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# Super Bowl & NFL Championship Seasons: The Philadelphia Eagles

*By Brian Kelly*

Begins with the Eagles' first Championship  
& rolls right to Super Bowl LII.





#1 Lud Wray



#2 Bert Bell



#3 Greasy Neale



#4 Bo McMillin



#5 Wayne Millner



#6 Jim Trimble



#7 Hugh Devore



#8 Buck Shaw



#9 Nick Skorich



#10 Joe Kuharich



#11 Jerry Williams



#12 Ed Khayat



#13 Mike McCormack



#14 Dick Vermeil



#15 Marion Campbell



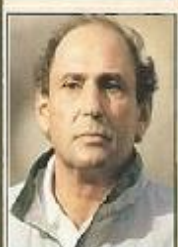
#16 Fred Bruney



#21 Chip Kelly



#17 Buddy Ryan



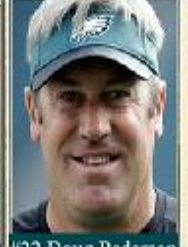
#18 Rick Kotite



#19 Ray Rhodes



#20 Andy Reid



#22 Doug Pederson







# Super Bowl & NFL Championship Seasons: The Philadelphia Eagles

Begins with the Eagle's first Championship a& rolls right to Super Bowl LII.

This book is written for those of us who love the Philadelphia Eagles and Eagles Football. The Eagles have many championships to their credit and many close calls. We cover them all in this book. We report on all of the thrilling seasons and the big games that made a big difference in Eagles Football History.

The book briefly reviews the founding of the Eagles as a new team in 1933, and it looks at the Yellow Jackets and other precursor teams that helped form the mettle of this great organization—The Philadelphia Eagles. The great games in the Eagles past amazed Philadelphia fans for years. This book takes the Eagles fan on a journey from when there was no Eagles team at all, to where American football style emerged from a sport that for years was played only by colleges with a mixture of soccer and rugby rules. With such a storied history, our current Philadelphia Eagles have truly arrived.

The Eagles have won three NFL championships (1948, 1949, and 1960) and they have won one Super Bowl (2018). But that is not all. Always keeping fans on the edge of their seats, the Eagles have had many close calls and many championship games. Daniel Gallen of Penn Live.com recently captured the frustration of Eagles fans. Four Championship Seasons is a big deal but there were lots of “almosts” and second places in the Eagles History

“The NFC Championship Game is well-worn territory for the Philadelphia Eagles and their fans. The Birds played in their seventh conference title game in 2017 on their way to the Super Bowl. It was their sixth appearance since 2001 including a run of four-straight from Andy Reid in the early 2000s. They lost most of their appearances. So, while this game is a symbol of success, it is also a reminder of so much heartbreak in January for the Eagles. As another mark of excellence, prior to the Super Bowl after the 2017 season, the Eagles were runners-up for the top prize with five 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes. We take you to all of those games as it is part of the Eagles championship and almost championship legacy.

This book captures the great championships and the almost championship seasons from 1933 when the Eagles came into the NFL. I dare you to pick up this book for, if you are an Eagles fan, you will never put it down again. It shows the greatest games in the greatest seasons played by your favorite football greatest team. You cannot ever get enough of Eagles' greatness, but we provide many stories in one spot as we can in this can't miss book.

## Brian Kelly



## Super Bowl & NFL Championship Seasons: The Philadelphia Eagles

Author:  
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Publisher/ Editor,

Brian W. Kelly  
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# Philadelphia Eagles Season Records from 1933 to 2019

Total Games 1247

Total Wins 599

Total Losses 622

Total Ties 26 \* Prior to Overtime Rules

Stats from 1933 \* Through Feb 2018

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Pl</u>	<u>W-L-T</u>
1933	Lud Wray	x	East	4th	3-5-1
1934	Lud Wray,	x	East	T3 <sup>rd</sup>	4-7-0
1935	Lud Wray,	x	East	5th	2-9-0

**1933-1935 Lud Wray final record (9-21-1)**

1936	Bert Bell,	x	East	5th	1-11-0
1937	Bert Bell,	x	East	5th	2-8-1
1938	Bert Bell,	x	East	4th	5-6-0
1939	Bert Bell,	x	East	T4 <sup>th</sup>	1-9-1
1940	Bert Bell,	x	East	5th	1-10-0

**1936-1940 Bert Bell final record (10-44-2)**

1941	Greasy Neale	x	East	4th	2-8-1
1942	Greasy Neale	x	East	5th	2-9-0

## *1943 The Eagles & the Steelers aka The Steagles*

1943	Greasy Neale	x	East	3rd	5- 4- 1, —
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1944	Greasy Neale	x	East	2nd,	7-1-2
1945	Greasy Neale	x	East	2nd	7-3-0
1946	Greasy Neale	x	East	2nd	6-5-0
1947	Greasy Neale	x	East	1st	8-4-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Won Eastern Divisional Playoff (at Steelers) 21–0</li> <li>• Lost NFL Championship (at Cardinals) 21–28</li> </ul>
1948	Greasy Neale	x	East	1st	9-2-1
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Won NFL Championship (1) (Cardinals) 7–0</li> </ul>
1949	Greasy Neale	x	East	1st	11-1-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Won NFL Championship (2) (Rams) 14-0</li> </ul>
1950	Greasy Neale	American	x	T3 <sup>rd</sup>	6-6-0

## **1941-1950 Greasy Neale final record (66-44-5)**

1951	Bo McMillin	American	x	5th	2-0-0
1951	Wayne Millner	American	x	5th	2-8-0

## **1951-1951 McMillin / Millner final record (4-8-0)**

1952	Jim Trimble	American	x	T2 <sup>nd</sup>	7-5-0
1953	Jim Trimble	Eastern	x	2nd	7-4-1
1954	Jim Trimble	Eastern	x	2nd	7-4-1
1955	Jim Trimble	Eastern	x	T4 <sup>th</sup>	4-7-1

## **1952-1955 Jim Trimble final record (25-20-3)**

1956	Hugh Devore	Eastern,	x	6th	3-8-1
1957	Hugh Devore	Eastern,	x	5th	4-8-0

## **1956-1957 High Devore final record (7-16-1)**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Pl</u>	<u>W-L-T</u>
1958	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	<b>T5<sup>th</sup></b>	2-9-1
1959	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	<b>T2<sup>nd</sup></b>	7-5-0
1960	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	<b>1st</b>	10-2-0

- Won NFL Championship (3) (Packers) 17-13
- Norm Van Brocklin (MVP)
- Buck Shaw (Coach of Year),

**1958-1960 Buck Shaw final record (20-16-1)**

1961	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	<b>2nd</b>	10-4-0
1962	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	<b>7th</b>	3-10-1
1963	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	<b>7th</b>	2-10-2

**1961-1963 Nick Skorich final record (15-24-3)**

1964	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	<b>T3<sup>rd</sup></b>	6-8-0
1965	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	<b>T5<sup>th</sup></b>	5-9-0
1966	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	<b>T2<sup>nd</sup></b>	9-5-0
1967	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	Capitl	<b>2nd</b>	6-7-1
1968	Joe Kuharich, Eastern		Capitl	<b>4th</b>	2-12-0

**1964-1968 Joe Kuharich final record (28-41-1)**

1969	Jerry Willms.	Eastern	Capitl	<b>4th</b>	4-9-1
1970	Jerry Willms	NFC	East	<b>5th</b>	3-10-1
1971	Jerry Willms	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	0-3-0

**1969- 1971 Jerry Williams final record (7-22-2)**

1971	Ed Khayat	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	6-4-1
1972	Ed Khayat	NFC	East	<b>5th</b>	2-11-1

**1971-1972 Ed Khayat final record (8-15-2)**

1973	M. McCormack	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	5-8-1
1974	M. McCormack	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	7-7-0
1975	M. McCormack	NFC	East	<b>5th</b>	4-10-0, —

**1973-1975 Mike McCormack final record (16-25-1)**

1976	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	4-10-0
1977	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	5-9-0
1978	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	9-7-0

- Lost Wild Card Playoffs (at Falcons) 13-14

1979	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	11-5-0
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- Won Wild Card Playoffs(Bears) 27-17

- Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Buccaneers) 17-24

1980	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>1st</b>	12-4-0
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- Won Divisional Playoffs(Vikings) 31-16,

- Won NFC Championship(v Cowboys) 20-7

- Lost Super Bowl XV (vs. Raiders) 10-27

1981	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	10-6-0
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- Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Giants) 21-27

1982	Dick Vermeil, NFC		East	<b>13th</b>	3-6-0
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- Players Strike

**1976-1982 Dick Vermeil final record (57-51-0)**

1983	Marion Campbell	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	5-10-0
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1984	Marion Campbell	NFC	East	<b>5th</b>	6-9-1
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1985	Marion Campbell	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	7-9-0
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1985	Fred Bruney	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	1-0-0 (wk16)
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**1983-1985 Marion Campbell final record (17-29-1)**



**1985-1985 Fred Brunev final record (1-0-0)**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Pl</u>	<u>W-L-T</u>
1986	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	5-10-0 —
1987	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	7-8-0, —
1988	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	<b>1st</b>	10-6=0
					• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Bears) 12–20
1989	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	11-5-0,
					• Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Rams) 7–21
1990	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	10-6-0
					• Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Redskins) 6–20

**1986-1990 Buddy Ryan final record (43-38-1)**

1991	Rich Kotite	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	10-6-0
1992	Rich Kotite	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	11-5-0
					• Won Wild Card Playoffs (at Saints) 36–20
					• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Cowboys) 10–34
1993	Rich Kotite	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	8-8-0
1994	Rich Kotite,	NFC,	East	<b>4th</b>	7-9-0

**1991-1994 Rich Kotite final record (37-29-0)**

1995	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East,	<b>2nd</b>	10-6-0
					• Won Wild Card Playoffs(Lions) 58–37
					• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Cowboys) 11–30
					• Ray Rhodes Coach of the year
1996	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East,	<b>2nd</b>	10- 6- 0,
					• Lost Wild Card Playoff s (at 49ers) 0–14
1997	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	6-9-1
1998	Ray Rhodes,	NFC,	East	<b>5th</b>	3-13-0

**1995-1998 Ray Rhodes final record (30-36-1)**

1999	Andy Reid	NFC	East	<b>5th</b>	5-11-0
2000	Andy Reid	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	11- 5- 0,
					• Won Wild Card Playoffs(Buccaneers) 21–3
					• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Giants) 10–20
2001	Andy Reid	NFC	East,	<b>1st</b>	11-5-0
					• Won Wild Card Playoffs(Buccaneers) 31–9
					• Won Divisional Playoffs (at Bears) 33–19
					• Lost NFC Championship (at Rams) 24–29
2002	Andy Reid	NFC	East	<b>1st</b>	12-4-0,
					• Won Divisional Playoffs(Falcons) 20–6
					• Lost NFC Championship(Buccaneers) 10–27
					• Andy Reid, Coach of year
2003	Andy Reid	NFC	East	<b>1st</b>	12-4-0
					• Won Divisional Playoffs(Packers) 20–17 (OT)
					• Lost NFC Championship(Panthers) 3–14
2004	Andy Reid	NFC	East	<b>1st</b>	13-3-0
					• Won Divisional Playoffs(Vikings) 27–14
					• Won NFC Championship(Falcons) 27–10
					• Lost Super Bowl XXXIX (vs. Patriots) 21–24
2005	Andy Reid	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	6-10-0
2006	Andy Reid	NFC	East	<b>1st</b>	10-6-0
					• Won Wild Card Playoffs(Giants) 23–20
					• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Saints) 24–27
2007	Andy Reid	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	8-8-0

**Year Coach Conf Div Pl W-L-T**

2008	Andy Reid	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	9-6-1
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- Won Wild Card Playoffs (at Vikings) 26–14
  - Won Divisional Playoffs (at Giants) 23–11
  - Lost NFC Championship (at Cardinals) 25–32
- 2009 Andy Reid    NFC                    East    **2nd**    11-5-0
- Lost Wild Card Playoffs (at Cowboys) 14–34
- 2010 Andy Reid    NFC                    East    **1st**     10- 6-0
- Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Packers) 16–21
- 2011 Andy Reid    NFC                    East    **2nd**    8-8-0,
- 2012 Andy Reid    NFC                    East    **4th**    4- 12-0
- 1999-2012 Any Reid final record (140-102-1)**

- 2013 Chip Kelly    NFC                    East    **1st**     10-6-0
- Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Saints) 24–26
- 2014 Chip Kelly    NFC                    East    **2nd**    10-6-0
- 2015 Chip Kelly    NFC                    East    **2nd**    7-9-0
- 2014-2015 Chip Kelly final record (26-22-0)**

- 2016 Doug Pederson    NFC,                    East    4<sup>th</sup>     7-9-0
- 2017 Doug Pederson    NFC,                    East    **1st**     13-3-0
- Won Divisional Playoffs(Falcons) 15–10
  - Won NFC Championship(Vikings) 38–7
  - Won Super Bowl LII (vs. Patriots) 41–33
  - Nick Foles (SB MVP)
- 2018 Doug Pederson    NFC,                    East    2nd     9-7
- Won Wild Card Playoffs (at Bears) 16–15
  - Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Saints) 14–20
- 2016-2018 Doug Pederson record through 2018 season (29-19-0)**

## **Eagles totals from 1933 to 2019**

Total reg. season wins & losses thru Feb. 2019 **(577-601-26)-**

Total playoff wins & losses from 1933-2017 **(23-23)**

Total all games from 1933-2017 including playoffs **(599-622-26)**

Total NFL Championships 4

Total NFC Championship Games 7

Total Pre Superbowl (1933-1966) runner-ups 5

Total Divisional Championship Games 15

Total Divisional Championship Wins 8

# Dedication

*I dedicate this book*

*To my wonderful brothers and sisters:*

*Angel Edward J. Kelly, Jr.*

*Carol & Amelia Kelly*

*Nancy "Ann" Flannery & Angel Jim Flannery*

*Mary A. Daniels & Bill Daniels*

*Joseph A. Kelly & Diane Kelly*

*I surely am a lucky person to have*

*Such a great family*

*Edward J Kelly and Irene McKeown Kelly*





# Acknowledgments:

I appreciate all the help that I have received in putting this book together as well as all of the other 202 books from the past.

My acknowledgments were so large at one time that readers complained that they had to go through too many pages to get to page one.

And, so I put my acknowledgment list online, and it continues to grow. Believe it or not, it would cost about a dollar more to print my books with full acknowledgments.

Thank you and God bless you all for your help. Please check out [www.letsGOPublish.com](http://www.letsGOPublish.com) to read the latest version of my heartfelt acknowledgments updated for this book.

In this book, I received some extra special help from many fine American patriots including Dennis Grimes, Gerry Rodski, Wily Ky Eyely, Angel Irene McKeown Kelly, Angel Edward Joseph Kelly Sr., Angel Edward Joseph Kelly Jr., Ann Flannery, Angel James Flannery Sr., Mary Daniels, Bill Daniels, Angel Robert Gary Daniels, Angel Sarah Janice Daniels, Angel Punkie Daniels, Joe Kelly, Diane Kelly, Brian P. Kelly, Mike P. Kelly, Katie P. Kelly, Angel Ben Kelly, and Budmund (Buddy) Arthur Kelly.

*Thank you all!*





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# References

I learned how to write creatively in Grade School at St. Boniface. I even enjoyed reading some of my own stuff.

At Meyers High School (HS Diploma) and King's College (BS Data Processing), and Wilkes-University, (MBA Accounting & Finance) I learned how to research, write bibliographies and footnote every non-original thought included in my writings. I learned to hate *ibid*, and *op. cit.*, and I hated assuring that I had all citations were written down in the proper sequence. Having to pay attention to details took my desire to write creatively and diminished it with busy work.

I know it is necessary for the world to stop plagiarism, so authors and publishers can get paid properly, but for an honest writer, it sure is annoying. I wrote many proposals while with IBM and whenever I needed to cite something, I cited it in place, because my readers, IT Managers, and company management, could care less about tracing the vagaries of citations. I always hated to use stilted footnotes, or produce a lengthy, perfectly formatted bibliography. I bet most bibliographies are flawed because even the experts on such drivel do not like the tedium.

I wrote 202 other books before this book and several hundred articles published by many magazines and newspapers and I only cite when an idea is not mine or when I am quoting, and again, I choose to cite in place, and the reader does not have to trace strange numbers through strange footnotes and back to bibliography elements that may not be readily accessible or available.

Yet, I would be kidding you, if in a book about the great championship seasons in Philadelphia Eagles' Football, I tried to bluff my way, so you would think that I knew everything before I began to research and write anything in this book. I spent as much time researching as writing. I might even call myself an expert of sorts now for all the facts that I have uncovered.

Without any pain on your part, you can read this book from cover to cover to enjoy the stories about the championship seasons of Philadelphia Football.

This book is not intended for historians per se, but it does teach a lot of history. It is for regular people of all levels of intelligence. It is for people that want to have a fun read, who like smiling when Eagles Football is the topic. It is fun reading about each of Philadelphia's 599 wins. This book is for people who love Philadelphia Eagles'

Football and perhaps it is also for some Eagles detractors who want to have command of the facts before they defend a point of view.

There are lots and lots of facts in this book. This book is not for sticklers about the mundane aspects of writing that often cause creative writers to lay bricks or paint houses instead of writing. It is for everyday people, like you and I, who enjoy the Eagles because they are the Eagles and who enjoy football because it is football. It is that simple.

When the Eagles play a team and they win or lose, that is a historical fact, but to discover such facts, it does not require fundamental or basic research. The NFL itself as well as the Eagles, copyright their original material but not public facts. They copyright so they can say "no" if somebody else's creativity affects the league or the franchise negatively. Even the NFL does not own publicly well-known facts that are readily available about legacies such as Lud Wray or Bert Bell, Greasy Neale, or even Doug Pederson and championship seasons.

The championships and the coaches and the great players are well known and well defined, though some may think the facts belong to the NFL. Facts are facts, period. So, what? As the author of this book, I care but it is a sports book. I use a judicious approach to assure that I am not throwing the bull when I intend to be presenting the facts.

Nonetheless, this is not a book about heavy math algorithms, or potential advances to the internal combustion engine, or space travel, or the eight elements necessary to find a cure for cancer. So, I refuse to treat this book 100% seriously. If you find a fault, I will fix it. This is a book about sports and sports legends and stories about sporting events that have been recorded seven million times already someplace else. Though I tried for sure to get it all right and I used the work of others to assure so, I bet I made a mistake or two.

What is my remedy for the *harmed* if I have made a mistake? I did not write this book to harm anybody. If I did not write this book, would the *harmed individuals* from the book be unharmed. So, at the very least, I can *unpublish* those parts of the book. If any reader is harmed, let me know, and I will do whatever must be done for all to be OK.

# Preface:

"I'm here to save Jack (Pardee's) job, and I'm here to win the Super Bowl this year. If I do that, everybody wins. Jack stays and somebody wants to hire Buddy Ryan." Quote by Buddy Ryan, a great Philly coach with an almost championship season in 1988.

That quote is a classic for the late Buddy Ryan (RIP 2016) is one of the more quoted of the Eagle's past coaching masters. It is no wonder why. In his years at the Eagles and elsewhere, Ryan called it as he saw it, and was right most of the time. He was a great coach besides. Ryan is in this book because he brought the Eagles to the Divisional Championship game in 1988. You'll read about how the Eagles lost that one when you hit the middle of the book.

Everything that is—can be made better. When the 2017 season began, everybody thought the Eagles were going to do well but not win the Super Bowl. Carson Wentz, after just a few games changed a lot of minds. Nick Foles changed a lot of minds also. Once he caught on to all the nuances of the offense, he changed a lot of minds about what kind of a football player he had always been. The Eagles won the playoffs and the Super Bowl in 2017. In 2018, at 9-7, the Birds won their Wild Card game but lost in the Divisional Championship game.

Looking back in history as we do in this book, we find a ton of great coaches out of the 22 on the list, yet the Eagles have a losing record. Why? Well, in many ways, the excellent coaches had winning percentages that were very good but not every year, and the poor and so-so coaches dragged the record downward like a rock. Take a look at the season one-liner summaries at the beginning of the book and you will see what I mean.

The Eagles were so close to pay-dirt in the past, having had coaches get them into the playoffs—even before the Super Bowl era. They had achieved the ultimate success a few times with NFL championships in 1948, 1949 (Greasy Neale), and 1960 (Buck Shaw). However, once the Super Bowl was the target of the big dance, the Eagles were mostly MIA, though the Birds won their division numerous times. Over the years, the playoffs were not kind in bringing the Philadelphia Eagles to a Super Bowl encounter.

It all changed in the fall of 2017. Looking at this team and may I repeat the word, TEAM. There are some wild pundits who are still out there suggesting the Pederson Eagles could recover from whatever adversity was thrown at them. Throughout the season after there were so many injuries to so many great Eagles players on both sides of the ball—Darren Sproles, Jordan Hicks, Fletcher Cox, etc. and so many more that the theme of this book would have to change just to list them all. The wild pundits, however were so pro-Eagle this year, I am convinced that after all the recovering the Eagles did to win, that if the whole team got sick for one game, and they put in fresh replacement players, they would believe that Pederson would squeeze a win out of them. That's a positive feeling for sure.

When it seemed everybody was hurt, Carson Wentz, the brightest light on the Eagles in 2017, suffered a season-ending hit. Some think Wentz was so good for so long that if he were in the game, he could actually light up the entire Lincoln Financial Field with his raw talent in the event of a stadium-wide power outage. Now, that friends, is a bright light. I think you get what I mean. What a pleasure to have seen the Eagles that season after so many dry holes. At 9-7 the following year 2018, the Birds came back to make the playoffs.

The Eagles were at their best. Thank you, Coach Doug Pederson, and a spirited group of great Birds.

After writing about Notre Dame, Penn State, Clemson, Alabama, Florida, Syracuse, and Army, Brian Kelly, your author was moved by the Eagles' great season to take a shot at writing a book about his favorite pro-team.

This book is all about the almost championships and the championship seasons in Philadelphia Eagles Football. It touches every aspect of the historical and mythical Eagles Football Teams who got to play in the big games. It tells exhilarating stories about a ton of great games. The book stops every now and then, and it takes the reader on a side excursion in time to learn about a particular event or a great player.

The player list always begins with the immortal Dutchman, Norm Van Brocklin, and on and on with Tommy McDonald, Wilbur Montgomery, Reggie White, Chuck Bednarik, Brian Dawkins, David Akers, and of course Carson Wentz, highlighting the list



along with Super bowl MVP, Nick Foles. These stops will add substantially to your reading enjoyment. These Pro Bowlers have made Eagles Football a bright light experience for the program's many years and many fans.

In my role as Editor in Chief of Lets Go Publish! and a die-hard Eagles' fan, as I have been at a number of games with my dad, your author, and I predict that you will not be able to put this book down

You are going to love this book because it is the perfect read for anybody who loves the Philadelphia Eagles and Eagles football, and who wants to know more about one of the most revered professional athletic teams in all of football.

Few sports books are a must-read but Brian Kelly's Philadelphia Eagles Championship Seasons will quickly appear at the top of Americas most enjoyable must-read books about sports. Enjoy!

Who is Brian Kelly?

Brian Kelly aka Brian W. Kelly, is one of the leading authors in America with this, his 153rd published book. Brian continues as an outspoken and eloquent expert on a variety of topics. Moreover, Kelly also has written several hundred articles on other topics of interest to Americans.

Most of his early works involved high technology. Later, Brian wrote a number of patriotic books and most recently he has been writing human interest books such as The Wine Diet and Thank you, IBM. His books are always well received. If I could get the pen out of Dad's hand for just awhile, I might be able to write a few books of my own, but my editing chores at Lets Go Publish always come first.

Brian Kelly's books are highlighted at [www.letsGOPublish.com](http://www.letsGOPublish.com). They are for sale at Amazon, Kindle, and Barnes & Noble, [Amazon.com/author/brianwkelly](http://Amazon.com/author/brianwkelly), as well as and other fine booksellers.

The best!

Sincerely,

Brian P. Kelly, Editor in Chief  
I am Brian Kelly's eldest son

# About the Author



Brian Kelly retired as an Assistant Professor in the Business Information Technology (BIT) Program at Marywood University, where he also served as the IBM i and Midrange Systems Technical Advisor to the IT Faculty. Kelly designed, developed, and taught many college and professional courses. He continues as a contributing technical editor to a number of technical industry magazines, including "The Four Hundred" and "Four Hundred Guru," published by IT Jungle.

Kelly is a former IBM Senior Systems Engineer. His specialty was problem solving for customers as well as implementing advanced operating systems and software on his client's machines. Kelly continues to solve problems of all kinds. With this book, Brian is now the author of 203 books, including 52 Sports Books, and hundreds of magazine articles. As a technocrat by trade before becoming an author, Brian was a frequent speaker at technical conferences throughout the United States.

Brian Kelly tried his hand at politics and was a candidate for the US Congress from Pennsylvania in 2010. He also ran for Mayor in his home town in 2015. Kelly's political ventures were all about learning and there was no winning. Kelly loves the Eagles, becoming a fan in the 1950's and 1960's watching games with dad and brothers on Sundays on the family 21" Admiral B/W TV.

This is Brian's first "NFL Championship Seasons." book. Writing about the Philadelphia Eagles is always a special treat, but not as much fun as watching the Birds in action.



# Chapter 1 Introduction to the Book

The Eagles recently celebrated 85 years of football.



Everybody loves the Eagles!

In 2017, Philadelphia celebrated its 85<sup>th</sup> year of Eagles' football and they won the Super Bowl when played in 2018. How about that?.

This book celebrates the championship and almost-championship seasons of Philadelphia Eagles Football. People like me, who love the team from way back when they were in their twentieth year, will love this book. Eagles' haters will want their own copy of this book just for additional ammo. Yet, it won't help them! Hah!



In defining the format of the book, we chose to use a timetable that is based on a historical chronology. Within this framework, we discuss the many championship seasons in Philadelphia Eagles Football History. No book can claim to be able to capture all the fascination of seeing a championship game live but we sure give it a try in this book,

These championship seasons could be themselves a never-ending story, because of the coaches, the players, the fans and the games are full of nuances, but we cut it to a manageable size so the fans can eventually get all the reading done. These championship games naturally include a lot of great people, including players and the 22 great coaches that over time would make or break the Philadelphia Eagles.

Even before we get into Eagles football, we present some salient introductory material that in some ways precedes the beginning of football, the beginning of the NFL, and lightly examines the precursor team to the Eagles, namely, the Frankford Yellow Jackets.

Chuck Bednarik, Reggie White, Norm Van Brocklin, Tommy McDonald, Steve Van Buren, Seth Joyner, Brian Westbrook, and other Philadelphia greats from over the years, have great reverence

for the team for which they played the game of football. That reverence is captured in these pages. This book presents some of their best games of all time.

Looking at the quick snapshot of coaches and seasons at the beginning of the book, it is clear that Philadelphia has been able to survive a number of coaches who could not necessarily survive themselves. Admittedly, it was not until Greasy Neale in 1947 that after 15 years in the league finally almost got a championship. Then Neale and his great teams began a roll. From 1933 onward during this time, the Eagles football program has grown both in acceptance and popularity. Go Eagles!

Look across the Internet with your web browser and you will be reminded that the Philadelphia Eagles are world champions once removed, having defeated the New England Patriots in February 2018 to win the coveted Super Bowl Trophy and those huge individual rings. After all those years of almost, Philly got the Super Bowl prize.

I have done my best to portray an accurate depiction of Philadelphia Eagles Football History, displayed in a properly summarized format in which the almost championship and the championship games are highlighted. Nobody wants to be reading this book forever unless it is a bad winter. There are almost 300 pages to this book however, so there is more than enough to accompany you when the wind is howling on those cold winter nights after the close of the football season.

There are a ton of great stories in all these championships and the full seasons leading up to the classic games, for sure. More importantly, none of us should need to search further than this book for the truth about many of the depictions in this book. What is here is fact. Let's talk about some Eagles football moments and some great athletes and coaches now, before we close out the first chapter of this book highlighting the Championship Seasons in Philadelphia Eagles Football.

## Brief Overview

Ya just gotta love Philadelphia as a sports city and the Philadelphia Eagles Professional Football Team. I know I do from way back. I have been to a number of the Philadelphia stadiums where the football games are played. I have always been a Sunday football watcher, and a proud Philadelphia Eagles Football Fan, though until last year (2017), I too have had my share of frustrations with my team coming so close for so long but always staying so far away from the big prize that we never got to have a celebratory beer.

The Eagles have been around since their beginning in 1933. A syndicate that was led by the late Bert Bell and Lud Wray were responsible for getting the Eagles flying. They purchased the former Frankford Yellow Jackets franchise for \$2,500. Later on as the world war II slowed down athletics at the pro level, in 1941, a one of a kind team swap took place between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh that saw the clubs trade their home cities. Alexis Thompson became the new Eagles owner.



Pro football was not a sure thing in the early days. It could have been successful but there were no guarantees. Unlike college football, there were no rich alums who bankrolled the bad years. Teams either made money for the owners or the teams folded.

In the 1930's there were a lot of conflicts in Europe and eventually the US entered what became known as World War II in 1939.

As the US geared up for the possibility of war and especially after war was declared, both college and professional football had a tough



time getting the players that were needed as the armed services were grabbing all able-bodied men and assuring their enlistment. On September 16, 1940, the United States instituted the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, which required all men between the ages of 21 and 45 to register for the draft. This was the first peacetime draft in United States' history.

In 1943, it was so difficult getting players for pro teams that the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh franchises combined for this one season. The manpower shortage created by World War II was having an impact as men were needed for the war, and for the major manufacturing that was set up in the US to build the armaments.

This combination team was called both Phil-Pitt and the Steagles. Greasy Neale of the Eagles and Walt Kiesling of the Steelers were co-coaches of this team, which finished at 5-4-1. In addition to the 1943 season, Neale coached the Eagles for 10 seasons and he led the Eagles to their first significant successes in the NFL. After 1943, the War department informed the pro football leagues that their manpower needs were filled well enough, and they would not be wholesale enlisting Americans for the war effort from that point on.

Paced by such future Pro Football Hall of Fame members as running back Steve Van Buren, center-linebacker Alex Wojciechowicz, end Pete Pihos, and beginning in 1949, center-linebacker Chuck Bednarik, the Eagles dominated the league for six seasons. Nobody could touch them.

They finished second in the NFL Eastern division in 1944, 1945 and in 1946, they won the division title in 1947 and then scored successive shutout victories in the 1948 and 1949 championship games. I was just one year old at the time. To be sure we know what I am saying, for long before the Super Bowl and Super Bowl Champions, there were playoffs and there was an NFL Championship team. And the Eagles won three of them from 1948-on.

The Eagles won their first championship in 1948 with Greasy Neale as coach and then Coach Neale brought them right back in 1949 with another shutout in the championship game to become World



Champions of football in both 1948 and 1949. In 1960, with Coach Buck Shaw, the Eagles were again world champions. They would have been Super Bowl Champions back then in the NFL, but the Super Bowl had yet to be invented.

As you can see, the Eagles were once the kings of football and after 2018, the Philadelphia Eagles reign again. Last year was a respite as the Super Bowl team from 2017 battled back to win its Wild Card game and then lost in one of its many divisional championship years. Many Eagles fans in 2019 are looking for Carson Wentz to drive the Eagles to another Super Bowl with a hard-earned victory as the end result.

Football has always been a tough game. The Eagles team began to get depleted because of injuries during the 1949 championship. A rash of injuries ended Philadelphia's era of domination and, by 1958, the Eagles had fallen to last place in their division. Bad stuff happens when all the stars are not lined up right. That year, however, the organization began a rebuilding program by hiring a fine new coach, Buck Shaw. They added the Dutchman, Norm Van Brocklin to the squad. He was a fine QB.

Quarterback Norm Van Brocklin, according to my father back when I began to watch football about 1958 after the family got our first Admiral Black/White TV, was the best quarterback alive. My dad pointed out that he had rivals such as Charley Conerly of the Giants and Johnny Unitas of the Colts. The Eagles got the Dutchman from a trade with the Los Angeles Rams. In just three years, in 1960, as noted above, Buck Shaw gave Philadelphia another championship. True to his word, Buck Shaw retired from coaching the Eagles after his three years at the helm. He was quite a coach.

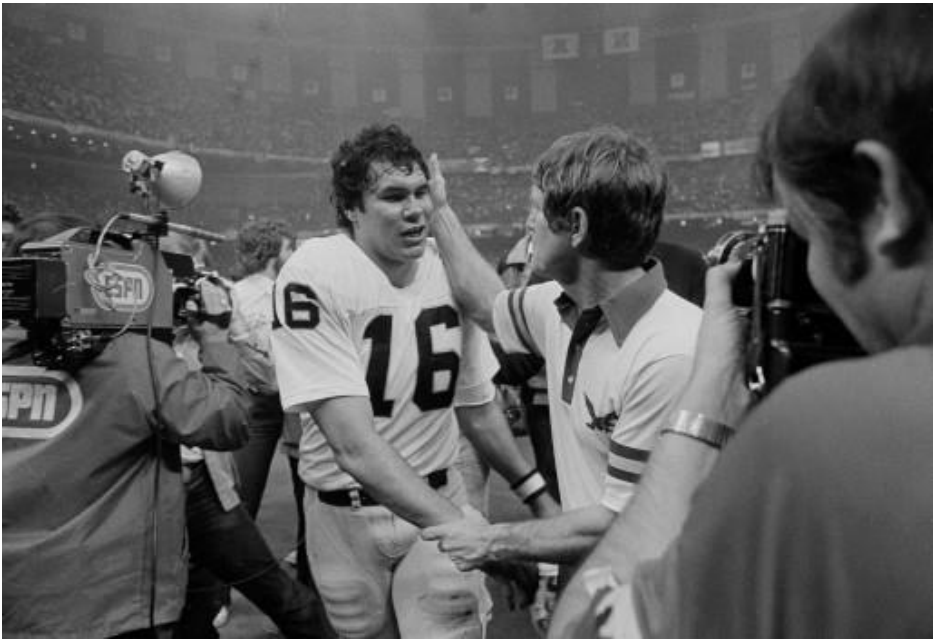
The great results during this time came from Van Brocklin's expert play and his on-the-field leadership. The Eagles won the Eastern division with a 10-2 record and then defeated the Green Bay Packers 17-13 for the NFL championship. In the game, Chuck Bednarik saved the day for the Eagles with an open field tackle of Green Bay's Jim Taylor on the game's final play. If you are my age, you recognize those championship names because you saw them play.



Philadelphia's Chuck Bednarik, center, with Green Bay's Paul Hornung, left, and Jim Taylor after the Eagles' 17-13 victory over the Packers in the N.F.L. championship game on Dec. 26, 1960, at Franklin Field

The Eagles fell just a half-game short of another NFL Eastern conference championship in 1961 but didn't reach the playoffs again for 18 years until 1978, their third season under another great coach, Dick Vermeil.

Vermeil's teams played in four straight post-season playoffs between 1978 and 1981. In 1980, Philadelphia won a then club-record 12 games, edging out Dallas for the Eastern division title. The Vermeil squad then defeated the Cowboys 20-7 for the NFC championship. However, the Eagles lost to the Oakland Raiders 27-10 in Super Bowl XV (fifteen). If my father had permitted it, I would have shed some tears on that one.



Oakland Raiders quarterback Jim Plunkett, left, accepts congratulations from Philadelphia Eagles head coach Dick Vermeil

In 1988 the Eagles won the NFL Eastern division championship. Starting with that season, Philadelphia, which was particularly dominating on defense, won 10 or more games for five straight years up to 1993. In four of those years, the Eagles entered the playoffs as a wild-card team, a feat they repeated in 1995 with Coach Ray Rhodes. Nonetheless, despite the great record, there were no super bowls.

In 1999 Andy Reid was named the team's head coach. He had been an assistant with Mike Holmgren's Green Bay Packers. He instantly transformed the Eagles into one of the dominant teams in the NFL. Beginning in 2000, Philadelphia won their division six times, appeared in the postseason nine times, and made a trip to Super Bowl XXXIX (39). Reid served as the team's head coach for 14 seasons, the longest tenure of any coach in franchise history. Close but no cigar. Reid had a tough time with so many chances to bring a Super Bowl to Philadelphia.

In 2013, University of Oregon head coach Chip Kelly took the Eagles head coaching job and it immediately looked like the Eagles were on the right track to the Super Bowl. After Andy Reid's worst

year ever, Kelly brought the Eagles back and they won the NFC East Division title in his first season. The team lost in the playoffs.

Kelly did another commendable job in 2014 with another 10-6 record but this time, the Eagles came in second place. As the team was readying for the 2015 season, Kelly gained more control of the team and he got rid of some of the top Eagles talent and had issues with players. The 2015 Eagles dropped to 7-9 and had no shot at the playoffs.

The Eagles fired Chip Kelly and hired Doug Pederson, who was serving as offensive coordinator of the Kansas City Chiefs from 2013–2015. Pederson was well respected. He spent most of his playing career as a member of the Green Bay Packers, serving as a backup quarterback to Brett Favre and holder on placekicks. The Packers won Super Bowl XXXI over the New England Patriots.

Pederson was also a backup QB to Dan Marino as a member of the Miami Dolphins, and in 1999, he was the starting quarterback for the Eagles and then the Cleveland Browns.

In his first season as the Eagles' head coach, Pederson's team looked very good and then began to lose with rookie Carson Wentz at the QB slot. The 2016 team finished the season at 7-9.

In 2017, with Wentz again at QB the Eagles got off to a great start and finished 13-3. Wentz was injured at the end of the season and was replaced by Nick Foles. Wentz tore his ACL late in the third quarter in game fourteen v the Rams on a first-and-goal scramble. He ran out of the pocket after realizing nobody was open on the play, he sprinted to his right toward the end zone.

When Wentz got near the goal line, he was sandwiched between linebacker Mark Barron and defensive end Morgan Fox. He tore his left ACL on the play.

Although Wentz reached the end zone on that play, the Eagles did not get the TD. It was called back because of a holding penalty. Wentz told nobody and did not complain. He remained in the game for the remainder of the series, handing the ball off to running back

Corey Clement twice, missing a pass to wide receiver Alshon Jeffery and then connecting with Jeffery for a touchdown on fourth down. Wentz is one tough cookie

Wentz was so good in 2017 that when Foles stepped in, everyone automatically counted the Eagles out. But the Eagles adjusted well, and Nick Foles was the perfect student and he mastered the Eagles game as well needed.

When interviewed about Nick Foles. Eagles quarterbacks coach John DE Filippo said: "...the backup quarterback in the NFL gets zero reps with the starters. Zero." This is how much experience Foles got with the Eagles starters before Carson Wentz's season-ending injury. He thus had very little time to prepare to take over the offense.

With how little football he'd played in the past two years, and how he'd completely fallen out of the NFL's collective consciousness until Wentz's injury, Foles's emergence in the playoffs as an efficient quarterback was a small, modern football miracle. It was a triumph of both coaching and playing.

Still Foles was not Wentz, but he got his act together quickly. In the NFC championship game against the Minnesota Vikings, Foles became the fourth quarterback this millennium to throw for 300 yards, three touchdowns, and no interceptions in a conference title game. He shares pretty good company now with Tom Brady, Peyton Manning, and Matt Ryan.

Against Minnesota, the league's best defense by yards per game, he completed a remarkable 78.8 percent of his throws, after completing 76.7 percent the week before against Atlanta. He was throwing shorter passes than Wentz, but he was an efficiency machine in the playoffs—thanks to a mixture of a great offensive game plan, gifted skill-position players, a sturdy offensive line, and Foles himself making the throws he was asked to make.

One of the brilliant, if obvious, maneuvers the coaching staff made once Wentz went down was to ask Foles to throw the ball quickly and not as far down the field. Foles averaged 2 fewer air yards per pass than Wentz—a huge disparity in the modern NFL—as 40

percent of Wentz's passes went beyond 10 yards, and only 25 percent of Foles's did. In these playoffs, Foles threw his average pass in 2.42 seconds—less time than any other player in the playoffs.

Foles led the Birds to a victory in Super Bowl LII (also against the Patriots). This marked the first Super Bowl title in Eagles franchise history. Pederson then became just the fourth person, after Mike Ditka, Tom Flores, and Tony Dungy to win a Super Bowl as both a player and head coach. What a great season! What a great team! The best Eagles Ever! Already many pundits have altered their best Eagles' coaches lists and have Pederson ranked #1 over Dick Vermeil. We'll see when the 2019 season rolls around.



## Chapter 2 History of Philadelphia Eagles' Football Stadiums



The Eagles have called many stadiums home throughout Philly. Franklin Field was just one of them, and not the first. *Courtesy of Kean Collection/Archive Photos/Getty Images*

Since the many Eagles' championship games were played in various stadiums, we use this chapter to show the various football facilities that helped Philadelphia claim so many almost championships and championships.

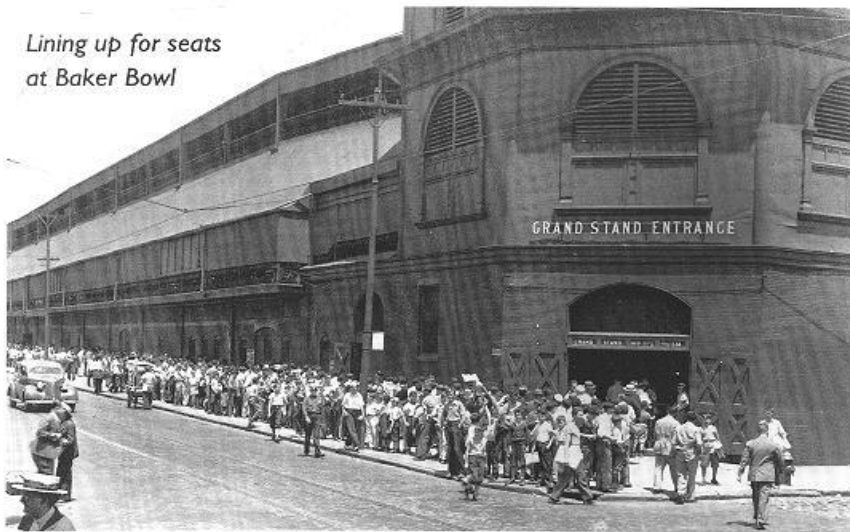
Melissa Romero wrote a nice piece that day – just the day after my birthday January 31. It was written in 2018 and titled: “A history of the Philadelphia Eagles’ home stadiums.” I start many of my historical sports books with an early chapter, such as this, about the various stadiums in which the teams operated. It is always an interesting adventure. Many of the facts in this chapter are from Melissa’s work. She begins by saying:

“The Eagles have called North, West, and South Philly home over their long history” Franklin Field in its heyday is shown above. But, it was not the first of Philly’s six stadiums from 1933 to 2018.



Before the team called the Linc its current home in 2003, the World Champion Eagles had called a number of stadiums throughout Philadelphia, *home*. Pro football was more interested in surviving in the early years than having cities build monuments to the teams. For the Eagles, it all started in North Philly, where many of Philly's original stadiums stood, before teams ultimately made their way down Broad to South Philly. Most stadia were built for baseball the national past time and then retrofitted to host football games. The Baker Bowl had been around for a while when the Eagles found it as an opportunity.

## Stadium #1. Baker Bowl (1933-35)



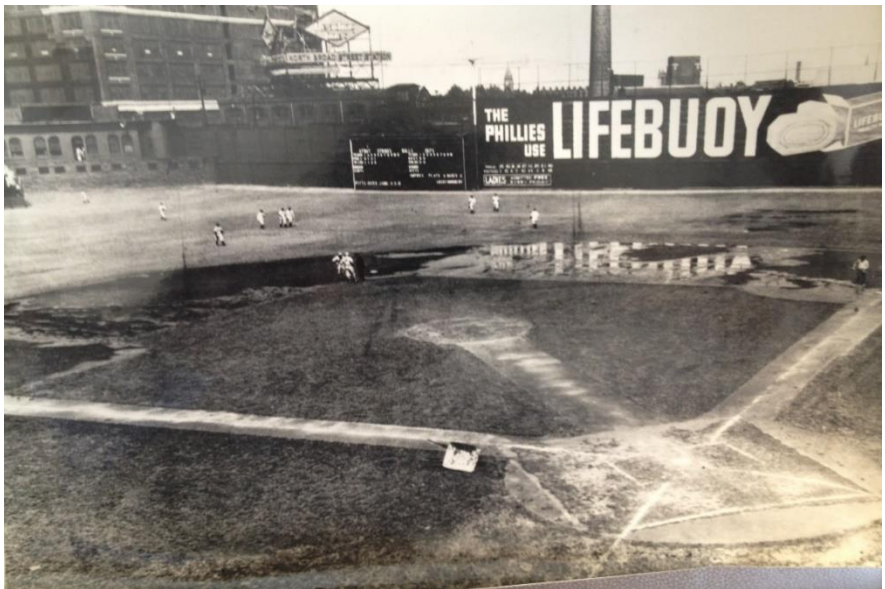
The Baker Bowl was the first home field of the Philadelphia Eagles, who played there from 1933 (first game) through 1935. In their three seasons there, they had a record of 9-21-1.

