

redskins head coach history

Redskins head coach history is a fascinating journey that reflects the evolution of one of the NFL's most storied franchises. The Washington Redskins, now known as the Washington Commanders, have had a rich history since their founding in 1932. The head coaches of the team have played pivotal roles in shaping its identity, culture, and success on the field. This article delves into the significant figures in Redskins coaching history, their achievements, coaching styles, and the impact they had on the franchise and its fans.

Foundational Years and Early Coaches

The Redskins were established in the early days of the NFL, and their first head coach was L. D. "Duke" Slater, who led the team for just one season in 1932. The early years were marked by several coaching changes, as the franchise struggled to find a consistent leader.

George Allen Era (1971-1977)

One of the most notable coaches in Redskins history is George Allen, who took over the reins in 1971. His coaching philosophy was centered around building a strong defense and fostering a winning mentality. Allen's leadership was characterized by:

- Innovative Strategies: He was known for his "Over the Hill Gang," a group of seasoned players who played pivotal roles in the team's success.
- Playoff Appearances: Under his guidance, the Redskins made the playoffs in five of his seven seasons, culminating in a Super Bowl appearance in 1973.

Allen's tenure is often remembered for its intensity and his ability to motivate players, which left a lasting impact on the franchise.

Joe Gibbs: The Legendary Coach (1981-1992, 2004-2007)

Perhaps the most iconic figure in Redskins head coach history is Joe Gibbs. He first took the helm in 1981 and quickly transformed the team into a powerhouse in the NFL.

- Super Bowl Success: Gibbs led the Redskins to three Super Bowl championships (1983, 1988, and 1992), a remarkable achievement that solidified his legacy as one of the greatest coaches in the league.

- **Offensive Innovation:** His use of the "Hogs," a formidable offensive line, and his adaptability to different quarterback styles made the Redskins' offense versatile and unpredictable.
- **Strong Leadership:** Gibbs was revered for his ability to connect with players and foster camaraderie, creating a winning culture that resonated throughout the organization.

Gibbs returned for a second stint in 2004, but although the team experienced mixed results, his influence remained a significant part of the franchise's identity.

Transition and Challenges: 1990s to 2000s

Following Gibbs' departure, the Redskins faced challenges in maintaining their status as a competitive team. The 1990s and early 2000s saw a series of coaching changes that reflected the instability within the organization.

Norv Turner (1994-2000)

Norv Turner took over as head coach in 1994, inheriting a team in transition. His tenure was marked by:

- **Mixed Results:** While Turner had a talented roster, including players like quarterback Gus Frerotte and running back Stephen Davis, the team struggled to achieve consistent success.
- **Playoff Appearance:** The highlight of his tenure was a playoff appearance in 1999, but ultimately, he was unable to replicate the success of the Gibbs era.

Turner's time with the Redskins was characterized by an inability to establish a solid identity, leading to his dismissal in 2000.

Other Key Coaches of the 2000s

The early 2000s were turbulent, with several head coaches attempting to restore the franchise's glory:

- **Marty Schottenheimer (2001):** Schottenheimer lasted only one season, leading the team to an 8-8 record before being let go.
- **Steve Spurrier (2002-2003):** Spurrier, known for his success in college football, struggled to adapt to the NFL, leading to a disappointing record of 12-20.
- **Joe Gibbs (2004-2007):** Gibbs returned, bringing some stability, but despite a playoff appearance in 2005, the team struggled to regain its former glory.

Recent Coaching Changes and Developments

The 2010s brought further changes to the coaching staff, with the franchise continuing to search for the right leader.

Mike Shanahan (2010-2013)

Mike Shanahan, a two-time Super Bowl winner with the Denver Broncos, took over as head coach in 2010. His tenure included:

- Quarterback Controversy: The selection of Robert Griffin III in the 2012 NFL Draft created excitement but also led to challenges in managing quarterback dynamics.
- Playoff Run: The 2012 season saw the Redskins winning the NFC East, but injuries and controversies marred Shanahan's later years.

Jay Gruden (2014-2019)

Jay Gruden succeeded Shanahan and had a mixed record:

- Offensive Focus: Gruden emphasized an offensive game plan and worked to develop quarterbacks like Kirk Cousins.
- Playoff Appearance: His best season came in 2015 when the team reached the playoffs, but overall, he faced challenges with consistency.

Ron Rivera (2020-Present)

In 2020, Ron Rivera was hired as head coach, bringing a wealth of experience from his time with the Carolina Panthers.

- Defensive Improvement: Rivera focused on strengthening the defense, leading to significant improvements in team performance.
- Cultural Change: He emphasized a positive culture and team unity, aiming to rebuild the franchise's identity after years of turmoil.

Conclusion

The history of **Redskins head coach history** is a tale of triumphs and challenges, reflecting the broader narrative of the franchise itself. From George Allen's innovative strategies to Joe Gibbs' legendary leadership and the more recent efforts of coaches like Mike Shanahan and Ron Rivera, each head coach has left an indelible mark on the organization. As the team

continues to evolve, the lessons learned from its coaching history will undoubtedly influence its future direction. The legacy of these coaches will always be a significant part of what it means to be a fan of the Washington Commanders.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was the first head coach of the Washington Redskins?

The first head coach of the Washington Redskins was Marshall 'Lone Star' Dietz, who led the team from 1937 to 1940.

Which Redskins head coach has the most wins in franchise history?

Joe Gibbs holds the record for the most wins as head coach of the Washington Redskins, with a total of 140 regular-season victories.

How many Super Bowl championships did Joe Gibbs win with the Redskins?

Joe Gibbs won three Super Bowl championships with the Washington Redskins, in the years 1983, 1988, and 1992.

What was the significant achievement of head coach George Allen?

George Allen led the Redskins to an impressive 1971 season, finishing with a 9-4-1 record and making the playoffs, marking the team's first postseason appearance since 1945.

Who was the Redskins' head coach during their 2012 playoff run?

Mike Shanahan was the head coach of the Washington Redskins during their 2012 playoff run, which was highlighted by Robert Griffin III's standout rookie season.

What impact did Ron Rivera have on the Washington Redskins since becoming head coach?

Ron Rivera has focused on rebuilding the Washington Redskins' culture and improving their on-field performance since becoming head coach in 2020, leading to a more competitive team.

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