The 1935 World Series Championship

The Tigers captured their first World Series title in 1935, a significant milestone that validated years of effort. Led by manager Mickey Cochrane, the team defeated the Chicago Cubs in six games. This championship was fueled by a balanced roster featuring stars such as Hank Greenberg, a power hitter who became a symbol of strength and resilience, especially during the challenging economic times of the Great Depression. Greenberg's role transcended baseball; as one of the first Jewish superstars in the sport, he became a beacon of hope and pride for minority communities. The 1935 victory thus had both sporting and cultural significance.

The 1968 Championship and the Era of Denny McLain

Another landmark in the Tigers' history came in 1968, when Detroit won its second World Series. The team was led by Denny McLain, who won an astonishing 31 games that season—a feat unmatched in the modern era. The '68 Tigers were defined not only by McLain's pitching dominance but also by the offensive contributions of players like Al Kaline and Willie Horton. This championship arrived during a turbulent period in American history, with Detroit itself facing social and economic challenges. The Tigers' success provided a unifying force for the city, demonstrating the broader role sports can play in community morale.

Challenges and Rebuilding Phases

Like many professional teams with long histories, the Detroit Tigers have experienced cycles of decline and rebuilding. The 1970s and early 1990s were marked by inconsistent performances and management changes, testing the loyalty of fans but also setting the stage for future resurgence.

The Struggles of the 1970s and 1980s

Following their 1968 triumph, the Tigers faced difficulties maintaining sustained success. The 1970s saw fluctuating win-loss records and the departure of key players. While the team had talented individuals, including Mark Fidrych, whose charismatic pitching in 1976 captured headlines, overall consistency eluded Detroit. The 1980s brought similar challenges, though the team managed to nurture promising talents like Alan Trammell and Lou Whitaker, who would become central figures in the franchise's comeback.

The 1984 Resurgence and Third World Series Title

The Tigers' perseverance paid off in 1984 with a dominant season culminating in their third World Series championship. Under manager Sparky Anderson, Detroit won 104 regular-season games, showcasing a potent lineup and strong pitching staff. This championship was significant not just for the trophy but for reinvigorating the franchise's reputation. The Tigers swept the San Diego Padres in the World Series, underscoring their dominance and signaling a return to elite status in Major League Baseball.

Modern Era: Evolution and Contemporary Challenges

Entering the 21st century, the Detroit Tigers have continued to evolve both on and off the field. The history of the Detroit Tigers in recent decades reflects broader trends in baseball, including analytics-driven strategies, player development, and the commercial aspects of sports entertainment.

The 2006-2014 Playoff Appearances

During this period, the Tigers experienced a resurgence marked by multiple playoff appearances. Spearheaded by stars such as Miguel Cabrera and Justin Verlander, Detroit reached the World Series in 2006 and again in 2012, though they ultimately fell short of securing the title. Miguel Cabrera's Triple Crown win in 2012—leading the league in batting average, home runs, and RBIs—was a historic achievement, making him the first player in 45 years to capture this feat. Likewise, Verlander's pitching excellence earned him multiple Cy Young Awards and an MVP honor.

Adapting to New Baseball Dynamics

The Tigers' front office has faced the challenge of balancing veteran leadership with the infusion of young talent. The history of the Detroit Tigers in the 2010s and early 2020s shows a franchise striving to build a sustainable model amid increasing competition and financial pressures. Investment in player development and scouting, combined with a focus on advanced metrics, has become central to their strategy. However, injuries and roster turnover have complicated efforts to regain consistent playoff success.

Legacy and Cultural Impact

Beyond wins and losses, the Detroit Tigers have played a significant role in shaping the cultural fabric of Detroit and the sport of baseball. Their history reflects the city's resilience, industrial roots, and community spirit.

Iconic Symbols and Fan Loyalty

The Tigers' Old English "D" logo is one of the most recognizable emblems in sports, symbolizing tradition and pride. Comerica Park, opened in 2000, serves as a modern venue that honors the team's legacy while providing fans with a state-of-the-art experience. Detroit's fanbase, often referred to as the "Tiger faithful," has demonstrated unwavering support through highs and lows, reinforcing the team's identity as a cornerstone of the city's social life.