Eagles' owner Bert Bell had hoped to play home games at the larger Shibe Park, which had another name (Connie Mack Stadium) but negotiations with the Philadelphia Athletics (major league baseball team) were not fruitful. So, Bell agreed to a deal with Phillies' owner Gerry Nugent for the rights to use the Baker Bowl stadium.

When the Eagles played football at home, 5,000 temporary seats were erected along the right-field baseball wall. The Eagles played their first game at the ballpark on October 3, 1933, a 40–0 pre-season victory over a U.S. Marines team. This game was played at night under rented floodlights.

In the first regular-season game on October 18, 1933, 1,750 fans saw the Portsmouth Spartans beat the Eagles, 25–0. Later that season, 17,850 fans watched the Eagles tie the Chicago Bears on Sunday, November 18, 1933. Under Pennsylvania blue laws, Sunday games had been prohibited.

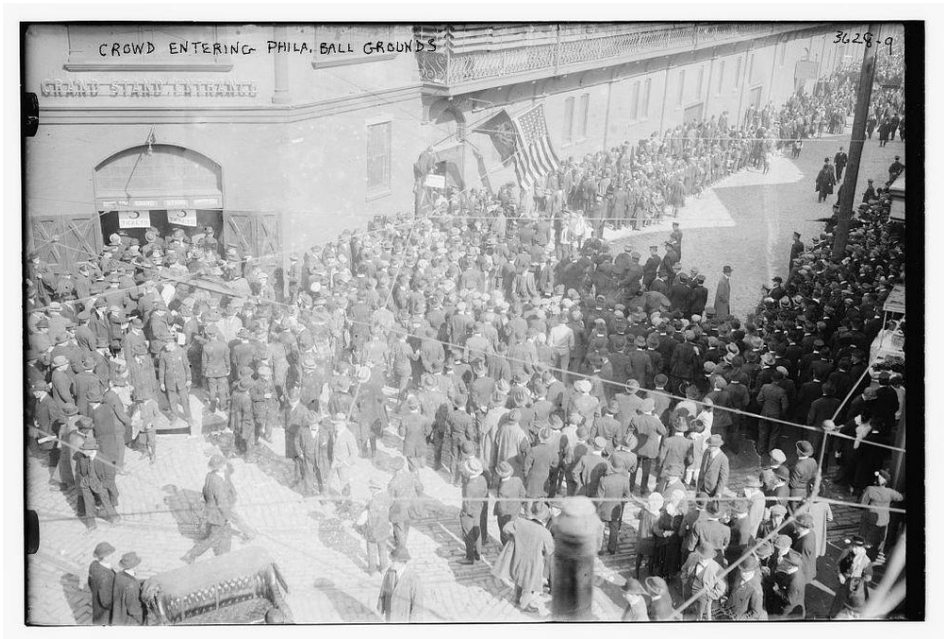
The ballpark was never in top shape. As its condition became more of an issue, the Eagles left Baker Bowl after the 1935 season for the city-owned Municipal Stadium, which was then only 10 years old and in its prime seated as many as 102,000 spectators.



Baker Bowl ball park set up for baseball games

The Baker Bowl is known mostly as the first home of the Philadelphia Phillies, but, as noted, it is also where the Eagles played their first three seasons as an NFL franchise. One of Philly's first real stadiums, the Baker Bowl was located by North Broad Street and Lehigh Avenue and built originally in 1887.

It suffered some tragedies over the years, including a collapse that killed a dozen spectators and a massive fire that destroyed the original wooden structure. Still, it served as the first dual-use stadium for professional sports in Pennsylvania, until it was torn down in 1950. Sports were very popular in Philadelphia as witnessed by the crowd waiting to get into the Baker Bowl for a game—see below in b/w photo.





JFK Stadium

## **Stadium #2. Philadelphia Municipal Stadium/JFK Stadium (1936-39)**

See JFK picture on prior page.

When you look at this picture of the stadium, you can see the horseshoe-shape and you can see the bricks as the makeup of the outer wall. This stadium first opened in South Philly on April 15, 1926 as part of the Sesquicentennial International Exposition. It became the home of the Philadelphia Quakers of the first American Football League, and eventually the Eagles used it for home quarters but just for four years from 1936 to 1939

Philadelphia is a very large city geographically and there were multiple stadia. This was the sole stadium in South Philly at the time. The Eagles were short term tenants. In 1940, the Birds found a new home in what many know as Shibe Park, but which Philllies' fans know as Connie Mack Stadium.

## Stadium #3. Shibe Park/Connie Mack Stadium (1940-1958)



Outside of Connie Mack Stadium

After being in South Philly for four years, the Eagles moved back to North Philly a few blocks away from the Baker Bowl to Shibe Park. This was a steel and concrete stadium that sat 40,000 people. It had a French Renaissance-architecture and by the time the Eagles squeezed in as a tenant, it was already being used as a home to two baseball teams--the Philadelphia Athletics, and the Phillies.

This is the place in 1948, the year I was born, that the Eagles played in the NFL Championship during a blizzard and won against the Chicago Cardinals.

## Stadium #4. Franklin Field (1958-70)



*Courtesy of Kean Collection/Archive Photos/Getty Images*

After Shibe Park / Connie Mack Stadium, the Eagles went west. Their destination was West Philadelphia's Franklin Field. This 70,000-seat stadium was built in 1922 by the University of Pennsylvania and was the first permanent and horseshoe-shaped college stadium in the country.

The Eagles made Franklin Field their home turf for 13 seasons, and won their third NFL title in 1960 here against the Green Bay Packers. Franklin Field is still in use today and is now the oldest two-tiered stadium in the country.



## Stadium# 5. Veterans Stadium (1971-2003)



*Courtesy of Print and Picture Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia*

The “Vet was humungous as was its huge parking lot. Since the Eagles as a franchise was already successful, the big problem became getting more fans into the games. They were very successful at Franklin Field, but the Birds needed a bigger and better venue. And so, the City Fathers decided to build the Vet. It was another multi-purpose stadium built in 1970. It cost a whopping \$52 million, making it one of the most expensive stadiums at the time.

The Vet in South Philly was of an “octorad” design. It was designed to accommodate both the Eagles and the Phillies in their respective sports. The problem with any municipal stadium is that the keepers are often not diligent, and they never have to pay the price for their failures. While it was a fine state-of-the-art facility at first, by its final years the Vet fell into great disrepair, and it was imploded in just one minute in 2003. Poof! Gone!

## 6 Lincoln Financial Field (2003-today)



*Thank you Romeo / Shutterstock.com for this fine pic--inside of the Lincoln Financial Field*

So, here we are at the last of the six Eagle's stadiums. This one is known by the locals as the Linc. This has been the Eagles' home for the past 15 years. It is located in South Philly's stadium district. The Lincoln Financial Field, aka, the Linc seats about 69,000 people and was built for a staggering \$512 million.

Because it was born in the days of renewable energy, this stadium is considered one of the greenest in the nation, if not the world. It was built with renewable energy sources: 11,000 solar panels and 14 wind turbines. It cost a zillion dollars.

This sixth Eagles Stadium was opened on August 3, 2003. It took two years of construction that began on May 7, 2001. It replaced the blown-up Veterans Stadium. While total seating capacity is similar to that of "The Vet", the new stadium contains double the number of luxury and wheelchair-accessible seats, along with many more modern services. The field's construction included several light emitting diode (LED) video displays, as well as more than 624 feet of LED ribbon boards. It is an impressive stadium.

Like most new stadia, to defray costs, naming rights were sold. For the Linc, naming rights were sold in June 2002 to the Lincoln Financial Group, for a sum of \$139.6 million over 21 years.



Additional construction funding was raised from the sale of Stadium Builder's Licenses to Eagles season ticket holders.

The stadium hosts a lot of great games including the annual Army–Navy football game since the Linc is located halfway between both service academies. The stadium is able to house the large crowds in attendance, and the historic nature of the city is another reason for military teams to like to play in Philadelphia.

Temple University's Division I college football team also plays home games at Lincoln Financial Field, paying the Eagles \$1 million a year to do so. The Philadelphia Union of Major League Soccer have played exhibition games there against high-profile international clubs when their stadium Talen Energy Stadium does not provide adequate seating.



The stadium also plays host to several soccer games each year, and in the past (2005, 2006, 2013) it has played host to the NCAA lacrosse national championship. The Linc is a busy place. Now it is the home of the World Champion Eagles.

In late spring of 2013, the Eagles announced that there would be some major upgrades to Lincoln Financial Field over the next 2 years. The total project estimate was valued at over \$125 million. The upgrades included seating expansion, two new HD video

boards, upgraded amenities, WiFi, and two new connecting bridges for upper levels.

These upgrades were decided upon after research from season ticket holders, advisory boards, and fan focus groups. The majority of these changes, including WiFi (which will accommodate 45,000 users and have coverage over the entire stadium), were completed by the 2013 home opener. The upgraded sound systems and video boards were finished for the 2014 season.

In 2018, by winning the Super Bowl, the Eagles became the top pro team in the nation, playing home games at Lincoln Financial, aka the Linc



## Chapter 3 Eagles Launch First Football Team



Eagles Early Team

There would be no Eagles today if it were not for 1933. The Philadelphia Eagles launched their first football team in 1933. Most fans understand the Eagles most recent history which includes three shots at the big prize --- the Super Bowl. The Birds lost their first two tries and then in Super Bowl LII on February 4, 2018, the Eagles beat the NE Patriots in a great game 41-33 at U.S. Bank Stadium, Minneapolis, MN.

Philadelphia's debut in the biggest championship game there is came against the Oakland Raiders in Super Bowl XV (15). The Eagles, led by quarterback Ron Jaworski and a defense that had allowed the fewest points (222) in the NFL, were defeated 27-10. I saw the game. Jaworski always played better.

The Eagles returned to the Super Bowl with Andy Reid after 24 years to face off against the New England Patriots in Super Bowl XXXIX (34) in 2004. Prior to that appearance, Philadelphia had lost three consecutive NFC championship games—to the Rams, Buccaneers and Panthers. The Eagles created a lot of fan tears over

the years getting so close the fans could taste it but never bringin home the big prize. Finally, they broke out for their second Super Bowl appearance in franchise history. Was Andy Reid up to the challenge?

Neither Andy Reid's misfortunes, nor their franchise misfortune changed, however, as they lost by a hair to the Patriots 24-21 to fall to an 0-2 record in Super Bowl outings. Finally, after a long wait and with their 22nd head coach Doug Pederson, a real Philadelphia Eagle, the Eagles found the third time to be the charm. They lost in their first two appearances, but they won big-time in 2018.

The beginning era of the Eagles history, 1933 to 1939, was most influenced by its owner, and then also coach, Bert Bell. After Bell had sold the team, to Alexis Thompson in 1940, the second era of the Eagles history was largely directed by their new coach and future Hall of Famer, Greasy Neale.

## **Let's get back to the beginning.**

Before the Eagles were the name of the team, there was already a team in Philadelphia. Bert Bell is responsible for making the Eagles into the Eagles. From 1930, until 1932, Bell was a backfield coach for the Temple Owls College Football Team. In 1932, George Preston Marshal tried to coax Bell into buying the rights to an NFL franchise, but Bell was not happy with the NFL and in fact, disparaged the league and he ridiculed the idea of becoming an owner. However, when Pop Warner took over as the head coach of Temple for the 1933 season, the famous coach chose to hire his own assistants and Bell was let go in the process. All of a sudden, the NFL did not look so bad.

It was in early 1933 that Bell's opinion on the NFL had changed, and he became very interested in becoming an owner of a team based in Philadelphia. Because NFL games were played on Sunday, before Bell anteed up the money for a PA team, he was advised by the NFL that Pennsylvania Blue Laws would have to be adjusted in order for PA to host an NFL franchise mollified.

This should have been an easy task as the blue laws were already antiquated. The first of the blue laws in Pennsylvania, for example, was enacted in 1682, back when it was a colony of the British Empire. The general prohibition was against working or having fun on Sundays. The ban carried over when Pennsylvania became a state in 1787. Sunday restrictions have tempered state activities for over 330 years. There are other blue laws for example:

Keeping restaurants with liquor licenses closed until 7 a.m. on Sundays, even when people are gathering to watch concrete stadiums blow up, is one of the strange laws on the books in Pennsylvania. Some call these laws ghosts of the past but they still haunt the PA criminal code. Fishing for example is legal on Sundays but hunting is not. Buying a new or used car from an auto dealer on Sundays is against the law. However, you can test drive or window shop at those weekend car expos, but you can't legally buy or even negotiate a purchase.

To be sure that he could operate the team, Bert Bell became what can be called a “force majeure” in lobbying to get the laws adjusted as required by the NFL. Bert Bell was not going to be denied. He borrowed money from Frances Upton, and he partnered with Lud Wray, the Eagles first coach, and he eventually gained the rights to a franchise in Philadelphia, which he named the Philadelphia Eagles.

Before the Eagles, however, there were the Yellow Jackets. Though operating out of Philadelphia, they were not the Philadelphia Yellow jackets. They were the Frankford Yellow Jackets. Yes, they were a very early professional American football team, formed as part of the part of the National Football League. They existed from 1924 to 1931, though the team's origin dates back to as early as 1899, when American football was a blend of rugby and soccer. They were associated with the Frankford Athletic Association.

The Yellow Jackets won the NFL championship in 1926. You can count that for the Eagles if you wish in this Championship Seasons book but they were not yet the Eagles. This pre-Eagles team played its home games from 1923 on in the Frankford Stadium, which was also known as Yellow Jacket Field. It was located in in Frankford, a section in the northeastern part of Philadelphia, that is noted for the subway-elevated transit line that ends there.

Somehow, the Yellow Jackets became or did not become the Philadelphia Eagles and we can fight over whether the first “Eagles” game was in 1922 or in 1933. But, let’s not as this is not a history book. The Yellow Jackets were certainly the predecessor team to the Philadelphia Eagles.

## The impact of PA College Football

College football had begun in 1867 and it took some time for all the rules of the modern football game to evolve to where it is today. Even today, the rules continue to change. One of the toughest teams back in the late 1800’s was the Penn Quakers, so it is quite understandable that Philadelphia would have so many athletic associations and non-college groups that engaged in the sport of football. It was tough for college football programs to find teams to play and so they often played large high schools and/or nearby athletic clubs. Philadelphia and for the most part all of Pennsylvania adopted football early in its infancy.

The original Frankford Athletic Association was part of all this fuss. But, it had disbanded prior to the 1909 football season but some of the tam kept it alive. In the early 1920s, the Frankford Athletic Association's Yellow Jackets gained the reputation as being one of the best independent football teams in the nation. In 1922, Frankford absorbed the Philadelphia City Champion team known as the Union Quakers of Philadelphia. In that year Frankford captured the unofficial championship of Philadelphia. During the 1922 and 1923 seasons the Yellow Jackets compiled a 6–2–1 record against teams from the National Football League. This led to the Association being granted an NFL franchise in 1924. They were always a great team with many wins. They did play NFL teams but the NFL was not such a big deal in the 1920’s

There was an NFL controversy in 1925. The Yellow Jackets were part of the Championship controversy. A dispute arose over a game that the nearby Pottsville Maroons had played against the Notre Dame All-Stars in Philadelphia; the Yellow Jackets claimed that their nearby rivals had infringed on their territorial rights by playing the game against a non-league opponent in Philadelphia. The league

agreed and suspended the Maroons, allowing the Chicago Cardinals to win the 1925 title. However, the NFL reinstated the Maroons the following year after fears that the team would join Red Grange's new American Football League, which posed a threat to the NFL.

The Yellow Jackets were for real just like the Eagles. They played a preseason game in 1926 against the Atlantic City Roses, which Frankford won big, 45–0. Their NFL fired up just six days later. The first game was a lackluster 6–6 tie at home against the Akron Pros. The first weekend in October saw the club rebound and post two solid victories over the Hartford Blues. Then, they played a two-game series against the Buffalo Rangers. During the Saturday game, the Yellow Jackets defeated the Rangers 30–0 in Frankford.

During the final weekend of October, the Yellow Jackets had a league-leading 6–0–1 record. However, they had an upcoming two-game set with their toughest opponent yet, the Providence Steam Roller. The Yellow Jackets managed to split the series.

The Yellow Jackets' 14 wins during the 1926 championship season set an NFL record for regular season victories that stood until 1984, when it was broken by the 15–1–0 San Francisco 49ers.

James Adams became as president in 1927. He hired Charley Moran as the team's new coach. The Yellow Jackets continuity suffered as a result of too many and their record was a poor 2–5–1 after eight league games.

1928 was a lot better with an 11–3–2 league record, behind only the Providence Steam Roller. In 1929, Bull Behman became coach of the Yellow Jackets. The team did well again with a 9–4–5 record and achieved third place in league standings.

Teams with minimal finances suffered the most in 1930 due to the financial hardships brought on by the Great Depression in 1930. The lack of talent resulted in a string of ten Yellow Jacket consecutive losses, the worst losing streak in Yellow Jackets' history.

To end the streak, Frankford found the money somehow and purchased eleven players from the Minneapolis Red Jackets, and George Gibson took over the team's coaching duties from Behman.



The Legion Post also tried to rally to the Yellow Jackets, pledging its support. However, the effects of the economic depression and poor performance on the field combined to reduce the team's fan base. The season finally ended with a 6–13–1 overall record and a 4–13–1 record in league play

## Yellow Jackets 1931 final season

Herb Joesting took over as head coach in 1931. However, the team was in terrible shape. Some members of the press began referring to the team as the Philadelphia Yellow Jackets, in an attempt to increase fan support, which failed to materialize.

By October, NFL President Joe Carr, after witnessing the poor attendance at Frankford's home loss to the Portsmouth Spartans, approved a plan for the Yellow Jackets to finish the season as a traveling team. Carr hoped that this move would allow the team to curb spending and rebound financially. It was tough going.

On October 26, 1931, the Yellow Jackets defeated the Chicago Bears, 13–12, at Wrigley Field. This game marked the last time a Philadelphia-based NFL team would win an away game over the Bears until October 17, 1999, when the Eagles defeated the Bears 20–16 at Soldier Field.

The 1928 Yellow Jackets win over the Packers marked the last time in 51 years a Philadelphia NFL team won a road victory over the Packers; the Eagles' 1979 win at Green Bay finally ended that streak.

## Philadelphia Eagles

The 1931 victory over the Bears would be the last game the Yellow Jackets would play. The Yellow Jackets suspended operations the following day. Unable to find a buyer, the Frankford Athletic Association returned the franchise to the league.

The NFL spent over a year searching for a new team to operate in Philadelphia. On July 9, 1933, the NFL granted an expansion franchise to Bert Bell and Lud Wray and awarded them the assets of the failed Yellow Jackets organization. As noted, Bell and Wray named their team the Philadelphia Eagles, after the symbol of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. This has led to assumptions that the Yellow Jackets changed their name to the Eagles and returned to the league after sitting out the 1932 season. However, that is not the case.

Bell and Wray did not buy the Yellow Jackets team, but rather the NFL rights to the Philadelphia area that formerly had belonged to the Frankford Athletic Association. Due to the period of dormancy, the Eagles do not claim the Yellow Jackets' history as their own, and the NFL considers the Eagles a 1933 expansion team for record-keeping purposes. Additionally, Bell and Wray assembled an almost entirely new team; only one player from the 1931 Yellow Jackets ended up with the 1933 Eagles.

Those of us who do not tune into the nuances of the business of football, believe in the obvious. The Philadelphia Eagles are the reincarnation of the Frankford Yellow Jackets.

It was not long for the Philadelphia Eagles to play their first game

The 1933 Philadelphia Eagles season was the franchise's first season in the National Football League (NFL). The team record was 3–5–1. They failed to qualify for the playoffs under head coach Lud Wray.

Pennsylvania eased some of the Blue laws to allow Sunday sporting events. When this was done, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh became available for NFL franchises as they could play home games on Sundays.

Before the 1933 season as we have discussed, Bert Bell and Lud Wray were granted an expansion franchise in the NFL for the rights to Philadelphia. The Yellow Jackets had been inactive for two years, so their rights were pulled by the NFL. The Eagles received their name from the Blue Eagle, which was used by American companies to symbolize their compliance with the National Industrial Recovery Act, a program within Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. The NFL

Eagles' original colors were a light blue and yellow—like the Yellow Jackets.

Moving on towards the first game of the first season, the Eagles held their first training camp in Atlantic City, New Jersey. They scheduled their home games to be played at the Baker Bowl in Philadelphia, which was also the home of the Philadelphia Phillies of Major League Baseball. The Eagles played at the Baker Bowl for three seasons before moving to the newer Philadelphia Municipal Stadium in the south Philadelphia area.

It was not a happy day for the Eagles on October 15, 1933, when Lud Wray's squad finally got to play their first NFL game. The game was played at the Polo Grounds in New York City against the New York Giants. The Giants played like the Eagles defense was not on the field. Before 18,000 spectators, the Giants won by a blowout over the Eagles in the first of many games that would be contested between these two rivals.

It would be nice to have a better tale to tell about this first-ever meeting occurring on Oct. 15, 1933 but what is, is, and New York was in a winning way. It was just eight days after baseball's New York Giants, with Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth on duty, defeated the Washington Senators to win the World Series, at the Polo Grounds, and football's Giants kept the winning momentum going at the field of champions, by destroying the Eagles, 56-0, in Philadelphia's NFL debut game.

The Giants went 11-3 in 1933 but lost to the Chicago Bears in the NFL Championship Game, thwarting the chance for three New York champions, as the Rangers won the Stanley Cup in the spring of '33. The first time the Eagles beat the Giants came on Oct. 28, 1934, in their fourth try, defeating New York at the Polo Grounds, 17-0.

# Chapter 4 Eagles Football – Tough Start 1933-1940

Coach #1 Lud Wray  
Coach #2 Bert Bell

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Pl</u>	<u>W-L-T</u>
1933	Lud Wray	x	East	4th	3-5-1
1934	Lud Wray,	x	East	T3 <sup>rd</sup>	4-7-0
1935	Lud Wray,	x	East	5th	2-9-0
1936	Bert Bell,	x	East	5th	1-11-0
1937	Bert Bell,	x	East	5th	2-8-1
1938	Bert Bell,	x	East	4th	5-6-0
1939	Bert Bell,	x	East	T4 <sup>th</sup>	1-9-1
1940	Bert Bell,	x	East	5th	1-10-0



1933 Philadelphia Eagles Team Picture

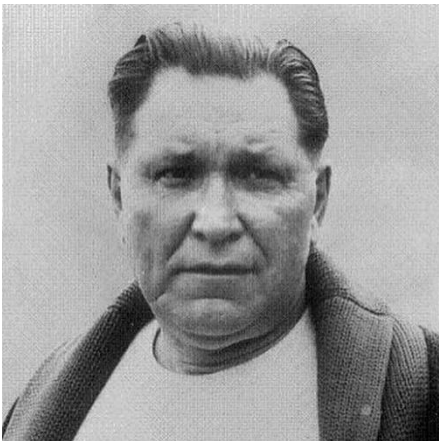
## Intro to Eagles 1933 Football

After the two-year hiatus in which the Yellow Jackets gave up their franchise, and the players disbursed, Bert Bell and Lud Ray brought a professional Philadelphia Football team to life again. They were offered and accepted a new expansion franchise and so technically, they are not descendants of the Frankford Yellow Jackets

When the State of Pennsylvania eased some of its Blue laws, and began to permit Sunday Sporting Events, both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh joined the NFL as the Eagles and the Steelers respectively. Both played football at the pro level in 1933 as their inaugural NFL seasons. When they operated, The Frankford Yellow Jackets had played their home games on Saturday mostly when they were the home team. Sundays were verboten.

The 1933 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their first season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Lud Wray in his first season of three as head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles. This Eagles team finished with a losing season of 3-5-1. Coach Wray had the job of molding this team into being worthy of playing in the NFL. He put in three seasons and still this job was not complete. But, clearly it was just a matter of time as the Eagles over time became one of the best franchises in the NFL and in 2017 became the Super Bowl Champions, which at the time made them the best in football.

## Coaches Lud Wray & Bert Bell



<<< James R. Ludlow "Lud" Wray  
1<sup>st</sup> Eagles Coach

Coach Wray was a professional football player, coach, and co-founder, with college teammate Bert Bell, of the Philadelphia Eagles of the National Football League. He was also the first coach of the Boston Braves (now Washington Redskins). He also served as head coach at his alma mater, Penn

Prior to college, the coach attended Chestnut Hill Academy in Philadelphia, where he lettered in baseball and football. He played his college football at the University of Pennsylvania as the Quakers' center from 1914 to 1916. During World War I, Wray served in the United States Marine Corps. He returned for his senior season in

1919. In addition to football, Wray also played catcher on the Penn baseball team.

Lud Wray was good friends with former teammate and fellow assistant coach at Penn, Bert Bell, who later would be the Eagle's second coach. Bell convinced Wray to become coach of the expansion Philadelphia Eagles. He coached for three years at Philadelphia. His record for the three years was 9-21 and he never came close to a winning season so he brought no championships or almosts to the Eagles



<< Bert Bell 2<sup>nd</sup> Eagles Coach

The first NFL Draft was held in 1936 in Philadelphia and The Eagles had the first pick. The Eagles picked nine players from six different schools. Jay Berwanger a Halfback from the University of Chicago was selected #1. He had won the Downtown Athletic Award in 1935. This was a big deal, which was later renamed the Heisman Trophy.

Berwanger decided at first not to play in the NFL. Later in the year, the Eagles traded him to the Chicago Bears and he still refused to play NFL football. George Halas offered him \$13,500 but he held out for \$15,000 and never played professional football. He could have used a good agent. Know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em.

For the 1936 season, the Eagles had 12 rookies and 8 players with 2 years' experience, or less on their roster. Eleven of the 26 members on the team went to college within 15 miles of Philadelphia.

On Sept 13 at home in the season opener at Municipal Stadium, the Eagles defeated the New York Giants W (10-7) before 20,000 fans. At its peak, Municipal Stadium, AKA JFK Stadium could host up to 102,000 fans. The Eagles pulled out of this stadium for Shibe Park / Connie Mack Stadium in 1941.

Bell coached five years until 1941, when he was replaced by Greasy Neale, one of the Eagles All-time great coaches. He brought no championships or anything close in his five years finishing with a 10-44 record. Now you know why the Eagles overall record is not yet above 500 despite some great recent seasons.

The 1940 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their eighth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Bert Bell in his fifth season of five as head coach. Like the prior year, this Eagles team finished with a losing season record of 1-10-0, winning just one game. They failed to qualify for the playoffs for the eighth consecutive season. This would be the Eagles first season at Shibe Park.

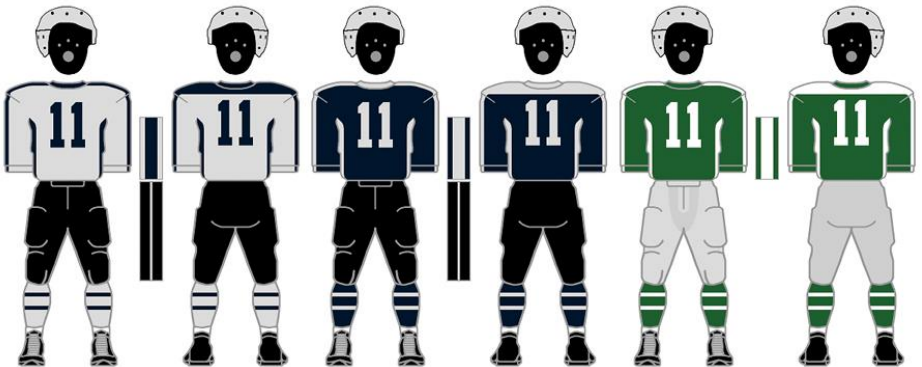
After 4 years playing at the larger Philadelphia Municipal Stadium, the Eagles moved to Shibe Park for the 1940 season. Eagles training camp was held at West Chester State Teachers College, West Chester, Pennsylvania. West Chester has always been a great sports institution.

# Chapter 5 Coach Greasy Neale Era 1941 to 1950

Coach # 3 Greasy Neale

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Pl</u>	<u>Record</u>
1941	Greasy Neale	x	East	<b>4th</b>	2-8-1
1942	Greasy Neale	x	East	<b>5th</b>	2-9-0
<i>1943 The Eagles &amp; the Steelers aka The Steagles</i>					
1943	Greasy Neale	x	East	<b>3rd,</b>	5, 4, 1, —
1944	Greasy Neale	x	East	<b>2nd,</b>	7-1-2
1945	Greasy Neale	x	East	<b>2nd</b>	7-3-0
1946	Greasy Neale	x	East	<b>2nd</b>	6-5-0
1947	Greasy Neale	x	East	<b>1st</b>	8-4-0
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Won Eastern Divisional Playoff (at Steelers) 21-0</li> <li>• Lost NFL Championship (at Cardinals) 21-28</li> </ul>	
1948	Greasy Neale	x	East	<b>1st</b>	9-2-1
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Won NFL Championship (1) (Cardinals) 7-0</li> </ul>	
1949	Greasy Neale	x	East	<b>1st</b>	11-1-0
1950	Greasy Neale	American	x	<b>T3<sup>rd</sup></b>	6-6-0
<b><u>1941-1950 Greasy Neale final record (66-44-5)</u></b>					

There was not one losing season from 1943 to 1950



**Philadelphia Eagles**

1941: 2-8-1

4th in Eastern Division



## Greasy Neale: a great football coach

How about that for a moniker. If you were looking for a replacement coach for any sport, to replace a coach with a very poor record, would you even stop to consider a coach named "Greasy." Well, the Eagles did and it was a great move. Look at some of the other nicknames in the early days of football and you might change your mind. Greasy Neale was one of the best. Without him coming along when he did, who knows if the Eagles would have survived as the Eagles. Once he got going Greasy Neale brought the Eagles a lot of championships and almost championships.



**Alfred Earle**  
**"Greasy" Neale,**  
**born** November 5,  
1891 and died  
November 2, 1973,  
was an American  
athlete of the finest  
caliber. He played  
football American  
style, and he played  
baseball, and he was  
an outstanding  
coach.

He was born in  
Parkersburg, West  
Virginia. Although it  
would make sense  
that writers would  
eventually assume  
that Neale got his  
nickname, "Greasy",  
from being so  
elusive on the  
football field as a  
player, he actually  
got it as a kid when  
he engaged in a  
name-calling joust

with a friend. He was also a great baseball player.

Neale is one of the all-sports immortals of which there are few. He played professional football in the Ohio League (professional) with the Canton Bulldogs in 1917, the Dayton Triangles in 1918, and the Massillon Tigers in 1919. He starred as an end on Jim Thorpe's pre-World War I Bulldogs as well as the Dayton Triangles in 1918 and Massillon Tigers in 1919. He coached the Triangles in 1918. He could not get enough of sports. I bet he could play basketball as well as height did not matter as much as dexterity in the early days of the sport.

Neale began his coaching career while still a professional player. He served as the head football coach at Muskingum College (1915), West Virginia Wesleyan College (1916–1917), Marietta College (1919–1920), Washington & Jefferson College (1921–1922), the University of Virginia (1923–1928), and West Virginia University (1931–1933), compiling a career college football coaching record of 82–54–11. He coached basketball for two seasons at Marietta (1919–1921) as well, amassing a record of 26–11.

He also served as an assistant football coach for the Yale Bulldogs football program for seven seasons (1934–1940). At Washington & Jefferson, he led his 1921 squad to the Rose Bowl, where the Presidents played the California Golden Bears to a scoreless tie. At Virginia, Neale was also the head baseball coach from 1923 to 1929, tallying a mark of 80–73–2.

Neale later coached the independent professional Ironton Tanks with his legendary style, flair and winning ways. He and Tanks quarterback Glenn Presnell claimed victories against the NFL's second place New York Giants and third place Chicago Bears in 1930. The team folded in 1931.

Neale moved to the National Football League (NFL), serving as head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles from 1941 to 1950. Although it took Neale a while to pull together the needed talent to build a winning team, once he had the right ingredients, they stayed among the league's best for nearly a decade. From 1944 through 1949, Neale's Eagles finished second three times and in first place three

times. The Eagles won the NFL Championship in 1948 and again in 1949. They played in the championship game in 1947 but lost.

They were the only team to win back-to-back titles by shutting out their opponents, beating the Chicago Cardinals 7–0 in the snow ridden 1948 NFL Championship Game and the Los Angeles Rams 14–0 in the 1949 NFL Championship Game in a driving rain storm. It was the last championship for the Eagles until 1960 with coach Buck Shaw.

Neale's offense was led by the passing of quarterback Tommy Thompson, the pass catching of future Hall of Fame end Pete Pihos, and the running of another Hall of Famer, Steve Van Buren. He tallied a mark of 66–44–5 including playoff games in his ten seasons with the Eagles. Neale was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1967 and the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1969. Both inductions recognized his coaching career.

Greasy Neale died in Florida at the age of 81 on November 2, 1973 and he is buried at Parkersburg Memorial Gardens in West Virginia. He is one of the best athletes ever.



Greasy Neale talks with three star-players, HB, Steve Van Buren, Tackle Al Wistert and quarterback Tommy Thompson

## **Greasy Neale, Coach #3—the best at the time**

Counting 1943, the year of The Steagles, the 1944 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their twelfth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Greasy Neale in his fourth season of ten as head coach. Neale had finally broken through the win barrier. This Eagles team finished with a winning season record of 7-1-2, winning seven games and finishing in second place. Though they had by all accounts a fine season, their first winning season other than the Steagles, they failed to qualify for the playoffs for the twelfth consecutive season.

Life went back to normal for Philadelphia after the 1943 season and it got its share of the players from the Steagles temporary merger. However, the NFL was still not back to full-strength because of the war. The Steelers and the Chicago Cardinals in fact merged at the beginning of 1944 for just one year because things were not yet completely right. In 1945, there would be a “return to normalcy.”

The 1944 NFL Draft was a bit different this year as a number of colleges had suspended football and there was not as much talent coming from the colleges. Some schools such as perennial basketball power Gonzaga dropped football during the war and never brought it back.

The Draft was held later than usual on April 19, 1944. The draft would be for 32 rounds, not the customary 22 rounds. Again, in round 2 and 4 only the 5 lowest wins teams from the 1943 season would pick. Due to the merger in 1943, The Eagles would alternate with the Pittsburg Steelers in picking either 4th or 9th in each round.

### **1944 Games of the Season**

From 1944 through 1946, the Eagles came in second place each year in the Eastern Division. In 1947, they came in first but lost the NFL championship game.

The season opener for 1944 was played on Sept 26 at Boston. The Eagles beat the Yanks W (28-7) before 25,061. On Oct 8 at home in Shibe, the Eagles tied the Washington Redskins T (31-31). Two

weeks later at home, on Oct 22 the Eagles shut out the Boston Yanks in a runaway W (38-0) before 24,638. Then, on Oct 29 at New York, the Eagles defeated the Giants W (24-17) before 42,639.

On Nov 5, at Brooklyn the Eagles beat the Dodgers W (21-7) before 15,289. On Nov 12, at home, The New York Giants and the Philadelphia Eagles played to a tie T (21-21) before 33,248. On Nov 19, at Washington, the Eagles beat the Redskins W (37-7) before 35,540.

Then, on Nov 26, at home, the Eagles suffered their first loss of the season. Without this loss, instead of second place, the Eagles would have won the East championship this year and been in the playoffs. The Chicago Bears beat the Eagles L (7-28) before 34,035 at Shibe. On Dec 3, at home, the Eagles shut out the Brooklyn Dodgers W 34-0 before 13,467. Then, on December 10, the Eagles capped off their best season ever with a nice win against the Cleveland Rams W (26-13) before 24,123

## Tell us about Steve Van Buren, RB



Having begun his pro football career in the early 1940's just a bit more than ten years after the Eagles became an NFL team, Steve Van Buren is one football name most football fans remember.

He is still considered one of the greatest players to put on an Eagles' uniform.

In four of his eight years as a pro, Van Buren led the NFL in rushing yards. He was also deadly as a returner, as he had five touchdowns off of kick and punt returns. If Van Buren

had the ball, the opposition always knew he was heading for the goal line, and anything less was not part of the Van Buren plan.

Teams played fewer games in the 1940's and the offenses were designed to be less explosive and more methodical. For example, the T-formation was perfected in those days. When legendary coach George Halas of the Chicago Bears used the T-formation to defeat the Washington Redskins by a score of 73–0 in the 1940 NFL championship game, it marked the end of the single wing at nearly all levels of play. Whether it was a straight T formation, that 70-0 game prompted coaches during the course of the 1940s, to move to formations with the quarterback "under center" like the T. George Halas is credited with perfecting the T formation.

Consequently, Van Buren may not have the stats of some of the other running backs that today or in the recent past have graced the offenses in the NFL. However, as noted, that has more to do with the fact that he played during a time where there were less games in a season. It is fair to wonder just how more illustrious Van Buren's numbers would have been over the course of 16 games.

### **These words are from the Pro Football Hall of Fame:**

"I made a lot of long runs. I ran from scrimmage and I ran back kicks and I played safety and ran back passes...I'd just love to run against these four-man lines they have nowadays."

Steve Van Buren answered to a lot of names during his eight-year career in the National Football League, "Wham Bam," "Supersonic Steve," "Blockbuster," and several more.

Translated, they all mean that he was an exceptional football player.

To be sure, Steve's pro career was distinctive. He surpassed 1,000 yards rushing twice, won four NFL rushing titles and a rare "triple crown" in 1945 when he led in rushing, scoring, and kickoff returns. He was a first-team All-NFL selection each of his first six seasons. Van Buren lined up as a halfback but played more like a fullback as the battering ram of a powerful Eagles squad that dominated the NFL in the late 1940s.

Philadelphia had never finished above fourth place until Steve came on the scene in 1944. That year they finished second, were runners-up two more years, won three straight divisional titles, and the NFL title in 1948 and 1949.

Van Buren provided the offensive punch in both championship victories. In 1949 title game against the Los Angeles Rams, Steve carried 31 times for a record 196 yards as the Eagles won 14-0. A year earlier, Van Buren rushed for 98 yards and scored the game's only touchdown in the Eagles 7-0 title win over the Chicago Cardinals.

Born in Honduras, Van Buren was orphaned when he was very young and sent to New Orleans to live with his grandparents. He failed to make the high school football team as a 125-pound high school sophomore, but as a senior he played well enough to win a scholarship to LSU. In his senior season, Van Buren rushed for 832 yards.

Encouraged by LSU coach Bernie Moore, the Eagles selected him as their top pick in the draft. It was a break for Van Buren and, for the Eagles, possibly their most fortunate ever.

### **1945 Greasy Neale, Coach #3**

The 1945 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their thirteenth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Greasy Neale in his fifth season of ten as head coach. Neale had finally broken through the win barrier. This Eagles team finished with a winning season record of 7-3-0, winning seven games and finishing in second place. The Eagles failed to improve on their previous record of 7-1-2, losing three games. The team failed to qualify for the playoffs for the 13th consecutive season.

The 1945 Draft was held on April 8, 1945. It was the last draft held in Chicago; later in the year the league moved its offices to Philadelphia. It would be 32 rounds with the Eagles getting picks in

30 of them. Because it had such a strong 1944 season, The Eagles picked 9th in the rounds.

The teams with the 5 worse records in 1944 season would be the only teams picking in rounds 2 and 4. Future Hall of Famers in this draft included Charley Trippi, Halfback from Georgia taken 1st round 1st overall by the Chicago Cardinals. Elroy "Crazylegs" Hirsch, Wide receiver from Michigan taken 5th overall by the Cleveland Rams. Pete Pihos, Defensive end from Indiana University, Tom Fears, End from UCLA, and Arnie Weinmeister, Defensive tackle from Washington.

On Oct 7, at home, the Eagles defeated the Chicago Cardinals W (21–6) before 25,581. On Oct 14, at Detroit, in a close match, the Lions got the best of the Eagles L (24–28) before 22,580. At Washington on Oct 21, the Eagles lost their second game in a row L (14–24) before 35, 550. Then, to wrap up October, on Oct 28, at home, the Eagles beat the Cleveland Rams W (28–14) before 38,149.

At Pittsburgh on Nov 4, the Eagles shellacked the Steelers W (45–3) before 23,018. On Nov 11, at home, the Eagles beat the New York Giants W(38–17) before 30,047. Then on Nov 18 at home, the Eagles beat the Steelers again, W (30–6) before 23,838.

At home on Nov 25, the Eagles shut-out the Washington Redskins W (16–0) before 37,306. On Dec 2, at New York, the Giants beat the Eagles in a close match L (21–28) before 45,372. Then, on Dec 9, the Boston Yanks came to Shibe to be beaten by the Eagles W 35–7 before 27,905

### **1946 Greasy Neale, Coach #3**

The 1946 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fourteenth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Greasy Neale in his sixth season of ten as head coach. This Eagles team finished with a winning season record of 6-5-0, winning six games and finishing in second place. The Eagles failed to improve on their previous record of 7–3, losing five games. The team failed to qualify for the playoffs for the 14th consecutive season.



With the war restrictions behind them, the Eagles moved training camp from West Chester State Teachers College in West Chester, Pennsylvania, to Saranac High School Field in (Saranac Lake, New York). edit

The 1946 NFL Draft was held on January 14, 1946. There was 32 rounds and the Eagles had the 7 or 8th pick in the rounds. Like prior years, the top 5 teams in the league from the previous season did not get a draft pick in rounds 2 and 4 and were instead the recipients of compensatory low value picks in the 31st and 32nd rounds. The Eagles thus made 30 selections in this draft. The overall number one pick in the draft was by the Boston Yanks and they choose Frank Dancewicz, a quarterback from Notre Dame's Fighting Irish.

The season opener took place on Sept 29, after the Eagles took the long journey out to Los Angeles, where they beat the Rams, W (25-14) before 30,500. Pro football was beginning to look like pro-football. On Oct 6, at home, the Eagles beat the Boston Yanks W (49-25) before 33,986. At 2-0, the Eagles faced off with the Packers on Oct 13 at Green Bay, but could not keep the streak going L (7-19) before 36,127. Loss #2 came the next week at Chicago as the Bears beat the Eagles by one TD L (14-21) before a nice crowd of 41,221.

On Oct 27 at Washington, the Eagles defeated the Redskins W (28-24) before 33,691. Then, on Nov 3, at home in Shibe, the Eagles got a good win against the New York Giants W (24-14) before 40,059. At New York on Nov 10, the Eagles were beaten well by the Giants L (17-45) before a packed house of 60,874. At Pittsburgh on Nov 17, the Eagles could not get up enough steam to beat Pittsburgh and lost by a field goal L (7-10) before 38,882

On November 24, at home, the Eagles lost to the Washington Redskins L (10-27) before 36,633. On December 1, at home, the Eagles beat their intra-state rival Pittsburgh Steelers W (10-7) before 29,943. Wrapping up the season on December 8, at Boston, the Eagles put the right formula together to crush the Yanks W (40-14) before 29,555.

### 1947 Greasy Neale, Coach #3

The 1947 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fifteenth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Greasy Neale in his seventh season of ten as head coach. This Eagles team finished with a championship level winning season record of 8-4, finishing in first place. The Eagles improved on their previous record of 6-5, winning eight games. They qualified for the playoffs for the first time ever but lost the NFL Championship.

For the second year in a row, the Eagles chose Saranac High School Field / Eagles Residence, in Saranac Lake, New York for training camp. Greasy Neale liked having the Eagles train outside of the home city and they only trained near Philadelphia when there were wartime travel restrictions during WW II. Under Neale the Eagles trained in Wisconsin, upstate New York and Minnesota when they were permitted to travel. Greasy Neale had unlocked the secret of the Philadelphia Eagles, and he clearly gave Doug Pederson the keys in 2017/2018.



1947 National Championship Game v Cardinals

The 1947 NFL Draft was brought back to December after all the war-time adjustments. The NFL began a lottery of a bonus pick for the first pick in the draft. They did this until 1958. In 1947, the Eagles made 29 selections over the 32 rounds. They got the 6th or 7th pick in the rounds in which they had picks.

The top two picks in the draft was a lottery bonus pick as the number-one pick by the NFL champion Chicago Bears. It was Bob Fenimore, a back who attended Oklahoma A&M. With the number-two pick, the Detroit Lions took 1946 Heisman Trophy winner Glenn Davis, a great halfback from Army.

In my recent book, titled, *Great Moments in Army Football*, I had the pleasure of featuring Glenn Davis when he was shredding records along with Doc Blanchard in the Army Cadets heyday during the war years. Unfortunately for the Lions, Davis was unable to play due to his required military service after West Point.

Cal Rossi, a running back from UCLA was drafted again this year with the 4th pick by the Washington Redskins. He had been taken in error with the 9th pick of the 1946 draft when he was still a junior in college. He declined at that time to play pro football.

The future NFL Hall of Famers that were in this draft were Dante Lavelli (12th round), Art Donovan (22nd round) and Tom Landry (20th round). Yes, that is the same Tom Landry who coached the Dallas Cowboys so well for so long.

Some players drafted were signed by All-America Football Conference teams. Not everybody chose the NFL at the time to play their football.

On September 28 at the season and home opener, the Eagles managed a victory over the Washington Redskins in a game that could have gone either way W (45–42) before 35,406 at Shibe. On Oct 5, at home, the Eagles shut out the Giants W (23–0) before 29,823. After traveling to Chicago to play the Bears on Oct 12, the Eagles were pummeled by the Bears L (7-40) before 34,338. Then, on Oct 19, at Pittsburgh, the Eagles lost cleanly to the Steelers L (24-35) before 33,538.

On Oct 26, at home, the Eagles beat the Los Angeles Rams W (14–7) before 36,364. At Washington, on Nov 2, 1947, the Eagles danced over the Redskins for the win W (38–14) before 36,591. At New York on Nov 9, the Eagles put a hurt on the Giants W (41–24) before 29,016. Then, on Nov 16, at home, the Eagles shutout the Boston Yanks W (32–0) before 26,498

This time at Boston, the Yank's home field, on Nov 23, the Eagles could not hold on and lost at Boston L (14-21) before 15,628. On Nov 30, at home, the Eagles shut out the Pittsburgh Steelers W (21-0) before 37,218. Finding another loss unexpectedly, a rolling Eagles team met defeat on Dec 7 at home, at the hands of the Chicago Cardinals L (21-45) before 32,322. In the season ender, on Dec 14, the Eagles got the team moxie together to defeat the Green Bay Packers W (28-14) 24,216. I have been noticing that the cold December games are not as well attended. How about you?

## National Championship Game

It was the Eagles v the Chicago Cardinals. The big game was played for the 1947 National Football League Championship. It was the 15th annual National Football League (NFL) championship game. The Chicago Cardinals was the team, not the St. Louis Cardinals. The game was played on December 28 at Comiskey Park in Chicago. The attendance was 30,759, well below capacity. As usual in Chicago, it was cold with a deep wind.



Cardinals-Eagles Game Action

The game featured the Western Division champion Chicago Cardinals(9-3) and the Eastern Division champion Philadelphia Eagles (8-4). A week earlier, the Eagles defeated the Pittsburgh

Steelers 21–0 in a tiebreaker playoff to determine the Eastern winner. Both the Eagles and Cardinals were making their first appearances in the championship game.

The Cardinals had won the regular season meeting against the Birds in Philadelphia three weeks prior by a healthy 24 points and after a week off, they were 12-point favorites to win the title game at home. They did.

The Cardinals grabbed a quick 14–0 lead in the second quarter, then the teams traded touchdowns. The Eagles closed the gap to 28–21 with five minutes to go, but the Cardinals controlled the ball the rest of the way on an extended drive to pick up their first title. The Eagles would shine in 1948.

This was the only NFL title game ever played at Comiskey Park and it continues as Cardinals' only win. The two teams returned for a rematch in 1948 in Philadelphia, but the Eagles won in a snowstorm. The Cardinals have not won a league championship since this one in 1947, over seven decades ago, the longest drought in the NFL. (They made it to the Super Bowl (XLIII) in the 2008 season, but lost by four points.) The Eagles had won BFL championships prior to the 2018 game but had never won a Super Bowl Game until Pederson and company accomplished that in 2018. They're still talking about that 2018 win across the entire NFL.

The Cardinals' win in 1947 kept the NFL title within the city of Chicago; the north end's Bears had won the previous season. This was the Cardinals' last playoff win as a franchise until January 1999; at 51 years and five days, it was the longest post-season win drought in NFL history. They relocated to St. Louis in 1960 and again to Arizona in 1988.

### **1948 Greasy Neale, Coach #3**

The 1948 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixteenth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Greasy Neale in his eighth season of ten as head coach. This Eagles team finished with a championship level winning season and this time got the championship Their record was

9-2-1, finishing in first place. The Eagles improved on their previous record of 8-4, winning nine games and whooping everybody else to get the championship.

They qualified for the playoffs as a repeat in the Eastern Division and they returned to the NFL Championship game, this time defeating the Chicago Cardinals to win their first NFL title. Well-deserved Go Eagles! Go Greasy Neale and thanks for coming by!

The NFL Draft was still a reportable event and so we still are reporting about it. The 1948 NFL draft was held back in December, on the 19, just five days after the end of the regular season, but before the College Bowls. It was held nine days before the championship game was played.

The Eagles had finished the 1947 season with an 8–4 record. Since they were tied well up in the standings with the Chicago Bears and Pittsburgh Steelers, got to pick 7th, 8th or 9th normally in the 32 rounds in which they had picks.

The Washington Redskins won the lottery bonus pick at number one and chose Harry Gilmer. He was a phenomenon at the University of Alabama. In a book I wrote a year ago titled, *Great Moments in Alabama Football*, Harry is highlighted for his great play long before Alabama was known for its great play.

In the first round, the Eagles selected Clyde Scott, a running back from the University of Arkansas. The Eagles' 26th round pick, Lou Creekmur, did not make the team but ended up becoming a Hall of Fame player for the Detroit Lions. That gives us all a perspective on how hard it is to pick the best when you cannot see into their hearts.

Many of the draft picks made by NFL teams ended up playing for teams in the rival All-America Football Conference (AAFC). Today, the NFL has it lots easier as most other opportunities to play are inferior to the NFL, which persisted to become the greatest football league of all time.

On Sept 24 at Chicago, the Eagles were beaten by the Cardinals in the season opener L (24-14) before 24,159. On Oct 3, at Los

Angeles, the Eagles tied the Rams T (28-28) before 24,597. On Oct 10 at home, the Eagles walloped the New York Giants in a shutout, W 45-0 before 22,804. On Oct 17, at Washington, the Eagles shut out the Redskins W 45-0 before 35,580.

At home on Oct 24, in a very close match, the Eagles beat the Chicago Bears W (12-7) before 36,227. Then, at Pittsburgh on Oct 31, the Eagles beat the Steelers W (34-7) before 32,859. On November 7, at New York, the Eagles defeated the Giants W (35-14) before 24,983. Then, on Nov 14, at home, in the third 45-0 shutout of the season, the Eagles whipped the Boston Yanks W (45-0) before 22,958

On Nov 21 at home, the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins W 42-21 before 36,254. At home on Nov 28, the Eagles shut out the Steelers W (17-0) before 22,001. At Boston on Dec 5, the Yanks defeated the Eagles L (14-37) before 9,652. It was just the second loss of the season for the Eagles. On Dec 12, at home, the Eagles beat the Detroit Lions W (45-21) before 15,322 in the final game of the 1948 season.

## **NFL Championship Game Dec 19, 1948**

### **Eagles Greatest Games**

The NFL Championship game was played at Philadelphia's Shibe Park on December 19 during a blizzard.

The status of the game was tentative until close to game time. In fact, thinking the game would not be played in such a blizzard, star back Steve Van Buren remained home. He needed a yeoman effort to make it to the stadium to suit up and play that day. It was so bad Van Buren was sure the game was called off. Eagles coach Earle "Greasy" Neale called him and told him the game was still on. Van Buren had to catch 3 trolleys and walk 12 blocks in order to make the game on time.



1948 Eagles v Chicago Cardinals NFL Championship in Philadelphia in a Blizzard

The paid attendance for the game was 36,309. Only 28,864 were seated as the weather chased a number of fans away. The game was scoreless until early in the fourth quarter. The Eagles recovered a fumble that set up Van Buren's five-yard touchdown at 1:05 into the fourth quarter. Not seeing the goal line too well with the snow, the Cardinals disputed that the ball or Van Buren had crossed the snow-covered goal line. The referee's call stood regardless.

This was the Cardinals' last appearance in any NFL Championship game in the 20th century. There is said to be a curse on the football Cardinals that followed them from Chicago to St. Louis and on to Arizona. You would need to read another book not written by this author to learn more about the curse.

Looking a bit deeper into the circumstances of this day, the major problem was that they could not remove the tarp with the amount of snow that was piled on it. Eventually the crew had to ask for the help of both the Eagles and the Cardinals players to remove the tarp from the field. Amazing.





Earle (Greasy) Neale with the team after defeating the Chicago Cardinals in the 1948 NFL championship game. Linebacker Alex Wojciechowicz said of Neale, "He devoted his life to teaching his men not only sports, but also an understanding and appreciation of life itself."

Though getting the tarp off was a big enough of a problem, the snow fall was so rapid that seeing the yard lines was nearly impossible. It was up to the head ref to use his best judgment and keen observation skills to determine first downs, touchdowns and so on. Could you imagine such a decision being used today? Not likely.

Through three quarters of play the scoreboard had not been dented. However, when Chicago fumbled early in the fourth quarter on their own side of the 50-yard line, the Eagles took advantage. Hall of Famer Steve Van Buren scored the game's only touchdown, giving the Eagles a 7-0 lead, which would later become the final score.

Not much else to report

### **1949 Greasy Neale, Coach #3**

The 1949 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventeenth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Greasy Neale in his ninth season of ten as head coach. This Eagles team finished with a championship level

winning season and got the championship for the second time in a row

Their record was 11-1-0, finishing in first place. The Eagles improved on their previous record of 9-2-1, winning eleven games and whooping everybody else to get the coveted championship. They qualified for the playoffs as a repeat in the Eastern Division and they returned to the NFL Championship game, this time defeating the Chicago Cardinals to win their first NFL title. Well deserved! Go Eagles! Go Greasy Neale and thanks for coming by!

## NFL Draft

The 1949 NFL draft was held on December 21, 1948. It was 25 rounds long. The Eagles had the Lottery Bonus Pick in the draft and picked 1st. The Eagles would choose 26 players total during this draft. They had the last pick in each round as all teams picked in every round. The All-America Football Conference was still a rival league and were doing a good job signing some of the NFL cast offs and draft picks. With the bonus and 1st pick overall, the Eagles took a local hero from the University of Pennsylvania, a center and linebacker, Chuck Bednarik. Along with him, the other future NFL Hall of Famers picked this year were Norm Van Brocklin, George Blanda, and Doak Walker.

In the first game of the season on Sept 22 at New York, the Eagles defeated the new Bulldogs W 7-0 before 4,355. On Oct 3, at Detroit, the Eagles defeated the Lions W (22-14) before 20,163. At home in Shibe, on Oct 8, the Eagles defeated the Chicago Cardinals W (28-3) before 33,716. At Chicago on Oct 16, the Bears put the only mar for the year on Greasy Neale's Eagles record with a L (21-38) defeat before 47,248.

On Oct 16, the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins at home W (49-14) before 28,602. On Oct 30, at Pittsburgh, the Eagles beat the Steelers W (38-7) before 37,840. On Nov 6, at home, the Eagles beat the Los Angeles Rams W (38-14) before 38,230. Then, at Washington on Nov 13, the Eagles defeated the Redskins W (44-21) before 31,170

Next on Nov 20, at home, the Eagles walloped the New York Bulldogs W (42–0) before 22,165. At home again, on Nov 27, the Eagles beat the Pittsburgh Steelers W (34–17) before 22,191. On Dec 4, at New York, the Eagles beat the Giants W (24–3) before 25,446. In the season closing game on Dec 11, 1949, the Eagles beat the New York Giants W 17–3 before 21,022

## The 1949 NFL Championship Game

There were no playoffs to set up the 1949 National Football League Championship Game. The league was still in its infancy. However, it was the 17<sup>th</sup> title game for the National Football League (NFL). It was played on December 18 at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum in Los Angeles, California. It was lousy weather with a big rain storm that caused the field to become a mud pit. Paid attendance was 27,980, but only 22,245 braved the weather to take a seat in the stadium.

Our Eastern Division champion Philadelphia Eagles (11–1), were the defending NFL champions, and they were matched against the Western Division winners, the Los Angeles Rams(8–2–2). The Eagles devoured the Rams W (14-0) for their second championship in a row.

This was the first NFL title game played in the western United States. The Rams had last appeared in a title game in 1945. They won that game and ironically, it was the franchise's final game in Cleveland. Then, they moved further west to LA.

The Eagles were favored by a touchdown, they won by two TD's shutting out the rams from scoring. It was the second consecutive shutout for the Eagles in back to back NFL championship games. The score was 14–0. It featured the great rushing of the immortal running back Steve Van Buren, who led the field with 196 yards on 31 carries for the Eagles. The Eagles fabled defense held the Rams to just 21 yards on the ground.



Eagles v Rams National Title Game

Philadelphia head coach Earle "Greasy" Neale did not like to fly, so the Eagles traveled to the West Coast by train. On the way west, they stopped in Illinois for a workout at Stagg Field at the University of Chicago on Wednesday morning. Cross country trains typically stop in Chicago to pick up another train going west.

## Who is Chuck Bednarik?



Chuck Bednarik, who just recently passed away in 2015, was known as one of the most punishing tacklers ever to play the game. He routinely made short work of any player foolish enough to run in his way.

He was a college standout and was the first pick in the 1949 NFL Draft. He lived up to all expectations. During his 14-year stint as an Eagle, Bednarik was notorious for making the big plays on defense.

However, it must be told

that he was one of the few players in football at the time that continued to go both ways – O, & D. He played center on offense.

After retiring, it did not take the powers that be long to award him a coveted spot in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. There was only one Chuck Bednarik. Many running backs across the league including Frank Gifford, are glad there were not two or three Bednarik's for them to face in the NFL.

**The following words are about Chuck Bednarik as written on the Pro Football Hall of Fame site:**

Quote: "If I could relive my life it would be in those times. The Eagle teams I played on were like family, particularly that 1960 championship team."

No National Football League player in the 1950s was immune to bone-jarring contact with the Philadelphia Eagles' Chuck Bednarik because the 233-pounder played on both the offensive and defensive units long after the two-way player had largely faded from the scene.

Bednarik didn't really get into football until he returned from World War II (after a 30-mission tour as a B-24 waist gunner with the Army Air Corps that saw him win the Air Medal). He showed up unheralded at the University of Pennsylvania, where he went on to win All-America honors as a center his last two seasons.

Chuck was selected first overall in the 1949 NFL Draft as the Eagles' bonus draft choice and earned a starter's spot as a center on offense and linebacker on defense. As an offensive center, big Chuck was a bulldozing blocker, both on rushing and passing plays. On defense, he was a true scientist in his field and the kind of tackler who could literally stop even the finest enemy runners "on a dime."

In 1950, Bednarik received All-NFL recognition as a center. Although he frequently played both offense and defense right up through the 1956 season, it was as a bone-jarring linebacker that he drew the most attention. He was named All-NFL as a linebacker 1951 through 1957 and again in 1960.

His athletic abilities and inspirational play was particularly evident in 1960 when injuries forced the Eagles to ask their 12-year veteran to again play both sides of the line. The 35-year-old was sensational. He finished the campaign with a 58-minute performance, capped by a game-saving tackle in the Eagles' NFL championship victory over Green Bay. With just seconds remaining, the Packers' Jim Taylor appeared to be heading for a winning touchdown until the last Eagle in his path, Bednarik, bear-hugged him to the ground as time ran out.

### **1950 Greasy Neale, Coach #3**

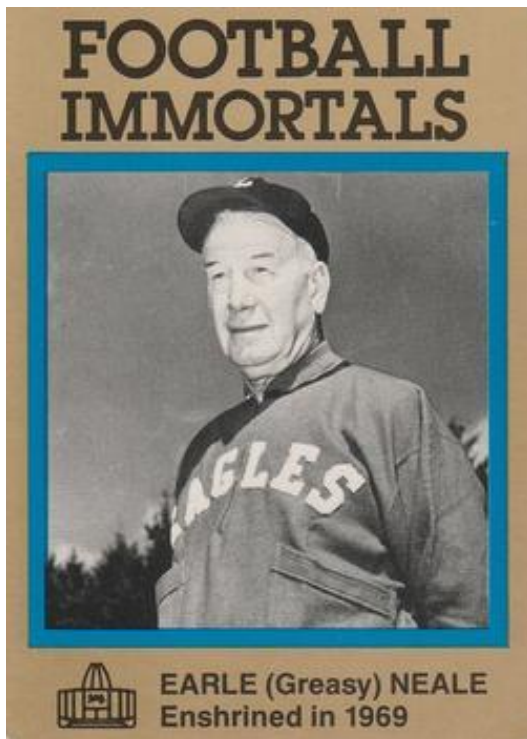
The 1950 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their eighteenth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Greasy Neale in his tenth and last season as head coach. This Eagles team finished with a .500 record after having won two championships in a row.

Greasy Neale was fired before the 1951 season. It would take a while for the Eagles to regain their prominence in the NFL.

## THE YEAR GREASY NEALE WAS FIRED

By Gene Murdock

[Originally published in Pro Football Digest, April—May 1968, five years before Neale's death in 1973 and 17 years after his controversial ousting.]



It was a tense moment in the Philadelphia Eagles' dressing room at the Polo Grounds on a raw Sunday afternoon in late November 1950. The National Football League champions had just dropped a heartbreaker to the New York Giants, 7-3. The club owner stood in the center of the room and pointed an accusing finger at his coach. "And you," he shouted, "you made mistakes out there; you made mistakes!"

"Damn you," fired back the coach, "I never make mistakes. Or if I do you

can't tell me in my clubhouse in front of my football players. If you want to tell me what mistakes I make on the football field, you tell me in your office on Monday morning!"

Seated in his home in Parkersburg, W.Va. 17 years later, 76-year-old Earle "Greasy" Neale still has thunder in his voice as he talks of the shouting match that openly marked the beginning of the end of his long and colorful coaching career. "Imagine this now -- the president of a ball club standing in the middle of the dressing room after you'd been beaten 7-3, popping off in front

of your players, telling me you can't win with three points. Anybody knew that. It didn't take a genius to tell you that!"

The year 1950 had already been a trying one for Greasy, who had led the Eagles to NFL titles in 1948 and 1949, winning "Coach of the Year" honors both seasons. He had taken over the club, a tail-end outfit, in 1941, had converted it into a winner within three or four years and had topped this feat with three divisional and two league crowns.

As the 1950 season approached, the future had looked bright. Neale had most of his championship team back, a team studded with such seasoned stars as Steve Van Buren, Tommy Thompson, Pete Pihos and Vic Sears. In addition, there were outstanding second-year men like Chuck Bednarik, Clyde "Smackover" Scott and Frank Ziegler. Greasy confided to Philadelphia sportswriter Stan Baumgartner on the eve of the College All-Star game his personal optimism: "I don't see why our boys can't do it again. Who is there to beat us?"

But things had not worked out that way. A wave of crippling injuries beset the Eagles in training camp. In the first game of the season, the Cleveland Browns, newly arrived in the NFL after terrorizing the All-America Conference, proved they belonged there by trouncing the Eagles 35-10.

As he looks back on that first game with Paul Brown's team, Greasy admits that he and his Eagles probably took the neophyte Browns too lightly.

"They beat us with passes – Otto Graham to Dub Jones. I thought Russ Craft could cover anybody alive – he covered "Crazylegs" Hirsch all the time and would take the ball right away from him and run for touchdowns – but he couldn't cover Dub Jones. I knew within 10 minutes after that game started that the Eagle defense wouldn't stop the Browns."

But the Eagles bounced back. They won five straight and seemed headed for another championship until they experienced a series of exasperating razor-thin defeats in November and



December that destroyed their hopes for a third straight title. The mounting frustration came to a head in the Polo Grounds dressing room with owner Jim Clark and Greasy blowing up at each other. In picturesque language Neale offered to quit his job on the spot, but Clark quickly retreated and diplomatic relations between the two were temporarily patched up.

As Greasy recalls it: "After that game in New York we went out to Cleveland for our second game with the Browns. Jim and I rode out together and had a few drinks together. I forced him on Tuesday to come to practice and apologize to the team. He told me then: 'You can coach this team forever for me.'"

The cut went too deep, however, and in three months' time the "Coach of the Year" – the man who had wondered: "Who is there to beat us?" – was fired.

What happened? From the distance of years, it looks quite simple. After racing to a 5-1 record to lead the Eastern Conference at the midway point, the Eagles apparently collapsed. In the last half of the season, except for a 33-0 rout of the Redskins, the Philadelphians dropped five games. They ended up in a tie for third place in the East with a 6-6 record, the team's poorest performance since 1942.

But as Greasy tells it, nothing is ever quite that simple. Although only 6-6 for the season, the Eagles outscored their opponents by the lopsided margin of 254 to 141. And, significantly, they dropped those five second-half games by a total of 18 points. The Giants beat them twice (7-3 and 9-7), the Browns once (13-7), Pittsburgh once (9-7) and the Cardinals once (14-10).

In the first Giant game, the one that touched off the Clark-Neale confrontation, Philadelphia was near the goal line most of the time but could not push the ball across and had to settle for a field goal. As Greasy remembers it, they were stopped five times – on the 16-, 20-, 5-, 2-, and 4-yard lines.

He talks of the second clash with the Browns with bitterness lightened by a special kind of pride. "I spent two hours a day for

a week on defense before the second Brown game. Imagine that! They only give 20 minutes to defense normally. "

Motley gains 15 yards, Graham doesn't complete a pass. And they beat me on an intercepted pass that they scored on and two fumbles where Groza kicked field goals. They beat us 13-7. They made two first downs – and I'll bet it's the only game Graham ever played in which he didn't complete a pass!"

Greasy's strategy for stopping Marion Motley was simple: "I put Bednarik on that Motley and I said: "That's your man, and don't you let him go anywhere. When he comes through the line, whether he's got the ball or not, you hit him, and you hit him, and you tear him apart!"

"That Bednarik, he was something! You know, he was the first lineman ever taken as a first-round draft choice. He and Van Buren and Joe Muha were the best picks we ever made."

The loss of those five games by 18 points resulted less from a collapse of the team on the field -- on defense the Eagles allowed far fewer first downs than any team in the league and were only 70 yards behind the Browns in yards allowed -- than from a succession of damaging injuries, but anytime a coach loses players like Van Buren, "Bosh" Pritchard, Scott and Al Wistert for extended periods, he's in trouble. Greasy was no exception.

Van Buren developed a spur on the bottom of one of his feet in training and after playing in the All-Star game with Novocain deadening the pain, he was returned to Philadelphia for an operation and did not practice for the next six weeks. He missed the season's opener and was far below par all year long. His rushing total dropped from the league-leading figure of 1,146 yards in 1949 to 626 in 1950, with his average declining from 4.4 yards a try to 3.3.

Pritchard, who had finished fifth in the NFL in rushing in 1949 with a 6.0 average, injured a knee in training and didn't play in a single game in 1950. Scott, who as a rookie from Arkansas in 1949 had averaged just under five yards a try in 40 carries, was

badly injured in the second quarter of the 1950 opener against the Browns and was finished for the season.

As Stan Baumgartner explained it: "Pritchard and Scott are very fast men who can run the ends, keep the opposing defense spread and make it possible for Van Buren to plunge through the line. When these two carriers were out of the lineup, the opposition concentrated on Van Buren and bottled him up before he could get started. The only other danger was quarterback Tommy Thompson's forward passes. With no far of Pritchard, Scott or Van Buren, the rival club concentrated on possible receivers. So, Neale's entire intricate offense bogged down."

Greasy was vacationing at Lake Worth, Fla. in February 1951, confident that his Eagles would bounce back the next season, when he got a terse telegram from owner Jim Clark saying: "You will be paid for the one year remaining on your contract, but you are no longer the coach of the Philadelphia Eagles."

"It was a complete surprise," says Greasy. "After that blowup in New York Clark told me that I could coach the Eagles as long as he had the club. It liked to kill my wife. She died two months later."

In Neale's opinion an important factor in his dismissal was a difference of views over his scouting system. "We had the greatest scouting system of any team in the NFL," Greasy proudly claims. "We had the information on every boy who entered school until the time he graduated from any college in America."

According to Greasy, it was in 1943 that he and Alexis Thompson, who then owned the Eagles, and general manager Harry Thayer worked out an elaborate method of compiling complete information on all college football players.

"We had 68 books that we took into the second draft meeting we attended. No team had ever done this before. They laughed at us, but you can bet they stopped after we got ourselves men like Van Buren and Muha with that system! "

The problem was that Jim Clark, who headed the 1,000 stockholders who bought the club from Lex Thompson, didn't know anything about football. He wanted to trim expenses by doing away with my scouts. He thought we were spending too much money for information on football players.

"That scouting system won us championships. But I was wasting my time telling Clark that. He paid no attention to it."

To replace Neale, Clark hired Bo McMillan, who in three years as head coach of the Detroit Lions (1948-50) had compiled a 12-24 won-lost record and had feuded continually with the club-owners. He coached the Eagles for two games in 1951, quitting because of illness. Wayne Millner succeeded him, and the Eagles wound up the year with a 4-8 mark.

Today, Greasy Neale lives in his boyhood hometown in a house filled with trophies. The trophies tell of the days he played football with Jim Thorpe long before the NFL was born, of years as a slick-hitting outfielder with the Cincinnati Reds and as a coach of college football teams – including the Washington and Jefferson giant-killers who held mighty California to a scoreless tie in the 1922 Rose Bowl.

And some of the trophies tell Greasy that he was professional football's "Coach of the Year" two years in a row – just before a season when the percentages took over and five games lost by a total of 18 points brought him and his high-flying Eagles back to earth.

Here is another look at Greasy Neale's record:

1941	Greasy Neale	4th place	2-8-1
1942	Greasy Neale	5th place	2-9-0
1943	Greasy Neale Steagles	3rd place	5-4-1 —
1944	Greasy Neale	2nd place	7-1-2
1945	Greasy Neale	2nd place	7-3-0
1946	Greasy Neale	2nd place	6-5-0
1947	Greasy Neale	1st place	8-4-0
1948	Greasy Neale	1st place	9-2-1
1949	Greasy Neale	1st place	11-1-0
1950	Greasy Neale	T-3 <sup>rd</sup> place	6-6-0

- 1947 Won Eastern Divisional Playoff (at Steelers) 21-0
- 1947 Lost NFL Championship (at Cardinals) 21-28
- 1948 Won NFL Championship (1) (Cardinals) 7-0
- 1941-1950 Greasy Neale final record (66-44-5)



# Chapter 6 Four Coaches from 1951 to 1957

Coach # 4 Bo McMillin

Coach #5 Wayne Millner

Coach #6 Jim Trimble

Coach #7 Hugh Devore

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf/Div</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Record</u>
1951	Bo McMillin	American	5 <sup>th</sup>	2-0-0
1951	Wayne Millner	American	5 <sup>th</sup>	2-8-0
<b><u>1951-1951 McMillin / Millner final record (4-8-0)</u></b>				
1952	Jim Trimble	American	T2 <sup>nd</sup>	7-5-0
1953	Jim Trimble	Eastern	2 <sup>nd</sup>	7-4-1
1954	Jim Trimble	Eastern	2 <sup>nd</sup>	7-4-1
1955	Jim Trimble	Eastern	T4 <sup>th</sup>	4-7-1
<b><u>1952-1955 Jim Trimble final record (25-20-3)</u></b>				
1956	Hugh Devore	Eastern,	6 <sup>th</sup>	3-8-1
1957	Hugh Devore	Eastern, x	5 <sup>th</sup>	4-8-0
<b><u>1956-1957 Hugh Devore final record (7-16-1)</u></b>				



Eagles 1951 Head Coach Bo McMillan as player -- QB

**1951 Bo McMillan, Coach #4 (2-0)****1951 Wayne Millner, Coach #5 (2-8)**

The 1951 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their nineteenth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Bo McMillan and Wayne Millner at different times in the season. Both were in their first season of one as head coach. This Eagles team finished with a dismal losing season of 4-8-0.

The Eagles owner fired Greasy Neale and first hired Bo McMillin as head coach on Feb 8, 1951. He took on the challenge of returning the Philadelphia Eagles to their previous glory. However, after just two games (both wins), McMillin underwent surgery for what was believed to be ulcer troubles. The verdict was far worse: stomach cancer, which ended his coaching career. Assistant coach Wayne Millner took over as head coach for the rest of the year. Millner would resign weeks before the 1952 season citing health as the reason for stepping down. There was no championship in 1951

**1952 Jim Trimble Coach # 6**

The 1952 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their twentieth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Jim Trimble in his first season of four as head coach. This Eagles team finished with a winning record of 7-5-0. The team was a bit better 7-4-1 in 1953 and 1954. Trimble was not a bad coach but he also was no Greasy Neale. He got three second place finishes but no championships.

1952	Jim Trimble	American	<b>T2<sup>nd</sup></b>	7-5-0
1953	Jim Trimble	Eastern	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	7-4-1
1954	Jim Trimble	Eastern	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	7-4-1
1955	Jim Trimble	Eastern	<b>T4<sup>th</sup></b>	4-7-1

**1952-1955 Jim Trimble final record (25-20-3)**



Great player Pete Pihos and Coach Jim Trimble in Honors Ceremony

Head coach Wayne Millner, who took over, for ailing head coach Bo McMillin in 1951, resign on September 8, just 3 weeks before the 1952 season started, citing health as the reason for stepping down. He was replaced by coach Jim Trimble just in time for the season. The Eagles problem with coach retention did not help the team win games.

1953 was the fourth season in a row for the team to not make the playoffs.

The 1956 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their twenty-third season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Jim Trimble in his fourth and last season of four as head coach. This Eagles team finished with the losing reverse of a winning record at 4-7-1 as 1953. This was the sixth season in a row for the team to not make the playoffs.

Jim Trimble would not survive after this season though he was doing reasonably well. The Eagles fired him after this season.



The replacement for Trimble came with stellar credentials. Hugh Devore, who had been an interim coach at Notre Dame several times, was a great guy and was a well-liked and respected coach, Devore had consistently brought in less than stellar results at ND, but the Eagles expected better. He was hired and coached for two years before getting the axe. As one might expect, as good a guy as he was, Devore predictably brought in less than stellar results. This did not please the Eagles constituency and sooner, not later, the great man, but medsa-medsa coach was given the bum's rush.

Under Trimble, Philadelphia was not a bad team. They had finished second in the prior two 2 seasons to the Cleveland Browns. And so, Trimble was awarded a three-year contract after the team's second straight runner-up finish in 1953. He had another fine year in 1954 but no cigar. When the stubby cigar that was left, could not be lit again, it was time for a departure song as far as Eagle's management was concerned. But, what did they know?

### **1956 Hugh Devore Coach # 7**

The 1956 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their twenty-fourth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Hugh Devore in his first of two seasons as head coach. This Eagles team finished with a losing record of 3-8-1. This was the seventh season in a row for the team to not make the playoffs. Many of the games were close this year but the Eagles could not close. There were no real blowouts, but the record overall was poor.

The Eagles changed coaches during the off season. Jim Trimble was fired on December 12, and they hired Hugh Devore. Devore had a long career including Notre Dame, Green Bay, NYU, etc. before taking over the Eagles. Jim Trimble's legacy is more connected to football products, thanks to his "slingshot" goal posts. In 1966, he would design and market the idea. Today they are the common goal post at football games.

## 1957 Hugh Devore Coach # 7

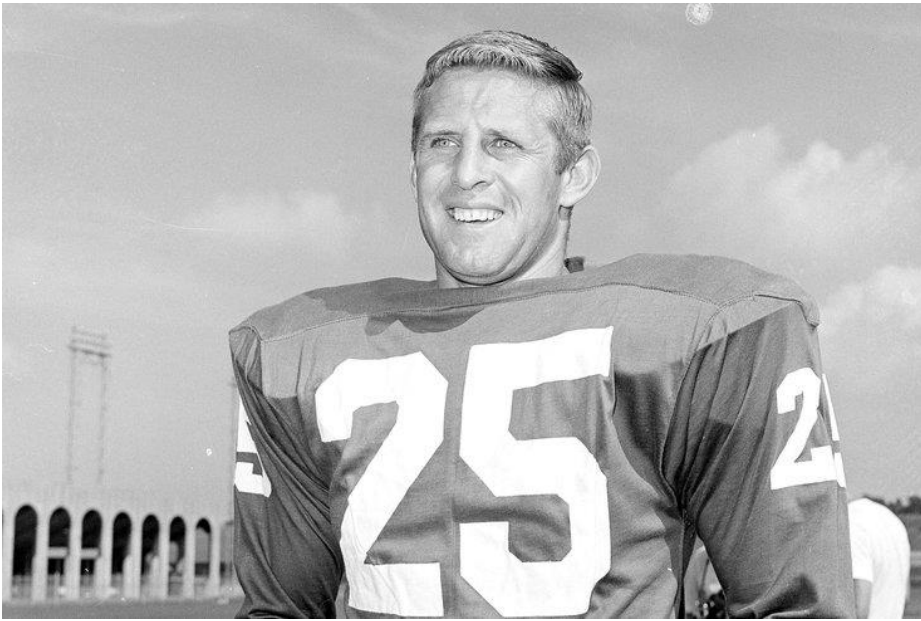


The 1957 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their twenty-fifth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Hugh Devore in his second and last season as head coach. This Eagles team won three more games than in 1956 but still finished with a losing record of 4-8-0. This was the eighth season in a row for the team to not make the playoffs.

## Who is Tommy McDonald

Joining the Eagles after being drafted in 1957. Tommy McDonald spent seven years as a Philadelphia Eagle. Wide receiver Tommy McDonald led the league in touchdown receptions twice and earned Pro Bowl honors five times. And, yes, he was part of that team that won the 1960 NFL Championship. If you check out his resume, you will hear it speaking for itself. As a side note, his great success came during a time where defenses weren't handicapped by safety rules. McDonald more than survived.

**Tommy McDonald: "I THINK CATCHING PASSES IS JUDGMENT, MOSTLY. I'VE GOT GOOD VISION; GOOD PERIPHERAL VISION. I THINK SOMETIMES I CAN SEE THINGS THE DEFENSIVE BACK DOESN'T SEE. I WATCH FOR HIM TO MAKE HIS MOVE—YOU'VE GOT TO STUDY THE GUYS IN THIS LEAGUE—AND IF HE'S A FRACTION LATE COMPENSATING FOR MINE, THEN I'VE GOT HIM BEAT."**



Wide receiver Tommy McDonald was taken early in the draft on 1957 (third round) by the Philadelphia Eagles in 1957. He had been an All-America choice at Oklahoma, winning the Maxwell Award in 1956 as college football's player of the year.

Though small in stature, he made up for it in heart and talent, and desire. During his three varsity years at Oklahoma, the Sooners never lost a game. McDonald could catch anything.

When I first joined IBM in Scranton, PA, Tom McDonald was the #1 Office Products salesman. He was a great guy and is still a great friend. At a summer outing in a volleyball game. Al Teufel went up and spiked a hard one. My Tommy McDonald may not have been able to catch anything, but he sure caught that spike right in the nose causing a sea of crimson immediately on the ground. Our team was getting thumped but good. Nonetheless, my Tom McDonald jumped up quickly after catching the ball in the face and screamed at the top of his voice, "Ya gotta win by two." They were already about eighteen ahead at Clifton Beach right outside of Scranton, PA. It did not matter to McDonald.

The Eagles' Tom McDonald was a six-time Pro Bowl selection (1959-1963 and 1966). He played seven seasons with the Eagles

(1957-1963), one with the Cowboys (1964), two with the Rams (LA) and one each with the Atlanta Falcons (1967) and the Cleveland Browns (1968). He was a pro's pro.

At just 5-9 and 176 pounds, McDonald was extremely durable and missed only three games in his first 11 seasons. Trying to catch the speedster was an exercise in futility. He used his running skills brilliantly after making his catches, gaining an average of 17 yards after the catch and 84 touchdowns. I can remember many a game on the old black/white Admiral TV, watching the Eagles with my dad.

McDonald had a tough time missing a ball, so he almost never did. He was a sure-handed receiver for sure. There were few Tommy McDonald peers, when it came to *getting the ball into the end zone*. In the short period from 1958-62, he had 56 touchdown receptions in 63 games, including a 35-yard TD catch from ace quarterback Norm Van Brocklin in the 1960 NFL Championship Game. The Eagles got all the marbles that year by defeating Green Bay Packers 17-13.

McDonald's statistics were outstanding. He had a career ratio of touchdowns-to-receptions of 1 in 5.9. He as dangerous to opponents when he got his hands on the ball. There was a stretch in which he caught at least one pass in 93 consecutive games. As a rookie, he was used primarily as a kickoff and punt return specialist e also caught at least one pass in 93 consecutive games.

McDonald was fun to watch. He ranked sixth all-time in receptions (495), fourth in yards receiving (8,410) and second in touchdown catches (84) when he retired following the 1968 season. He was born in Roy, New Mexico, had his most outstanding season in 1961. Not only did he lead the NFL in reception yardage (1,144) and in touchdowns (13), but he had the best game of his career against the New York Giants. He caught seven passes for 237 yards and two touchdowns. Last time I checked, this was still an Eagles' single-game best.



This picture captures the Tommy McDonald I recall

# Chapter 7 Three Coaches From 1958 to 1968

**Coach #8 Buck Shaw**  
**Coach #9 Nick Skorich**  
**Coach #10 Joe Kuharich**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Record</u>
1958	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	<b>T5<sup>th</sup></b>	2-9-1
1959	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	<b>T2<sup>nd</sup></b>	7-5-0
1960	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	<b>1st</b>	10-2-0

- Won NFL Championship v (Packers) 17-13
- Norm Van Brocklin (MVP)
- Buck Shaw (Coach of Year),

### 1958-1960 Buck Shaw final record (20-16-1)

1961	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	<b>2nd</b>	10-4-0
1962	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	<b>7th</b>	3-10-1
1963	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	<b>7th</b>	2-10-2

### 1961-1963 Nick Skorich final record (15-24-3)

1964	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	<b>T3<sup>rd</sup></b>	6-8-0
1965	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	<b>T5<sup>th</sup></b>	5-9-0
1966	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	<b>T2<sup>nd</sup></b>	9-5-0
1967	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	Capitol	<b>2nd</b>	6-7-1
1968	Joe Kuharich, Eastern	Capitol		<b>4th</b>	2-12-0

### 1964-1968 Joe Kuharich final record (28-41-1)



Coach Buck Shaw gets lift from Bobby Walston, 83, Tim Brown, 22, Tommy McDonald 25

## **1958 Buck Shaw Coach # 8**

The 1958 Philadelphia Eagles football team finished in fifth place with first year coach Buck Shaw. In 1959, they came in 2<sup>nd</sup> place and then Buck Shaw brought the pride back to the Philadelphia Locker room with a National Football League Championship.

After Hugh Devore was fired in the offseason, Vince Lombardi was offered the Eagles head coaching position, but he refused it. He opted to stay as the Offensive Coordinator of the New York Giants. Buck Shaw took the team that was not in too good a shape from two poor years helping make it a stronger contender.

## **1959 Buck Shaw Coach # 8**

The 1959 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their twenty-seventh season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Buck Shaw in his second of three seasons as head coach. This Eagles team finished second in the Eastern Conference with a winning record of 7-5-0. This was the tenth season in a row for the team to not make the playoffs.

## **1960 Buck Shaw Coach # 8**

The 1960 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their twenty-eighth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Buck Shaw in his third and last seasons as head coach. This Eagles team finished first in the Eastern Conference with a winning record of 10-2-0. This broke the ten years spell of not making the playoffs. This was for Vince Lombardi, a one-time head coaching prospect at Philadelphia, his first year coaching the Green Bay Packers

This great Buck Shaw coaching year and Eagles 1st place, 10-2 performance culminated in the Eagles' beating the Green Bay Packers in the NFL championship game to win their third league title. The victory over the Packers was also the first and only playoff defeat of the great Vince Lombardi's coaching career. The 1960 season was the Eagles' first postseason appearance since their last NFL championship season of 1949. It was their only postseason

appearance in the 28 seasons from 1950 to 1977, and their last NFL title until their victory in Super Bowl LII, 57 years later. Go Eagles!

The business of football continued this year. For example, on March 13, 1960, there was an expansion draft to “stock” the new Dallas Rangers with players. The Rangers soon afterwards changed their name to the "Cowboys." In this draft the Eagles lost tight end Dick Bielski, tackle Jerry DeLuca, and linebacker Bill Striegel to Dallas.

The 1960 NFL draft and the 1960 AFL Draft were held separately for college players (the common draft was not initiated until 1967).

The NFL Draft was a draft of 20 rounds with 12 teams picking. The Eagles would rotate having the 7th, 8th or 9th pick in the draft rounds, with Chicago and Cleveland. The quickly assembled NFL franchise of the Dallas “Cowboys,” did not have a chance to pick, as the draft was held on November 30, 1959, before they were formed, on January 28, 1960.

The NFL now had a competition with the AFL. The AFL had its own draft. The 1960 American Football League draft was held on November 22–23, 1959, in Minneapolis, shortly after the organization of the league. It lasted 33 rounds. An additional draft of 20 rounds was held by the AFL on December 2.

The Philadelphia Eagles lost 4 players to the AFL including 1st round pick Ron Burton a running back out of the Northwestern University. A total of 6 NFL 1st round picks in this draft would sign with the AFL this particular year.

On September 18, the Eagles lost to the Cleveland Browns L 24–41 0–1 56,303. It was the home and season opener for the Philadelphia Eagles. The Eagles lost a rare game this year to the Cleveland Browns L (24-41) by a healthy margin before 56,303. On Sept 25, the Eagles regrouped at Dallas and defeated the new “Cowboys” W 27–25 before 18,500. On October 2 at home , the Eagles defeated the St. Louis Cardinals W (31–27) before 33,701. At home on October 9, the Eagles whipped the Detroit Lions W (28–10) before 38,065.



Then, on Oct 16 at Cleveland, Philadelphia beat the Browns by two points W (31–29) before 64,850. The Eagles drew a bye for Oct 23. Then, on Oct 30, at home, the Eagles pounded the Pittsburgh Steelers W (34–7) bringing their record to 5–1, before 58,324 at Franklin Field. Then on Nov 6 at home, the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins W (19–13) before 39,361. On Nov 20 at New York, the Eagles beat the Giants W (17–10) before 63,571.

## Great Eagles Games—11/20/1960 v Giants

### More on the Nov 20 Eagles-Giants Game

#### “The Hit”:

*On October 23, 2013, Ray Didinger wrote about “The Hit.”*

Over 50 years later, “The Hit” still resonates.

The people who were there still talk about it. Those who saw it on TV still shudder at the memory. It was the beauty and the beast of pro football captured in one unforgettable image, one play that defines two legends. [I saw “The Hit.”]

Chuck Bednarik and Frank Gifford (New York Giants) collided dozens of times in the course of their Hall of Fame careers. But it was the one encounter on November 20, 1960, at Yankee Stadium that still echoes through the game. Almost every day, Bednarik said he is asked about “The Hit.”

Surely, he must be tired of it by now.

“Are you kidding? I never get tired of it,” Bednarik said. “For Frank, it’s probably a different story.”

“The Hit” came on a critical play late in a game which the Eagles led 17-10. On Nov. 20, 1960, the 6-1 Eagles battled the rival 5-1-1 Giants with first place on the line in the NFL’s Eastern Division. The Giants were driving toward a potential tying score when Gifford, their star halfback, ran a slant pattern across the middle. He caught the ball, but was immediately

leveled by Bednarik, a 6-foot-3, 235-pound linebacker, coming full speed in the opposite direction.

The 6-foot-1 Gifford, who played at 185 pounds, was slammed backwards violently onto the frozen turf where he lay unconscious, his arms and legs limp. As he hit the ground, the ball rolled loose and Chuck Weber dove on the fumble to seal the victory that vaulted the Eagles to the Eastern Division title and eventually the world championship.

When Bednarik saw Weber recover the fumble, he did a fist-pumping victory dance over the motionless Gifford. To this day, Bednarik swears he didn't see Gifford at his feet. He was, he claimed, simply reacting to the win which was now assured. "I was saying, 'This (expletive) game is over,'" Bednarik said. "I wasn't directing it at Frank or anybody else. I was elated we won. If people think I was gloating over Frank, they're full of you-know-what."



Gifford suffered a severe concussion on the play. He sat out the remainder of the 1960 season and all of the following season

before returning to the Giants in 1962. Gifford has always insisted he has no hard feelings toward Bednarik.