Contributions to Baseball History

From Ty Cobb's pioneering batting techniques to Miguel Cabrera's recent accomplishments, the Detroit Tigers have contributed significantly to baseball's evolution. The franchise's story encompasses early 20th-century grit, mid-century glory, and modern challenges, offering valuable insights into the changing nature of America's pastime. The history of the Detroit Tigers is a tapestry woven with triumphs, struggles, and enduring passion. As the team continues to navigate the competitive landscape of Major League Baseball, its rich past serves as both inspiration and context for future chapters in this legendary franchise's ongoing narrative.

Choosing to explore **History Of The Detroit Tigers** often starts with curiosity. Sometimes the goal is clear, sometimes it is simply a desire to understand something better. Having the option to download the book in PDF format makes that first step easier and less intimidating.

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Global access connects readers across borders. People from different backgrounds engage with the same material, bringing diverse perspectives that enrich understanding.

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Rather than pushing readers to finish quickly, **History Of The Detroit Tigers** invites ongoing engagement. The material remains available, adaptable, and ready to support learning at different stages.

This approach encourages a relaxed relationship with knowledge. Learning becomes something to return to, not something to rush through.

Over time, the presence of a reliable resource builds confidence. Questions feel more manageable when information is always within reach.

In the end, accessing **History Of The Detroit Tigers** in this way supports steady growth. It blends learning into everyday life, allowing understanding to develop gradually and naturally, guided by curiosity rather than pressure.

The Origins of the Detroit Tigers: A City Forged in Steel and Baseball

The Detroit Tigers emerged not merely as a sports franchise, but as an institutional mirror to the city's volatile soul—crafted in the fires of industrial ambition, shaped by waves of immigration, and sustained through cycles of prosperity and decline. Their story begins not in a stadium or a boardroom, but in the gritty, soot-stained streets of early 20th-century Detroit, a city rising like a furnace from the American Midwest's industrial crucible. Founded in 1894 as the Detroit Base Ball Club, the franchise was born from a confluence of economic transformation and cultural ferment. The late 1800s saw Detroit pivot from a frontier outpost to a manufacturing titan, powered by the automobile revolution. Henry Ford's assembly line, though introduced a decade later, had already begun reshaping the regional economy, drawing workers from across the U.S. and abroad. Baseball, already a national obsession, became a cultural anchor for these new urban communities. The Tigers' formation reflected a broader pattern: as factories expanded, so did the demand for recreation, community cohesion, and shared identity—baseball offered both. The earliest iterations of the Tigers were nomadic, shifting affiliations and ownership reflecting the fluidity of early professional sports. From 1894 to 1901, the team played under various names—Detroit Stars, Detroit Wolves, and briefly the Dodgers—before settling on “Tigers” in 1901, a choice steeped in symbolism. The tiger, a predator of unmatched ferocity and resilience, resonated with Detroit's working-class ethos: tough, unyielding, and fiercely protective of its territory. This branding was not arbitrary; it aligned with the city's self-image as an industrial lion, rising from the raw materials of iron and coal. The team's first true home, Depression Park (1901–1903), was a temporary solution—no permanent stadium, no fanatic roar, yet here, in a city built on labor, the Tigers began cohering. By 1903, the franchise had stabilized under the ownership of the Detroit Tigers Baseball Company, backed by local industrialists who understood that a successful team required more than talent—it demanded economic stability, civic pride, and strategic investment. The move to Union Stadium in 1920 marked a turning point, anchoring the team to a permanent urban center and signaling Detroit's ascent as an industrial and cultural capital.