“It was a good, clean hit,” Gifford said. “It wasn’t an elbow, or a clothesline shot. He hit me in the chest and my head snapped when I hit the ground. I was out cold when they carried me off. I woke up in the locker room and had no idea what happened.” Whenever the Eagles and Giants renew their rivalry, ... old-school Philly fans reflect on that play. What made it particularly remarkable was that Bednarik was playing both ways - center on offense, linebacker on defense - as he did for much of the 1960 season. He was 35 years old, playing every down and he still had the strength to KO Gifford in the final two minutes of the game...

*An award-winning writer and producer, Ray Didinger was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1995. He has also won six Emmy Awards for his work as a writer and producer at NFL Films. The five-time Pennsylvania Sportswriter of the Year is a writer and analyst for Comcast SportsNet. Didinger will provide Eagles fans a unique historical perspective on the team throughout the season for PhiladelphiaEagles.com. You can read all of his Eagles History columns here.*

Against the Giants one week later on Nov 27, at home, the Eagles, at 7-1 beat the Giants W (31-23) making them 8-1 going into December. This game was played before 60,547. Then, on Dec 4, at St Louis, the Eagles beat the Cardinals 20-6 before 21,358. At Pittsburgh, riding high on none straight wins, the Eagles were set back on Dec 11 at Pittsburgh by the Steelers in a close match L (21-27) before 22,101. In the last game of the year, with the Eastern Championship already in the bag, the Eagles beat the Redskins on Dec 18 at Washington W 38-28 10-2 20,558

The **Milwaukee Wisconsin Journal Sentinel** provides a great account of the game:



Philadelphia Tom Brookshier (40) brings down Green Bay's Jim Taylor in the second quarter of NFL championship game. Eagles' Don Burroughs rushes in to help. *UPI/Journal Sentinel files*

***By BUD LEA, Milwaukee Sentinel***

**Philadelphia-** Time ran out on the Cinderella Packers Monday.

The team which rose from rags to riches under the driving leadership of Vince Lombardi ended its most successful season in 15 years nine yards away from the biggest prize in the world of football - the National League championship.

The Eagles won this 28th title game, 17-13, on a slippery Franklin Field turf as 67,325 held their breath because the Packers were on the move - from their 35 to the Philadelphia nine when the "bell" saved the Eagles.

With five seconds to play, Bart Starr fired a 15-yard pass to Jim Taylor, who was gang-tackled in the muck on the nine. The

Bayou Blaster buried his head in the mud as the gun sounded ... it was all over.

### **Each Loses \$2,000**

Losing meant a loss of more than \$2,000 to each Packer. The winners took home \$5,116.55 apiece while each Packer pocketed \$3,105.14.

The Packers moved easily against the Eagles, outgaining the best in the East, 401 yards to 296. But when scoring opportunities were presented, Green Bay failed badly.

The big play time and again was missing. Four times the Packers penetrated inside the Philadelphia 10-yard line and all they could show for it was a 20-yard field goal by Paul Hornung early in the first quarter.

### **Pack Hogs Ball**

The ball control theory could have been thrown out the window on this unusually warm winter afternoon. The Packers had 85 plays to the Eagles' 48.

Philadelphia, as expected, hitched its attack to Norm Van Brocklin, a pudgy, intelligent man of 34 who did enough damage with 3 1/2 minutes of the second quarter to beat the Packers.

### **Held 6-0 Lead**

Getting good protection, the Dutchman exploited Green Bay's defense by completing four of seven passes for 120 yards in this short stretch - one a 35-yard scoring shot to sprinter Tommy McDonald, and the other a 22-yard blur to rookie Ted Dean which set up Bobby Walston's 15-yard field goal.

Until Van Brocklin opened up with this deadly barrage, the Packers enjoyed a 6-0 lead on two field goals (20 and 23 yards)

by Hornung. Philadelphia then took its 10-6 halftime lead into the fourth quarter.

At 1:53 of the fatal fourth, Starr fired a seven-yard touchdown pass to Max McGee. It climaxed an 80-yard drive in 12 plays, put in motion by one of the most daredevil stunts of the year - a 35-yard run by McGee after faking a punt deep in his own territory.

But Dean, hailed the rookie of the year in most quarters, returned the ensuing kickoff 58 yards to the Packer 40. And seven plays later the 6-2, 210-pound halfback from Wichita wheeled five yards around left end to assure victory.

## Lose Hornung

The Packers lost the services of Hornung midway through the third quarter, and his spot was filled adequately by rookie Tom Moore.

Before suffering a pinched shoulder nerve, which hampered his ball handling, Hornung had gained 61 yards in 11 rushes and had caught four passes for 14 yards.

Individually, the Packers looked sharp on paper. Taylor gained 105 yards in 24 carries; Starr completed 21 of 34 passes for 178 yards and a touchdown, and Gary Knafelc had his best game of the year with six catches for 76 yards.

But the punch fizzled when it counted. And the indication was evident right off the bat.

On the very first offensive play of the game, Bill Qinlan recovered a Van Brocklin lateral to Bill Barnes on the Eagle 14. What an opportunity!

Taylor ripped through for five ... Hornung two ... Taylor one to the Eagle six. With fourth down and two to go, Taylor was met head on and missed by a yard.



Jim Taylor takes the handoff

A golden opportunity was royally flubbed, but another was right around the corner. It came the fourth time the Eagles had the ball, when Dean sliced over tackle for eight yards and fumbled. Forrester Gets It

Bill Forrester scooped up the ball on the Eagle 22. Two running plays by Hornung and a six-yard blast by Taylor reached the seven.

Taylor fought his way fiercely to the five, only to have an offside penalty shove the Packers back to the 12. With the going tough on the slippery gridiron, Starr then decided to go to the air.

His first shot aimed at Knafelc was broken up by Bobby Freeman, an ex-Packer. The next on third down, sailed beyond McGee's reach in the end zone.

Hornung, who had rested on the two previous plays, came in and booted a 20-yard field goal at 6:20 of the first quarter.

## Move Again

The Eagles showed little life on two series of plays, but the Packers started to move again late in the initial period.

After Willie Wood was caught in his tracks while fielding Van Brocklin's 30-yard punt on the Packer 37, the Bays methodically ground out yardage with its potent power-punch of Taylor and Hornung and Starr's accurate passes.

In seven plays the Packers were sitting pretty on the Philly 16.

Taylor clawed his way to the 13, but over-eagerness cost the Pack a five-yard offside penalty on the next play.

Starr resorted to passes and both fizzled. His first shot intended for McGee was broken up by Tom Brookshier. The next was dropped by Eagle defender Don Burroughs.

Denied a touchdown, the next best thing was a field goal, and Hornung obliged by splitting the uprights from the 23. His effort gave Green Bay a 6-0 lead 1:44 into the second quarter.  
Crowd Restless

Meanwhile, a highly partisan mob of Eagle rooters became restless. They started stamping their feet for action. Van Brocklin responded after McGee dribbled a 30-yard punt which stuck in the mud like a pitchfork on the Eagle 43.

He selected the pass which turned fans fears into reality. Two went to McDonald, a fast man downfield, 22 yards and then 35 for the touchdown.

On the TD Packer, defender Hank Gremminger was beaten on the hazardous turf, and by the time Em Tunnell tried to get to McDonald, he was shooting into the end zone.



## Walton Converts

Bobby Walston converted at 8:08 and the Eagles had taken the upper hand, 7-6.

Five plays later Van Brocklin was at it again. This time he picked on Jess Whittenton, completing a bomb to Pete Retzlaff which gained 41 yards. Johnny Symank caught the high-flying Eagle on the Packer 33.

Then Dean slipped past Whittenton and gained 22 yards after taking a perfect pass from Van Brocklin to the Packer eight. The Dutchman, though, couldn't come up with the TD pass on three tries so Walston booted a field goal from the 15 at 11:48 in the second quarter to boost the Eagle's lead to 10-6.

## March 73 Yards

This prompted Green Bay to march 73 yards in 10 plays, and Starr was masterful at ripping the Eagle defense apart.

Hornung, shrewd at picking his holes, started the drive with a 16-yard run. Seven plays and 29 yards later, Starr hit Taylor for a 15-yard gain to the Philly 20.

Only 45 seconds remained after Starr fired a seven-yard pass to Hornung. Then the Packer passer hit Knafelc on the seven. Starr couldn't find a receiver on the next play, made it to the line of scrimmage but lost valuable time.

## Brookshier Helps

The Packers hurriedly lined up for a field goal attempt and Brookshier proved a perfect host by jumping the gun.

Green Bay refused the offside penalty because of the angle of the kick. But from the 13, Hornung missed the field goal and another scoring chance was "blown" as the first half ended.

Although the third quarter was scoreless, there were chances for both clubs to score only to be thwarted by some fine defensive play.

On the third play after the second half kickoff, Starr heaved a long pass to Boyd Dowler, who ran straight downfield. But Burroughs, the Ram castoff who intercepted nine passes this season, made an outstanding defensive maneuver in knocking the ball out of Dowler's reach.

### **Stopped On 25**

The next time the Packers got the ball they quickly romped into Philly land again, but on fourth down with two to go, Taylor was stopped on the 25.

Now it was Van Brocklin's turn to get hot again and a 33-yard shot to McDonald, who was wide open, and a 25-yarder to Walston, who took the ball away from Gremminger, put the Eagles on the Packer five.

On second down, though, Symank saved further embarrassment by jumping high to intercept Van Brocklin's pass in the end zone for an automatic touchback.

The Packers, offensively, couldn't respond though. Three of Starr's passes failed to connect, and then McGee went back to punt. Well, everyone in Franklin Field including the Eagles and Packers thought so.

But the Taxi, a real money player, jolted everyone in this old park by taking off with the ball. The Eagles did not have a single man rush McGee, so the Packer-punter nonchalantly shot up the middle for 35 yards.



This was not a play from the bench, Lombardi later revealed, strictly a McGee gimmick. It worked ... and how, it worked.

Now the Packers were within striking distance again on the Eagle 45. It was the lift they needed, and Starr quickly went to work.

### **To The 10**

His 15-yard strike to Knafelc and Moore's 11-yard blast over three defenders carried to the 23. Taylor fought for five and Moore wheeled for eight to the 10.

Taylor then hit Burroughs so hard on the next play after picking up three yards that the Eagle defender had to be helped off the field. Starr immediately took advantage of his sub, Bobby Jackson, and passed to McGee from the seven for the touchdown.

Hornung came off the bench to convert at 1:53 in the fourth quarter, and the Packers were on the verge of their first championship in 16 years with a 13-10 lead.

Then Dean sprinted 58 yards on the kickoff to the Packer 40, and the handwriting was on the wall. Aside from a 13-yard pass to Barnes, Van Brocklin relied on the running of Barnes and Dean to gobble up 40 yards and a touchdown in seven plays.

Dean scored with a five-yard sprint around left end. Maybe the Packers were looking for the pass because they certainly didn't react to the Eagle runner. Walston kicked the extra point at 5:21 and that proved to be the final outcome.

### **Try to Rally**

The Packers tried to rally. But when McGee fumbled away the ball to Chuck Bednarik after picking up a first down on the Eagle 48, things looked bleak, mighty bleak.

It wasn't until Lew Carpenter returned Van Brocklin's punt six yards to the Packer 35 that another hope prevailed. But time was wastin', a minute and 15 seconds remained.

Starr, between taking time outs and getting instruction from the bench, fired quickies to Taylor and Moore. A 17-yard strike to Knafelc put the Packers on the Eagle 30.

Then the Alabama rifle tried to go for the touchdown, but his receiver, Dowler, was knocked down in the end zone. Starr hurriedly followed with an eight-yard pitch to Knafelc.

And with five seconds to go he hit Taylor, who was pounded into the mud on the nine. The gun sounded, and the Eagles went wild, their fans wilder, for this has been as hungry a team as the Packers.

The game has to go down as one of the best in the history of this great game. It had everything, considering the fact it was played on a frozen and later a muddy field.

## **More on the NFL Championship Game**

In the Championship game on the day after Christmas, December 26, 1960, the Buck Shaw's Philadelphia Eagles got the best of Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers W (17-13) at Franklin Field in Philadelphia before 67,325

The 1960 National Football League championship game was the 28th NFL title game. It was played on a Monday, December 26, at Franklin Field in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

This game lives on in history. Some liken it to the landmark 1958 championship game, in which the Baltimore Colts defeated the New York Giants in sudden death overtime. The scribes had no idea how great the legend of Vince Lombardi would be; but looking back we know. This game marked the lone playoff defeat for this great Packers coach before his Packers team established a dynasty that won five NFL championships, including the first two Super Bowls, in a span of seven seasons.



Bednarik makes tackle in 1960 Eagles NFL Title game . Colorization by John Turney

This Eagles victory was the third NFL title for the Philadelphia Eagles, and their final championship until the team won Super Bowl LII in 2018. The 2018 game of course was spectacular, and it ended a 57-season championship drought.

The (AFL)American Football League was in its first season and held its inaugural title game less than a week later. First-year NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle convinced owners to move the league's headquarters from Philadelphia to New York City, and with Congressional passage of the Sports Broadcasting Act of 1961

received an antitrust exemption that allowed the league to negotiate a common broadcasting network representing all of its teams, helping cement football's ascendancy as a national sport.



This was the second and last NFL championship game played in Philadelphia, and the only one contested at Franklin Field. A dozen years earlier, the 1948 title game was held in the snow at Shibe Park and was also an Eagles' victory. As a point of interesting trivia, prices for the game were ten and eight dollars

Today, in a world of professional scalpers controlling football ticket prices, analysts say that there were plenty of tickets on the market several days before the game and the going rate or what the experts call the “get-in price” at the time was just a shade over \$2,800 on February 3.

Having researched this, for Super Bowl 52 in 2018, the face values ticket prices ranged from \$950 to \$5,000. The \$950 face value tickets were found in the upper level end zone sections, with the upper level corner sections a bit more at \$1,250. From 1960 to 2018, 57 years have passed, and the prices increased from \$8 to \$10 per ticket to \$950 to \$5000 per. That is a 100% increase.

No wonder so many people watch the game at home or at a nice comfortable tavern. In fact, many who show up for the game, sell

their tickets at their hotels for a ton of cash and then take another vacation at another time. They see the game at the hotels with a group of similarly rich sellers and life is good.

## Great Eagles Coaches—Buck Shaw

### On Top, Buck Shaw Retires from Eagles

Posting from FEBRUARY 14, 2011

#### 1958: Buck Shaw Hired as Head Coach of Philadelphia Eagles

On February 14, 1958 the Philadelphia Eagles announced that Lawrence “Buck” Shaw had been hired as head coach. The Eagles most recently had endured two disappointing seasons under Hugh Devore.



Buck Shaw, coaching on the sidelines for the good of the Eagles

Since Earle “Greasy” Neale, who built the club into a two-time NFL champion, was let go in 1950, the team had gone through four head coaches, from Bo McMillin, who resigned after two



games in '51 due to health reasons, through Wayne Millner, Jim Trimble, and Devore.

The 58-year-old Shaw had been a star player under Head Coach Knute Rockne at Notre Dame (where he was a teammate of the legendary George Gipp) and, with Rockne's encouragement, went on to coach at Santa Clara, Nevada, and North Carolina State before moving into the pro ranks as the original head coach of the San Francisco 49ers in the AAFC in 1946.

"The Silver Fox", as he was dubbed due to his full head of gray hair, stayed at the helm for nine years and his record with the 49ers, who became part of the NFL in 1950, was a solid 71-39-4. From there, he had become the first head coach at the Air Force Academy, and resigned after going 9-8-2 in two seasons.

While it was publicly stated that Shaw was signed to an extended contract, it was actually a one-year deal with an option on both sides for a second (the term was at the coach's request). Shaw also had business interests in California and made clear that he would handle his coaching duties from June through December only, which, even in an era in which pro coaching was not yet a year-round occupation, was still somewhat unusual.

Fortunately for Shaw, while the team had played poorly in the previous three seasons (a combined 11-23-2), they had drafted well. The first four picks in '57 alone proved valuable to the team's future – FB Clarence Peaks from Michigan State, Wake Forest HB Billy Barnes, HB Tommy McDonald from Oklahoma, and QB Sonny Jurgensen out of Duke.

While Jurgensen started some games in his first year and showed promise, the new coach made clear at his introductory press conference that, in emphasizing the passing game, he intended to obtain an experienced and accomplished quarterback, and did so with the acquisition of 32-year-old Norm Van Brocklin from the Rams (The Dutchman was unhappy with the LA organization, especially Head Coach Sid Gillman, and was threatening to retire if not traded).



Peaks and Barnes both saw substantial action in '57, but Coach Devore had taken criticism for his handling of the diminutive McDonald. Too small to play halfback (5'9", 172 pounds), the coach stubbornly resisted suggestions that he be moved to flanker until late in the season. The immediate results were spectacular, and under Van Brocklin's tutelage, McDonald developed into an outstanding deep threat.

Shaw was soft-spoken, rarely raising his voice, and acted much as the organization's CEO, letting his strong group of assistants handle the details. Offensive line coach Charlie Gauer was highly regarded, and Van Brocklin largely directed the offense. Jerry Williams proved to be an innovative and highly-effective defensive assistant. Shaw handled administration (which he did ably), made personnel decisions, and set the overall tone.

With a new home field (the University of Pennsylvania's Franklin Field) as well as head coach and quarterback, the Eagles looked to improve in 1958. The record (2-9-1) was actually worse than in '57, but the team was in the process of rebuilding and did show signs of turning around.

Van Brocklin threw the ball well (and often – he led the NFL with 374 pass attempts and 198 completions), and was an outstanding team leader. Barnes joined The Dutchman as a Pro Bowl selection, leading the club in rushing with 551 yards and gaining another 423 on 35 pass receptions.

McDonald caught just 29 passes, but 9 of them were for touchdowns and he gained 603 yards for a 20.8 average gain. Pete Retzlaff, who had been buried on the depth chart at halfback after being obtained from the Lions, was nurtured by Van Brocklin and blossomed into an outstanding end – he caught 56 passes to co-lead the NFL along with Baltimore's Raymond Berry. Veteran end Bobby Walston continued to be a reliable receiver and also handled the placekicking.

The team had been sound defensively under Devore, and contained solid players in DE Tom Scott, DT Jess Richardson, LB Bob Pellegini, HB Tom Brookshier, and safeties Jerry

Norton and Lee Riley. However, players at the other positions proved less adept. Such was also the case with the offensive line, where former All-Pro linebacker Chuck Bednarik had moved to center, but holes remained elsewhere. As Van Brocklin said after the season, “We bled for linemen. After last year, Barnes and Peaks are lucky to be alive.”

The personnel were overhauled as needed (they traded or released 20 players in 1958), and the Eagles improved to 7-5 in 1959 and 10-2 in '60, when they won the NFL Championship. Important acquisitions included rookies J.D. Smith (OT), Joe Robb (DE), and Gene Johnson (DB) in 1959 and Maxie Baughan (LB) and Ted Dean (RB) in '60 as well as veterans Stan Campbell (G) and Don Burroughs (FS).

Shaw made clear prior to the 1960 season that it would be his last, and he went out on top (he is pictured at top celebrating with #11 Van Brocklin & #60 Bednarik). In making his retirement official the day after the Eagles won the championship, he said “I can’t think of a better time to bow out. I can’t soar any higher than being head coach of a world championship professional football team. It was a distinct pleasure coaching the Eagles, and I can’t pay too high a tribute to this 1960 team. It was a team of tremendous desire, a team that just would not accept defeat.”

Shaw returned to California and retirement with a 90-55-5 overall record as a pro head coach (AAFC and NFL) and 2-1 in the postseason. He was remembered long afterward as a quiet but firm gentleman who demanded top performance and molded a championship team (McDonald compared him to Bud Wilkinson, his coach at Oklahoma).

Much to the consternation of Van Brocklin, who believed he had been promised the job, assistant coach Nick Skorich was named as Shaw’s successor. After contending in 1961, the injury-plagued Eagles dropped to the basement in '62 and '63. They would not return to the postseason until 1978.

<https://fs64sports.blogspot.com/2011/02/1958-buck-shaw-hired-as-head-coach-of.html>

## 1961 Nick Skorich # 9

The 1961 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their twenty-ninth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Nick Skorich in his first of three seasons as head coach. This Eagles team finished first in the Eastern Conference with a winning record of 10-4-0. The Eagles did not make the playoffs this year after losing to the NY Giants in Game #13 this year. The Giants finished 10-3 to take the Eastern Championship.



Nick Skorich Instructing the troops

The next two years Skorich could not make it happen and the Eagles ended up both years in seventh place. In 1963, the Eagles had a terrible record with one less win than in 1962, and they were nowhere close to making the playoffs again this year. Coach Skorich would not see another year with Philadelphia

## 1964 Joe Kuharich # 10

1964	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	<b>T3<sup>rd</sup></b>	6-8-0
1965	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	<b>T5<sup>th</sup></b>	5-9-0
1966	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	<b>T2<sup>nd</sup></b>	9-5-0
1967	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	Capitol	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	6-7-1
1968	Joe Kuharich,	Eastern	Capitol	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	2-12-0

**1964-1968 Joe Kuharich final record (28-41-1)**

In 1964, the Philadelphia Eagles football team hired Joe Kuharich in his first of five seasons as head coach. He started off slow with a 6-8 record followed by a 5-9 in 1965. Kuharich was able to bring in two second place finishes in the Capitol Division in 1966 and 1967. The 1966 team tied for second with a 9-5 record while the 1967 team had a losing record of 6-7 yet still finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> in the four team division. In 1968, the team fell apart with a 2-12 record after which Kuharich had to find himself another job.



Eagles coach Joe Kuharich, treasurer & VP Ed Snider, & owner Jerry Wolman

Wolman gave an unproven coach, Joe Kuharich, what pundits at the time called “an *unheard-of* contract of \$1 million over 15 years”. Taking over as the boss of the team, Kuharich then traded future Hall of Famers Sonny Jurgensen to the Washington Redskins and Tommy McDonald to the Dallas Cowboys. You tell me? No Eagle fan that I know of was happy about those trades.

Earl Gros and Pro Bowl and Hall of Fame member Jim Ringo were acquired reportedly when he tried to have an agent talk for him during Ringo's 1964 contract talks with Green Bay. The Eagles sent Lee Roy Caffey and their 1965 1st round draft pick to the Packers. Nice guys often finish last but Kuharich was such an engaging individual, he won many hearts and minds to his side. Everybody seemed to like him and so he was a survivor.

### **1966 Joe Kuharich # 10**

The 1966 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their thirty-fourth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Joe Kuharich in his third of five seasons as head coach. The owner was Jerry Wolman. This Eagles team picked itself up by the bootstraps and played hard enough for coach Kuharich to give them their best season under this coach, finishing tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> place and making the playoff bowl with a record of 9-5-0. They Lost NFL Playoff Bowl (vs. Colts) 14-20

In the season opener in 1966, in Sept 11, at St. Louis, the Cardinals defeated the Eagles L (13–16) before 39,066. In the home opener at Franklin Field, on September 18, the Eagles beat the Atlanta Falcons, W (23–10) before 54,049, At home again on Sept 25, the Eagles defeated the New York Giants W (35–17) before 60,177. Then the Eagles evened out their record at 2-2 with a loss to the St. Louis Cardinals at home on Oct 2 L (10–41 before 59,305. At Dallas on Oct 9, the Cowboys shellacked the Eagles L (7–56) before 69,372

At Pittsburgh on Oct 16, the Eagles beat the Steelers W (31–14) before 28,233. On Oct 23 at New York, the Eagles overpowered the Giants W (31–3) before 63,018, giving them their first positive record of the year. Then on Oct 30 at home, the Washington Redskins beat the Eagles L (13–27) before 60,652. On Nov 6, the Eagles were ready for Dallas and would not give up against the Cowboys W (24–23) before 60,658. On Nov 13, at Cleveland, the Eagles lost to the Browns L (7–27) before 77,968.

Next up at San Francisco, on Nov 20, the Eagles got the win in a nail-biter against the 49ers W (35–34) before 31,993. Because there was an expansion team this year, there was no game on Nov. 27. On

Dec 4 at home the Eagles beat the Pittsburgh Steelers W (27–23) before 54,275. Then, on Dec 11 at home, the Eagles beat the Cleveland Browns W (33–21) before 58,074. The Eagles finished the season with their fourth win in a row, at Washington, putting the Redskins down W (37-28)

### **1967 Joe Kuharich # 10**

The 1967 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their thirty-fifth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Joe Kuharich in his fourth of five seasons as head coach. The owner was Jerry Wolman. This Eagles team fell backwards this year after a nice 1966. The finished 6-7-1 and grabbed 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the NFL Capitol Division. They did not qualify for the playoffs.

### **1968 Joe Kuharich # 10**

On the lighter side today but not back then in Philadelphia, one of the most infamous incidents in Philadelphia sports history came at halftime of the final game of the dismal 1968 season (2-12). The Eagles were well on their way to losing to the Minnesota Vikings at halftime. The team management had planned an extravaganza for half-time. It was to be a Christmas pageant. However, field conditions were so poor, they had to cancel the big deal. Instead, the team found a fan dressed as Santa Claus, and they coaxed him to run onto the field to celebrate with a group of cheerleaders. With their Eagles in such a sorry state, the fans, were in no mood to celebrate. Instead, they loudly booed and actually threw snowballs at Santa Claus. The sense of frustration was as Nat King Cole would say, “Unforgettable.”



# Chapter 8 Four Coaches From 1969 to 1982

**Coach #11 Jerry Williams**

**Coach #12 Ed Khayat**

**Coach #13 Mike McCormack**

**Coach #14 Dick Vermeil**

Year	Coach	Conf	Div	Place	Record
1969	Jerry Williams.	Eastern	Capito	<b>4th</b>	4-9-1
1970	Jerry Williams	NFC	East	<b>5th</b>	3-10-1
1971	Jerry Williams	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	0-3-0
<b><u>1969- 1971 Jerry Williams final record (7-22-2)</u></b>					
1971	Ed Khayat	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	6-4-1
1972	Ed Khayat	NFC	East	<b>5th</b>	2-11-1
<b><u>1971-1972 Ed Khayat final record (8-15-2)</u></b>					
1973	M. McCormack	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	5-8-1
1974	M. McCormack	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	7-7-0
1975	M. McCormack	NFC	East	<b>5th</b>	4-10-0, —
<b><u>1973-1975 Mike McCormack final record (16-25-1)</u></b>					
1976	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	4-10-0
1977	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	5-9-0
1978	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	9-7-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lost Wild Card Playoffs (at Falcons) 13–14</li> </ul>
1979	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	11-5-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Won Wild Card Playoffs(Bears) 27–17</li> <li>• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Buccaneers) 17–24</li> </ul>
1980	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>1st</b>	12-4-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Won Divisional Playoffs(Vikings) 31–16,</li> <li>• Won NFC Championship(v Cowboys) 20–7</li> <li>• Lost Super Bowl XV (vs. Raiders) 10–27</li> </ul>
1981	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	10-6-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Giants) 21–27</li> </ul>
1982	Dick Vermeil,	NFC	East	<b>13th</b>	3-6-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players Strike</li> </ul>
<b><u>1976-1982 Dick Vermeil final record (57-51-0)</u></b>					

There were no firsts or seconds and not a whiff of a championship was in the air from 1969 through 1973. In 1976, the Eagles brought in Dick Vermeil who began with a 4-10 record followed by a 5-9. By 1978 Vermeil had made a team out of the Eagles and they came in with a 9-7 season and got 2<sup>nd</sup> place. They got another 2<sup>nd</sup> place in 1979 followed by a win of the NFC East (1<sup>st</sup> place) in 1980. They got to



the big Super Bowl game in 1980 and were beaten by the Raiders L (10-27).

Vermeil had another fine year in 1981 and his 10-6 record gave him a shot in the playoffs. However the Eagles lost the Wild Card game L (21-27). In the shortened (by player strike) season of 1982, the Eagles struggled with various players to achieve their 3-6 record. This was it for Vermeil as he stepped down and the Eagles were coach shopping again for 1983.

## 1976 Dick Vermeil #14

SPA's Distinguished Speaker Series presents

Legendary NFL Head Coach  
**Dick Vermeil**

Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>  
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FREE PSU Student Tickets  
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Philadelphia Eagles  
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Head Coach  
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1987-1999

Head Coach  
Kansas City Chiefs  
2001-2005

Super Bowl  
XXXIV  
2000  
Led the Rams to win  
Super Bowl 34  
January 30, 2000

At 4-10 , it was the team's 10th consecutive season without a winning record. The Eagles also missed the playoffs for a 16th consecutive season, a growing franchise record. With Dick Vermeil at the helm, there was a lot of hope, but results were expected to come later. They did.

It would not be long that this new fiery coach would bring the Eagles to their first playoff berth in 18 years in 1978 and then their first Super Bowl appearance just two seasons later. Won't it be nice

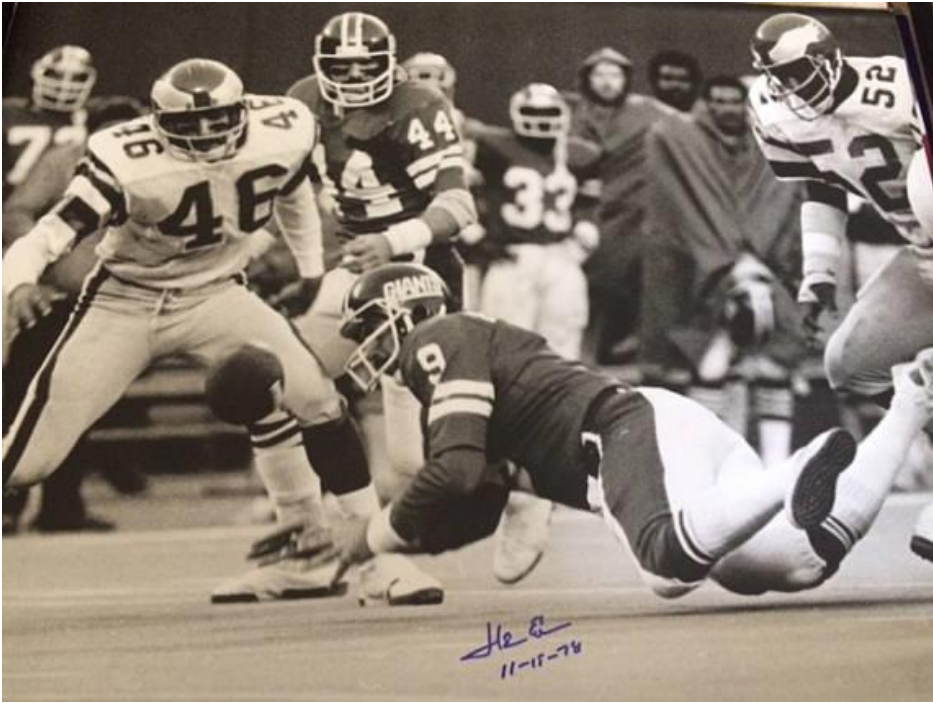
for us all to explore the Vermeil years now. As a Vermeil guy, I know how exciting it was to have this coach on the sidelines coaching your team.

Vermeil did not come from nowhere. After coaching #12 UCLA (8–2–1) to a win over #1 Ohio State (11–0), coached by the master, Woody Hayes, in the 1976 Rose Bowl by the score of 23–10 Dick Vermeil was offered the Head coaching job of the Philadelphia Eagles. Because of bad trades by past Eagles coaches, Vermeil did not have a 1st round draft pick until 1978, but Vermeil did big things with the talent he had inherited from previous coaches. Read about Dick Vermeil anywhere. He was and is a fine coach. When he left the Eagles eight years later a lot of fans lamented.

### **1978 Dick Vermeil #14**

The 1978 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their forty-sixth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Dick Vermeil in his third of seven seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. The Eagles had finally adjusted to Dick Vermeil and were performing well, The Birds won four more games than in 1977. At 9-7-0, with this improvement, the team qualified for the playoffs for the first time in eighteen years. Let me say that again for so long we could not say it. The Eagles reached the postseason for the first time in eighteen years, which ended the longest postseason drought in the franchise's history and one of the longest in the history of the NFL

At NY on Nov 19, the Eagles defeated the Giants W 19–17 before 70,318. More on this game “miracle” below:



Herman Edwards: “The Miracle at the Meadowlands”

## Great Eagles Games

### Miracle at the Meadowlands

Since this day, Nov 19, 1978, it has been known as “The Miracle at the Meadowlands” Sportscasters and Philadelphia Eagles fans believe it was a miracle that when needed, the Eagles got a fortuitous fumble recovery by cornerback Herman Edwards that he returned for a touchdown at the end of this November 19, 1978 NFL game against the New York Giants in Giants Stadium.

It was seen as miraculous because it occurred at a point in the game when the Giants were easily capable of running out the game's final seconds. The Giants had the ball, and the Eagles had no timeouts left. Everyone watching expected quarterback Joe Pisarcik to take one more snap and kneel with the ball, thus running out the clock and preserving a 17–12 Giant upset. Instead, he attempted to hand it off to fullback Larry Csonka and botched it, allowing Edwards to pick up the ball and run 26 yards for the winning score.

The Eagles were 6–5 going into this game, and the win was crucial for them to have a shot at the playoffs. It ultimately provided the Eagles with the fifth-and-final playoff spot in the 1978 NFC playoffs.

## Finishing the 1978 Season

On Nov 26, at St. Louis, the Eagles brought home a victory from the Cardinals W (14–10) before 39,693. On Dec 3, 1978 at Minnesota, the Vikings beat the Eagles by one point L (27–28) before 38,722. On Dec 10, at home, the Dallas Cowboys beat the Philadelphia Eagles L (13–31) before 64,667. In the last game of the season, on Dec 17, the Eagles triumphed over the New York Giants, W (19-17) before 56,396

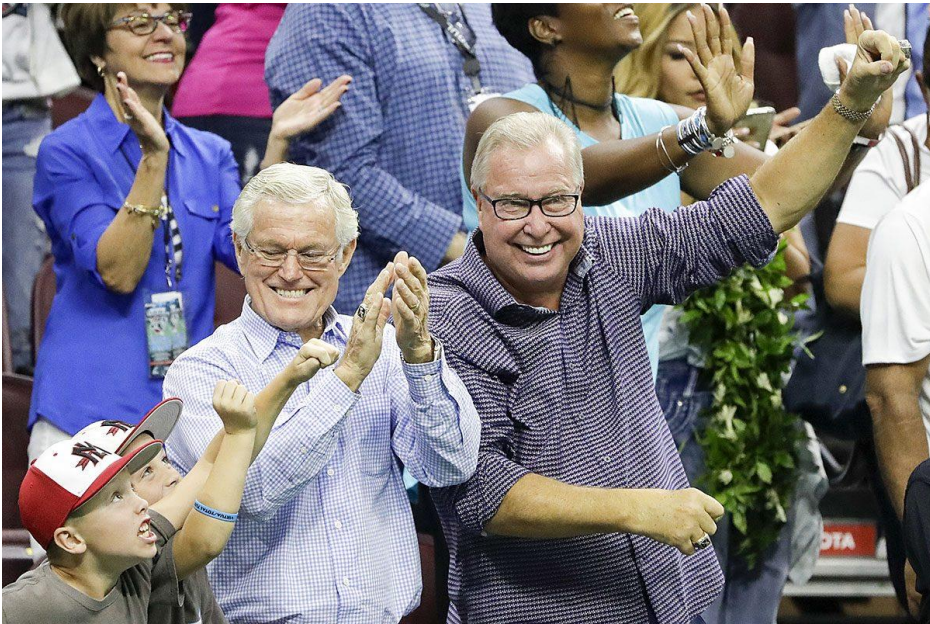
## The 1978 Playoffs

Both Philadelphia and Atlanta had suffered extremely prolonged postseason droughts. The Falcons were in the playoffs for the first time in their 13-year history while the Eagles were playing their first playoff game since their victory in the 1960 NFL Championship Game.

Dick Vermeil's Eagles had been plagued with problems at the placekicker position all year long. Starting kicker Nick Mike-Mayer had made just 8/17 field goals before suffering a season-ending injury in week 12. To replace him, coach Dick Vermeil used punter Mike Michel. Michel had done some placekicking in college, so Vermeil assigned him both roles. This did not pay off, as Michel missed 3 of 12 extra points during the remainder of the season, performing so poorly that the Eagles started attempting fourth down conversions deep in opponent territory rather than field goals.

Coming into this playoff game, Michel had not attempted a single field goal, and the Eagles issues in the kicking game would ultimately play a decisive role in their loss to the Falcons. As an aside, the irony of the Eagles' placekicking dilemma is that the Falcons kicker

in this game was rookie Tim Mazzetti. He had been cut by Philadelphia in the preseason.



Dick Vermeil, coach, & Ron Jaworski, QB, years later at a benefit

The Eagles were winning the game, but the Falcons came back to win their first playoff game in team history. They came back from a 13–0 deficit by scoring two TD's in the final 5 minutes of the game. It seemed to be the old Philadelphia death-wish in play again.

In the first quarter, Philadelphia's Cleveland Franklin recovered a fumble from Billy Ryckman on a punt return at the Falcons 13-yard line, setting up wide receiver Harold Carmichael's 13-yard touchdown reception from Ron Jaworski. However, Michel missed the ensuing extra point, which would later prove to be costly. Neither team would score again until the third quarter when the Eagles took advantage of another Atlanta special teams miscue, this time a dismal 17-yard punt by John James that gave them a first down on their 40-yard line.

Ron Jaworski was roughed up and the Falcons were called on it, The penalty plus two nice receptions by Charlie Smith, helped Jaworski lead the team 60 yards to score on Wilbert Montgomery's 1-yard rushing touchdown. Michel's extra point was partially deflected, but still went in to give the Eagles a 13–0 lead. Later in the

period, Michel had a chance to put the team up by three scores, but he missed a 42-yard field goal attempt, the first field goal kick of his career.

Nonetheless, Philadelphia was apparently in control of the game as the fourth quarter approached. Then, with 9:52 left in 4Q, things got to look even better as Eagles cornerback Bobby Howard intercepted Falcons QB Steve Bartkowski's pass. This was the 5th turnover of the day for Atlanta. The Eagles moved the ball to Atlanta's 15-yard line, and were ready to take it in to ice the game. However, with 8:16 to go, linebacker Fulton Kuykendall recovered a fumble from fullback Mike Hogan on the 13. A few plays later, faced with second down and 10 on the 26, Bartkowski launched a deep pass to Wallace Francis, who was tightly covered by defensive back Herm Edwards. Both players went up for the ball and both came down with it, resulting in a simultaneous catch between each of them.

Under NFL rules, a simultaneous catch goes to the receiver, so Atlanta kept the ball and gained 49 yards on the play. It was devastating. Three plays later, Bartkowski, on target, hit tight end Jim Mitchell wide open in the end zone for a 20-yard touchdown pass, cutting the score to 13–7 with 4:56 remaining.

The Eagles went three-and-out were forced to punt the ball back to the Falcons. The Eagles' Franklin tackled Ryckman for a 5-yard loss on the return, but he committed a 15-yard facemask penalty in so doing and this put Atlanta in a great position on their 49-yard line. After 5 plays, the Falcons were on the 37. They had moved just 12 yards and were faced with a 3rd and 10. Bartkowski came through again with a deep toss to Francis again.





He outran safety Randy Logan to score on a 37-yard touchdown completion. With Mazzetti's extra point, the Falcons grabbed their first lead of the game, 14–13, with 1:37 left in the game. Now it was the Eagles turn. The Birds had one last shot to win the game as Jaworski completed four passes to get them to Atlanta's 16-yard line with just 13 seconds remaining. Vermeil called for a 34-yard field goal attempt, which failed, and the Falcons ran out the rest of the clock.

Bartkowski completed passes as needed clicking on 18 of 32 passes for 243 yards and two touchdowns, with two interceptions. His top target was Francis, who caught 6 passes for 135 yards and a touchdown. Jaworski did just about as well completing 19/35 passes for 190 yards and a touchdown. The Eagles leading receiver was Smith, who caught 7 passes for 108 yards. This was and to this day remains the only playoff game ever to feature two Polish-born starting quarterbacks (Bartkowski and Jaworski.) Both were born in the USA of Polish descent. Michel was released by the Eagles in the offseason after this game and never played in the NFL again. The Eagles had gotten to the dance but a kicker with two left feet stepped all over their chances of moving on in the dance contest.

### **1979 Dick Vermeil #14**

The 1979 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their forty-seventh season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Dick Vermeil in his fourth of seven

seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. The Eagles were playing great football under Dick Vermeil and the fans were enjoying the performances. The Birds won two more games than in 1978. At 11-5-0, with this improvement, the team qualified for the second time in a row for the playoffs. And, so, at the end of the season, they Birds won the Wildcard Playoff over the Bears W (27–17) but then they lost the NFC Divisional Round against the Buccaneers L(17–24).

The prior year they had ended the longest postseason drought in Eagle’s history. With Vermeil’s guidance, they would make the playoffs again in the following two seasons before undergoing a six-year drought.

## Wild Card Playoffs—Bears v Eagles

It was the first NFL postseason game played in Philadelphia since the 1960 NFL Championship Game. In a 1979 Wild-Card game Eagles QB Ron Jaworski was on the mark. He threw for 204 yards and 3 touchdown passes as Philadelphia wiped out a 17–10 Bears halftime lead. The Eagles got on the board first when Jaworski threw a 17-yard TD to wide receiver Harold Carmichael. Chicago came right back with an 82-yard drive. The score came from a 2-yard rush from Walter Payton.





Philadelphia soon added a Tony Franklin field goal to the mix and then Walter Payton scored again on a 1-yard TD scamper. In the second quarter, Bears lineman, the immortal Alan Page recovered a fumble from Jaws on the Eagles 16-yard line, and Bob Thomas chipped in a 30-yard field goal that gave Chicago their 17-10 halftime lead.

Starting off the third quarter, Payton ripped off a powerful 84-yard run on his first carry. But, there was an illegal motion penalty against receiver Brian Baschnagel and the play was called back. , but it was called back by an illegal motion penalty against receiver Brian Baschnagel. The Bears did not move the ball and punted. After the punt, The Eagles roared back with a Jaworski's 29-yard touchdown pass to Carmichael. Chicago drove to the Philadelphia 9-yard line, but defensive back Bob Howard ended the scoring threat by intercepting Mike Phipps in the end zone. Several plays later, Jaws threw a 63-yard touchdown to running back Billy Campfield to take the lead for good.

When there were twelve minutes left, the Bears could only manage one first down during this time. With 7:31 left, Eagles defensive tackle Jerry Robinson recovered a fumble from Bears receiver Dave Williams and Franklin popped in his 34-yard field goal.

Chicago did have one last chance to score when linebacker Gary Campbell recovered a fumble from Eagles running back Wilbert Montgomery on the Philadelphia 28. But the drive ended with another turnover, this time an interception by defensive back Herm Edwards.

Along with Jaworski, Harold Carmichael was hot finishing the game with 6 receptions for 111 yards and two touchdowns.

## Divisional Playoffs

The Buccaneers started by jumping to a 17-0 lead and held the Eagles to just 48 rushing yards. Ricky Bell clocked in with 142 rushing yards and 2 touchdowns.

Tampa Bay marched down the field with some consistent play -- an 18-play, 80-yard opening drive. It took 9:25 off the clock and set the tone for the game. They scored on a Bell 4-yard touchdown run. Philadelphia responded with a drive into scoring range, but when they attempted a fake 47-yard field goal, they failed to snap the ball before the play clock ran out. Then Tony Franklin's 52-yard field goal was thus declared no good.



The Buccaneers stopped Eagles rushing play--1979 NFC Divisional Playoffs.

Tampa drove to a 10–0 lead on Neil O'Donohue's 40-yard field goal. Then on the Eagles next drive, Wilbert Montgomery lost a fumble that nose tackle Randy Crowder recovered on the Philadelphia 5-yard line. Three plays later, Bell was in the end-zone. on a 1-yard fourth down run. The Bucs led 17–0 with 5:12 left in the half. Ron Jaworski's 11-yard touchdown pass to Charlie Smith, made the score 17–7 by halftime.

The Eagles got the kickoff to begin the 2<sup>nd</sup> half and then drove 45 yards to score on Franklin's 42-yard field goal. The deficit was now 17–10. There was no more scoring until 7:08 left in the game.

Williams then threw a 9-yard touchdown pass to Jimmie Giles. Down 24–10, Philadelphia made a desperate comeback attempt, driving 80-yards in 9 plays with the score coming on Jaws' 37-yard bomb to Harold Carmichael. Their defense then forced a punt with

2:11 left in the game, giving them one last chance for a tying touchdown.

Jaworski's completions to Carmichael and Smith for gains of 16 and 25 yards moved the ball to the Bucs 45-yard line. But his next four passes were incomplete, enabling the Buccaneers to take over and run out the clock.

## **1980 Dick Vermeil #14**

The 1980 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their forty-eighth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Dick Vermeil in his fifth of seven seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. The Eagles were playing great football under Dick Vermeil and the fans were enjoying the performances. The Birds won one more games than in 1979. At 12-4-0, with this improvement, the team came in first place and qualified for the third in a row for the playoffs. And, so, at the end of the season, they Birds won the Divisional Playoffs and the NFC Championship and got their first chance at a Super Bowl Ring.

This was the first time the Eagles had won the Division title in 20 years. 1980 was a fine Eagles' season. It marked Philadelphia's third consecutive playoff appearance under coach Dick Vermeil, and culminated in the team's first Super Bowl appearance, where they were defeated by the Oakland Raiders.

## **Games of the 1980 Season**

In the home and season opener for the 1980 Philadelphia Eagles on Sept 7, 1980, the Eagles pounded the Denver Broncos W (27-6) before 70,307. Eagles fans had again begun to love coming to Eagles' games. At Minnesota, on September 14, 1980 at Minnesota, the Eagles thumped the Vikings in a big win W (42-7) before 46,460. At home, on Sept 22, the Eagles whipped the New York Giants W (35-3) before 70,767. At St. Louis on Sept 28, the Cardinals defeated the Eagles L (14-24) before 49,079.

At home at the Vet on Oct 5, the Eagles soundly defeated the Washington Redskins W (24-14) before 69,044. At New York, on

Oct 12, the Eagles beat the New York Giants W (31–16) before 71,051. On October 19, Philadelphia beat the Dallas Cowboys at home W (17–10) before 70,696. Then, on October 26, at home, the Eagles got the best of the Chicago Bears W (17–14) before 68,752.

The Eagles picked up another win on Nov 2, at Seattle as the Seahawks lost W (27–20) before 61,047. At New Orleans on Nov 9, the Eagles won against the Saints W (34–21) before 44,340. At Washington, on Nov 16, the Eagles shut out the Redskins W (24–0) before 51,897. At home on Nov 23, the Eagles slipped a win away from the Oakland Raiders W (10–7) before 68,535

At San Diego, on Nov 30, the Chargers defeated the Eagles by one-point L (21–22) before 51,567. At home, on Dec 7, the Atlanta Falcons squeaked in a win against Philadelphia L (17–20) before 70,205 fans. Then, at home again, on Dec 14, the Eagles defeated the St. Louis Cardinals W (17–3) before 68,969. Finishing up the 1980 season at Dallas, on Dec 21, 1980, the Cowboys beat the Eagles L (27–35) before 62,548

## NFL Playoffs

Within each conference, the three division winners and the two wild card teams (the top two non-division winners with the best overall regular season records) all qualified for the playoffs. The three division winners were “seeded” 1 through 3 based on their overall won-lost-tied record, and the wild card teams were seeded 4 and 5.

The NFL did not use a fixed bracket playoff system. In the first round, dubbed the wild-card playoffs or wild-card weekend, the fourth seed wild card hosted the fifth seed. All three division winners from each conference then received a bye in the first round. The second round, the divisional playoffs, had a restriction where two teams from the same division could not meet: the surviving wild card team visited the division champion outside its own division that had the higher seed, and the remaining two teams from that conference played each other.

The two surviving teams from each conference's divisional playoff games then meet in the respective AFC and NFC Conference Championship games, hosted by the higher seed. Although the Super Bowl, the fourth and final round of the playoffs, was played at a neutral site, the designated home team was based on an annual rotation by conference. The Eagles survived two such games and qualified for a run at being Super Bowl Champions for 1980.

## Divisional Playoffs: Philadelphia Eagles 31, Minnesota Vikings 16

This game was played at Veterans Stadium in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on January 3, at 12:30 p.m. EST to a crowd of 70,178 under cloudy skies and 29 degree weather.

The Eagles were on their game as they forced eight turnovers, with seven in the second half, rolling to a 31–16 victory, while holding the Vikings to just 215 total yards, with a mere 36 yards on the ground. The Eagles had shellacked the Vikings 42-7 during the regular season and so this smaller loss was little consolation,



The Vikings grabbed scored 14 unanswered points in the first half, starting with wide receiver Sammy White's 30-yard touchdown reception from quarterback Tommy Kramer. Then after a punt, they

drove 69 yards in 10 plays to score on running back Ted Brown's 1-yard touchdown run. However, Philadelphia scored before halftime when Jaworski finished an 85-yard drive with a completion to 6' 8" wide receiver Harold Carmichael. The Eagles then tied the game on the opening possession of the second half with Wilbert Montgomery's 8-yard touchdown run.

One turnover after another was the order of business in the second half (11 total) Early in the fourth quarter, Eagles lineman Ken Clarke recovered a fumble from Doug Paschal, which was soon countered by Jaworski's interception to defensive back John Turner.

A few plays later, Herman Edwards intercepted a pass from Kramer, only to see this later nullified by Jaworski's interception to defensive back Tom Hannon. With 9:16 left in the game, Eagles linebacker Frank LeMaster returned another interception from Kramer seven yards to the Vikings 15, leading to Tony Franklin's 33-yard field goal to increase the Eagles lead to 24-16.

On the Vikings next drive, Edwards intercepted another pass and returned it 14 yards to the Minnesota 31, leading to Perry Harrington's 1-yard rushing touchdown. This made the final score 31-16. On the last play of the game, Young intercepted a pass from Kramer in the end zone.

## **NFC Championship: Philadelphia Eagles 20, Dallas Cowboys 7**

### **This is one of the Eagles Greatest Games Ever**

This game was played at Veterans Stadium in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on January 11, at 12:30 p.m. EST to a crowd of 71,522 under sunny skies and 17 degree breezy weather.





1980 NFC Championship Game.

Philadelphia quarterback Ron Jaworski had a tough day completing only nine of 29 passes for 91 yards and he was intercepted twice. Nonetheless, running back Wilbert Montgomery led the Eagles to a victory by rushing for 194 yards and a touchdown. Dallas had a great season as the highest scoring team in the NFL during the regular season.



However, against the Eagles defense, they could only manage 206 yards and score a single touchdown. They also fumbled five times, losing three of them.

Dallas could not get started with a three and out on their opening drive. Then, the kick from the normally phenomenal QB Danny White (who also served as the team's punter) went just 26 yards before John Sciarra returned it to the Cowboys 42-yard line. One play later,

Montgomery was in on a 42-yard rushing touchdown. The Eagles earned themselves chances to score on their next two drives. However, they were stopped both times and their special teams' unit failed to capitalize.

First, they got all the way down to the Dallas 23-yard line, only to have Tony Franklin's field goal attempt blocked by Dallas cornerback Aaron Mitchell. Then they found themselves on the Cowboys 16-yard line, where Harvey Martin sacked Jaworski on third down and a high snap on the field goal try sailed right through Jaworski's hands.

Half way through the second quarter, Danny White, who had been held to negative passing yardage, finally got the Cowboys moving with a 10-play, 68-yard drive, completing an 18-yard screen pass to Tony Dorsett and a 12-yarder to Drew Pearson. Dorsett then wrapped it up with a 3-yard touchdown run to tie the game.

The score would was 7-7 at halftime, due to another blown scoring chance by the Eagles when Jaworski's touchdown pass to Harold Carmichael was canceled out by a 15-yard personal foul penalty on guard Woody Peoples. If it were not for bad luck, the Eagles would have been having no luck at all. But, the Cowboys were not too lucky either.

In the third quarter, the Eagles luck changed a bit as the Eagles recovered the first turnover of the game when Billy Campfield recovered a fumbled punt return from James Jones. Dallas quickly took the ball back, however, with Anthony Dickerson's interception, but they only held on for a few plays before White lost a fumble due to a massive hit from Carl Hairston, which Eagles defensive end Dennis Harrison recovered on the Dallas 11-yard line. This action set up Franklin's 26-yard field goal.

Dallas was then in a position to respond when tight end Jay Saldi made a leaping catch on the Eagles 40-yard line for a 28-yard gain. The pass and catch were White's longest completion of the day. On the next play rookie cornerback Roynell Young stripped the ball from Dorsett, and linebacker Jerry Robinson returned it 22 yards to



the Dallas 38-yard line. Six plays later, running back Leroy Harris scored a 9-yard touchdown to give the Eagles a 17–7 lead.

Later on, Montgomery's 55-yard carry put the Eagles in position to put the game away, but Mitchell kept Dallas' chances alive by intercepting a pass from Jaworski in the end zone.

Despite the interception, the Cowboys' offense was still unable to move the ball. For the rest of the game, the Cowboys never made it into Eagles territory, and after Philadelphia put together a 62-yard drive to score the final points of the game on Franklin's 20-yard field goal with 2:10 remaining, Young intercepted a pass from White on their final play of the game with 30 seconds remaining.

The Eagles, as the home team, elected to wear their road white jerseys instead of their home green jerseys so as to force Dallas to wear their rarely used blue jerseys rather than their familiar white jerseys; through the years, the Cowboys' blue jerseys were said to be jinxed since they often lost wearing them – especially in Super Bowl V. This would be the last game in which the Cowboys wore their royal blue jerseys; in 1981, they debuted a new navy blue uniform with a significantly different and darker shade of blue than that still used for the numbers on their white jerseys.

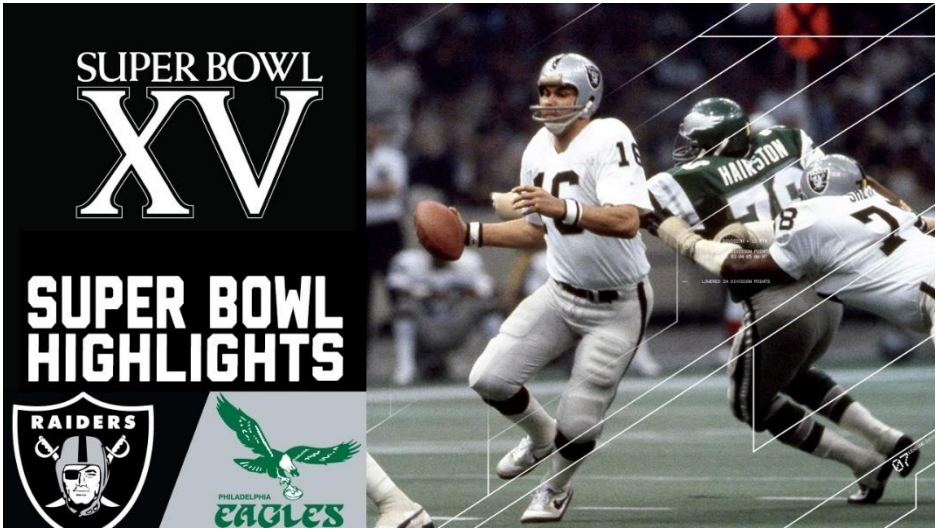
Montgomery finished with more all-purpose yards (208) than the entire Cowboys offense. This was the first time Dallas had ever allowed an opposing player to rush for over 100 yards in team postseason history. This would be the Eagles' last playoff victory until the 1992 season. Super Bowl XV began a five-game postseason losing streak for the franchise. Let's take a look at the Super Bowl now.

## Super Bowl XV

Philadelphia Inquirer BUD SHAW, Daily News Staff Writer  
(Article was first published on January 26, 1981.)

Please enjoy this review of Super Bowl Fifteen by Bud Shaw, Daily News Staff Writer for the Philadelphia Inquirer. This had to hurt to writ. The days headline was

**“Super Bowl XV: After big break, QB Jim Plunkett leads Raiders in rout of Eagles.”** After Kenny Stabler Got Hurt, it was all Plunkett. It’s one game the Eagles would love to have to play again.



NEW ORLEANS - Nobody expected it to happen this way. It was Bjorn Borg losing in straight sets, Sugar Ray Leonard getting knocked out in a sparring session.

Super Bowl XV stiffed the Eagles. It left them feeling ugly and unwanted.

The Eagles had taken 20 years of frustration and stuffed it down the Cowboys' throats two weeks ago; they swallowed a whole new kind of frustration last evening.

They'll have a hard time digesting a 27-10 loss to the Oakland Raiders. The numbers must be gnawing at their insides. It was a day that'll cry out for retribution with tears as salty as the ones drenching living rooms back in Philly yesterday.

The No. 1 defense in the league came snorting out of the tunnel early yesterday and three hours later it limped back in. It was hard to distinguish the burn marks from open wounds.

The Eagles weren't playing the Pittsburgh Steelers of a couple years ago. This game was supposed to be a coin toss, an arm wrestling match between two teams that claimed destiny as their coach.

Fate held both of them at arm's length and let them go at each other like two bulldogs fighting in a pit. The Raiders were the only ones growling when it was all over.

"I hated to see us go out like this," said Frank LeMaster. "I would've rather seen it be a situation where we get beat by one point or lose in the last couple minutes of a game.

"It hurt to see our defense end the season this way. I can't use the word 'embarrassed.' All I can say is we didn't play up to our capabilities. Not at all.

"I really don't have an answer either. We'll all be searching for a reason. We'll be thinking back on it and trying to find an explanation."

The Eagles got here because they generally treated every week like a street fight. They were the guy you wanted breathing at your side when you walked down a dark alley.

THERE WAS NEVER any reason to question their mood. It was always intense and nasty, but yesterday they sagged like a wet dishrag.

"We seemed fired up at the start of the game," said Ron Jaworski, "but I sensed a lack of emotion during the game and it never seemed to get stronger.

"We usually have a strong second half, a snowball emotional effect, but it just didn't swell up in the second half of this game."

The Eagles got here because their defense swallowed whole teams and spit out fragments. They got there because they rushed quarterbacks and bruised running backs, but yesterday Jim Plunkett and Mark van Eeghen looked like they spent the afternoon at a cocktail party.

The Eagles had sacked Plunkett eight times back in their 10-7 win in November. The Raiders' equipment people had seven less turf stains to wash away when it was all over yesterday.

"We let him stand back there all day and pick us apart," said LeMaster. "They were the same team they were last time, but we weren't anywhere near the same. It's a hard thing to explain."

Plunkett sat back and threw passes like he was dropping stones into a lake. He was 13 of 21 for 261 yards and 3 touchdowns.

The Eagles had given him one big play the last time, an 86-yard bomb to Cliff Branch, but yesterday there were enough to make into a 60-minute highlight film.

Yesterday, Plunkett found Branch again for an early touchdown after Ron Jaworski drilled his first pass into linebacker Rod Martin's chest. Plunkett found running back Kenny King a while later, and the Birds were gulping into the neon lights of the scoreboard.

The pass to King was a busted pattern, a play that summed up the Eagles' day in one tangled mass of confusion. Plunkett was scrambling, King got behind the coverage and all Herm Edwards could do was wave and chase. The play covered 80 yards, setting a Super Bowl record.

And don't think that the offense was winning its share of the dogfight. The only first-half points provided came on a 30-yard field goal by Tony Franklin.

They had blown a 40-yard touchdown pass to Rodney Parker when Harold Carmichael went in motion and broke toward the line too quickly. And when a drive late in the half died at the Raider 11-yard line, Tony Franklin had a field goal blocked by Ted Hendricks.

The Eagles were losing 14-3 at the half. It didn't look very good. But hell, the Eagles had always played the final 30 minutes of the

game like the other team had been locked inside its dressing room.

It didn't happen this time, and there were as many reasons as there were people watching the game. On the opening drive of the second half, Branch rose up and grabbed a 29-yard pass away from Roynell Young near the goal line and tumbled in. It was 21-3. The Super Bowl had been yanked away in one graceful leap, but only because the Eagles had already given up some of it in several clumsy exchanges.

"I had the outside position on that one," Young explained. "I was trying to gauge where the ball was and keep a feel for Branch, too.

"He just came back and took the ball away from me. By the time I knew where he was, it was too late. I had my hand on it for a second but I just couldn't control the ball.

"I CAN'T SAY how that made me feel. Seeing him with the ball in the end zone just hurt. That's all."

It was something other than a tug-of-war at that point. The Raiders had the Super Bowl trophy in their fingers and the Eagles couldn't pull it away.

The Birds got here because Ron Jaworski spent a helluva lot of Sunday afternoons boosting them up on his shoulders, but he couldn't do it yesterday.

Jaws made it to the Pro Bowl and was the NFC Player of the Year. Neither's going to untie the knot in his stomach when he stares down at his naked ring finger today.

Lester Hayes said he was going to catch more passes than Harold Carmichael. Super Bowl hype being what it is, Lester never quite made it. But nobody bothered to ask Rod Martin. He managed to come a helluva lot closer.

Jaws was 18-for-38 for 291 yards, but he threw 3 interceptions, all to Martin. Some of his passes were dropped, others overthrown.

It didn't help that the Eagles rushed for only 69 yards, or that Wilbert Montgomery got only 44 of those.

Jaworski had brush-stroked a masterpiece of a season until yesterday. The final touches were a little like throwing a can of paint at the easel.

"I'm not one to reflect on my individual performance," Jaws said. "We needed a team effort and we didn't get one today. We got behind early and played right into their hands."

The Eagles managed to make it 21-10 when Jaworski hit Keith Krepfle for an eight-yard TD early in the fourth quarter, and you could hear the Eagles' heartbeat again.

But the Raiders ate the clock and the field with a long drive. They got two field goals from Chris Bahr, and the Eagles' Super Bowl hopes had fallen short and wide left.

"We have a great team," said Charlie Johnson, "and we shouldn't be sad about what happened today. We've had five great seasons in which we've gotten better and better. I'm proud to be standing here.

"I feel bad about it so I can imagine 26 teams must be feeling miserable. We're going to be back next year. That's for sure.

"What happened during the week didn't have anything to do with it. All the attention didn't bother us. What happened out there on the field was our load and we'll just have to carry it with us. "

"After the game," said Dick Vermeil, "we just had a short prayer session. Then I told the players how proud I was of them. I just reminded them of all the hard work we did for five years to get here."

The Eagles made it to the Super Bowl, and it had been an orgy of a season until yesterday.

They had their biggest date in 20 years and got stiffed. It hurt like hell.

There was very little etiquette involved in the way they got stood up.

## **1981 Dick Vermeil #14**

The 1981 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their forty-ninth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football.

The Eagles had a good year but not as good as the 12-4 year in 1980. At 10-6-0, the team came in 2<sup>nd</sup> in the NFC East. and qualified for their fourth in a row run in the playoffs.

In the post-season, the best the Birds could do was lose to the Giants in the Wild Card Playoffs (21-7). Eagles fans thought Dick Vermeil was a miracle worker and he sure was after taking over for Mike McCormack, but no coach can work miracles all the time.

Because they had made the Super Bowl in 1980, they were picked by many to not only reach the Super Bowl, but this time, to win it as well. The Eagles began the 1981 season like they owned the league with 6 straight wins, their best ever start to a season at the time. The Eagles would win then 3 of their next 5 games to sit at 9-2. They were on their way, but something happened that was inexplicable. Maybe they had forgotten how hard it was to win NFL football games.

They would then lose their next 4 games to slip to 9-6 and were in danger of missing out on the playoffs. The next week, they hammered the Cardinals 38-0 to clinch a playoff berth for the fourth straight season. In the playoffs, they met their arch rivals the Giants. It was New York's first playoff appearance in 18 years. They were hungry and the Eagles loved winning but perhaps no longer had the thirst for blood. In the game, the Giants would stun the Eagles 27-21. This put the kibosh to the Eagles' season as well as hopes for a second straight Super Bowl appearance. The Eagles would not make the playoffs again until 1988, seven years later. They also wouldn't reach the Super Bowl again until 2004..

Nothing in life, worth having, is easy.

## Games of the 1981 Season

In the season opener on Sept 6, 1981 at New York, the Eagles defeated the Giants W (24–10) before 72,459. In the home opener on Sept 13, 1981, the Eagles beat the New England Patriots W (13–3) before 71,089. At Buffalo on Sept 17, the Eagles beat the Bills W (20–14) before 78,331. At home on Sept 27, the Eagles defeated the Washington Redskins W (36–13) before 70,664.

On Oct 5, at home, the Eagles beat the Atlanta Falcons W (16–13) before 71,488. At New Orleans on Oct 11, the Eagles knocked off the Saints W (31–14) before 52,728. Then, on Oct 18, at Minnesota, the Eagles lost their first game of the year v the Vikings L (23–35) before 45,459. At home on Oct 25, the Eagles beat the Tampa Bay Buccaneers W (20–10) before 70,714.

On Nov 1 at home, the Dallas Cowboys beat the Eagles by a field goal L (14–17) before 72,111. On Nov 8, at St. Louis, Philadelphia blew out the Cardinals W (52–10) before 48,421. At home on Nov 15, the Eagles hammered the Baltimore Colts W (38–13) before 68,618. At home on Nov 22, the New York Giants bested the Eagles L (10–20) before 66,827.

On the last day of November, 1981, Nov 30, at Miami, the Dolphins got past Philadelphia L (10–13) before 67,797. At Washington, on Dec 6, the Eagles were defeated by the Redskins L (13–15) before 52,206. At Dallas on Dec 13, the Cowboys defeated the Eagles L (10–21) before 64,955. In the season closer on Dec 20, the Eagles roared back to shut out the St. Louis Cardinals W (38–0) before 56,656

## Wild Card Playoffs Eagles v Giants

Even without starting quarterback Phil Simms and linebacker Brad Van Pelt, the Giants were off to the races from the kickoff. They



grabbed a 20–0 lead in the first quarter and withstood an Eagles comeback at the end to hold on to a 27–21 win.

The Eagles made up for the Giants injuries by making mistakes on the field. In the first quarter, for example, Eagles kick/punt returner Wally Henry fumbled a punt after a big hit from Lawrence Taylor. Beasley Reece recovered the ball for the Giants on the Philadelphia 26-yard line. A few plays later, QB Scott Brunner threw a 9-yard TD to running back Leon Bright. They missed the extra point.



Then after forcing an Eagles' punt, the Giants drove 74 yards, including an drive-saving 11-yard scramble by Brunner on 3rd and 11, to score on his 10-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver John Mistler. Henry muffed the ensuing kickoff. When he tried to pick the ball up, he lost it while being hit by Mike Dennis. Giants defensive back Mark Haynes recovered in the end zone giving the Giants their initial 20–0 lead. After the kickoff, the first quarter ended, and things looked bad for the Eagles as the Giants had a 104 to 1 advantage over in total yards gained.

Herman Edwards' interception of a Brunner pass gave the Eagles a first down on the New York 36-yard line. Jaworski then hit on a 15-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Harold Carmichael. However, the Giants made a big play on the kickoff with Reece returned the

kickoff 27 yards to the 38-yard line. The Giants drove the 62 yards in just 5 plays to score on Brunner's 22-yard touchdown pass to Tom Mullady, giving them a 27–7 halftime lead. The key play of the drive was a 21-yard run by Rob Carpenter on 2nd and 8 from the 40 with 2:04 left on the clock.

Vermeil must have used some choice words on the D at halftime as New York was shut out in the second half. Meanwhile the Eagles opened the third quarter by marching 82 yards in 15 plays with an 8 minute drive in which Wilbert Montgomery crossed the goal line at the end on a nice six-yard run.

Late in the fourth quarter, New York drove inside the Eagles 20 and had a chance to put the game away, but Joe Danelo missed a 32-yard chip-shot field goal attempt. Philadelphia then drove 80 yards, 44 of them coming from 3 Giants penalties, in 9 plays to score on Montgomery's 1-yard touchdown run. Now it was 27-21 with 2:51 left in the game. The Eagles had to get the ball back, but the Giants would not give it up.

The Giants ran out the clock, picking up gains of six, three, and five yards on runs by Carpenter for a key first down. The Giants got their first postseason victory since 1956. In a great reserve role, Brunner completed nine of 14 passes for 96 yards, but he threw three touchdowns with only one interception. Most of the Giants' offense came from Carpenter, who had 33 carries for 161 yards and four receptions for 32. This was a very disappointing end to another promising season for the Eagles, who had started out 9-2, but then lost all but one of their remaining games.

Next year's players strike contributed to the demise of the Vermeil era as the coach was gone after the 1982 season. The Eagles would sorely miss him.

## **1982 Dick Vermeil #14**

The 1982 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fiftieth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Dick Vermeil in his last of seven seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. The Eagles had played great

football under Dick Vermeil and the fans had been enjoying some great performances The Birds had made the playoffs again and lost a nail-biter to the Giants in the Wild Card game. There were many looking for a repeat performance in 1981. The Eagles had a very poor year (3-6) after a 10-6-0 just one year before The Eagles did not make the playoffs.

The bottom line was that the play of the Philadelphia Eagles this year resulted in a losing season. It would be the end of an era under a great head coach Dick Vermeil. While under Vermeil the Eagles had the most successful period of their existence up to that time, making the playoffs four straight seasons (1978–1981) and having a record of 54–47 in six seasons with Vermeil (1976–1982), including a Super Bowl year in 1980. Vermeil retired due to “burnout” but would return to coaching in 1997 with the St. Louis Rams and would lead them to a Super Bowl victory in 1999.



QB Jaworski getting field instructions from Coach Dick Vermeil

There isn't much to say about a season shortened by two months of bickering and finger-pointing and a bad blood player strike. Dick Vermeil had given it his all. At 46 years old, he had had it. Too many all-nighters with film and trying to figure out the un-figurable. The bitter players strike, and its impact overall was the straw

perhaps, but Dick Vermeil and his family felt he needed an emotional break.

His wife is credited with saying We're "outta" here! This was when Vermeil himself could not make a decision about whether he would be back in 1983. Leonard Tose and all of the Philadelphia sports community did not want him to go. It took Dick Vermeil about 17 years to come back to the field as a coach. The painful 1982 season is now presented.

Before the players strike, the NFL played two weeks of the season. The players wanted the fans to feel the pain and we did. The strike could have occurred before any games were played but that was not what was apparently wanted for the most effect.

On January 2, at home, the New York Giants rained on Dick Vermeil's swan song L (24–26) before 55,797. At the time, nobody knew this was the coach's last game.



# Chapter 9 Coaches Marion Campbell & Buddy Ryan, 1983 to 1990

Coach #15 Marion Campbell

Coach #16 Fred Bruney

Coach #17 Buddy Ryan

Year	Coach	Conf	Div	Place	Record
1983	Marion Campbell	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	5-10-0
1984	Marion Campbell	NFC	East	<b>5th</b>	6-9-1
1985	Marion Campbell	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	7-9-0
1985	Fred Bruney	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	1-0-0 (wk16)
<b><u>1983-1985 Marion Campbell final record (17-29-1)</u></b>					
<b><u>1985-1985 Fred Bruney final record (1-0-0)</u></b>					

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Record</u>
1986	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	5-10-0 —
1987	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	<b>4th</b>	7-8-0, —
1988	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	<b>1st</b>	10-6=0
	•	Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Bears) 12–20			
1989	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	11-5-0,
	•	Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Rams) 7–21			
1990	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	10-6-0
	•	Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Redskins) 6–20			
<b><u>1986-1990 Buddy Ryan final record (43-38-1)</u></b>					



Coach Marion Campbell with Eagles Players

## 1983-1985 Marion Campbell #15

Marion Campbell did not move the championship or the almost odometer even a little with a 17-29-1 record in three years. The fans cheered as Buddy Ryan replaced him in 1986.

## 1986 – 1987 Buddy Ryan #17

The 1986 and 1987, with two poor records, Buddy Ryan brought in two fourth place finishes. It's funny he got another chance and brought in three fine years of Eagles Football.



## 1988 Buddy Ryan #17

The 1988 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fifty-sixth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Buddy Ryan in his third of five seasons as head coach. The owner was Norman Braman. This year's 10-6 record brought the Eagles a first-place finish in the NFC East. The team broke the five-streak of playoff misses and the Eagles earned the right to compete in the NFL playoffs this year.

The Eagles won the NFC East for the first time in seven seasons, but lost to the Chicago Bears in the NFC Divisional round during the Fog Bowl. That was one game that should not have been played... IMHO.

On the final day of the regular season, Philadelphia dumped Dallas, 23–7, but had to wait for the end to the Jets-Giants game at Giants Stadium to learn if they had clinched the division or not. The Jets won the game, 27–21, on a late TD strike from Ken O'Brien to Al

Toon, giving the Eagles the NFC East crown on the tiebreaker of having beaten the Giants in both regular-season meetings. Buddy Ryan had delivered a playoff berth in his third season.

In the draft, Keith Jackson from Oklahoma, and Don McPherson from Syracuse, two college greats suited up for the Eagles in 1988.

On Sept 4 in the season opener at Tampa Bay, the Eagles beat the Buccaneers W (41-) before 43,502. On 2 Sept 11 at home, the Cincinnati Bengals beat the Eagles L (24 28) before 66,459.. Then, on Sept 18 at Washington, the Redskins beat the Eagles L (10-17) before 53,920. At Minnesota on Sept 25, the Eagles lost a very close match to the Vikings L (21-23) before 56,012.

On Oct 2 at home, the Eagles beat the Houston Oilers W (32-23) before 64,692. At home, on Oct 10, the Eagles stole a good game from the NY Giants in a fine win W (24 13). The Eagles were now 3-3. This game was before 63,736. On Oct 16 at Cleveland, the Eagles lost to the Browns, L (3-19) before 78,787. At home on Oct 23, the Eagles beat the Dallas Cowboys in a game decided by 1 point W (24-23) before 66,309.

At home again on Oct 9, the Eagles lost to the Atlanta Falcons by a Field Goal L (24 27) before 60,091. Again, at home, against the Los Angeles Rams on Nov 6, the Eagles prevailed W (30-24) before 65,624. At Pittsburgh in a rare game, on Nov 13, the Eagles won a one-point game W (27-26) before 46,026. On Nov 20, at New York, the Eagles beat the New York Giants in OT W (23-17) before 43,621.

In the first game ever against the former St. Louis Cardinals, now the Phoenix Cardinals, on Nov 27 at home, Philadelphia prevailed W (31-21) before 57,918. At home, on Dec 4, the Washington Redskins defeated the Eagles in a one-point match L 19-20) before 65,947. Travelling to Phoenix for the first time ever, the Eagles defeated the Cardinals W (23-17) before 54,832. At Dallas on Dec 18, in the last game of the regular season for both teams, the Eagles defeated the Dallas Cowboys W (23-7) before 46,131. The next game for the Eagles would be in the playoffs.



## The Divisional Playoffs Philadelphia v Chicago

The NFL playoffs for the 1988 season began on December 24, 1988. This postseason tournament concluded with the San Francisco 49ers defeating the Cincinnati Bengals in Super Bowl XXIII, 20–16, on January 22, 1989, at Joe Robbie Stadium in Miami, Florida. There was a lot of action before America and the world got to see this final game played. Due to Christmas, the two wild card playoff games were held in a span of three days. The Eagles were not part of the Wild Card weekend as the Birds had won the Divisional Championships.

In a game affectionately known as the Fog Bowl, the Bears defeated the Eagles 20–12, in a contest in which a heavy, dense fog rolled over Chicago's Soldier Field during the second quarter and cut visibility to about 15–20 yards for the rest of the game. The only fair thing about the game was that both teams experienced the same conditions.

I watched the game from my new home, where I had lived for just a year at the time. And though I was cozy, it was a tough game to watch as all the Eagle's talent was minimized by the fog and the game was tough to see on TV or anyplace for that matter.



It seemed like the fates were against Philadelphia from the beginning of the game. Chicago scored first with quarterback Mike Tomczak's 64-yard touchdown pass to Dennis McKinnon. The Eagles responded by driving to the Chicago 26-yard line, but kicker Luis Zendejas missed a 43-yard field goal attempt. Philadelphia quickly got the ball back after linebacker Seth Joyner intercepted a pass from Tomczak, and this time they managed to score with Zendejas' 42-yard field goal, but only after committing two costly mistakes.

Two times on the drive, Philadelphia had seven-point touchdowns (the only kind that count) nullified by penalties. The Bears then drove to the Eagles 33-yard line on their next drive. It stalled right there and Bears kicker Kevin Butler missed his shot at a 51-yard field goal. The Eagles to the ball back with great field position.

QB Randall Cunningham then led the Eagles inside Chicago's 20-yard line where Zendejas kicked a 29-yard field goal to cut the deficit to 7-6.

After a punt exchange, the Bears drove 44 yards and scored with Neal Anderson's 4-yard touchdown run, giving them to give them a 14-6 lead. The teams then traded field goals before halftime, and they went into their locker rooms with Chicago leading 17-9. Mike Ditka had to be thrilled especially being ahead with a fig that made everything a secret.

By the time the second half began, the heavy fog made it extremely difficult for the teams to see the snap and move the ball. Each team could only score a short field goal in the second half.

Randall Cunningham, who was off and on throughout the season looked good, finishing the game with 407 passing yards, but he was unable to take control of the game. He could not lead the Birds to a single TD and he was intercepted three times. Other than the 64-yard touchdown pass, which occurred when the field was clearer, Tomczak was dominated the rest of the game by the Eagles defense, completing only 10 of 20 passes for 174 yards with a touchdown and three interceptions.

McKinnon finished the game with four receptions for 108 yards and a touchdown. Eagles fullback Keith Byars rushed for 34 yards and

caught nine passes for 103 yards. Tight end Keith Jackson caught seven passes for 142 yards. Even the bears after that game did not taste good.

### **1989 Buddy Ryan #17**

The 1989 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fifty-seventh season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Buddy Ryan in his fourth of five seasons as head coach. The owner was Norman Braman. This year's 11-5 record brought the Eagles a second-place finish in the NFC East. The team earned the right to compete in the NFL Wild Card Playoffs this year.

Despite a fine year, deep sorrow struck the Eagles late in the season with the death of quarterbacks' coach Doug Scovil from a heart attack. For the remainder of the season, the Eagles wore a black stripe made of electrical tape over the wings on their helmet in tribute.

Chris Carter had on and off-field troubles this year, and so it would be the Hall of Famer's final season in Philadelphia. His issues led to his release the following preseason. Carter would then sign with the Minnesota Vikings.

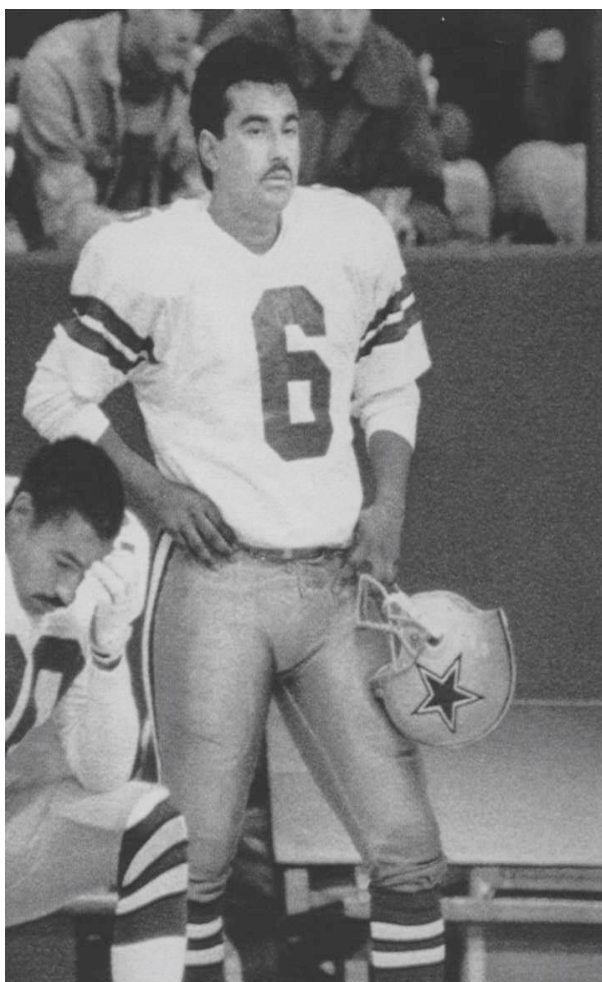
Randall Cunningham took all the snaps this year as he enjoyed the second of back-to-back breakout seasons. His great year began with his leading the Eagles to a 42-37 comeback victory at RFK Stadium v the Redskins on Sept 17, right after signing a contract extension.

The Birds won five of their last six games to challenge the Giants for the division lead. On Thanksgiving Day at Texas Stadium, the Eagles whooped the Cowboys, 27-0, while there were accusations that certain defensive players were rewarded with bounties to take out several Dallas offensive players, including kicker Luis Zendejas. Two Saturdays later, back in Philadelphia, Eagles fans pelted the Cowboys and game officials with snowballs packed in ice thanks to freezing temperatures and snowfall from the previous day. The two matchups between the Cowboys and Eagles became known as the Bounty Bowls.

## Great Eagles Games

### The Bounty Bowls

Late in November 1989, Eagles coach Buddy Ryan made his mark on two Dallas / Philly football games. Ryan was accused by first-year Dallas Cowboys coach Jimmy Johnson, the coach many fans in the country loved to hate after his years of controversy at Miami coaching the “thugs,” of offering bounties to Eagles if they injured Cowboys players.



Jimmy Johnson was not quiet about it. After the Eagles made mush out of the Cowboys, Johnson was livid, and he said Ryan had bounties of \$500 on Cowboys quarterback Troy Aikman and \$200 on placekicker Luis Zendejas, who had been an Eagle just three weeks earlier.

In the Irving Texas game, the Eagles (8-4) looked as good as they had in years. Randall Cunningham had his most productive day in two months. Cris Carter made two acrobatic touchdown catches and the Eagles' defense posted its first

shutout since 1986.

The fan action came after the game when the postgame interviews were a hundred times more exciting than the game play. It all seemed to begin when placekicker Luis Zendejas threatened to deck a portly, peaceful man named Buddy Ryan.

One comment of note was "Hey, they played a football game, and WrestleMania IV broke out." "I congratulate them," Johnson said before storming out of the interview room, "but I have absolutely no respect for the way they played the game...having bounties on opposing players is not the way it's supposed to be done. "

Zendejas was leveled by linebacker Jessie Small on the second-half kickoff, and wobbled in the general direction of Ryan before gravity and better sense directed him elsewhere.

He said that if he could have stood up straight, he would have tried to slug Ryan right then and there. "The fat little guy. He can't take you out himself, so he pays somebody else to do it for him," Zendejas said. Ryan took the charges in stride, shrugged his shoulders and denied the accusations. "I didn't send anybody after anybody, That's ridiculous..." "Maybe he just saw all the friendly faces and thought he was still with us," Ryan deadpanned.

On Sept 10, 1989 in the home and season opener, the Eagles defeated the Seattle Seahawks W 31-7 before 64,287 at Veterans Stadium. On Sept 17, at Washington, Ryan's Eagles beat the Redskins W (42-37) before 53,493. Then, on Sept 24, at home, the San Francisco 49ers defeated Philadelphia L (28-38) before 66,042. On Oct 2, at Chicago, the Bears defeated the Eagles L 13-27) before 66,625.

At home on Oct 8, the Eagles beat the New York Giants W (21-19) in a close match before 65,688. At Phoenix on Oct 15, Philadelphia defeated the Cardinal L(5-17) before 42,620. On Oct 22, at home, the Eagles defeated the Los Angeles Raiders W (10-7) before 64,019. Then, at Denver on Oct 29, the Eagles beat the Broncos W (28-24) before 75,065.

At San Diego on Nov 5, the Chargers defeated Philadelphia L (17-20) before 47,019. On Nov 12, at home, the Washington Redskins beat the Birds L (3-10) before 65,443. Then, on Nov 19, in a one

point match, Philadelphia beat Minnesota W (10–9) before 65,944 at the Vet. On Nov 23, at Dallas, in the Bounty Bowl I, the Eagles crushed the Cowboys W (27–0) before 54,444

On Dec 3, for the second time this season, the Eagles beat the New York Giants. This time in NY W (24–17) before 74,809. At Veteran Stadium on December 10, in Bounty Bowl II, the Eagles dropped the Cowboys again W (20–10) before 59,842. At New Orleans on Dec 18, the Saints beat the Eagles L (20–30) before 59,218. In the last game of the season, the Eagles ended the season on a high note at home by defeating the Phoenix Cardinals on Christmas Eve, W (31–14) before 43,287

## Wild Card Playoffs

The LA Rams got past the “balmy” 50 degree Philadelphia weather and the rowdy fans, as well as the Eagles stalwart defense, and quickly pushed forward to beat the Eagles at the Vet, 21–7 on December 31, 1989, New Year's Eve, before 57,869 mostly comfortable fans. 1989. The Eagles big problem in the game was injury concerns from the season just ended.

It had been eight years since a playoff game were in Philadelphia, but somehow the Eagles were not ready. Several players came limping into the game, but perhaps the most concerning injury was that of Eric Allen, whose ankle was hurt a few weeks prior.

The Rams were not slouches with name players such as QB Jim Everett, RB Greg Bell and wideouts Henry Ellard and Willie "Flipper" Anderson . Nonetheless Buddy Ryan was not fazed by the Rams potential.

Eric Allen did not start the game. It was not bad weather for Philadelphia though overcast, and a bit drizzly. As expected, the Rams attacked Allen's replacement, cornerback Izel Jenkins and burned him on the Rams first touchdown; a 39-yarder from Everett to Henry Ellard on the Rams first possession. Jenkins was the culprit again for another long pass --to Willie Anderson. It was so bad that

midway through the second quarter, Buddy Ryan chose to insert a limping Allen into the game, which was already lost, into the game.

The Eagles' Randall Cunningham, the Birds, All-Pro QB, had no answers for a unique zone implemented by Rams defensive coordinator Fritz Shurmer. Sometimes the Rams would rush just two defenders and would drop all other personnel for pass coverage. It worked.

Cunningham, while completing 24 of 40 pass, threw underneath for the majority of the game and was unable to get anything downfield. All-Pro receiver Mike Quick was unable to help due to a season-ending injury earlier in the year. The Eagles were simply not moving the ball and had less than 100 yards at halftime. They had no first downs till midway through the second quarter.

Three times in a play sequence row, the Eagles went three and out and then they capped it off with an interception in their first four times with the ball.

When the Eagles finally did score on a one-yard Anthony Toney touchdown plunge to make the game 14–7 with just under 11 minutes to go, there appeared to be some hope. The defense, after their shaky start, had by and large held the Rams in check. Indeed, after the Eagles only touchdown of the afternoon, the Eagles defense held the Rams twice and gave the Eagles good field position on their next two possessions, which began at their own 31- and 40-yard lines. However, the Eagles could do nothing with the opportunities and got just one first down on those two possessions.

With three minutes on the clock, the Rams finally put the icing on the cake. Greg Bell ran for a 7-yard touchdown for the final score of 21–7. This TD came a few plays after Bell ran 54 yards down to the 10-yard line. The Eagles defense, especially the front four, had finally collapsed after keeping the Rams in check for so long during the game. It went down in another one of those “what coulda beens” in the Buddy Ryan era.

## 1990 Buddy Ryan #17

The 1990 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fifty-eighth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Buddy Ryan in his last of five seasons as head coach. The owner was Norman Braman. This year's 10-6 record brought the Eagles a second-place finish in the NFC East. The team earned the right to compete in the NFL Wild Card playoffs again this year.

Making the postseason again with a 10–6 overall record, was made much more difficult by a poor season beginning the season with disappointing games early, bringing the Eagles record to 1–3 in the first four games and 2–4 after six.

The Eagles had a good offense, running for 2,556 rushing yards in 1990, which is the most of any team in a single season in the 1990s. Other season highlights were a 28–14 win at Veterans Stadium over the Washington Redskins on November 12. This game got the nickname the “Body Bag Game,” since the defense managed to knock both Redskins quarterbacks from the contest plus several other key players.

At Buffalo in a 30–23 loss on December 2, Randall Cunningham made one of the signature plays of his career, eluding Bills Hall of Fame defensive end Bruce Smith in the end zone before launching the ball into the middle of the field to wide receiver Fred Barnett, who completed the 95-yard touchdown play.

One week prior, the Eagles avenged an opening-night loss at the Meadowlands, whipping the 10–0 Giants by a 31–13 score.

The Eagles began the season at New York on Sept 9, 1990 at New York where the Giants defeated them L (20–27) before 76,202. On Sept 16, in the home opener, the Phoenix Cardinals beat the Eagles by two points L (21–23) before 64,396. At Los Angeles, on Sept 23, the Eagles defeated the Rams W (27–21) before 63,644. At home on Sept 30, the Eagles lost a one-pointer to the Indianapolis Colts L (23–24) before 62,067. On Oct 8, the Eagles drew a scheduled bye as the league extended the season by one week.