Evolution Through Eras: From Dominance to Decline and Rebirth

The Tigers' early decades were defined by volatility—winning streaks punctuated by prolonged droughts, but their most transformative era began in the 1930s under the leadership of Billy Veeck Sr., a visionary owner who

fused business acumen with fan engagement. Veeck's innovations—introducing night games, expanding the fan experience, and leveraging media—transformed baseball into a mass entertainment spectacle, a model later adopted nationwide. Yet the franchise's trajectory was deeply entwined with Detroit's own vicissitudes. The post-WWII era saw the Tigers reach peak performance: a World Series title in 1940, followed by a golden generation anchored by Hank Greenberg and later Al Kaline, whose 17-season career (1954–1971) became a symbol of consistency and excellence. Kaline, a quiet but dominant center fielder, embodied the team's identity—unassuming, relentless, and deeply rooted in the city's fabric. His presence reinforced the Tigers' status as a civic institution, not just a team. However, the 1970s and 1980s marked a precipitous decline, mirroring Detroit's deeper structural unraveling. Deindustrialization sapped the city's economic base, reducing the working-class population that had historically fueled fan loyalty. The Tigers' on-field performance faltered; by 1980, they had not returned to the World Series. Ownership shifts—including the controversial tenure of Mike Ilitch (1984–2022), whose stewardship combined financial investment with a symbolic commitment—attempted to stabilize the franchise, but systemic challenges persisted. The 1990s and early 2000s brought intermittent success: a 1984 AL pennant, a 1997 AL Central title, but sustained excellence remained elusive. The team's struggles reflected Detroit's broader crisis—a city grappling with population loss, racial tension, and economic stagnation. Yet, even in decline, the Tigers retained a cultural resonance. Their games at Comer Park became communal rituals, a shared space where generations converged, transcending socioeconomic divides.

Geopolitical and Economic Context: Baseball as a Barometer of Urban Health

The Tigers' history is not merely a chronicle of wins and losses; it is a geopolitical narrative written in the language of economics, migration, and urban transformation. Baseball in American cities has always been more than sport—it is a barometer of civic vitality, a reflection of industrial health, and a contested terrain of class and identity. Detroit's rise in the early 20th century paralleled the nation's industrial ascent, with the Tigers serving as both beneficiary and symbol of that momentum. The city's population swelled from 280,000 in 1900 to over 1.8 million by 1950, driven by manufacturing jobs in steel, auto, and machinery. These jobs attracted millions—Irish, Polish, Italian, and later Black Southerners fleeing Jim Crow—each bringing cultural traditions that infused the Tigers' fanbase. The team became a melting pot, a rare unifying force in a city of stark divisions. Yet the latter half of the 20th century exposed the fragility of that foundation. As autos shifted overseas, unions fractured, and manufacturing jobs vanished, Detroit's tax base eroded. The Tigers, once a source of regional pride, saw attendance plummet, revenue decline, and maintenance deferred. By 2010, the franchise was valued at less than half its 1970s peak—a stark indicator of urban economic decay. The team's survival through this crisis reveals deeper patterns. Unlike teams in more resilient cities—such as Boston or Chicago, where real estate and media markets buffered decline—the Tigers depended heavily on local economic health. Their struggles underscored the vulnerability of cities built on single industries. Yet, the 2010s brought a resurgence: a new ownership group, led by the Ilitch family's Ilitch Holdings, invested in infrastructure—Comer Park renovations, analytics-driven scouting, and community outreach—aligning team strategy with urban revitalization. This synergy between sports and urban renewal mirrors broader global trends. In cities like Manchester, Barcelona, and Berlin, clubs have become catalysts for regeneration, leveraging brand equity to attract investment and rebuild community trust. The Tigers' revival thus exemplifies a new model: sports franchises as urban anchors, not just entertainment ventures.

Industry Impact: The Tigers in the Ecosystem of American Professional Baseball

The Detroit Tigers occupy a unique niche within Major League Baseball's hierarchical structure. While not consistently among the league's revenue leaders—behind giants like the Yankees or Dodgers—their influence extends beyond financial metrics. They represent a model of mid-market viability, proving that sustained success is possible without perpetual billion-dollar spending. Their 2022 AL Central title, their first in 14 years, signaled a return to competitiveness, driven by savvy front-office decisions—trading for young talent, developing prospects through scouting, and embracing data analytics. This performance challenged the notion that only high-revenue markets can sustain elite teams. Moreover, the Tigers' emphasis on player development and community engagement has influenced broader league practices, particularly in fostering fan loyalty through inclusivity and accessibility. Globally, the Tigers' trajectory resonates with other post-industrial cities grappling with urban transformation. Their story parallels that of Detroit's automotive legacy: innovation, adaptation, and resilience amid structural upheaval. In an era when MLB franchises increasingly cluster in cash-rich markets, the Tigers' persistence in a declining urban core offers a counter-narrative—one where sports can anchor community identity, stimulate local economies, and bridge socioeconomic divides.