At home, on Oct 15, the Eagles beat the Minnesota Vikings W (32–24) before 66,296. On Oct 21 at Washington, the Redskins beat the Eagles for the fourth loss in six games this year L (7–13) before 753,567. The Eagles would lose just two more games in the regular season this year. On October 28, at Dallas, in a classic one-point game, the Eagles beat the Cowboys W (21–20) before 62,605. On Nov 4, the Eagles shellacked the New England Patriots W (48–20) before 65,514

At home on Nov 12, the Eagles whooped the Washington Redskins W (28–14) before 65,857. This game is forever noted as “The Body Bag Game”. The pundits have it written up as one of the Eagles Great Games

## Great Eagles Games

### The Body Bag Game

Buddy Ryan was the source of a lot of controversy in his time at Philadelphia. The Body Bag Game was a Monday Night Football game that was played on November 12, 1990, between the Eagles and Redskins at Veterans Stadium. The Eagles defeated the Redskins, 28–14. The game’s nickname is because nine Washington Redskins players left the game with injuries, and an Eagles player reacted to one of those injured Redskins by yelling, "Do you guys need any more body bags?" Funny?



This was game # 2 between the two NFC East rivals. The Redskins had won the Super Bowl just two years earlier, but they were classified as an again team at the time of the body bag encounter. The Eagles were in their fifth and last season under defensive mastermind Buddy Ryan, but they were coming off two straight early playoff exits. In the previous game, on October 21, the 3–2 Redskins beat the 2–3 Eagles 13–7, behind a rushing touchdown by Gerald Riggs and two Chip Lohmiller field goals. The rematch would come three weeks later, on Monday Night Football, with the second-place Redskins being 5–3; the third-place Eagles being 4–4.

They scored first, on a 30-yard interception return for a touchdown by cornerback William Frizzell. In the second quarter, Washington tied the game 7–7 behind a Rutledge pass to tight end Don Warren. But, by the third quarter, the Eagles took control of the game with three touchdowns.

The first TD was on a trick play. Fullback Keith Byars threw a 9-yard pass to Heath Sherman. The second TD was collected by the defense, when defensive end Clyde Simmons returned a fumble 18 yards. The third TD in a row was another pass to Sherman, this time from QB Randall Cunningham. The Redskins would finish the

scoring in the fourth quarter. Brian Mitchell took it in on a one-yard run. The score would not become a comeback. The Eagles won the game 28–14.

Get the body bags! During this game, the pundits counted at least nine Redskin players who were injured. These included starting quarterback Jeff Rutledge and backup QB Stan Humphries. Washington, already playing without quarterbacks Mark Rypien (who was injured earlier in the season) and Gary Hogeboom (inactive). They had to finish the game with rookie running back Brian Mitchell at quarterback.

After this “exciting” Body Bag Game, the Eagles won five of their last seven under Cunningham, finished the season 10–6 and earning a wild card playoff berth. They were fourth seed in the tough NFC.

The Redskins meanwhile also won five of their last seven to finish the season 10–6, losing the number four seed spot to the Eagles. Despite this, the Redskins would return to Veterans Stadium and defeat the Eagles in the Wild Card playoff game, 20–6. No body bags were spotted in the playoff game.

The Redskins lost to defending Super Bowl champion San Francisco in the divisional round. However, as told in the NFL Network presentation *America's Game: The Story of the 1991 Washington Redskins*, coach Joe Gibbs and others pointed to this game as the foundation for the successes of the 1991 Redskins, who would go on to win Super Bowl XXVI.

After the season, the NFL had to address the problem of two quarterbacks being injured in the same game. The began to permit a third quarterback in addition to the regular 45-man game-day roster. Under that rule, the third quarterback could be played, but if he entered the game before the fourth quarter, neither of the other quarterbacks could return to the game. That rule was changed again for the 2011 season when the game-day roster size was simply increased to 46. ---End of body bag write-up

## 1990 Season games continued

At Atlanta on Nov 18, in another one-point classic, the Eagles dropped the Falcons W (24–23) before 53,755. Then at home on Nov 25, the Eagles crushed the New York Giants W (31–13) before 66,706. At Buffalo on Dec 2, the Eagles lost by a TD to the Bills L (23–30) before 79,320.

At Miami on Dec 9, the Dolphins beat the Eagles L (20–23) before 67,034. On Dec 16, at home, the Eagles had all cylinders firing and shut out the Green Bay Packers W (31–0) before 65,627. At home again on Dec 23, the Eagles beat the Dallas Cowboys W (17–3) before 63,895. At Phoenix on Dec 29, the Eagles beat the Cardinals by two points W (23–21) before 31,796

For three years of close but no cigar, Head Coach Buddy Ryan was fired after the 1990 Season. Philadelphia offensive coordinator Rich Kotite was promoted to replace Ryan as Eagles head coach, a position Kotite held for the next four seasons.

## The Wild Card Playoffs 1991

The Eagles drew first blood against Washington with a Roger Ruzek in Veterans Stadium on January 5. The Eagles held the lead for the entire first quarter and then upped the ante in the second quarter with another Ruzek field goal—this one of 28-yards. Eagles fans wanted more but were ok that the Eagles were winning. But it would be short-lived.



Randall Cunningham off with the ball in the Wild Card Game v Washington

Before halftime, Washington would score twice to first take the lead and then add to it. Redskins Art Monk caught a 16-yard TD pass from Mark Rypien and Chip Lohmiller added the kick, putting Washington up 7-6. From then, Redskins would shut out the Eagles.

In the third quarter, with the lead well assured, the Redskins Chip Lohmiller connected on two goals. One was 20-yards, and the other 10-yards, Near the end of Q3, the Redskins wrapped up their scoring when Mark Rypien connected with Gary Clark on a two-yard TD pass after a nice drive. Lohmiller added the point. Game over. 20-6

# Chapter 10 Coaches Rich Kotite, & Ray Rhodes 1991 to 1998

**Coach #18 Rich Kotie**

**Coach Ray Rhodes**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Pl</u>	<u>W-L-T</u>
1991	Rich Kotite	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	10-6-0
1992	Rich Kotite	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	11-5-0
	• Won Wild Card Playoffs (at Saints)				36-20
	• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Cowboys)				10-34
1993	Rich Kotite	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	8-8-0
1994	Rich Kotite,	NFC,	East	<b>4th</b>	7-9-0
<b>1991-1994 Rich Kotite final record (37-29-0)</b>					
1995	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East,	<b>2nd</b>	10-6-0
	• Won Wild Card Playoffs(Lions)				58-37
	• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Cowboys)				11-30
	• Ray Rhodes Coach of the year				
1996	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East,	<b>2nd</b>	10- 6- 0,
	• Lost Wild Card Playoff				s (at 49ers) 0-14
1997	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East	<b>3rd</b>	6-9-1
1998	Ray Rhodes,	NFC,	East	<b>5th</b>	3-13-0
<b>1995-1998 Ray Rhodes final record (30-36-1)</b>					



Coach Rich Kotite taking it seriously

## **1991 Rich Kotite #18**

The 1991 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fifty-ninth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Rich Kotite in his first of four seasons as head coach. The owner was Norman Braman. This year's 10-6 record brought the Eagles a third-place finish in the NFC East. The team did not make the playoffs

## **1992 Rich Kotite #18**

The 1992 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixtieth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Rich Kotite in his second of four seasons as head coach. The owner was Norman Braman. This year's 11-5 record brought the Eagles a second-place finish in the NFC East. They made the playoffs; won in the Wildcard game; but lost the Divisional playoffs.

The Eagles fought through adversity from game one and improved upon their previous record of 10–6. They won eleven games and returned to the playoffs after missing one year.

After their six of seven win streak at the end of the prior regular-season games, the Birds kept the momentum going and posted grabbed their first playoff victory since the 1980 NFC Championship game. They beat the Saints in New Orleans in the first round.

There were a number of highlights in the season including: the first 4–0 start since going 6–0 to begin the 1981 campaign. They had a home shutout of the Denver Broncos on September 20; a memorable seven-play goal-line stand in a 7–3 win over the Cardinals on October 25; a come-from-behind 47–34 win over the New York Giants at the Meadowlands (which included a Vai Sikahema punt return for a touchdown and his iconic boxing with the padding at the base of the goal posts); and cornerback Eric Allen batting away a Mark Rypien pass at the goal line to seal a playoff-spot-clinching 17–13 decision against the Washington Redskins on December 20.

The entire season was the focus of Mark Bowden's best-selling book "Bringing the Heat", which also dealt in great detail with prominent

recent-term figures who were not with the 1992 Eagles, including tight end Keith Jackson as he became one of the first NFL players ever to enjoy full free agency and signed with the Miami Dolphins and former coach Buddy Ryan.

On Sept 6 in the season and home opener, Rich Kotite's Eagles beat the New Orleans Saints W (15-13) before 63,513 at Veterans' Stadium in Philadelphia. On Sept 13, at The Eagles beat the Cardinals W (31-14) before 42,533. At home, on Sept 20, the Eagles blanked the Denver Broncos W (30-0) before 65,833. At home on Oct 5, the Birds beat the Dallas Cowboys W (31-7) before 66,572.

On Oct 11, at Kansas City, the Eagles lost to the Chiefs L (17-24) before 76,626. On Oct 18, at Washington, the Redskins beat the Eagles L (12-16) before 56,380. Then, at home in the Vet on Oct 25, Philadelphia defeated the Phoenix Cardinals W (7-3) before 64,676. On Nov 1, at Dallas, with Troy Aikman at QB, the Cowboys beat the Eagles L (10-20) before 65,012.

On Nov 8, at home, the Eagles beat the Los Angeles Raiders W (31-10) before 65,388. At Green Bay on Nov 15, 199, the Packers barely beat the Eagles L (24-27) before 52,689. At NY on Nov 22, the Eagles beat the Giants in a shootout W (47-34) before 68,153. At San Francisco on Nov 29, the 49ers beat the Eagles L (14-20) before 64,374.

At home, on Dec 6, Philadelphia defeated the Minnesota Vikings W (28-17) before 65,280. At Seattle on Dec 13, the Eagles beat the Seahawks W (20-17) before 47,492. On Dec 20, at home, Philadelphia beat Washington W (17-13) before 65,841. At home to close the season, on Dec 27. The Philadelphia Eagles defeated the New York Giants W (20-10) before 64,266

### **1993 Rich Kotite #18**

The 1993 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-first season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Rich Kotite in his third of four seasons as head coach. The owner was Norman Braman. This year's 8-8 record brought the Eagles a third-place finish in the NFC East. The team did not make the playoffs.



## **1994 Rich Kotite #18**

The 1994 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-second season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Rich Kotite in his last of four seasons as head coach. The prior owner Norman Braman sold the team to Jeffrey Lurie this year before the season. This year's 7-9 record brought the Eagles a fourth-place finish in the NFC East. The team did not make the playoffs.

Philadelphia did not improve upon their previous season record of 8-8, winning only seven games and as noted, they failed to qualify for the playoffs for the third time in seven seasons.

The sale of the team went through on May 6, 1994. The NFL approved the transfer of majority interest in the club from Braman to Lurie. With the new owner and a not too spiffy season in 1994, Rich Kotite's fate as Eagles head coach was sealed after a seven-game losing streak to end the season knocked Philly out of contention. Having been at 7-2, this was unacceptable to management and the fans. One key injury was the season-ending broken leg suffered by linebacker Byron, He was lost in game #10 against Cleveland and the team won no more games.

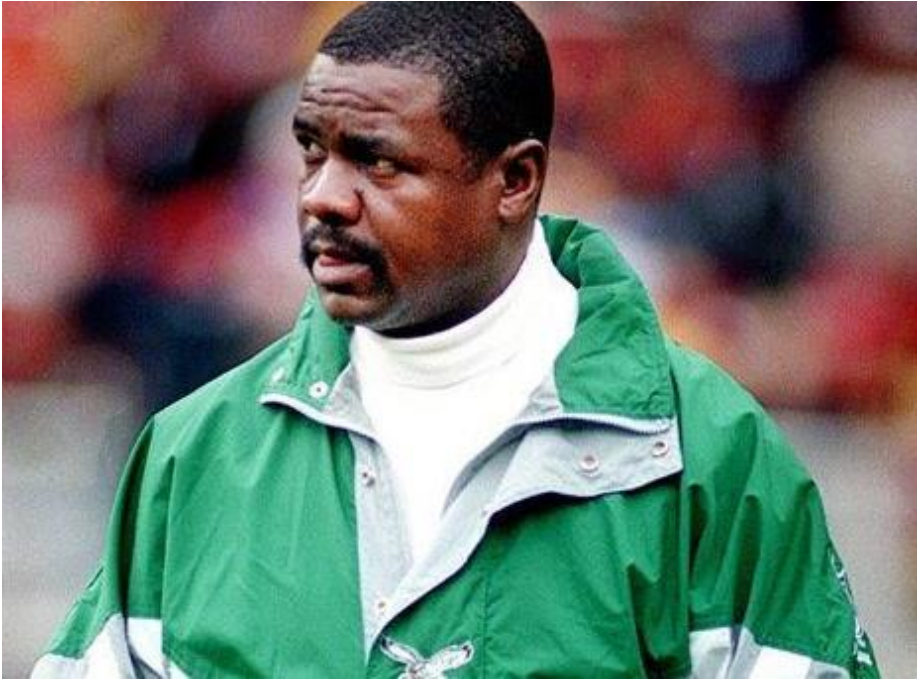
If it could have been worse it would have been or so it seemed as the low point of the collapse came on Christmas Eve at Cincinnati, when the 2-13 Bengals scored six points in the final seconds thanks in part to the recovery of a fumbled kick return – to steal a win.

The high point of the '94 season occurred early when all players were injury-free. On Oct 2 at Candlestick Park, the Eagles steamrolled the eventual Super Bowl winning 49ers by 40-8.

## **1995 Ray Rhodes #19**

In 1995 and 1996, the Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-third & sixty-fourth seasons of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. Ray Rhodes had two great years with identical 10-6 records before, just like Rich Kotite, he struggled his last two years and was replaced.

Both 10-6 records brought the Eagles second-place finishes in the NFC East. The team made the playoffs in 1995 and won a wild-card berth game. However, the Eagles lost in the Division Championship game.



In week four of the 1995 season, the Eagles were thumped by a 31-point margin against the Raiders in Oakland. However, the momentum swung in a positive direction after that, as the Eagles won four straight and seven of their next eight to get back in the playoff hunt.

Fans remember on a frigid December 10 at the Vet against the Cowboys, the Eagles defense twice stopped Emmitt Smith on 4th-and-1 in Dallas territory late in the fourth quarter of a 17-17 tie. The change of possession resulted in the game-winning field goal from Philly's Gary Anderson and bragging rights forever W (20-17) . A win over Phoenix the following week clinched a playoff berth for Ray Rhode's Eagles in his first year, but a loss at Chicago in the season finale on Christmas Eve torpedoed any hopes of winning the NFC East crown. It was the final season with the Eagles for

quarterback Randall Cunningham, who retired from the team following the season before he joined the Vikings for the 1997 season.

The season opener was also the home opener. It was played on Sept 3, 1995 against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The Eagles lost the contest before 66,266 by a score L (6-21). At Arizona on Sept 10, the Eagles beat the Cardinals W (31-19) before 45,004. At home on Sept 17, Philadelphia lost to the San Diego Chargers L (21-27) before 63,081 At Oakland on Sept 24, the Eagles were shellacked by the Raiders L (17-48) before 48,875.

Getting back to winning. At New Orleans, the Eagles beat the Saints on Oct 1, W (15-10) before 43,938. At home, on Oct 8, 1995 the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins by a field goal W (37-34) before 65,498. At NY, on Oct 15, the Eagles beat the Giants W (17-14) before 74,252 fans. The next week was a bye. Then, on Oct 29, at home, the Eagles defeated the St. Louis Rams W (20-9) before 62,172.

At Dallas, on Nov 6, at home, the Cowboys pounded the Eagles L (12-24) before 64,876 Still at home, on Nov 12, the Eagles whooped the Denver Broncos W (31-13) before 60,842. At home, on Nov 19, the Eagles got the best of the New York Giants W (28-19) before 63,562. At Washington, on Nov 26, 1995 the Redskins lost to the Eagles W (14-7) before 50,539.

At Seattle on Dec. 3, the Seahawks beat the Eagles L (14-26) before 39,893. At home, on Dec 10, Philadelphia got by the Dallas Cowboys W (20-17) before 66,198. This game is one of the great ones played by Philadelphia according to the Pundits. After we finish describing the last two games, we will be back for this one

On December 17, at home, the Eagles pulled a one-point special on the Arizona Cardinals with a nail-biter win W (21-20) before 62,076. In the season closer at Chicago on Dec 24, the Bears beat the Eagles L (14-20) before 52,391. This loss cost the Eagles the NFC East Championship.

## Great Eagles Games

### They Stopped Him Again

The pundits suggest that the rivalry with Dallas is so intense that it would be almost impossible for Eagles fans not to kick the Cowboys while they're down. That's how it is and, in most cases, it is just for fun.

The back-and-forth nature of any rivalry is the stuff all great rivalries are made out of. Once upon a time, the Dallas Cowboys were the rulers of the NFC East. The Philadelphia Eagles were the team who were continually struggling sometimes to the point of hapless.

Records have never mattered, however, when these two teams meet though.

Picture this. On December 10th, 1995, an average Philly squad met Super Bowl favorites, the Cowboys, in a divisional clash at the Vet. The names and faces were different every time. This time a Ray Rhodes-led Eagles team tried to outdo Barry Switzer and the Cowboys. The Pundits said the Dallas would walk all over the Birds that day. Instead, they let them hang around.

As the game approached its' natural conclusion, the Eagles and Cowboys were locked in a 17-17 tie. The Cowboys had been stopped on 3rd down deep in their own territory. Mark McMillian had just stopped Cory Fleming on a pass from Troy Aikman that left Dallas one yard short of a first down. The Cowboys, who should have punted, elected to go for it.

Emmitt Smith was stopped on a 4th-down run at the Cowboys' own 29-yard line. The Eagles wouldn't be given credit for it though as the two-minute warning had been called. Dallas, now with the opportunity to rethink things, elected to go with the same play and ran it again.

We all know what happened next. That moment and the highlight, along with another classic call from Merrill Reese, is now etched into our brains forever. You know the one. "They give it to Smith, and they stop him again! They stop him again!"

Gary Anderson (yes that Gary Anderson) nails the game winning field goal. No Eagles fan will ever forget that day. The stop led to a 42-yard game winner by Gary Anderson (yes, Gary Anderson), and the Eagles would end the day with a 20-17 victory. By the way, he'd have to attempt the kick twice as his first attempt was waved off. The referee hadn't yet given the signal to resume play. Bad luck and then good luck. Maybe it is those green uniforms. Emmitt Smith stopped twice. Eagles win.

## 1995 Wild Card Game

Our thanks to the Chicago Tribune for this nice writeup of the Eagles 1995 wild-card win



**Defanged: Eagles 58, Lions 37**

**Lion Mistakes Add Up to Eagles' Playoff Win**

December 31, 1995 | By Mike Kiley, Tribune Staff Writer.

PHILADELPHIA — Ray Rhodes has plenty to smile about with a new era of Broad Street Bullies, who can borrow the

nickname from their hockey brethren of another decade in Philadelphia. But Rhodes apparently has few grins to spare, so he didn't waste excess happiness on his Eagles' romp Saturday.

The taciturn rookie Philadelphia Eagles coach, named NFC coach of the year, conducted a complete whipping of the Detroit Lions in an NFC wild-card game.

These weren't the same Eagles the Bears beat 20-14 in the regular-season finale. "We had a lot more to play for than last week," said Eagles strong safety Michael Zordich, who had one of his team's six interceptions.

And these toothless Lions, 58-37 losers, weren't the same team that clobbered the Bears twice this season with Barry Sanders and a potent passing attack. Even if wide receiver Brett Perriman hadn't sprained his knee in the second quarter and been forced to the sidelines the rest of the game, the Eagles would have ruled Detroit.

"When Perriman got hurt, that gave us a bonus," said Philadelphia defensive coordinator Emmitt Thomas, whose scheme held Sanders to 40 rushing yards on 10 carries and two receptions for 19 yards.

Herman Moore still had seven catches for 133 yards and one score. But it wasn't the same without his partner in crime. Perriman left after making three catches for 26 yards.

Lions coach Wayne Fontes oversaw a seven-game winning streak to get his team to the playoffs and supposedly save his job. But he seldom does well once he makes the postseason, his only such victory coming in January 1992 against Dallas.

"We got here, and I'd hate to belittle that," Fontes said. "But we have to be able to take the next step. "We just got on a roller coaster going downhill. When you are on the road in the playoffs, you better score early. But from 7-7, I turned around and it was suddenly 31-7."

The Eagles could do nothing wrong in the first half in taking a 38-7 lead, more points than they had ever scored in a playoff game. It was the most points in one half of an NFC playoff game since Washington matched that total against the Los Angeles Rams in 1983.

Philadelphia had lost six of its previous seven playoff games, the lone victory coming two years ago in an NFC wild-card game with New Orleans. The Eagles then lost to Dallas in the second round, and the Cowboys will be the next opponent again for the second round if form holds and Green Bay beats Atlanta on Sunday. If the Falcons win, Philadelphia plays San Francisco. The 49ers are Rhodes' former team, where he was defensive coordinator. The Eagles lost at Dallas 34-12 Nov. 6 and beat the Cowboys in Philadelphia 20-17 on Dec. 10.

Detroit turnovers, a kickoff out of bounds and a 28-yard punt contributed to the Eagles' taking an immediate first-half stranglehold by starting drives from prime field position. Lions quarterback Scott Mitchell suffered three interceptions in the first half and four for the game

Don Majkowski relieved Mitchell in the third quarter and threw two interceptions before he was done. The Eagles returned two of the six interceptions for touchdowns.

Before the game, Eagles fans worried that Rodney Peete's poor performance against the Bears would carry over and that Mitchell would dominate the quarterback duel. But Peete was 17 of 25 for 270 yards and three touchdowns, while Mitchell was 13 of 29 for 155 yards and one score.

"By the fourth quarter I was saying, 'Run clock, get it over,'" said Eagles guard Guy McIntyre.

Philadelphia's scoring in the 31-point second quarter ended dramatically. A pass into the end zone as the clock ran out was wrestled away from a Lions defender by Rob Carpenter for a 43-yard score.

"It's a little deflating to have them score on a Hail Mary like that right before halftime," said Lions linebacker Chris Spielman. "But what were our options? We had to keep going.

"We tried to get some breaks to go our way. But field position was tough on us, and it was hard to do anything. Three cheers for the Eagles."

C'mon, Chris, no fair trying to get Rhodes to smile.

## The Divisional Playoff Game

The results of the NFC: Divisional Playoff game is already posted in history as Dallas Cowboys 30, Philadelphia Eagles 11. We offer a short game summary as the Eagles failed to make a great showing in this contest. The game was held in Texas Stadium in Irving, Texas right outside of Dallas. The game was played at 12:30 p.m. EST/11:30 a.m. CST. The weather was good for football at 32 degrees and clear. The 64,371 in the stands were ready for anything. The TV announcers on Fox) were Pat Summerall and John Madden. Injuries would again affect the Eagles in a city in which nobody paid bounties.

Eagles' QB Rodney Peete was out of the game early and the Eagles offensive machine was tilted without Peete in control. The Cowboys held the Eagles to just 227 yards and 11 points, and there was not a lot of bounce coming from the Eagle's cleats.





After punting the first time, the Cowboys scored on their second drive of the game, having driven 37 yards to put Chris Boniol in range for his 24-yard field goal. Following an Eagles try and a punt, Mark McMillian intercepted a pass from Dallas quarterback Troy Aikman and returned it 34 yards to the Cowboys 43, setting up Gary Anderson's 26-yard field goal on the first play of the second quarter.

On Philadelphia's field goal drive, Rodney Peete suffered a concussion when he was tackled by Darren Woodson one yard short of a first down on the Dallas 9-yard line. This took him out of the game and Randall Cunningham came in to replace him.

It did not take long in the second quarter for Dallas to get on the boards. Running back Emmitt Smith rushed four times for 25 yards and caught a 22-yard reception on a well executed 70-yard drive. Deion Sanders finished the drive with a 21-yard touchdown on an end-around run. The Eagles managed just one first down before punting again.

The Cowboys then marched 79 yards, including a Troy Aikman's completions of 37 and 26 yards to receiver Kevin Williams and fullback Daryl Johnston. Johnston's catch gave the team a first down on the Eagles 1-yard line. Emmitt Smith ran the ball in for the score

on the next play. Dallas was then up 17-3 lead with 3:42 left in the half. That was it for the action in the first half.

Williams returned the second half kickoff 24 yards, and then caught a 34-yard pass. After moving 59 yards, the Cowboys scored on Boniol's 18-yard field goal, making the score 20-3. On the Cowboys' next drive, they grabbed another three points on Boniol's franchise record 51-yard field goal. The score was now 23-3.

In the fourth quarter, Sanders intercepted a pass from Randall and returned it 12 yards to the Eagles 21-yard line. This led to the Cowboys' final score on Aikman's 9-yard pass to Michael Irvin for the TD. The Eagles finally responded as Cunningham completed 4/5 passes for 63 yards before taking the ball into the end zone himself on a 4-yard run. He also completed a pass for a 2-point conversion, but by then only 2:36 remained in the game. It was too late for a rally, but nobody stopped playing until the whistle blew and it did soon enough.

Troy Aikman finished the game 17/24 for 253 yards and a touchdown, with one interception. Irvin, who was double teamed most of the game, had only one reception, but Williams caught 6 passes for 124 yards and returned 2 kickoffs for 45. Emmitt Smith just missed 100 yards, but he accumulated 99 yards and he scored a TD, while also catching 3 passes for 40. Eagles running back Ricky Watters, who rushed for 1,273 yards during the season, finished this game with just 39 yards on 13 attempts, though he also caught 4 passes for 45 yards. It was not a good day for the Eagles, but it was a good year.

### **1996 Ray Rhodes #19**

This year's 10-6 record brought the Eagles a second-place finish in the NFC East. The team made the playoffs and lost the wild-card berth game, thereby eliminating them from the rest of the playoffs and the Super Bowl.

Eagles fans were continually thinking that their coaches could not make it to the big games and win them. Results such as losing the 1996 Wild Card game would not be forgotten by the fans nor the power brokers in Philadelphia.

After a season ending injury to Rodney Peete, who by the way today is a Hallmark Channel star along with his family in a show about the Peete's, Ty Detmer took over the starting QB role. With a full stable of healthy horses, for the second time in three seasons, Ray Rhodes' Eagles were 7–2 at the nine-game mark. The Eagles had the services of Brian Dawkins for 1996 as he was picked up in the draft. So early on, things looked good.

One of the reasons was a thrilling win November 3 on the road against Dallas. The topper to that contest was a combined 104-yard interception return between James Willis and Troy Vincent in the final moments. This changed the momentum as a potential game-winning drive by the Cowboys into a Philadelphia victory.

As in 1994 under Rich Kotite, the Eagles wilted on the vine. Something was supposed to happen, but it never happened. Out of nowhere, the Eagles stopped playing like Super Bowl Champions. The Coach always gets blamed as it is his job to make sure no such bleeps occur.

This time, the Eagles suffered four losses in five games, including an embarrassing 27-point setback on national TV at Indianapolis v the Colts. This forced the Eagles to become scramblers in the playoff picture when at one time, it looked like a sure thing.

However, wins against the lowly Jets and Cardinals managed to right the ship just enough, and the team got a wild-card berth as their reward. But, when the wild-card game was played, the tune was "Let's see what happens in 1997."

On Sept 1, 1996, in a pre-labor day season opener v the Washington Redskins the Eagles squeaked out a victory W 17–14. On Sept 9, 1996 at Green Bay, the Packers pounded the Eagles L (13–39) On Sept 15, the Eagles beat the Detroit Lions W (24–17). At Atlanta on Sept 22, the Eagles defeated the Falcons W (33–18).

Then at home on Sept 30, the Dallas Cowboys beat the Eagles L (19–23). Oct 6 was a bye. Then, at New York, on Oct 13, the Eagles prevailed over the Giants W (19–10). Next on Oct 20, at home,

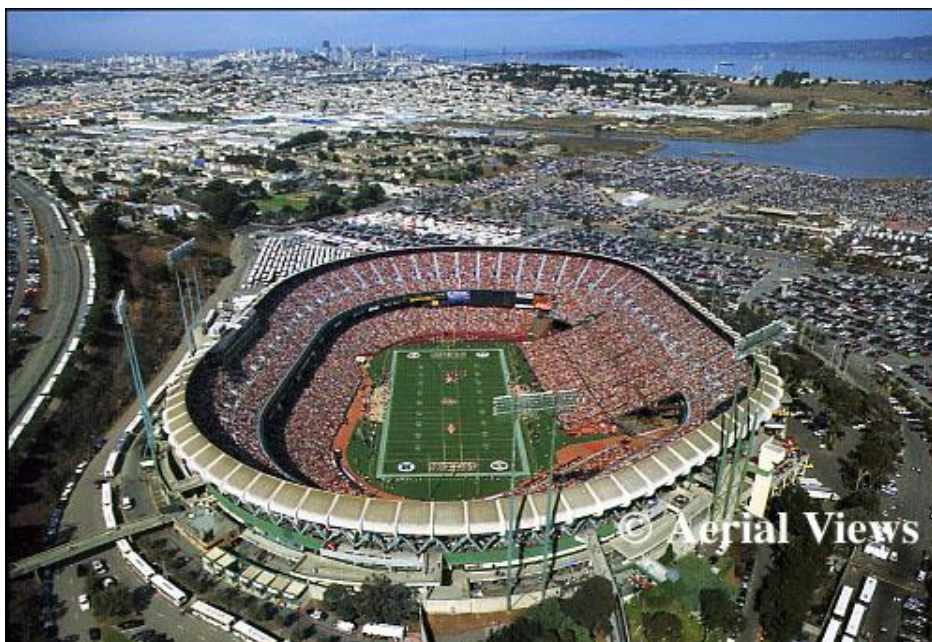
Philadelphia beat the Miami Dolphins W (35–28). On Oct 27, the Eagles beat the Carolina Panthers W (20–9) .

At Dallas on Nov 3, Philadelphia beat the Cowboys W (31–21). Then, at home against Buffalo on Nov 10, the Bills beat the Eagles (17–24). At home on Nov 17, the Washington Redskins beat the Eagles L (21–26). At Arizona on Nov 24, the Cardinals defeated the Eagles L (30–36).

At home on Dec 1, Philadelphia shut out the New York Giants W (24–0). At Indianapolis on Dec 7, the Colts walloped the Eagles L (10–37). The next two games would be wins against the poorest record teams in the league at the time. On Dec 14, at NY Jets W (21-20) On Dec 22, in the season finale, at home v Arizona Cardinals W (29-19)

## 1996 Wild Card Playoffs

One of the ironies in this Wild Card game was that the Eagles gained more yards than the 49ers. Nonetheless a game is more than just yardage.



Candlestick Park – Gone but not forgotten

Philadelphia was shut out though not shut down in a rain-soaked, muddy game with 62 miles per hour winds at Candlestick Park. Everybody who ever watched a Giants baseball game, or a 49ers football game knows about the winds of Candlestick Park, aka, "The Stick." The 49ers left Candlestick Park (later 3Com Park) after the 2013 season for a new \$1.2 billion stadium in Santa Clara. The Stick was demolished in February 2015 and is no longer visible from the major highways from the airport to downtown.

With Candlestick Park doing its best to help the 49ers, San Francisco won 14-0 in what coach George Seifert called "the swampy tundra of Candlestick." (A reference to John Facenda's famous description of Lambeau Field as "the frozen tundra") Despite the poor weather, San Francisco finished the game without losing any turnovers.

To say that Philadelphia had bad luck, would imply that the Birds actually had any luck. They did not. It began with Gary Anderson missing a 40-yard field goal attempt on the Eagles' first possession. In the second quarter, 49ers QB Steve Young completed 6/7 passes for 60 yards on a 74-yard drive and finished it off with a 9-yard TD. The Eagles then showed signs of life as they reached the San Francisco 8-yard line. Luck came into play again as quarterback Ty Detmer threw an interception to defensive back Marquez Pope. The 49ers punted, and the Eagles were back at it on the San Francisco 5-yard line. However, 49ers defensive end Roy Barker intercepted Detmer with just 43 seconds left in the half, and the Eagles would never seriously threaten again. They could have packed up at halftime and left for the East Coast.

Detmer was knocked out of the game in the third quarter with a hamstring injury, and his replacement Mark Rypien, a one-time accomplished QB for Washington, completed only five of 12 passes in the wind and rain for 77 yards, including an interception to Tim McDonald on the last play of the game.

Meanwhile, the great Jerry Rice stood up again and was counted with a one handed 36-yard reception, which set up the final score of the game, a 3-yard touchdown catch from Young, finishing off a 61-yard drive in the third quarter. This was the lowest scoring wildcard playoff game in NFL history.

Steve Young finished the game 14/21 for 161 yards and a touchdown, while also rushing for 65 yards and another score. 49ers defensive lineman Bryant Young had two sacks. The plague of Eagles not converting in playoff games continued.

### **1997 1998 Ray Rhodes #19**

This year's 6-9-1 record brought the Eagles no accolades in a poor third place finish in the NFC East. The team had a losing record with no chance of making the playoffs. They had imploded in 1996 and carried the implosion into the 1997 season. In 1998, it got worse at 3-13 record bringing the Eagles no accolades in a very poor last place finish in the NFC East





# Chapter 11 Coach Andy Reid 1999 to 2012

Coach #20 Andy Reid

Year	Coach	Conf	Div	Pl	W-L-T
1999	Andy Reid	NFC	East	5th	5-11-0
2000	Andy Reid	NFC	East	2nd	11- 5- 0,
					• Won Wild Card Playoffs(Buccaneers) 21–3
					• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Giants) 10–20
2001	Andy Reid	NFC	East,	1st	11-5-0
					• Won Wild Card Playoffs(Buccaneers) 31–9
					• Won Divisional Playoffs (at Bears) 33–19
					• Lost NFC Championship (at Rams) 24–29
2002	Andy Reid	NFC	East	1st	12-4-0,
					• Won Divisional Playoffs(Falcons) 20–6
					• Lost NFC Championship(Buccaneers) 10–27
					• Andy Reid, Coach of year
2003	Andy Reid	NFC	East	1st	12-4-0
					• Won Divisional Playoffs(Packers) 20–17 (OT)
					• Lost NFC Championship(Panthers) 3–14
2004	Andy Reid	NFC	East	1st	13-3-0
					• Won Divisional Playoffs(Vikings) 27–14
					• Won NFC Championship(Falcons) 27–10
					• Lost Super Bowl XXXIX (vs. Patriots) 21–24
2005	Andy Reid	NFC	East	4th	6-10-0
2006	Andy Reid	NFC	East	1st	10-6-0
					• Won Wild Card Playoffs(Giants) 23–20
					• Loat Divisional Playoffs (at Saints) 24–27
2007	Andy Reid	NFC	East	4th	8-8-0
2008	Andy Reid	NFC	East	2nd	9-6-1
					• Won Wild Card Playoffs (at Vikings)26–14
					• Won Divisional Playoffs (at Giants) 23–11
					• Lost NFC Championship (at Cardinals) 25–32
2009	Andy Reid	NFC	East	2nd	11-5-0
					• Lost Wild Card Playoffs (at Cowboys) 14–34
2010	Andy Reid	NFC	East	1st	10- 6-0
					• Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Packers) 16–21
2011	Andy Reid	NFC	East	2nd	8-8-0,
2012	Andy Reid	NFC	East	4th	4- 12-0
<b><u>1999-2012 Andy Reid final record (140-102-1)</u></b>					



Coach Andy Reid from the sidelines—One heck of a record.



It seems to Eagles fans that in Philadelphia football history, there was Andy Reid in the beginning and then just a few coaches after him. If having one of the best win-loss records in the regular season and getting into the big games was all that was important, Andy Reid seemingly would be renowned more than Knute Rockne. But, unfortunately for Andy, Eagles fans were looking to win all the marbles once or twice or more, kinda like Bill Belichick. The Philly fans were not happy with being Division champs six times and runners up four times in fourteen years. If Andy had delivered he would not be in Kansas City today.

### **1999, 2005, 2007, 2012 Andy Reid #20**

After a fifth place finish in 1999, Andy Reid's Eagles had ten great seasons of either #1 or #2 finishes. In 2005, 2007, and 2012, the team finished in fourth place. The 2012 4<sup>th</sup> place finish coupled with the 4-12 record as the one that did ole Andy in.

## **Eagles Great Coaches--Andy Reid**

When Andy Reid was hired from Green Bay, Packers coach Mike Holmgren was viewed as a master and Reid, one of his protégé's was quite welcome in Philadelphia. As way of an introduction, this piece was in the Philadelphia Inquirer announcing the great happening for Philadelphia readers. Thank you to Phil Sheridan and the Inquirer:

*Eagles hire Packers assistant Andy Reid as new head coach*

### **Updated:**

**DECEMBER 30, 2012 — 1:50 PM EST**

### **REPRINTS**

**by Phil Sheridan, Inquirer Staff Writer**

**Originally published on Monday, Jan. 11, 1999.**

After a courtship of four days, the Eagles will introduce Andy Reid as their 20th head coach today.

The former Green Bay Packers assistant is something of an unknown, but his strong interview and enthusiasm impressed the Eagles, who were not thrilled with remarks made last week on the West Coast by Reid's primary competitor for the job, Pittsburgh's Jim Haslett.

Reid, 40, is making the rare jump from position coach to head coach. He will be the second-youngest head coach in the NFL, behind only Oakland's Jon Gruden, a former Eagles assistant coach.

From the moment Reid became available last week, the Eagles focused their full attention on him, and they were struck by his positive attitude. But according to those familiar with the process, the search to replace Ray Rhodes, who was dismissed last month after four years as head coach, began several months ago.

Owner Jeffrey Lurie, director of football operations Tom Modrak and executive vice president Joe Banner put together a relatively short list of candidates. Reid and Haslett, the Steelers' defensive coordinator, were at the top.

The team interviewed Haslett first because, when the Steelers failed to make the playoffs, he was available first. Modrak, who worked in Pittsburgh last year, likes Haslett and believes he will make a good NFL head coach. Clearly, Modrak's relationship with Haslett prompted the Eagles' keen interest in him.

But the Eagles had to be concerned about Haslett's public and private comments that Philadelphia wasn't his first choice. After leaving here, Haslett interviewed in Seattle, where he raved to reporters about the Seahawks' facilities and plans for a new stadium. After four seasons of rumors that Rhodes was unhappy in Philadelphia, that kind of talk couldn't have helped Haslett.

It was Modrak, in fact, who made one of the most telling public comments of the last two weeks. Asked what he sought in a candidate, Modrak talked about leadership, intelligence and

passion, then added: ``And you want a guy who wants to be here. That's important. ''

Reid is that guy. Modrak was also high on Reid from the beginning. As Lurie said Dec. 28, when Rhodes was fired, he retained final say on hiring the head coach. But he planned to lean on Modrak, who was hired in May because of his football lifer's insight into the NFL. Simply put, Modrak knows who the up-and-coming coaches are, and Reid was near the top of his list.

The Eagles contacted Reid last Monday, the day after the Packers were knocked out of the playoffs by the 49ers in San Francisco. Also last Monday, the Eagles contacted Reid's mentor, former Packers head coach Mike Holmgren. They knew all along that Holmgren, who sought a head coach/general manager's job, was a long shot but decided to make a run at him.

Because of his commitments in Green Bay, the Eagles couldn't bring Reid in for an interview until Thursday. They talked to former Carolina head coach Dom Capers on Wednesday. Reid came in Thursday. Oakland defensive coordinator Willie Shaw interviewed Friday.

What no one knew at the time was that Reid stayed in Philadelphia on Thursday night and talked to the Eagles again Friday morning. When Holmgren took a job with the Seattle Seahawks that day, the Eagles' decision was made. Holmgren had already indicated to Reid that he would take him to Seattle as his offensive coordinator.

Reid flew home to Green Bay on Friday. On Saturday, a plane chartered by the Eagles brought Reid and his wife, Tammy, back to Philadelphia. The couple spent Saturday looking around the area, considering it as a home for themselves and their five children. They dined at Lurie's home Saturday night.

Bob LaMonte, Reid's agent, flew in yesterday from his Nevada home to complete the deal. Terms were not available. It is believed to be a five-year contract. LaMonte, who is also

Holmgren's agent, will pull off the neat trick of attending introductory news conferences on opposite coasts in three days.

The next important move for the Eagles is hiring a defensive coordinator. Reid's experience is on the offensive side of the ball. There were indications last night that Packers coordinator Fritz Shurmur might join Reid's staff. That would fill the need for an experienced, innovative defensive presence.

Nolan Cromwell, who coached the Packers receivers, could join the Eagles as secondary coach. Cromwell spent 11 seasons as a safety with the Los Angeles Rams.



Andy Reid and Mike Holmgren trademark glasses

Andy Reid was well known when he was hired by the Eagles. His work with Mike Holmgren and the Packers was well known and Reid attracted considerable notice throughout the league. This led to his being hired as the head coach of the Eagles on January 11, 1999.

At the time, many in the local media, who were unaware of the type of coaching that came from Green Bay, criticized the hiring, citing

the availability of other candidates who had past records of success as head coaches.

The Eagles, under former coach Ray Rhodes, finished in a three-way tie for the NFL's worst record at 3–13 the season before Reid took over. They improved two games in 1999 to finish at 5–11 (including the team's first road victory in 19 games, a 20–16 win over the Bears at Chicago on October 17. This was the first time the Philadelphia franchise had won an away game over the Bears since 1933.

## **2000 Andy Reid #20**

This year's 11-5 record was very positive and a look at things to come bringing a second-place finish in the NFL East. The Eagles made the playoffs and won their Wild Card Match but failed to win the Divisional Championship

Andy Reid fooled everybody at the start of the season when he called for an onside kick to start the season in Dallas. Nobody expected an onside kick and so the Eagles lined up normally and placed the onside kick well enough to recover it to start the game. This game is also known as the Pickle Juice Game, as the Philadelphia players were given pickle juice by Andy Reid in order to prepare for the high temperatures in Dallas that day. Reid wanted to win.

This year was Donovan McNabb's first full year as starting QB after seeing limited action during his rookie season. With McNabb, the team posted an 11–5 record. For his efforts, the Syracuse Flash was named to the Pro Bowl following the season. He would make several more Pro Bowl appearances during his time in Philadelphia.

The Eagles played great ball for Andy Reid and much of that was led by McNabb. He brought them to five NFC Championship games and a Super Bowl (2004) during the McNabb era.

The Eagles easily defeated the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the Wildcard round in 2000, but their season ended with a defeat to their rival and eventual NFC Champions, the New York Giants, in the Divisional Round.

In Week 5, their star running back Duce Staley broke his foot. This ended his season as he needed to be placed on injured reserve. Staley was a great runner. He rushed for 344 yards while active in five games.

## Wild Card Playoffs

### NFC: Philadelphia Eagles 21, Tampa Bay Buccaneers 3

The game was played at Veterans Stadium, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The game time was 4:00 p.m. EST Dec 31, 2000. The weather was 35° and cloudy. It was played before an attendance of 65,813



The game summary line was that “The Eagles defense held the Bucs to only 199 total yards and 11 first downs.”

It took a long time for the Buccaneers to begin to play. After six full drives of the game ended in punts, finally Buccaneers fullback Mike Alstott cut through the ice and rushed for 18 yards and caught a pass

for eight yards as the team drove 58 yards in eight plays to score on Martín Gramática's 29-yard field goal early in the second quarter.

Late in the same quarter, Eagles defensive lineman Hugh Douglas forced Tampa Bay QB Shaun King to fumble, which was recovered by linebacker Mike Mamula at the Bucs 15-yard line. This enabled Eagles' QB Donovan McNabb to take off on a 5-yard touchdown scamper. Tampa Bay punted on their next possession and the Eagles marched 69 yards in eight plays and the Birds took a 14–3 lead on Nat Brown's 5-yard TD reception with 12 seconds left in the half.

The Eagles chewed up the first eight minutes of the second half in their opening drive. They got no points because the usually perfect David Akers missed a field goal. The Birds got the ball back with good field position after receiving Mark Royals' 27-yard punt on their own 43-yard line. Philadelphia then drove 57 yards in eight plays. On the third play of the fourth quarter with McNabb's 2-yard touchdown pass to Jeff Thomason for a 21-3 lead. Meanwhile Tampa Bay's final two drives of the game would both result in turnovers on downs.

## Divisional Playoffs

The game began with the Eagles kicking to the Giants. It all might have been OK except the Eagles could not stop the return. Ron Dixon returned the opening kickoff 97 yards for a TD to set the Eagles back on their heels. They never recovered.

For the rest of the game, Philadelphia gained only 186 yards and scored 10 points, despite forcing three Giants' turnovers. Philadelphia failed to get a first down on their first three possessions. Then on the Eagles fourth drive, Torrance Small fumbled and Dave Thomas recovered the loose ball for the Giants to set up Brad Daluiso's 37-yard field goal.



Jessie Armstead (98) & Emmanuel McDaniel get pressure on McNabb

A few minutes before the end of the first half, cornerback Jason Sehorn made a diving interception of a Donovan McNabb pass. He then got back up and returned it 32 yards for a touchdown, thereby increasing the Giants lead to 17–0. The Eagles finally got on the scoreboard with a field goal before halftime, making the score 17–3.

In the third quarter the Eagles recovered an Amani Toomer fumble at the Giants 32-yard line, but the Giants defense managed to stop their drive at the 13-yard line. Akers' 31-yard field goal attempt went wide right. The Giants then added another field goal to increase their lead to 20–3.

In the fourth quarter the Eagles blocked a punt and McNabb completed a 10-yard touchdown pass to Small, making the score 20–10. With time running, out the Eagles tried an onside kick. However, the kick failed, and the Giants held the ball for the rest of the game.

The Eagles put together a winning season with a wild card win but like in the past they missed the big dance. Most fans were very happy that it took Andy Reid just two years to deliver a competitive team. Just two years prior, the Eagles were 3-9.



## **2001 Andy Reid #20**

The 2001 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-ninth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his third of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. This year's 11-5 record was equal to the prior year's very positive showing. The Eagles looked strong and they grabbed a second-place finish in the NFL East. The Eagles made the playoffs and won their Wild Card Match and they also won the Divisional Championship

And, so the 2001 Eagles made the postseason for the second consecutive time under Andy Reid. Reid was definitely a difference maker. After they defeated the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Chicago Bears in the first two rounds of the playoffs, they would advance to the NFC Championship game for the first time in 21 years. However, it would end there short again. They lost in a very close match lost 29-24 to the St. Louis Rams. The Rams made it to the Super Bowl, instead of the Eagles but they ran into their own bad luck. They were unable to stop Bill Belichick's New England Patriots, in Tom Brady's second year as a pro. (20-17).

The 2001 season was the first of five Conference Championship appearances for the Eagles with Donovan McNabb as starting quarterback and Andy Reid as head coach.

## **Wild Card Playoffs January 12, 2002**

At 11-5, the Eagles made the Wild Card tournament. It was a fine game for the Eagles as QB Donovan McNabb threw for 194 yards and two touchdowns, while also rushing for 54 yards. The Eagles dominated the Bucs from the opening whistle. Tampa Bay QB Brad Johnson threw four interceptions. Two were grabbed by Eagles' Damon Moore. This was the second consecutive season in which Philadelphia eliminated Tampa Bay from the playoffs during the wild card round, and two days later, Buccaneers coach Tony Dungy was fired.

Buccaneers safety Dexter Jackson intercepted a pass from McNabb during the Eagles first drive and returned it nine yards to the Eagles 36-yard line. This set up a 36-yard field goal from Martín Gramática. McNabb soon made up for his mistake with a 39-yard run on third down and 5 on Philadelphia's ensuing possession, setting up a field goal for David Akers that tied the game, 3–3.

In the second quarter, McNabb was hot, He completed all four of his passes for 70 yards on a 73-yard drive, including a 41-yard completion to Todd Pinkston, that ended with a 16-yard touchdown pass to tight end Chad Lewis. Tampa came back with a 10-play, 65-yard drive, but could not find the end zone, gaining another Gramatica field goal. There was more scoring before halftime, ending up with a 46-yard reception from Keyshawn Johnson, cutting the Bucs deficit to 17–9.

Tampa Bay was completely dominated in the second half. Moore recorded his first interception from Brad Johnson at the Eagles 38-yard line on the Buccaneers opening drive of the third quarter. Later on, the Eagles drove 60 yards in six plays and scored on a 25-yard touchdown run from rookie Correll Buckhalter.

When QB Johnson tried to get the Bucs back on track rally his team back, he moved a pair of drives deep into Eagles territory, but he was intercepted on both of them. Troy Vincent picked off a pass from Johnson in the end zone with 4:09 left in the third quarter. Then late in the fourth quarter, safety Brian Dawkins grabbed a Johnson toss on Philadelphia's 3-yard line. Following a punt, Moore put the game away by recording his second interception and returning it 59 yards for a touchdown.

## Divisional Playoffs v Bears

### McNabb's dual threat too much for Bears

From ESPN 20 Jan, 2002

CHICAGO (AP) --Donovan McNabb scrambled, ducked and used his quick feet to elude the Chicago Bears, turning his homecoming into a celebration for the Philadelphia Eagles.



"This is a feeling right now I somewhat can't explain," McNabb said Saturday after maneuvering the Eagles past the Bears 33-19, earning Philadelphia a trip to the NFC championship game.

"Coming back home and seeing family and friends yesterday, I knew today I just had to be focused on my job and that was going out, playing well and leading this team," said

McNabb, who threw for two TDS and ran for another score. "We've taken it one step farther than we did last year."

David Akers kicked four field goals and Philadelphia's rugged defense bottled up a Chicago offense crippled when quarterback Jim Miller was knocked out of the game in the second quarter because of a separated shoulder.

The Eagles, in the NFC championship game for the first time since January 1981, will face the winner of Sunday's Green Bay-St. Louis game. The Bears, who gave up the fewest points in the league this season, head home, disappointed after winning the

NFC Central and making their first playoff appearance since 1994.

...

McNabb, who grew up in the Chicago suburbs and once played in a prep championship at Soldier Field, completed 26 of 40 passes for 262 yards and rushed for 37 more in the last game at the venerable lakefront stadium before it undergoes a major renovation. McNabb was resilient the entire game against the team he rooted for as a child.

"I think Donovan showed that in the biggest games what he's all about. That's all part of his journey," said Philadelphia coach Andy Reid, whose team lost in the divisional playoffs a year ago.

"We just weren't on the field that much," Bears offensive tackle Blake Brockermeyer said.

"McNabb just killed us. We had him wrapped up many different times and the guy just made plays."

After the Bears sacked him for the first time in the third quarter, McNabb scrambled and hit Jeff Thomason with a 30-yard pass to the Chicago 10.

On second down, Duce Staley lined up on the far end and when the Bears went to sleep and forgot to cover him, he easily took a pass from McNabb for a go-ahead 6-yard TD the made it 20-14 late in the quarter.

"He buys a lot of time," Bears coach Dick Jauron said of McNabb. "If his receivers are not open initially, he can buy time with his legs and his athleticism."

Akers kicked a 40-yarder field goal to put the Eagles up 23-17 in the final quarter, and when Chicago's Autry Denson fumbled the next kickoff after a hit by Tim Hauck, Quinton Caver recovered.

McNabb again responded after being sacked. He ran around the Bears and found Staley on a 14-yarder to get Akers in position for a 46-yarder with 6:28 left that made it 26-17. McNabb snuck in a 5-yard TD run with 3:21 to go.

The Bears, with Shane Matthews filling in for Miller, managed only one offensive touchdown. Their defense got them a third-quarter lead when Jerry Azumah grabbed a deflected pass and raced for a 39-yard TD to put the Bears up 14-13.

McNabb led the Eagles on an 11-play, 69-yard drive in the final minute of the first half, scrambling out of a Bears rush and hitting Cecil Martin for a 13-yard TD with 14 seconds to go.

That put Philly up 13-7, just over five minutes after Chicago's Ahmad Merritt took a handoff from Matthews and ran 47 yards for a TD.

It didn't last. McNabb hit a 9-yard pass on fourth down to Thomason and connected on a 14-yarder to Chad Lewis. After spiking the ball to stop to the clock, McNabb was at his best. He kept his elusive feet moving, sidestepping the rush and then finally throwing a 13-yard TD to a wide open Martin with 14 seconds remaining.

Trailing 6-0, the Bears moved to the Eagles 25, but when Miller tried to loft a third-down pass to Dez White, Damon Moore intercepted at the 2.

During the return, Philly's Hugh Douglas threw Miller to the ground, separating the quarterback's throwing shoulder and changing the Bears' outlook.

"It's disappointing to work so hard for something like that to happen," Miller said. "It's hard to win without your starting quarterback. You work so hard to get here."

Miller said he would wait to see the tape to see if Douglas' play was a cheap shot. Douglas said it wasn't. Matthews said it was.

"I was just going to get a block and I just stood there for a while and he went like he was going to tackle and I just blocked him," said Douglas. "It was part of the game, I was just doing my job."

Matthews, who led overtime wins over San Francisco and Cleveland this season, hadn't played since Nov. 4.

The Eagles suffered an injury loss when defensive back Troy Vincent was forced out of the game with a groin pull. His status for next week was not immediately known.

## **The 2001/2002 NFC Championship**

St. Louis Rams 29, Philadelphia Eagles 24

Philadelphia had a tough time with the really big games. They had gained a 17–13 lead by halftime, and had not allowed more than 21 points per game during the season and the playoffs. But the Rams were not ready to turn in the towel.

They roared back thanks to Kurt Warner completing two-thirds of his passes for 212 yards and Marshall Faulk's 159 yards rushing and two touchdowns to earn their second trip to the Super Bowl in three years. Again, the Eagles had misfired in the clutch. Andy Reid was already beginning to get the reputation that he cannot bring in the big games.

### **2002 Andy Reid #20**

The 2002 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventieth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his fourth of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. This year's 12-4 record was the best yet for the Eagles. They looked strong and they grabbed a first-place finish in the NFL East. The Eagles made the playoffs but lost the NFC Championship to the Buccaneers, a team they had bullied the prior two years.

The Eagles' record tied for the best record in the NFL, and due to tie-breakers, gave them the number-one seed in the NFC, a first-round bye, and home field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs. The Eagles had it all. This would be their year. All they had to do was execute.

The best laid plans of mice and men gang oft aglay. There are pundits who will argue that this loss was the worst loss in franchise history at home. I am talking about the 2002 NFC Championship Game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The Bucs eventually won Super Bowl XXXVII.

The Eagles had defeated the Buccaneers in two prior consecutive seasons in the NFL playoffs in an easy fashion. Many experts thought that the Conference Championship game would not be any different. The game was the final football game played at Veterans Stadium. The Following year games were at Lincoln Financial Field, aka, according to the locals, the Linc

In the season opener on September 8, 2002 at Tennessee, the Eagles did not have enough steam to defeat the Titans L (24–27) before 68,804. At Washington on Sept 16, the Eagles pummeled the Redskins W (37–7) before a huge crowd of 84,892. On Sept 22, in the home opener, the Eagles pleased the fans by overpowering the Dallas Cowboys W (44–13) before 65,537. At home again on Sept 29, v the Houston Texans, the Eagles prevailed W (35–17) before 64,867.

The Eagles would win their last three out of four, losing the final game of the season to the Giants. On Dec 8, at Seattle, the Eagles beat the Seahawks by one TD W (27–20) before 59,862. At home, on Dec 15, the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins W (34–21) before 65,615. At Dallas, a team that always inspired the Eagles to do its best, the Birds blasted the Cowboys W (27–3) before 63,209. Then in one of the hardest battles of the year, the 13-3 Eagles could not muster enough on Dec 28 to beat the rival New York Giants and in the last game of the season before the playoffs, the Eagles were defeated L (7–10) before 78,782. New York fans always packed the stadium when the Eagles were coming to town.

At 12-4, the Eagles were in the favorite's slot and got to play in the NFC Championship game.

## NFC Championship Game January 19, 2003

The last team that the Eagles would have thought were viable enough to pummel them in a championship game was the TB Buccaneers. Why? Well, mostly because the Birds had nailed their coffins shut so many times in the past. The Eagles obviously forgot the special spikes and the silver bullets as the Bucs chose not to play dead in this encounter.

Nonetheless, The Eagles were dealt a crushing upset 27–10 defeat in the NFC Championship Game by the same Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The Eagles were everybody's favorites to win the conference title and propel themselves into the Super Bowl. Andy Reid had so fore-ordained by training the Birds to be the best in captivity.

They had beaten the Buccaneers at home in each of the last two postseasons and in October 2002, they had defeated Tampa Bay 20–10. The Buccaneers had never won a road playoff game and were 1–22 in games under 40 degrees (it would be 26 degrees at kickoff). Moreover, as an extra incentive for the Eagles, the game would be the final one for the team at Veterans Stadium. Win one for the Gipper? – At least win one for Veterans' Stadium!





The Bucs clipped the Eagles Wings in the NFC Championship

When the whistle blew, there were no more expectations. It was all reality live at the Vet. Brian Mitchell returned the opening kickoff 70 yards for the Eagles. Two plays later, Duce Staley broke through the middle for a 20-yard touchdown in the game's first minute. The Eagles led 7-0, the Philadelphia crowd was deafening, and the Eagles now looked certain to cruise to victory. Somebody unfortunately had not gotten the message to the Buccaneers that they had already lost in a game that had three quarters plus 14 minutes of the first to be played.

The Buccaneers did recover quickly. They were not hanging around waiting for the OK. They drove for a 48-yard Martin Gramatica field goal on their first possession. The Eagles could not make a first down and punted on their next drive. They pinned Tampa Bay at their own 4-yard line. On 3rd-and-2 from the Tampa 24-yard line, the Eagles were expected to shut it all down but...

Quarterback Brad Johnson hit Joe Jurevicius on a crossing route over the middle. Jurevicius easily beat veteran safety Blaine Bishop, who was playing injured, on the coverage and he ran all the way down the sideline to the Eagle 5-yard line. The 71-yard play was somehow a morale booster and a morale buster depending on which side of the ball you were on.

It turned the tide of the game and Mike Alstott finished the Bucs' drive with a touchdown to put Tampa Bay ahead 10–7. The Eagles had to think too much with Tampa Bay ahead.

In the second quarter, Philadelphia drove into the Tampa Bay red zone and tied the game with a 30-yard David Akers field goal. But the vaunted D had a tough time with the Bucs. They, that is, the Buccaneers began a 12-play drive on the kickoff that was not over until there was a 9-yard TD pass thrown from Brad Johnson to Keyshawn Johnson, making it 17–10 in favor of Tampa Bay.

The Eagles needed to be reminded that they were playing good ole Tampa Bay but good ole Tampa Bay was not behaving as good ole Tampa Bay.

It was on McNabb's shoulders. Donovan McNabb took the Eagles back into Tampa Bay territory before halftime, but Simeon Rice snuck though the big D and sacked McNabb and to make matters worse, he recovered the McNabb fumble.

Trying too hard perhaps under pressure for the first time by a team such as Tampa Bay, when the Eagles got the ball in the third quarter, the McNabb was not well-protected, and he lost the ball again on a sack. This time, it was near midfield it was tough to come back without the ball.

With a minute left in the third quarter, Tampa Bay continued to score with a field goal to take a 20–10 lead. The Buccaneers were invigorated that they might beat Philadelphia while the Birds were figuring this could not be happening.

Philadelphia had trouble moving the ball throughout most of the second half as their hopes faded. With less than four minutes to play, the Eagles drove to the Tampa Bay 10-yard line, but McNabb was intercepted by Ronde Barber who returned the ball all the way for a touchdown to end the game.

It was not a great game for the Eagles regardless of how well Andy Reid had prepared them. Andy did not lose the game but the men on the field, the Eagles themselves, needed a little more discipline to

bring in the V from a team that obviously wanted the prize more than they did. Eventually, the Bucs would win the Super Bowl this year. That says something about their emotion as the Eagles had finished them off earlier in the season without having to take showers after the game.

McNabb was 26-for-49 for 243 yards with an interception and two fumbles lost, while Johnson was an efficient 20-for-33 for 259 yards and a score. Staley was held to 58 yards rushing, while the Eagles defense did manage to hold the Buccaneers to only 49 rushing yards. The heartbreaking loss, which was made all of the more painful when Tampa Bay went on to easily defeat the Oakland Raiders in the Super Bowl one week later, is consistently rated as the one of the worst losses in Philadelphia sports history. It was not Andy Reid's fault IMHO.

## **2003 Andy Reid #20**

This year's 12-4 record was the best yet for the Eagles and it equaled the stellar performance of the Birds in 2002. The Eagles looked strong and they grabbed a "two-in-a-row" first-place finish in the NFL East. The Eagles won the Divisional Playoffs v the Packers but lost the Conference Championship to the Packers

Overall looking back, the Eagles were doing very well. As a long-time Eagles fans, I have grown a suspicion about the Eagles somehow always being able to capture defeat from what are clearly is the jaws of victory. Looking back, however, especially after Ray Rhodes' 3-9 season, the Eagles were really doing well. Maybe the dark cloud if that suspicion got in their way of finishing consistently well.

Here we are in 2003, just four years after the 3-9 season and not only are the Eagles doing very well, the team made the playoffs for the fourth straight year, won its third straight NFC East division title, and had the NFC's top record for the second straight season.

After losing their final game in Veterans Stadium to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the 2002 NFC Championship Game, Philadelphia looked to turn the page with the opening of brand-new Lincoln

Financial Field, but the stadium got an ill-omened start when the Eagles dropped their first two games there, including a season-opening loss to Tampa Bay. A crushing loss to the New England Patriots left the Eagles 0–2 and three weeks later clocking in at 2–3, the Eagles were not looking like a Super Bowl contender.

But, there was hope when it looked like it would soon be a 2–4 record. Star running back Brian Westbrook returned a punt for a touchdown to shock the New York Giants in the closing minutes of their sixth game in a week 7 contest (counting the bye). The play turned the Eagles' season around and they won their next nine games, finishing with a 12–4 record.

## 2003 – 2004 Playoffs

The suspicions all came back when the playoffs came, as the Eagles found themselves needing another miracle to survive the Green Bay Packers on a 4th and 26. Unfortunately, good, consistent play wins games and depending on miracles is an iffy strategy. They got their miracle but the magic had run out by the next week as the team dropped a 14–3 decision to the Carolina Panthers at Lincoln Financial Field in the NFC Championship Game. Another season ended short for the top winner in the NFL. The suspicions were daunting.

It was a great season by any other standard than that of a wary Philadelphia fan. There were always these little omens making everything not quite 100% right. Duce Staley had been a preseason holdout, so Andy Reid was ready with other running backs. One might call it a running back committee solution with Staley, Westbrook, and Correll Buckhalter. They all rushed well for a combined 1,613 yards and 20 touchdowns and to foes in the NFL they became a "The Three-Headed Monster."

The Eagles rushing attack, which also benefited from 355 rushing yard and three touchdowns by quarterback Donovan McNabb, carried the offense, which featured a weak receiving corps that did not record a touchdown until Week 9. There were calls early in the

season to replace McNabb with backup A. J. Feeley, but McNabb would get back his rhythm and eventually enjoy a fine season.

The defense had its share of early injuries to defensive backs Bobby Taylor and Brian Dawkins. But, they wound up surrendering the seventh-fewest points in the league. Cornerback Troy Vincent, in his final season as an Eagle, was elected to the Pro Bowl. The weakness in the defense would be in stopping the run, something the team struggled with even at the height of their nine-game winning streak.

## **The 2003 – 2004 Playoffs**

**Division Eagles 20 v Packers 17**

### **Eagles Greatest Games**

On Sunday January 11, with Andy Reid creating his reputation as a head coach, many Eagles fans were concerned because it was playoff time again. Would Andy win the big ones this year? In what became known as the "4th and 26 game", the Eagles unexpectedly came back and beat the Green Bay Packers in one of the most dramatic playoff games in Eagles' history.

Inspired after the death of his father, Brett Favre led the Packers to victories in their final four games to win the NFC North Division, then he led the team into overtime against the Seattle Seahawks in a game eventually won by an interception return from former Eagle Al Harris.

The Packers had been proclaimed by experts as the "team of destiny" and had the sympathy of the nation. The Eagles, who finished 12–4, had ended the season with nine wins in ten games, but had some injuries on defense and were without running back Brian Westbrook for the playoffs. On a wall in the Eagles' locker room, it was written, "If they're the team of destiny, where does that leave us?"



“4th and 26” is the commonly used name for a famous play that occurred on Sunday, January 11, 2004, during the National Football League(NFL)'s 2003–04 playoffs. The play occurred during the fourth quarter of a divisional playoff game between the visiting Green Bay Packers and the Philadelphia Eagles at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The NFC East champion and top-seeded Eagles were coming off an opening round bye while the fourth-seeded, NFC North champion Packers were the visiting team, coming off an overtime win over the

Half way through 1Q, Packers linebacker Nick Barnett recovered a McNabb fumble on the Eagles 40-yard line. Like clockwork, the inspired Favre threw a 40-yard touchdown pass to Robert Ferguson on the very next play.

James Thrash returned the kickoff 36 yards to the 44-yard line. Then McNabb made up for his miscue with a handsome 41-yard run to the Packers 15. But the drive stalled at the 14-yard line and the Eagles got no points as David Akers missed a 30-yard field goal attempt. After the missed field goal, Ahman Green rushed three times for 31 yards before Favre threw his second touchdown pass to Ferguson, giving the Packers a 14–0 lead with 1:16 still left in the first quarter.

In the second quarter, McNabb was at it again and he completed five consecutive passes for 77 yards, including a 45-yard pass to Todd Pinkston. On the last play, his 7-yard touchdown pass to Duce Staley cut the lead to 14–7. Green Bay took the kickoff and drove 67

yards to the Eagles 1-yard line. This drive featured a 33-yard run by Green, but on fourth down, Green tripped on guard Mike Wahle's leg and was tackled for no gain. The Packers turned the ball over on downs.

The Eagles drove 88 yards in 8 plays as time was running out in the third quarter to tie the game, despite two 10-yard penalties against them on the drive. McNabb was responsible for all of the yards on the drive, rushing for 37 yards and completing four passes for 72, including a 12-yard touchdown pass to Pinkston that tied the game at 14 on the first play of the fourth quarter.

Antonio Chatman's 10-yard punt return later gave the Packers great field position on their own 49-yard line. On the next play, Favre threw a 44-yard completion to Javon Walker. Philadelphia's defense kept Green Bay out of the end zone, but Ryan Longwell kicked a 21-yard field goal to give them a 17–14 lead. Would it be the Eagles' normal fate?

The started a comeback with a 22-yard run by Duce Staley, but on the next play, McNabb threw an incomplete pass. Then, the Eagles were penalized 5 yards for a false start. A sack then pushed them back so far they needed 26 for a first The Birds faced with a fourth down and 26 yards, with just 1:12 remaining and no timeouts available. They then got a miracle pass completed to Freddie Mitchell for 28 yards (2 more than was needed for the 1st down)

On fourth down, the play (74 Double Go) called for a slant route to wide receiver Freddie Mitchell. McNabb threw a perfect strike to Mitchell deep into the Packers' secondary. The Packers' coverage, a Cover 2 package, broke down and was sharply criticized by broadcaster Cris Collinsworth.

Linebacker Nick Barnett, who was responsible for shallow coverage of Mitchell, decided to bite on the tight end. Inexplicably, Darren Sharper, played past the first down marker positioning himself for an interception rather than preventing any catch in front of the marker. The only player that was close to making a play, Packers' safety Bhawoh Jue, was playing the sidelines as is customary in Cover 2 defense . He was too late to prevent a catch or first down.

Mitchell completed a leaping reception and was brought down at the Packers 46, giving the Eagles a first down. Broadcaster Joe Buck criticized the spot of the ball, as it appeared from the broadcast that Mitchell barely crossed the line to gain but the officials gave him some extra yards.

The play set up David Akers' 37-yard field goal attempt after McNabb ran for another first down. The field goal was good, and the game went into overtime, when Eagles safety Brian Dawkins was able to intercept an errant Brett Favre pass and return it 35 yards, setting up another Akers field goal try. The 31-yard kick was good, giving the Eagles a dramatic 20–17 victory and sent them to their third straight NFC Championship Game, which they lost to the Carolina Panthers.

## **NFC Championship: vs Carolina Panthers**

### **January 18**

In another aggravatingly disappointing result for Philadelphia, the Eagles lost the NFC Championship 14–3 to the Carolina Panthers. Andy Reid was slowly collecting a reputation that he could not bring in the big games. It was their third straight championship game defeat, and second in a row at home.

The Eagles did get the best of the Panthers 25–16 in Week 13 in Carolina, but this time, it was a no-go. The Eagles were injury wounded and the Panthers' defense disrupted the wounded offense, holding them to just three points and dashing their hopes for a Super Bowl a week after the 4th and 26 miracle the week before.





### << Jarrod Cooper 3Q Sack on McNabb

Carolina drove into Philadelphia territory on their opening drive, but punted the ball away. McNabb then marched the Eagles down the field, reaching the Carolina 32-yard line after a 23-yard catch and run by Correll Buckhalter. However, the drive stalled, and the Eagles had to punt. The teams traded punts again, but then the Panthers took off when Jake Delhomme broke

through and led the Panthers down the field, finishing with a 24-yard touchdown pass to Muhsin Muhammad. It was a badly thrown ball that somehow beat the Eagles' double coverage.

McNabb responded with a long drive, but on 1st and 10 from the Carolina 23-yard line, he was knocked down by his own lineman being pushed back, and was hit by linebacker Greg Favors after he was down. McNabb came back after one play, and had a 10-yard completion to Freddie Mitchell. This set up a 41-yard field goal by David Akers that made it 7-3. Philadelphia's final drive of the first half was ended when rookie Ricky Manning Jr. picked off McNabb, who looked like he was hurt from the prior thumping, While the Eagles defense played well, the offense was stifled by four first half sacks.

With McNabb playing with torn cartilage in his ribs, the Eagles went to the ground, using Buckhalter and Duce Staley to drive into Carolina's red zone in the third quarter. However, McNabb was intercepted again with a pass intended for Todd Pinkston. This was a tremendous blow to the Eagles that could not do anything this day.

On Philadelphia's next possession, receiver James Thrash was hit as the ball arrived and Ricky Manning Jr. grabbed the deflection and

returned it 13-yards to the Philadelphia 37-yard line. It was his third interception of McNabb for the day. DeShaun Foster helped power the ball to the Eagles' one-yard line. With first and goal from there, it did not take long for Foster to run over linebacker Mark Simoneau as he pushed himself into the end zone.

Now losing 14–3, Philadelphia's crippled offense could not get a first down for the rest of the quarter. Koy Detmer finally came in to replace the injured McNabb. Cold off the bench Detmer led the Eagles to the Panther 11-yard line, but he then threw a pick to Dan Morgan, and the Eagles were out of threats. The Birds got the ball back one final time, and as McNabb watched from the sidelines, but they could not get past midfield.

For the second year in a row, the Philadelphia fans were forced to watch another team celebrate on their field. The five sacks and four interceptions by Carolina's defense were devastating. The Eagles looked bad as receivers Pinkston and Thrash were manhandled by the Panther secondary throughout the game. The injury to McNabb, on an offense already missing Brian Westbrook, left the offense punch-less and made the 14–3 deficit insurmountable.

In three quarters of action, McNabb was 10-for-22 for only 100 yards, while Buckhalter and Staley combined for 127 rushing yards. The Panthers were not hot, but they had enough to win. They rushed for 155 yards on the night. After what looked at times to be a blessed season, the Eagles' playoff campaign ended with an NFC Championship Game defeat, yet again.

## **2004 Andy Reid #20**

The 2004 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventy-second season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his sixth of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. This year's 13-3 record was the best ever for the Eagles and it bettered the stellar 12-4 back-to-back performances of the Birds in 2002 and 2003. The had first place locked as they won their first thirteen games in a row and then sat around waiting for the season to end of some fans seemed to think.

The Eagles should have won it all. Fans such as I believed they should have continued trying to win after they had locked up first place and home field advantage. The decision to lay down for three games sure seemed to take the edge off a team that was steamrolling one opponent after another until they got a huge break in the action. When the real Eagles finally came back, it was like pre-season again. The Birds were too rested and too complacent. They had lost their fire. For some, it is why Andy Reid had some problems even when the Eagles record was outstanding.

There is no denying that the Eagles had been one of the most successful teams in the league after the Andy Reid and Donovan McNabb era began in 1999, making it to the playoffs for four straight seasons and to the NFC Championship Game in 2001, 2002, and 2003. However, the team could not reach the Super Bowl, despite being favored in the final two NFC title games. This was quite disconcerting to Eagles' fans.

In the offseason, this already championship-level team was reinforced on both sides of the ball by the free agent additions of wide receiver Terrell Owens, defensive end Jevon Kearse, and middle linebacker Jeremiah Trotter, their third round draft pick in 1998.

The Eagles had far and away the best team in the NFC and proved that right from the start. Possessing a high-powered offense which featured McNabb, Owens, and Brian Westbrook, as well as a bruising defense led by Pro Bowlers Trotter, Brian Dawkins, Lito Sheppard, and Michael Lewis, they steamrolled opponents on the way to a 13–1 start to the season. After resting starters for the final two games, the 13–3 Eagles soared past the Minnesota Vikings and the Atlanta Falcons in the playoffs, earning a trip to Super Bowl XXXIX in Jacksonville against the defending champion New England Patriots.

The Super Bowl game was hard fought, but the Eagles fell short at 24–21, ending their magical season one score short of the ultimate goal. This season was considered the franchise's most successful until their Super Bowl LII-winning 2017 season.

There are a number of the suspicious who think that the Eagles had lost just enough of an edge from sitting its starters for the last two games that it could not get a few more points against New England to take home the prize. Having a 15-1 record was a prize in itself that was given up for no prize at all. Just saying.

## Divisional Championship

In the Divisional, Championship, the Eagles were heavy favorites as Minnesota had eeked in with an 8-8 record. The Vikings had lost four of their final five, but they had defeated the Packers in the Wild Card round.



Patrick Robinson Takes an interception for a TD

The Eagles started early but got nowhere on its first possession, On their second time with the ball, Brian Westbrook, who had missed the last playoffs with an injury, gained 48 total yards, setting up Donovan McNabb's two-yard touchdown pass to Freddie Mitchell.

Then, at the end of the quarter, McNabb got pay-dirt again as he found Greg Lewis for a 52-yard gain, Two plays later, Westbrook

snagged a short pass right over the middle and put Philadelphia up 14–0. Next came a long completion to Marcus Robinson by Daunte Culpepper. This led to a QB bootleg for a TD, keeping. This had the effect of keeping Minnesota in the game.

J.R. Reed took the Vikings kickoff into Minnesota territory, and a few plays later, McNabb hit L.J. Smith with a pass over the middle bringing the ball down past the ten-yard line. Smith seemed to get the score, but was hit hard, popping the ball up into air heading towards the goal line. Freddie Mitchell was right where he needed to be, and he caught the strange fumble in the end zone for an amazing touchdown that proved it would be the Eagles' day all the way.

Their next time with the ball, the Vikings got to the Eagles' 4-yard line, but a botched fake field goal attempt left them with nothing and they were clearly demoralized for this effort for naught. More bad luck for the Vikings occurred in the quarter as Ike Reese and Jeremiah Trotter got interceptions that kept Minnesota at bay. Freddie Mitchell's good luck from earlier in the game was reversed as he fumbled a near-touchdown out of the end zone, resulting in a touchback.

In the fourth quarter, two David Akers field goals put the game at 27–7 and out of reach in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Culpepper added a 32-yard touchdown pass to Robinson, but it was not enough as the Eagles were heading to their fourth straight NFC Championship Game. McNabb had 286 passing yards and two touchdowns, Westbrook had over 100 all-purpose yards, and Mitchell caught five balls and had two touchdowns as an effective fill-in for Terrell Owens.

## **NFC Championship: vs. Atlanta Falcons**

The Eagles hoped that the fourth time would get them a path to the “ring,” when they faced Atlanta this year in the NFC Championship game. The Birds had not been known for good results in such encounters, There were no playoffs when the Eagles won any of their three NFL Championship Games in 1948 & 49 with Greasy Neale, and in 1960 with Buck Shaw. After losing three big title games over the years, they were looking for the big win against the Atlanta Falcons in this year's NFC Championship Game.

The weather was not good, and this game was played in post-blizzard, 17-degree weather. There were swirling frigid winds nearing 30 MPH. Atlanta had gone 11–5 over the year, and were the second-best team in the conference, behind Philadelphia. Their quarterback, who in a few years would be playing for the Eagles was a star player named Michael Vick. He was the Falcons' main hope of upsetting the Eagles.

The Eagles saw Vick run twice on the opening drive, but the defense, used something they called a mush rush, and the stopped Vick both times. Later in the quarter, Brian Westbrook broke loose on a 36-yard run to the right side, followed by a completion to L.J. Smith for 21 yards. Dorsey Levens then pushed forward for a 4-yard touchdown, giving Philadelphia a 7–0 lead.

Atlanta began a long drive, which featured many Warrick Dunn and T. J. Duckett rushes. The Eagles found the Falcons on their two-yard line with a first and goal. They stuffed Duckett on first down, Vick was incomplete on second. He looked to run on third but big Hollis Thomas emerged and leveled Vick at the 3-yard line. The Falcons settled for a field goal, making it 7–3.

The Eagles started another drive that looked like it had a lot of promise. They were almost at the end zone again after McNabb launched the big blow to Greg Lewis, who hauled in the 45-yard pass, setting up first and goal from the Falcons' four-yard line. Two plays later, McNabb passed in the corner of the end zone to veteran tight end Chad Lewis, with Lewis catching the pass while making a spectacular effort to stay in bounds.

When Atlanta got the ball in the middle of the second quarter, Vick fired deep over the middle for tight end Alge Crumpler, who made the catch but was crushed on the play by safety Brian Dawkins. Dunn went in for the 10-yard score on the next play and it was 14–10 Eagles.

Philadelphia got the third quarter kickoff and drove down the field, setting up a 31-yard field goal by David Akers with the wind. The Eagles D chipped in as Defensive end Derrick Burgess got his first of

two sacks on Vick to kill Atlanta's next drive. Later in the third, Vick fired low and it was intercepted by Dawkins, leading to another Akers field goal and the Eagles were up 20–10.

In 4Q, Atlanta could not complete passes. against the Philadelphia secondary, a Super Bowl berth looked more and more likely for the Eagles. After a six-and-a-half-minute drive that ended in another short Chad Lewis touchdown reception, the Eagles began an early celebration. They won the game by a score of 27–10, making them NFC Champions for the first time since 1980.

McNabb's stats were modest but enough as he threw for 180 yards in the windy weather. He collected two touchdowns and had no interceptions. Westbrook came up with 96 yards on the ground, while Chad Lewis made two critical touchdown receptions. It was later learned that Lewis broke his ankle on the second touchdown catch, and he would not be part of the Super Bowl roster.

Meanwhile, the Eagles tough defense held Vick to 136 passing yards and 26 rushing yards, and kept Atlanta off the scoreboard in the second half. Finally, the Eagles were going to the big game. It was off to the Super Bowl for the Birds. There was a lot of great expectations.

## **Super Bowl XXXIX: v New England Patriots**

Being in the Super Bowl was not something that was an every-day deal for the Eagles. Their first and last trip had been Super Bowl XV (15), in 1981 with a loss to Oakland. When the Eagles met more than twenty years later against the New England Patriots on February 6, 2005 at ALLTEL Stadium in Jacksonville, Florida, there was nobody left on the prior team who was in that game.

The Patriots were beginning their Super Bowl dynasty. Led by Tom Brady, they had won two of the past three Super Bowls and a win against the Eagles would likely assure their dynasty status. Like the Eagles at 13-3, the Pats had a great record and the games they played were tough. Brady and company had gotten their 14–2



regular season record, and they had taken down the Indianapolis Colts and the 15–1 Pittsburgh Steelers in the AFC playoffs.



Tedy Bruschi gets a big hit on Donovan McNabb in Super Bowl XXIX

Meanwhile, partially because Andy Reid had never gotten this far, ever, the Eagles were considered heavy underdogs. Terrel Owens, who played great football when his head was on right was miraculously going to be available from injury for the game, though it was against doctor's orders, from injury.

As the game fired up, nerves seemed to have attacked the Eagles before the Patriots got their chance. A third-down sack and subsequent fumble by Donovan McNabb on the Eagles' first possession nearly led to a turnover in Eagles' territory, but Andy Reid saw something and he challenged the play. Instead of being pinned back, the Eagles got to get back some yardage by being able to punt.

Both offenses struggled in general until McNabb hit Owens on a 30-yard catch and run to inside the New England 10-yard line. A little more nerves and Patriot safety Rodney Harrison picked off McNabb's pass to the end zone. New England went no place and after a punt, the Eagles had good field position. However, L. J.



Smith was hit hard and he fumbled after a completion, turning the ball over to the Patriots.

The Patriot offense continued to struggle and the Eagles took back over, with McNabb finding wide receiver Todd Pinkston for a 17-yard completion then a spectacular leaping 40-yard catch. On third and goal, McNabb hit Smith in the end zone and the Eagles drew first blood 7–0. This action woke up the Patriots and soon, they were on the move.

Brady drove the Patriots to the Eagles 4-yard line, but he was sacked and fumbled. Darwin Walker recovered for the Eagles and things began to look good for the Birds. But, they could not keep it going and they went three and out, giving New England the ball back at the Eagles' 37-yard line. Brady took advantage of this opportunity, and led the Patriots to a touchdown with 1:21 left in the first half, with David Givens catching a 4-yard scoring strike and celebrating by mocking Owens' wing flap celebration.

The Patriots were feeling good in the second half with Brady connecting with eventual game MVP Deion Branch four times on the opening drive of the third quarter. Mike Vrabel caught the short touchdown pass and New England had its first lead, 14–7. In the middle of the third, the Eagles drove to the New England 10-yard line, before McNabb fired a bullet to Brian Westbrook between two Patriot defenders for a game-tying score.

The Patriots came right back with their own scoring drive topped off by two-yard touchdown rush by Corey Dillon early in the fourth quarter. The Pats were back in the lead 21–14. On their next possession, the Patriots got field position and ended the drive with a short Adam Vinatieri field goal, pushing the lead to 24–14. This field goal would be the margin of victory.

Teddy Bruschi stole one in the air from McNabb on the next series and it looked like the Eagles might be finished. However, they forced a three-and-out and with 5:40 left Philadelphia had the ball, down by two scores. They moved down the field, despite a patented Andy Reid “alarming lack of urgency with the clock kept ticking.” They finally scored on a sudden 30-yard touchdown pass from

McNabb to Greg Lewis. The Eagles had new life, but the Reid-style drive had eaten clock so there was just two minutes remained.

The Eagles tried and failed on an onside kick. Then, with defense confidence, they burned their timeouts on New England's possession. With 96-yards to go, the Eagles got the ball back at their 4-yard line with :46 seconds left. They needed just three points with the game at 24–21, but Rodney Harrison ended all hopes when he stole his second interception from McNabb three plays later and the Philadelphia season was *puff* over. McNabb threw for 357 yards and three touchdowns, but his three nervous interceptions were devastating.

Owens did well with nine catches and 122 yards on his partially healed ankle, while Pinkston hauled in 82 receiving yards. The Eagles had done better than most thought they would and were in the game until the last bell. Unfortunately, they had made too many first half mistakes, when the Patriots were playing poorly, and the team left too many points on the field. Nevertheless, the 2004 Eagles had done better than any Eagles team had ever done since the 1960 NFL Championship.

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### **2005 Andy Reid #20**

This year's 6-10 record was a throwback to when the Eagles could not put up winning seasons. It was a terrible showing this year, especially after being in the Super Bowl the prior year.

### **2006 Andy Reid #20**

This year's 10-6 record brought the Eagles back to pre-Super Bowl form and a first-place finish in the NFC East.

The Eagles won the Wildcard match but were aced out in a Divisional Round playoff loss to the New Orleans Saints. Nonetheless because of the poor prior years and having overcome an injury to McNabb in week 11, the season was viewed as a success by fans and pundits, and the suspicion idea was not as prevalent. Nonetheless, the Eagles did not make it again.

The Birds had been to the playoffs from 2000 to 2004, but in 2005, the team had many issues and finished 6-10. Revved up and ready in 2006, the Eagles won four of their first five games, but they underwent a mid-season downturn that left them 5-6.

Then, without McNabb, they depended on backup QB Jeff Garcia and running back Brian Westbrook. Both stepped up to turn the season around for Philadelphia. It was a scene from the undead as the Eagles came back to life in late-November to win their last five regular season games. Surprisingly, they won the NFC East division title after a three-game December road sweep of all of its division rivals. They beat the New York Giants 23-20 in a home playoff game before finally losing to the Saints.

McNabb was ready from the start with MVP-caliber numbers before he got hurt and had to sit out the rest of the season. Garcia was efficient running the "West Coast offense." He completed eleven touchdown passes with only two interceptions during the period. Westbrook became the focal point of the team's offense after McNabb's loss. He rushed for 1,217 yards and racked up 699 receiving yards.

Donté Stallworth, who came via a trade, combined with second-year wideout Reggie Brown to catch 15 touchdown passes and amass 1,541 receiving yards. Meanwhile, the offensive line was outstanding, featuring Shawn Andrews. They managed to morph from a quick-strike team under McNabb to a methodical balanced attack under Garcia while finishing No. 2 in yards in the league.

The defense was also much better from the previous season. The early season pass rush could be called, "savage," as the team appeared to be on the way to a sacks record. A season-ending injury to Jevon Kearse and some attrition weakened the defensive line mid-way.

During the team's mid-season slump, the run defense was porous, but then they began to play better, spearheaded by defensive leader and All-Pro Brian Dawkins. Trent Cole had eight of the team's 40 sacks and Lito Sheppard had six interceptions helped get him a Pro

Bowl slot. The defense snagged 19 interceptions altogether and returned four of them for TDs.

## **NFC Wild Card Round: vs. New York Giants**

By the time the fourth quarter came around, Philadelphia had built up a 20–10 lead and they pushed back a late Giants comeback attempt. The Eagles won on a 38-yard field goal by David Akers on the last play of the game.

The game was played at the Linc as the red-hot Eagles hosted their nemesis the giants on a soggy day in Philadelphia in the Wild Card Round of the playoffs. The teams had played twice during the season, splitting two games that mostly were dominated by the Eagles.

The Giants Eli Manning attacked the outside with Tiki Barber on the opening drive. He quickly completed a TD pass to Plaxico Burrell providing the Giants the initial 7–0 lead. The Eagles offense stalled, but the defense kept the Giants from scoring again despite New York having good field position. When the game as looking bleak, Brian Westbrook came through, He read his blocks and took a handoff and scampered 49 yards for the Eagles first touchdown. Things were beginning to happen for the Eagles.

Soon afterwards, Eagles cornerback Sheldon Brown intercepted Eli Manning, and the Eagles were off again, this time finding themselves on the Giants' 1-yard line. The Giants D stiffened and the Eagles settled for a field goal to grab take a 10–7 lead.

For the Giants, a 41-yard Tiki Barber run set up a Jay Feely field goal and the game was tied again. Then Eagles QB Jeff Garcia responded by taking Philadelphia on a ten-play drive that ended with a Garcia to Donte' Stallworth TD pass for a 17–10 lead right before halftime.



Eagles & Giants play with all heart and soul

In the third quarter, Westbrook, returned a punt, and used his great skills to race to the left side and score a well-needed touchdown. However, a block in the back brought the play back. The Eagles made up for it by stringing together ten-more plays that ended up with a season-long 48-yard field goal by David Akers.

The Giants were now down 10-20. Eli Manning threw a pass to Plaxico Burress and drew a 47-yard pass interference penalty. New York then got inside the Eagles' 5-yard line, but the Eagles D held, and the Giants settled for a field goal as the fourth quarter time began to tick early on. The Eagles could not settle down and were not managing their lead as the Giants banged together an 80-yard, seven-minute drive which ended with an 11-yard touchdown to Burress. So, now, a game which the Eagles should have tucked away was tied.

It was 20–20 and there was just five minutes remaining. Westbrook and the Eagles then put together what could only be called a masterful "four-minute offense." They got into field goal range and they were still burning the clock. As time expired, Akers booted a 38-yard game-winning TD.

Westbrook had a great game with 141 rushing yards and a touchdown, while Barber had 137 yards for New York in his final game. He might have been the difference maker for NY if the Eagles had not begun to control the game.

Reggie Brown had seven catches for 73 yards, including several important catches for first downs. The Eagles suffered an injury in the game to Pro Bowl cornerback Lito Sheppard—a dislocated elbow. The Eagles were getting ready for their next playoff game, but it would not be a win. This particular win as the team was heading into 2007, would remain Andy Reid's last home playoff win as the Eagle's head coach.

## **NFC Divisional Round: at New Orleans Saints**

In this Divisional round against the New Orleans Saints, the Eagles were not victorious at the Louisiana Superdome, New Orleans, Louisiana and thus they did not move on in the playoffs nor did they get into another Super Bowl game.

At this point in the season, the Eagles were riding a six-game winning streak, when they faced the NFC South champion New Orleans Saints. New Orleans had beaten up the Philadelphia team earlier in the season when they were still led by Pro-Bowler Donovan McNabb 27–24. The Saints had been resting and at the time were the recipients of the sympathy and prayers of the nation, due to Katrina a year prior, despite the Eagles bringing more playoff experience to the game.