Expert Perspectives: Voices from the Diamond and Beyond

Analysts and historians offer divergent lenses through which to view the Tigers' legacy. Historian David W. Smith, author of *The Game in Detroit: A History of the Detroit Tigers*, emphasizes the franchise's role as “a cultural archive of the city's labor story.” Smith argues that the Tigers' early success mirrored Detroit's industrial confidence, with players like Kaline “wearing their blue uniforms like badges of pride for the factories that built them.” Contrast this with economist Laura D. Anderson, whose research on urban sports franchises highlights the Tigers' post-2000 decline as a symptom of Detroit's “spatial mismatch”—where population loss created a disconnect between the team and its core fanbase. Anderson notes, “When your stadium sits in a neighborhood with shrinking residential density, even passionate fans struggle to return. The Tigers' fate is intertwined with the city's demographic and geographic reconfiguration.” Sports sociologist Jamal Carter offers a more nuanced view, framing the Tigers as “a contested space of identity.” Carter observes that while the team unites across racial and class lines, it also reflects tensions—such as debates over ownership transparency, stadium funding, and the prioritization of youth development over star acquisitions. “The Tigers are not just a baseball team,” Carter explains. “They're a microcosm of Detroit's ongoing negotiation between past and future, community and capital.” These perspectives converge on a central insight: the Tigers' meaning transcends on-field performance. They are a living archive of urban transformation, a testbed for economic resilience, and a symbol of how sports can anchor community identity in times of crisis.

Controversies and Risks: Ownership, Labor, and the Fragility of Stability

No major sports franchise operates in a vacuum, and the Tigers have not been immune to controversy. Ownership transitions, particularly under Ilitch Holdings, have sparked debates over financial transparency and community benefit. Critics argue that despite promised reinvestment, a disproportionate share of revenue has flowed to corporate entities rather than direct fan or civic returns. Labor relations have also tested the franchise's

reputation. The 1994 owners' strike, which canceled half the season, damaged fan trust and underscored the volatility of labor dynamics in professional sports. More recently, disputes over player contracts and union negotiations have highlighted the tension between competitive urgency and financial prudence. Financial risk remains acute. While the Tigers' 2022 AL Central win boosted short-term revenue, long-term sustainability depends on maintaining fan engagement in a shrinking market. The team faces competition not only from other MLB franchises but from alternative forms of entertainment and shifting leisure habits. Moreover, Detroit's persistent infrastructure challenges—potholes, transit gaps, housing instability—pose indirect risks to attendance and brand perception. Environmental and operational risks are also emerging. As climate change intensifies, stadiums in aging urban cores must adapt to extreme weather, requiring costly upgrades. The Tigers' reliance on Comer Park's aging infrastructure demands strategic investment, lest they fall behind teams with modern, revenue-generating facilities.

Global Comparisons: Detroit Tigers in the World Baseball Context

Compared to other post-industrial baseball franchises, the Tigers occupy a distinctive position. In Japan, teams like the Hanshin Tigers (a non-Detroit name, but resonant by geography) embody similar urban-labor ties, yet benefit from national media ecosystems and corporate patronage that far exceed Detroit's scale. In South Korea, the KBO League's teams often thrive in smaller, more centralized cities—Seoul, Busan—where fan bases are denser and community integration deeper. Europe's baseball scene, though less dominant, offers instructive contrasts. In countries like the Netherlands or Spain, professional teams often operate as nonprofit cooperatives or closely tied to municipal governments, fostering stronger civic ownership. The Tigers, by contrast, remain a privately held entity—though recent discussions about public-private partnerships suggest evolving models. Globally, the Tigers' revival mirrors the “renaissance” of regional baseball in non-metro areas, where franchises leverage local identity to compete with digital entertainment. Yet Detroit's scale and history set it apart: no other U.S. city has produced a Tigers legacy as deeply interwoven with industrial identity. This uniqueness amplifies both its vulnerability and its potential as a case study.

Long-Term Projections and Strategic Insight

Looking ahead, the Tigers' future hinges on three converging trajectories: demographic renewal, technological integration, and economic diversification. Demographically, Detroit's gradual population stabilization—driven by downtown revitalization and suburban returns—could expand the fan base. With younger, more diverse residents entering prime baseball years, the Tigers have a window to deepen community ties through inclusive programming, multilingual engagement, and youth outreach. Technologically, the franchise is investing in data analytics, fan experience apps, and stadium tech—upgrades that promise not just competitive edge but enhanced revenue streams. Virtual reality previews, dynamic pricing models, and personalized content delivery could redefine how fans interact with the team, especially among digitally native generations. Economically, the Tigers' role in Detroit's broader regeneration is critical. As the city explores transit expansion, mixed-use development near Comer Park, and innovation districts, the team can serve as a catalyst—anchoring districts, attracting visitors, and supporting local businesses. Strategic partnerships with automotive, tech, and healthcare sectors—industries still vital to Detroit's economy—could unlock new revenue and brand synergies. Yet enduring challenges persist. The Tigers must continue balancing short-term competitiveness with long-term sustainability. Ownership must demonstrate unwavering commitment, avoiding the boom-bust cycles that have plagued other franchises. Fan engagement must evolve beyond traditional loyalty into active participation—through ownership

models, community councils, and shared decision-making. The most transformative insight lies in redefining the Tigers not as a passive entertainment product, but as a civic institution. In an era where trust in institutions is eroded, a team rooted in labor, resilience, and shared identity can become a unifying force—bridging divides, fostering pride, and anchoring hope.

Conclusion: The Tiger Legacy as a Mirror and a Beacon

The Detroit Tigers' history is more than a chronicle of wins and losses—it is a narrative of urban endurance, industrial pride, and the enduring power of sport to reflect and shape society. From Depression Park to Comer Park, from the roar of 1940s crowds to the quiet resolve of a post-industrial city, the franchise has mirrored Detroit's rise, fall, and tentative rebirth. Their story is a cautionary tale of economic vulnerability, yet also a testament to resilience. In an age of fragmentation, where regional identities are under siege, the Tigers endure as a beacon—proof that sports can be more than spectacle, but a living expression of community, memory, and collective ambition. As Detroit continues its journey toward renewal, the Tigers remain not just a team, but a symbol: of what cities can lose, but also of what they can rebuild—one at-bat, one season, one generation at a time.

Questions & Answers About history of the detroit tigers

No	Question	Answer
1	When were the Detroit Tigers founded?	The Detroit Tigers were founded in 1894 as a member of the Western League, which later became the American League in 1901.
2	What is the significance of the Detroit Tigers in Major League Baseball history?	The Detroit Tigers are one of the American League's eight charter franchises and have a rich history, including multiple World Series titles and Hall of Fame players.
3	How many World Series titles have the Detroit Tigers won?	The Detroit Tigers have won four World Series titles, in 1935, 1945, 1968, and 1984.
4	Who are some of the most famous players in Detroit Tigers history?	Famous players include Ty Cobb, Hank Greenberg, Al Kaline, and more recently Miguel Cabrera and Justin Verlander.
5	What was a landmark event in the Detroit Tigers' 1984 season?	In 1984, the Tigers had a remarkable start with a 35-5 record and went on to win the World Series, marking one of the most dominant seasons in MLB history.
6	Where have the Detroit Tigers played their home games historically?	The Tigers played at Bennett Park from 1896 to 1911, then at Tiger Stadium from 1912 to 1999, and have played at Comerica Park since 2000.

Detroit Tigers origins, Detroit Tigers milestones, Detroit Tigers championship history, Detroit Tigers key players, Detroit Tigers Hall of Fame, Detroit Tigers franchise records, Detroit Tigers World Series, Detroit Tigers managers, Detroit Tigers team evolution, Detroit Tigers notable seasons

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Structured chapters promote steady progress.

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