Cornerback Sheldon Brown set the game tone early with a devastating hit on Saints' rookie star Reggie Bush on the first series. After trading punts on their opening drives, these great offenses decided it was OK to make some noise. A 28-yard run by Reggie Bush helped New Orleans take a 3–0 lead. In the second quarter, the Saints reached the Eagles' 5-yard line and added another field goal.



Brian Dawkins (Eagles) tries to tackle Deuce McAllister (26)

The Eagles offense then awoke when Jeff Garcia heaved a 75-yard bomb to Donté Stallworth, the longest Philadelphia playoff touchdown play ever, giving the Eagles the lead. It would not last long, however. A 14-play Saints' drive ended in Bush racing around the right end for a 4-yard touchdown, and a NO had a quick 13–7 lead. Philadelphia was not finished.

Garcia took the challenge and gained big completions to Reggie Brown and Hank Baskett that got the Eagles in position for Brian Westbrook to dive over the pile from a yard out. Next was a “Hail Mary pass” by Saints quarterback Drew Brees. It narrowly missed and the teams went to the locker room with Philadelphia ahead 14–13.

On the Eagles' third play of their opening drive of the third quarter, Westbrook broke through the line and he outran the New Orleans secondary. It was a 62-yard touchdown, the longest playoff rushing touchdown in Eagles' team history. The score was now 21–13 Philadelphia and there were visions of a fifth trip in six years to the NFC Championship Game. Unfortunately, this was about all the Eagles could muster this game.

New Orleans running back Deuce McAllister scored short touchdowns (one rushing, one receiving) on the Saints' next two possessions. His work put New Orleans on top 27–21. The Eagles were still working for the win and they drove to the Saints 4-yard line on their next series. None of the plays paid off and they could not get into the end zone, settling instead for a short David Akers field goal that left them behind 27–24 early in the fourth quarter.

After both teams had punted in the fourth quarter, New Orleans took their next possession seriously and got well beyond three and out. They began a drive that looked like it would run out the clock. However, misfortune rang Reggie Bush's bell as he fumbled a pitch from Brees to end the five-minute drive. Now, Philadelphia had its final shot with 3:18 remaining in the game.

After the two-minute warning, Andy Reid decided to go for it on 4th and 10 with the Eagles on their own 44-yard line. The result was a completion to Baskett that would have been good for a first down, but right guard Scott Young (replacing the injured All-Pro Shawn Andrews), was flagged for a false start penalty. Despite only 1:56 remaining in the game, Reid elected to punt the ball back to New Orleans on the resulting 4th and 15. Humph!!

The saints were with the Saints as they ran the ball for a first down and killed the clock, ending the Eagles' playoff run. That was it. Another Eagles' season without cigars

Westbrook, who gave a yeoman effort and nearly willed his exhausted team to victory, ran for 116 yards and two scores, while McAllister had 163 all-purpose yards and two scores of his own for the Saints. Garcia threw for 240 yards, Stallworth had 100 yards receiving and a touchdown against his old team. Reggie Brown chipped in with an additional 76 receiving yards. The defense sacked Brees three times, but it was not enough to slow down the New Orleans offense. Yes, it was close but no cigar. Andy Reid put in a great coaching year but the Eagles again were sent home early and did not get to go to the dance.



## **2007 Andy Reid #20**

The Eagles finished in fourth place and did not qualify for the playoffs.

## **2008 Andy Reid #20**

This year's 9-6-1 record was much better than the 8-8 record the prior year. The team earned the 6th seed in the NFC Playoffs. They lost in the Conference Championship game.

Despite their low-seeding in the NFC playoffs, Football Outsiders calculated that this year's Eagles were the best team in the league, play-for-play.

The 2006 Eagles were mentioned in the novel, while the 2008 team was in the film adaptation of *Silver Linings Playbook*.

Finally, the Eagles shined in a home and season opener. At the Linc on Sept 7, 2008, Philadelphia destroyed the St. Louis Rams in a shutout. At Dallas, on Sept 15, the Eagles lost to the Cowboys by just four points in a shootout. L (37–41). At home on Sept 21, the Eagles defeated the Pittsburgh Steelers W (15–6) On Sept 28, at Chicago, the Bears beat the Eagles L (20–24). The season progressed as normal.

At New York, the Eagles beat the Giants on Dec 7, W (20–14\_ At home on Dec 15, v the Cleveland Browns the Eagles gained a nice victory W (30–10). At Washington on Dec 21, the Redskins managed a win against Philadelphia L (3-10). In the final regular game of the 2008 season, at home, on Dec 28, the Eagles mauled the Cowboys W (44-6). With the win over the Cowboys, the Eagles were ready for the NFL playoffs.

## **NFC Wild Card: Eagles at Minnesota Vikings**

This game was played at the at Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, Minneapolis. It began on January 4, 2008 at 4:30 PM. The

attendance was 61,746. The TV Announcers were (Fox): Joe Buck, Troy Aikman, Pam Oliver, & Chris Myers



Brian Westbrook's Epic 71-YD TD in Wild Card Game

The Eagles entered this postseason tournament as the NFC's sixth seed. Our Eagles began this playoff run at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome against the #3 seeded Minnesota Vikings. The Vikings, were coached by Andy Reid protege Brad Childress, had finished their season at 10–6 and had gained the NFC North title.

The Vikings D was ranked #1 in the league against the rush. The offense featured emerging superstar running back Adrian Peterson, but an inexperienced Tarvaris Jackson had taken over at quarterback late in the season ear and would be the starter in the playoffs.

When the game began , a 62-yard punt return by DeSean Jackson got the Eagles off with a lead after a 43-yard field goal by kicker David Akers. Akers converted again from 51 yards at the end of the first quarter and the Eagles led 6–0. The Vikings came roaring back in the second quarter when star running back Adrian Peterson broke a 40-yard TD run over the left side, giving the Vikes a 7–6 lead.

As the game moved on, a34-yard completion by Donovan McNabb to DeSean Jackson set up another field goal for the Eagles. One minute later, cornerback Asante Samuel returned an interception of Tarvaris Jackson 44 yards return for a touchdown (the 4th of his

career, which is the most career postseason TD interception returns in NFL history). Peterson carried it in 3 yards for a touchdown late in the half to make the score 16–14 Eagles.

Both defenses stiffened in a scoreless third quarter, but the game remained tight. Then, with 6:37 left in the fourth quarter, Brian Westbrook took a screen pass 71 yards for a touchdown to extend Philadelphia's lead to 23–14. Westbrook's play was greatly aided by excellent downfield blocking by the rest of the Eagle offense. The Eagles' recovery of a low shotgun snap to Tarvaris Jackson led to Akers' fourth field goal of the day and a 26–14 lead.

In this great game, Westbrook had 121 yards from scrimmage, as well as a key touchdown. Tight end Brent Celek chipped in with 6 catches for 56 yards, while Donovan McNabb threw for 300 yards a touchdown and just one interception. With the win, the Eagles improved their overall record to 10–6–1. Also, Philadelphia improved their Wild Card record under head coach Andy Reid to 4–0. Now, would the Eagles continue in the playoffs? That question is answered in the next playoff essay.

## **NFC Divisional Round: Eagles at New York Giants**

This game was played at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. It was played on January 11, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. EST. The game was played in partly cloudy weather, about 20° with 79,193 in attendance. The TV announcers were (Fox): Joe Buck (play-by-play), Troy Aikman (color commentator), Pam Oliver, and Chris Myers (sideline reporters).

The Eagles were ready. They had just beaten the Vikings on the road in the Wild Card game. After a week of prep when they got home from Minnesota, they took a bus up the NJ Turnpike to Giants Stadium for their NFC Divisional duel with their NFC East rival, the top-seeded/defending champion New York Giants.

The Giants had defeated the Eagles 36–31 in Week 10, but the Eagles won 20–14 four weeks later in the Meadowlands. It was the

start of a skid for New York where they lost three of their final four games after the loss of star receiver Plaxico Burress.



DeSean Jackson on the move v the Giants

When the game began it was action immediately. Ahmad Bradshaw returned the opening kickoff to the Eagle 35-yard line and the Giants finished the drive with a 22-yard John Carney field goal. On the first play of New York's next drive, Asante Samuel came up with another big playoff interception for the Eagles. He returned the ball inside the New York 5-yard line.

Donovan McNabb had not lost his skills as a runner and a scrambler over the years and he stretched the ball over the plane for a touchdown on a QB sneak to give Philadelphia took a nice early 7–3 lead. New York punter Jeff Feagles made a difference as he pinned the Eagles deep in their own territory early in the second quarter, and the Giants defense forced McNabb into committing an intentional grounding penalty from his own end-zone. This gave the Giants a safety.

New York got the ball and drove close enough for Carney to miss from 46 yards on the ensuing New York possession. Carney was not done. He was good from the 34 yard-line on the next possession as

New York went ahead 8–7. The Eagles' offense saw the light and got on track. It was Philadelphia's last possession of the half, after driving down the field, they managed a 25-yard field goal by David Akers to take a 10–8 lead to the locker room.

As the third quarter progressed, New York defensive lineman Fred Robbins came up with an interception of McNabb, and New York regained the lead on a field goal. Philadelphia responded with an impressive drive. McNabb was at his best. He found slot receiver Jason Avant for a 21-yard gain on 3rd-and-20 and he hit running back Correll Buckhalter for 19 yards on a 3rd-and-10. It looked like a TD coming up, but the drive ended in a short field goal and the Eagles led 13–11.

Carney missed a 47-yarder on the next drive, and the Eagles came back by stringing 10-plays together that were topped off by 1-yard touchdown pass to Eagles tight end Brent Celek. Early in the fourth quarter, on 4th-and-1 from the Giant 44-yard line, the Eagles D was ready and they stuffed Eli Manning on a QB sneak.

On the next drive, the Eagles defensive line stopped Derrick Ward and the powerful Brandon Jacobs on third and fourth down. After the ball turned over on downs, McNabb launched a 48-yard bomb to DeSean Jackson. A David Akers' field goal followed, and the Eagles were in possession of a 23–11 lead. When the Eagles' Quintin Mikell's intercepted Eli Manning, his work essentially ended the game.

The Eagles had shown more than most years by delivering a big upset to NY. Andy Reid's team was still in the playoffs with two more rounds to go. The Eagles advanced to the NFC Championship against the Arizona Cardinals.

McNabb threw for 217 yards, a touchdown and two interceptions in windy conditions. Brian Westbrook was held to just 36 rushing yards, but DeSean Jackson caught four passes for 84 yards. Jacobs and Ward combined for 138 yards for NY, but Manning struggled in the passing game, throwing two interceptions. With the win, the Eagles improved their overall record to 11–6–1, and the Birds were looking to continue flying.

## NFC Championship: Eagles at Arizona Cardinals



Action at the Scrimmage Line Eagles v Cardinals NFC Championship

This game was played at the University of Phoenix Stadium, in Glendale, Arizona. The game was played January 18, at 3:00 PM in a weather-resistant Domed Stadium. . The game attendance: was 70,650. The TV announcers were (Fox): Joe Buck, Troy Aikman, Pam Oliver, & Chris Myers.

The Eagles were winning in the playoffs and even the fans were in disbelief. The Birds were coming off their divisional road win over the top-seeded Giants, and so they flew to the University of Phoenix Stadium for the NFC Championship Game against the Arizona Cardinals.

It was just a month or so earlier that on Thanksgiving Night, the Eagles had crushed Arizona 48–20. The Cardinals had finished 9–7 with losses in four of their last six games, were considered by some experts to be one of the worst playoff teams ever. The Eagles were expected to rip them apart.



However, at the end of their season, they had put together wins over the Atlanta Falcons and the Carolina Panthers behind strong performances by veteran quarterback Kurt Warner and wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald. The Cardinals were not about to lay low.

After the opening kickoff, the Cardinals marched down the field, ready to take advantage of every opportunity given by the Eagles. Their drive ended well, from their perspective with Kurt Warner's 9-yard touchdown pass to Larry Fitzgerald. Donovan McNabb knew the response was needed so in his first drive, he scrambled for 21 yards on Philadelphia's first play. But, the well started drive ended with a 45-yard field goal by David Akers (improving his NFL record for consecutive postseason field goals to 19). Akers missed on the next Eagles' drive.

On Arizona's first play after taking over from the miss, Fitzgerald scored on a 62-yard touchdown pass on a trick play to give Arizona a 14–3 second quarter lead. A 47-yard catch and run by Kevin Curtis helped Philadelphia answer with a 33-yard field goal, but the Cardinals would end the half with Warner's 1-yard touchdown pass to Fitzgerald and kicker Neil Rackers' 49-yard field goal to take a commanding 24–6 lead. The Eagles did not know what had hit them. None of Andy Reid's trick plays could get them out of such a deficit. They needed some consistent playing/.

When safety Adrian Wilson sacked McNabb on a blitz shortly after the second half, and Arizona recovered the ensuing fumble, there was a quick momentum change. However, the Eagles' defense held and McNabb came back to rally Philadelphia.

A 50-yard completion to Curtis jump-started a drive that ended in a 6-yard touchdown pass to Eagles' tight end Brent Celek, to make it 24–13. The Eagles got the ball right back and scored again on a 31-yard TD pass from McNabb to Celek. Still one score behind but the score was narrowed to 24–19 after a failed PAT by Akers. The Cardinals punted again, and with 10:45 left in the fourth quarter, McNabb looked to his arm to launch a huge bomb to DeSean Jackson that he bobbled and then hauled in despite the coverage of Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie.

This put the Eagles ahead, but would it be enough? The 62-yard play put Philadelphia ahead 25–24 (after a failed 2-point conversion). On the next drive, the Cardinals could not be slowed down and yet they were grinding for eight-minutes. The drive included a 4th-and-1 conversion, and it was topped off by an 8-yard touchdown pass to running back Tim Hightower. The successful 2-point conversion by Ben Patrick put Arizona back on top 32–25.

When they finally got the ball again, the Eagles drove into Arizona territory. Then, they could no longer execute. Four straight incompletions later ended Philadelphia's hopes of taking the whole team for a Super Bowl XLIII appearance. If the Eagles had won this day, the Super Bowl would have been an all-Pennsylvania Super Bowl since the Steelers had won the AFC Championship Game over the Ravens later in the same day. Not everything that can be ever is. With the loss, Philadelphia's season ended with an overall record of 11–7–1.

This was a very tough game to lose. McNabb threw for 375 yards, three touchdowns, and one interception. Curtis had 122 receiving yards, Jackson had 92 receiving yards, and Celek had 10 catches and two touchdowns. However, Brian Westbrook (71 yards from scrimmage) was a non-factor and the defense forced zero turnovers. Larry Fitzgerald, who eventually set a record for receiving yards in a playoff season, had 152 yards, three touchdowns, and dominated the first half. The Eagles again were very close, but no cigar and no tickets for the big dance with the Roman Numerals.

### **2009 Andy Reid #20**

This year's 11-5-0 record was much better than the 9-5-1 record the prior year. The team earned 2nd place in the NFC. They lost in the Conference Championship game.

This season marked the end of the Donovan McNabb era in Philadelphia as he was traded to the rival Washington Redskins in the 2010 off-season.

On September 13 the Eagles played in their season opener at Carolina and crushed the Panthers W (38–10). At home on Sept 20,



the New Orleans Saints walloped the Eagles L (22–48) On Sept 27, at home, the Eagles came back and whipped Kansas City W (34–14). In week 4, the Eagles drew a bye. On Oct 11, at home, the Eagles got the best of Tampa Bay W (33–14)

Moving into December, At Atlanta on Dec 6, the Falcons lost to the Eagles W (34–7). On Dec 13 at New York, the Eagles beat the Giants W (45–38). At home on Dec 20, the Eagles defeated San Francisco's 49ers W (27–13) On Dec 27, at home, the Eagles barely beat the Denver Broncos W (30–27). Finishing up a good season in a bad way, the Eagles were thumped and shut-out by Dallas on Jan 3, 2010 L ( 0–24). The Eagles would lose a third time this season to the Cowboys – next time was the playoffs.

## Wild Card Game Eagles v Cowboys

On January 9, 2010, the Eagles Wild Card game was played at Cowboys Stadium, Arlington, Texas at 8:00 p.m. EST. The Roof was closed for the game. The TV announcers (NBC) were Al Michaels, Cris Collinsworth, and Andrea Kramer.



Vick struggling in the pass game

The Eagles entered the playoff at 6<sup>th</sup> seed, barely making it. This game was the third meeting against their “hated” rival, the #3 seeded Dallas Cowboys. It was an opportunity for the Eagles to amend for their Week 17 defeat. But, it would not happen. Instead, the Cowboys extracted more pain.

There was no scoring in the first quarter, but the Cowboys made the first strike in the second quarter when QB Tony Romo threw a 1-yard touchdown pass to tight end John Phillips. The Eagles answered quickly when QB Mike Vick hooked up with rookie wide receiver Jeremy Maclin for a nice 76-yard touchdown, but Dallas had not put a halt to their explosive machine,

The Cowboys began to pull away as running back Tashard Choice squeezed out a 1-yard touchdown run. Then Dallas began to pile on their lead with kicker Shaun Suisham's 25-yard field goal, Romo's 6-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Miles Austin, and Suisham's 48-yard field goal.

Dallas would add onto their lead in the third quarter as running back Felix Jones evaded tacklers and scampered for a 73-yard touchdown run. The Eagles tried to mount a comeback drive in the fourth quarter as quarterback Donovan McNabb found wide receiver DeSean Jackson, but the Cowboys were too far ahead and would prevent any further attempts.

With the loss, Philadelphia was eliminated again, ending its season with an overall record of 11–6.

This would be Donovan McNabb's last game as an Eagle. He would be playing for the Redskins the next year. Any Reid had three years left.

## **2010 Andy Reid #20**

This year's 10-6-0 record was very respectable and good enough to gain first place in the NFC East. Reid really did know how to win the big ones but, according to some fans, sometimes he seemed to forget. They lost the Wild Card playoffs v the Packers L (16-21).

Yes, all that distance and no ticket to the dance. The Eagles lost again to the eventual Super Bowl champion Green Bay Packers in the Wild Card playoffs. The Eagles played all of their home games at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia, an, enjoyable, and comfortable venue.

Before the season began there were some key departures including as Donovan McNabb and Brian Westbrook, two of the franchise's top players over the Andy Reid era. The Eagles had trouble all the time keeping QB's healthy. This year, Kevin Kolb was intended to be the Eagles' new franchise QB, however he was injured during Week 1 of the season.

After a stint in the Big House, which we will not discuss, Michael Vick, thanks to some help from Tony Dungey, found his way into the Eagles lineup. When Kolb was injured, he was ready to go and did surprisingly well. Vick started in 11 of 16 games (Kolb started in Weeks 4–6 when he was injured, as well as week 17 with Vick and the starters resting for the playoffs.)

With Vick at QB, the Eagles set franchise records, including a 59–28 win in Washington. Despite the losses of McNabb and Westbrook, Football Outsiders calculates that the 2010 Eagles had the third-best rushing attack of any single-season team from 1993–2010.

Individuals Eagles were honored for their performance by making the Pro Bowl. These included: QB Michael Vick, WR DeSean Jackson, OT Jason Peters, CB Asante Samuel, and K David Akers

## **NFC Wild Card: Eagles v Green Bay Packers**

On a 30 degree sunny day, before 69,144 fans, at 4:30 PM on January 9, 2010, at Lincoln Financial Field, in Philadelphia, the Green Bay Packers defeated the Philadelphia Eagles 21-16 in the NFC Wild Card Tournament. The Packers went on to win the Super Bowl.



Michael Vick on a run v Packers in playoffs

The Eagles were a #3 seed entering the postseason preparing to play the #6 seed Green Bay Packers. The Eagles had previously lost to the Packers in Week 1 of the regular season, but this game would provide no consolation. The Eagles got off to a good start after an initial three-and out. They drove the ball into field goal range, and with All-pro-kicker David Akers the Eagles expected to gain a quick three-point advantage but it would not be.

Akers missed wide-right on the 41-yard field goal attempt. The Packers quickly stole the early first quarter lead as their adroit QB, Aaron Rodgers completed a 4-yard touchdown pass to tight end Tom Crabtree. Green Bay kept it coming in the second quarter when Rodgers completed a 9-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver James Jones. All the Eagles could muster in the first half was a 29-yard field goal from kicker David Akers. 14-3 at halftime.

After a Rodgers fumble, in the third quarter, Michael Vick found wide receiver Jason Avant on a 24-yard touchdown pass. The Packers countered right back with an 11 play, 80 yard drive which ended Rodgers tossing a 16-yard touchdown pass to running back Brandon Jackson. The drive took 6:17 off the clock.

With the game at 21-10, the defenses both stiffened and there was not much scoring for the rest of the game. The Eagles were ready to

score again in the 4th quarter, but Akers missed another field goal—just 24 yards, and so the score remained 21-10 with 8:56 remaining.

The Eagles then started their own drive from their own 25. It was a clock burner at 12 plays. Seventy-four yards later, they faced a fourth-and-goal at the 1. Vick took the snap and rushed forward, barely breaking the plain for a 1-yard touchdown run. The Eagles could not get the two-point conversion and they were down by five. On the two-pointer, they actually had it but lost it.

Vick completed the pass for the score, but Celek's heel went out of bounds and back in before he caught the pass, making him an ineligible receiver. The five-yard penalty moved the Eagles back to the 7-yard line. Vick's next attempt to get over the goal from the seven-yard line fell incomplete. Somehow the eagles forced a punt from Green Bay and had the ball at their own 34 with 1:45 remaining. Vick quickly hit DeSean Jackson for 28 yards to the Packers 38. It looked good for a brief while.

Vick then threw two incompletions, and finally hit Riley Cooper for 11 yards, moving the ball to the Packers 27 with less than a minute on the clock. Akers was not having a good day, but he never even got his chance at redemption as Green Bay's defense stopped the Eagles in the worst way. Vick threw another interception to Tramon Williams. The pass was headed for Riley Cooper in the end zone, but it was snagged by Williams with 44 seconds to go. This saved the win for the Packers.

Rodgers and Vick both played well. The Eagles out gained the Packers and won the turnover battle 2-1. However, the Packers held the ball longer. All-Pro kicker David Akers, who was 32/38 on kicks in the regular season, missed two easy field goals in this five-point loss. With the loss, Philadelphia was again eliminated from the playoffs early. Their overall record was 10–7 for the year, including the Wild Card game.

## **2011 Andy Reid #20**

This year's 8-8 record was atypical of the great years that Andy Reid had delivered for the Eagles. The team finished second in the NFC East but did not qualify for the playoffs.

The Eagles had stocked the team well with several notable offseason player acquisitions. This was another year in which the Eagles had high hopes of competing for a Super Bowl. However, they had some problems with winning during the season and they ultimately failed to make the playoffs for the first time since 2007. They had a miserable start and things would have been much worse if they had not won their last 4 games.

### **2012 Andy Reid #20**

This year's 4-12 record was the final straw for Andy Reid who did a great job at Philadelphia but had a tough time with the big games. This year's team finished last in the NFC East and did not qualify for the playoffs.

Despite having started the 2012 season with a respectable, 3-1 record, and having won all four of their pre-season games, the Eagles had a jump start on a great season. But, they fell apart after beating the Giants on September 30, and they lost eight in a row. That's a half season of losses. At that point, only a quarter of the season was left, and the Eagles were out of contention.

After a win on Dec 9 against the Buccaneers, they lost their last three games finishing with a very "blittin" 4-12-0 record. Philadelphia suffered their worst season since 1998 when they won only three games Andy Reid was fired on December 31, after fourteen seasons at the helm.



# Chapter 12 Coach Chip Kelly 2013 to 2015

## Coach Chip Kelly # 21

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Record</u>
2013	Chip Kelly	NFC	East	<b>1st</b>	10-6-0
	•	Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Saints) 24-26			
2014	Chip Kelly	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	10-6-0
2015	Chip Kelly	NFC	East	<b>2nd</b>	7-9-0
<b><u>2013-2015 Chip Kelly final record (26-22-0)</u></b>					



Coach Chip Kelly on the Eagles' sidelines

Chip Kelly came in like a breath of fresh air but he went out like a lot of bad Eagles coaches before him.

### 2013 Chip Kelly #21

This year's 10-6 looked like one of the great Andy Reid's seasons of the 1990's. This year's team finished first in the NFC East with a 10-6 record and qualified for the playoffs. The world, including Eagles fans thought the old Eagles were back.



Like many new coaches, Chip Kelly's arrival came at a time when anybody who came across the Schuylkill River to address a throng of awaiting fans could have talked about walking across the turbid waters hoping not to be late for the intros. We all know only one deity walked across the water but when Kelly arrived, since Andy had promised big, delivered much, but had become unreliable, a little walk on top of the water surely would have helped the shroud of uncertainty about the future of the franchise.

Being named Brian Kelly, for real, with a W middle name from Confirmation, that I once told potential girl-friends stood for Wart, I already thought the Kelly's were taking over football when my namesake Brian Kelly from Notre Dame took over that Catholic College from the Midwest. Chip sounded like a good name, so I was for him too and for the Eagles' success in the future. Things looked great for most of us Kelly's in year one.

Chip Kelly did a fine job in this, his first year for the Eagles and my family and I were quite pleased. Controversy would come but not this year.

With Kelly as coach, the Eagles improved on their 4–12 record from 2012, clinching the NFC East division title and getting to the playoffs for the first time since 2010, but after a close game, they lost to the New Orleans Saints in the Wild Card round of the playoffs, by a score of 26–24. Chip Kelly made it seem like Andy Reid was directing the playoffs.

The season gained honors for LeSean McCoy winning the NFL rushing title. Nick Foles, who everybody knows now from 2017's Super Bowl, engineered the success in this season producing 27 touchdowns to only 2 interceptions. Foles somehow did not get to hang around the Eagles to continue his success. He was later brought back.

Foles did tie a record in 2014 when he threw 7 touchdowns against the Oakland Raiders. This was the NFL record for most touchdowns in a single game. Foles now holds part of this record.

Who do you make your QB? This was Chip Kelly's dilemma as the Eagles had two other quarterback competing with Nick Foles--

Michael Vick and Matt Barkley. Somehow Vick won the job. After Vick got injured, however, Foles took over as quarterback and was eventually named the new starting quarterback even after Vick returned.

## NFC Wild Card: Eagles v New Orleans Saints



This Wild Card game was played at 8:10 PM EST on January 4, 2014 at Lincoln Financial Field, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania against the New Orleans Saints before 69144—a packed house at the Linc. The TV announcers were (NBC): Al Michaels, Cris Collinsworth and Michele Tafoya. The Birds lost the game in a tight match L (24-26)

The Saints had never won a road playoff game coming into this game. That's the kind of luck Philadelphia was having. The Eagles had been leading 24-23 with less than a minute remaining. It would not end that way. The Saints marched down the field to win the game with a Shayne Graham field goal as time expired. With all the expectations the Eagles fans had for Chip Kelly, the last heartbreak anybody expected would be a last-minute defeat right out of the playoff playbook of the prior coach. The Eagles ended the full season after this game with an overall record of 10-7. With all the

Kelly Hype and the Reid excoriations, there were some Philly fans who expected a lot more. But...

### **2014 Chip Kelly #21**

This year's 10-6 brought the Eagles a second place NFC finish but not good enough for the playoffs.

The same Nick Foles who was recently the big hero in the 2018 Super Bowl, led the Eagles to a 6-2 start of what looked like it would be a great season. Even during the first eight games, however, the team struggled with turnovers more so than in 2013. For example, Foles threw just 2 interceptions and lost 1 fumble in 2013. In 2014, Foles was injured in week 9, and that was the end. This brought former USC star Mark Sanchez off the bench to take over as starting quarterback.

Under Sanchez, the Eagles were 4-4. They continued to lead the NFC East until week 15, when they lost to their rivals, the Dallas Cowboys. With a loss to the 3-11 Washington Redskins in Week 16, and the Cowboys defeating the Indianapolis Colts, the Eagles were eliminated from playoff contention a week after they lost control of their division. The Eagles suffered one of the worst collapses in NFL history starting the season 9-3 before going 1-3 in the last four games with two losses against their division rivals, the Cowboys and Redskins.

Clearly the QB spot made the difference. Despite missing the playoffs, they had 9 selections for the 2015 Pro Bowl, second only to the Denver Broncos, who had 11.

### **2015 Chip Kelly #21**

The team had an unexpected losing year at 7-9, but they managed to snag second place in the NFC East. Kelly had masterminded a number of trades. Kelly was fired after the season

Many fans did not understand why Chip Kelly needed all that power at Philadelphia when what the fans wanted was a great coach who would consistently win games. Nonetheless, Kelly got his way and became the de facto General Manager. Eagles fans did not find a

problem with Kelly's coaching but were very upset when he cut or traded several prominent and well-liked starters.

Hard as it was to believe at the time but the names on Kelly's hatchet list were key starters such as Nick Foles, Evan Mathis, Trent Cole, and even the 2013 rushing champion LeSean McCoy. He also left the Eagles leading receiver Jeremy Maclin in free agency status. He brought in new players like Sam Bradford, Byron Maxwell, Kiko Alonso, and 2014 rushing champion DeMarco Murray, who he thought fit his system of coaching.

The Eagles did poorly, and Kelly's manipulation of the team took a lot of the blame for the poor results. The new guys were not exceptional. Some are not willing to go so far as to blame Kelly and they suggest that the NFC East as a whole had a terrible season, meaning that the Eagles were in playoff contention for most of the year.

However, no matter how you shake it, they did not perform well. The Eagles hung on until week 16 with fans thinking they would get in the playoffs. But, in almost a mirror image of 2014, the Eagles were eliminated from playoff contention in a Week 16 in a Saturday Night Football loss to the Washington Redskins. It did not take long for the Eagles to take action.

On December 29, 2015, Chip Kelly was abruptly fired by the Eagles. Eagles' offensive coordinator Pat Shurmur would take over as interim head coach for the final week of the 2015. Chip Kelly went from favorite to goat almost overnight.



# Chapter 13 Coach Doug Pederson 2016 to ...

Coach Doug Pederson # 22

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Record</u>
2016	Doug Pederson	NFC,	East	4 <sup>th</sup>	7-9-0
2017	Doug Pederson	NFC,	East	1 <sup>st</sup>	13-3-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Won Divisional Playoffs(Falcons) 15–10</li> <li>• Won NFC Championship(Vikings) 38–7</li> <li>• Won Super Bowl LII (vs. Patriots) 41–33</li> <li>• Nick Foles (SB MVP)</li> </ul>
2018	Doug Pederson	NFC,	East	2 <sup>nd</sup>	9-7
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Won Wild Card Playoffs (at <u>Bears</u>) 16–15</li> <li>• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at <u>Saints</u>) 14–20</li> </ul>
<b><u>2016-2018 Doug Pederson record through 2018 season (29-19-0)</u></b>					



Coach Pederson & the Eagles Super Bowl Champions

After a weak 7-9 start and no playoff bid in 2016, Doug Pederson proved that he had the stuff greats are made of in both 2017 and in 2018 with a first and second place finish respectively. In 2017 of course as we all know, he engineered the first Super Bowl Championship for the Eagles and the first NFL Championship since Buck Shaw's 1960 Eagles.

## 2016 Doug Pederson #22

As much as Eagles fans were pleased when Chip Kelly, a different kind of thinker came in to become Andy Reid's replacement, by the time that year-three came, even though his last name was Kelly, he was not only not doing the job for the Eagles he was hurting the longevity of the team with haphazard trading deals. There have been many Chip Kelly autopsies since he was fired but the best one I heard was written by NFL.com

It was titled, on The 3 main ways Chip Kelly failed the Eagles  
By NBCS Philadelphia December 30, 2015 at 10:30 AM. Here is the beginning with no editing:

Chip Kelly failed as a personnel evaluator, failed as a game manager and failed as a leader.

Had he excelled in any one of those areas, he probably would still be employed by the Eagles.

But instead, it's three strikes and you're out.

The problems caused by Kelly's personnel decisions have been well-documented. From DeMarco Murray to Kiko Alonso to, perhaps most importantly, the inexplicable decision to neglect the offensive line, Kelly has left a mess for his successor. How you trade for a quarterback recovering from two straight ACL injuries and sign a running back coming off a historic workload ,yet fail to strengthen the O-line is baffling.

For years we listened to Andy Reid preach about the importance of the line, and Kelly's at times was impotent. That offense was fireable in itself.

Kelly the head coach was maddening too. It's only fitting that the turning point in his final game was a botched pitch to Murray, the North-South downhill runner Kelly supposedly coveted.”

That's enough. Let's move on to a coach who is a young man and an unexpected and refreshing hero. If you like the Eagles, you like Doug Pederson as he delivered the goods for a fan base that was

looking for the best for years. We got it in 2017 and the SB game in 2018. Thank you, Doug Pederson.

The 2016 Eagles had a losing year at 7-9, the same record as in Chip Kelly's last year. They finished fourth in the NFC East and did not qualify for the playoffs.

## A closer look at Doug Pederson

Doug Pederson was born in Bellingham, Washington, in 1968. He is forty years old as of 2018. Pederson was a Ferndale High School graduate from nearby Ferndale, Washington. Pederson and his wife, Jeannie, have three sons: Drew, Josh and Joel. Jeannie played basketball at Louisiana College.

He was an athlete in high school and starred (All-starred) as an All-State selection in football, basketball, and baseball. After high school he graduated from Northeast Louisiana University. He was the QB from 1987 through 1990. Pederson still holds multiple passing records at the school.

He was good enough as a QB to make the Eagles as a player. He signed a three-year, \$4.5 million contract with the Philadelphia Eagles on February 18, 1999, to become the team's starting QB under new head coach Andy Reid, who was Pederson's quarterbacks coach at Green Bay from 1997–1998. Andy Reid is a good teacher.

He had some pretty good games as QB for the Eagles, but Donovan McNabb was earmarked for the position by Andy Reid. Pederson was to be the starting QB after he was asked to take the team while McNabb was getting accustomed to the pros. Pederson later went on to play for the Browns and he got a lot of playing time at Green Bay before he retired. He also played for the Miami Dolphins at quarterback. Like many great players, where he was when hurt his opportunities to grab a starting QB job in the NFL.

Pederson could handle big games when called upon as a QB. In a 1993 contest against the Eagles, for example, Pederson was pressed



into duty when Dolphins starter Scott Mitchell left the game with a shoulder injury. In the second half, he helped guide Miami to a 19-14 win that marked Don Shula's 325th career victory.

Doug Pederson was coached by three of the most successful coaches in NFL history: Don Shula, Mike Holmgren and Andy Reid. Additionally, Pederson played alongside Pro Bowl quarterbacks Brett Favre, Dan Marino, Donovan McNabb and Jim McMahon. No wonder he is so good a coach himself.

Pederson began his coaching career at Calvary Baptist Academy, a private Christian high school in Shreveport, Louisiana. He had a great record there and brought them to the State playoffs each year.

On January 29, 2009, Pederson was back at the Eagles, hired as the offensive quality control coach. Andy Reid was still head coach. He was promoted to quarterbacks' coach on February 8, 2011. Andy Reid then asked him to go to KC with him on January 11, 2013, and Pederson had the great skills to serve as offensive coordinator for the Chiefs.

During Pederson's first season as an NFL coach (2009), the Eagles offense recorded the fifth-most passing yards in team history (4,089), which at the time ranked second in club annals.

Pederson had a great record as QB coach for the Eagles. For example, in his first season as the Eagles quarterbacks coach, Pederson helped QB Michael Vick become the second quarterback in NFL history to top the 3,000-yard passing and 500-yard rushing plateaus in consecutive seasons. That year, under Pederson's direction, Vick set career highs in completions (253) and passing yards (3,303) while throwing the third-most touchdowns of his career (18).

Vick's yards through the air, combined with his 589 rushing yards, helped Philadelphia's offense record a then-franchise-record 6,386 net yards (now the second-highest total) and notch a team-record 356 first downs. Additionally, the 2011 Eagles offense ranked second in the league in plays of 10-plus yards (258) and tied for second in plays of 20-plus yards (84).

After a three-year run with the Chiefs under his mentor, Andy Reid, Doug Pederson got the job as head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles on January 18, 2016. Pederson is nothing less than a phenomenon. In just his second season as an NFL head coach, he led Philadelphia to a 13-3 regular-season record, an NFC East title, the No. 1 seed in the NFC playoffs and a berth in Super Bowl LII as an underdog. After all that, he finally coached the Eagles to become Super Bowl Champions. Not a bad record for a forty-year-old or a man of any age.

In 2016 with the Eagles, Coach Pederson helped develop rookie quarterback Carson Wentz, his # 2-overall pick in the 2016 NFL Draft, and he prepared Carson to start the regular-season opener vs. the Cleveland Browns. Wentz was a great find and surprised Eagle fans with his first three victories in 2016. Eagles' fans had gotten accustomed to bad luck at times when good luck was expected.

Under Pederson's tutelage, Wentz went on to set a team and all-time NFL rookie record with 379 completions, while posting franchise rookie records in pass attempts (607), passing yards (3,782), passing touchdowns (16) and completion percentage (62.4%). Wentz also produced the 4th-most passing yards (3,782) in single-season team history and NFL rookie history. Carson Wentz started all 16 games in his rookie season, becoming the first Eagles quarterback to start all 16 regular-season games since Donovan McNabb in 2008.

Carson Wentz, who was the 2<sup>nd</sup> overall draft pick for the Eagles was selected by coach Pederson to be the Eagles starting quarterback for Week 1 against the Cleveland Browns. The Eagles looked invincible with their new rookie quarterback as they got off to a 3-0 start including a 34-3 blowout win over the vaunted and always contenders, Pittsburgh Steelers.

The bye in week 4 somehow changed the Eagles but nobody knows why. Following their bye week, the Eagles lost nine of their final 13 games, including a 2-4 record against their divisional rivals. After losing to the Ravens, they were eliminated from playoff contention for the third consecutive season and fourth time in five seasons. But...see 2017

## Another look at Carson Wentz

Carson James Wentz was not born a quarterback, but he might as well have been. He is that good. He was born December 30, 1992.

My wife Pat and I have three children just over thirty years of age, Brian, Mike, and Katie, and we know that in today's age, it is tough for anybody to bust through the ranks and work your way to the top. Our "kids" are all doing great, I am very pleased to say.

Carson Wentz is a phenomenon. Yet, he has remained humble. He made it big right out of the shoot, and some, including EF Hutton, would say--He earned it. He sure did. He is one of few.

After his college years, he found himself as the starting QB of the Philadelphia Eagles of the National Football League (NFL) in his first year out of college.

He played his college football at North Dakota State University (NDSU) and was selected by the Eagles with the second overall pick of the 2016 NFL Draft. This was the highest selection ever for an FCS player ( a player not in the best of Division I).

Wentz had an impressive College record at NDSU, The team won five NCAA FCS national championships. In his first year with the Eagles, Wentz looked unstoppable after winning the first three regular season games as a rookie. He was tucking a lot of NFL and Eagles rookie records into his personal archives. These included the most pass attempts by a rookie quarterback and the most pass completions by a rookie.

The 2016 season finish was not as good as the beginning and the Eagles did not make the playoffs, but Wentz was out there every day helping the Eagles be as good as the team could possibly be. Coach Doug Pederson was right there with him.

In his second season, aka the 2017 season, nobody could believe there had ever been a setback after the first three games of 2016. Wentz was unbelievable at the helm as a second-year player. He was crucial to the strong and powerful start, which brought the Eagles to

an 11-2 record, when the 6'5" QB was injured and went down. Well sorta!

Let's go back again in time to the Wentz beginning before we review the great seasons Carson Wentz had in both 2016 and 2017.

Carson Wentz was born in Raleigh, North Carolina. He moved to North Dakota with his family at the age of three. In High School. He played QB and defensive back for his football team at Century High School in Bismarck, ND. At 6'5 and a fine athlete, he was a shoe in for the basketball team. He also played baseball for the Patriots.

As a freshman, Wentz was not yet a skyscraper. He was just 5 ft 8 in (1.73 m) in height, but he grew to be 6 ft 5 in (1.96 m) as a senior. Wentz was familiar with good bookwork and he graduated in 2011 as valedictorian of his HS class.

Not ready to move to the big cities, all of whom surely were looking for great QB's, he chose to attend North Dakota State, where he was redshirted his first season with the Bison as they won their first FCS title under ninth-year head coach Craig Bohl.

While Nick Foles was working to make the Eagles, Wentz was hoping to lock up the starting QB job for the Bison after playing behind Brock Jensen. Wentz played in his first collegiate game on September 22, 2011.

A very accurate passer who is not prone to be intercepted, Carson completed all eight of his passes in his first game for 93 yards. He later threw his first touchdown in relief of Jensen in a 66-7 blowout victory over the Prairie View A&M Panthers. Wentz finished the season completing 12-of-16 pass attempts for 144 passing yards and two touchdowns.

Jensen was still around in 2013 and Wentz would again not be the starter. That's how it is in College. So, he accepted his job as second-string quarterback in 2013 and he appeared in 11 games. He had his best game that season on October 13, against Delaware State, completing 10-of-13 attempted passes for 105 passing yards and a

touchdown. Wentz ended his redshirt sophomore season completing 22-of-30 passes for 209 yards and a touchdown.

Wentz earned the right to be the Bison starting quarterback during his junior year in 2014. In his first start in the opener at Iowa State of the Big 12 Conference, he completed 18-of-28 pass attempts for 204 yards in a 34–14 victory on August 30. During a game at Western Illinois on October 10, Wentz caught a 16-yard touchdown pass from running back John Crockett and helped lead the Bison to a 17–10 comeback victory. Statistically, his best game that season was at Missouri State, where he threw for 247 yards and five touchdowns.

Wentz did good. He led NDSU to a 15–1 record. On January 10, 2015, he started in his first national championship game against Illinois State and passed for 287 yards and a touchdown and rushed for 87 yards and scored a touchdown on a five-yard run to give North Dakota State the lead with 37 seconds left. NDSU won their fourth consecutive NCAA Division I Football Championship game, 29–27.

Wentz started all 16 games in College in 2014, completing 228 of 358 passes for 3,111 yards with 25 touchdowns and 10 interceptions. He was also the team's second leading rusher, with 642 rushing yards and six rushing touchdowns.

As a fifth-year senior in 2015, in his least year of eligibility, Wentz had one of the best games of his career on October 10 against Northern Iowa, when he passed for a career-high 335 yards. The following week against South Dakota, Wentz suffered a broken wrist in the first half but managed to complete the game with 16-of-28 completions, 195 passing yards, and two touchdown passes as the Bison lost 24–21.

After starting the first six games of the season and completing 63.7 percent of his passes for a total of 1,454 yards and 16 touchdowns, he missed the next eight weeks of the season.

He returned to practice in the beginning of December and was cleared to play in the national championship. On January 9, 2016, Wentz led the Bison to its fifth straight FCS title, running for two touchdowns and throwing for a third. He was named the NCAA

Division I-AA Championship Game Most Outstanding Player for the second straight year.

What a football talent and a talent as an academic. Carson Wentz graduated from NDSU with a degree in health and physical education, finishing with a 4.0 GPA and twice earning recognition as Academic All-American of the Year by the College Sports Information Directors of America, first for Division I football and later for all Division I sports.

Though we would all like to credit the Eagles for being smart in snagging Carson Wentz as the Eagles franchise QB of the future. We must ask, “How could the Eagles say “no”?” Once they had the opportunity to place Wentz on the team, it was a given.

When push comes to shove, those that can push or shove the hardest often win. In February 2016, in the NFL Draft, even though Wentz was not from Division I, most analysts and pundits had him projected to be selected in the mid-first round of the draft.

However, as NFL teams began to look at his record in depth, Wentz began to be regarded as a Top 10 prospect after his pro-day tryout. What was there not to like? On January 30, 2016, he chose to play in the 2016 Reese's Senior Bowl and he finished the game completing 6 of 10 pass attempts for 50 yards.

At the NFL Scouting Combine, Wentz showcased his athleticism as he was in the top three in the 40-yard dash, the broad jump, and the three-cone drill among all quarterbacks. And so, on April 28, 2016, the Philadelphia Eagles decided to select Wentz in the first round with the 2nd overall pick in the 2016 NFL Draft.

Good they did!

Carson Wentz thus became the first QB, which the Eagles ever selected in the first round of an NFL Draft since Donovan McNabb in 1999. McNabb was also taken second overall.

Carson Wentz is also the first FCS quarterback taken in the first round since Joe Flacco was taken with the 18th overall selection in 2008, and the highest FCS quarterback taken in draft history.

### **How did the Eagles snag Wentz?**

Nothing good in life happens without proper planning. The Eagles had a reserve of trades that they were willing to put up in the ante. So, they traded three top 100 picks in 2016, a first round pick in 2017, and a second round pick in 2018 in order to move up in the draft order so they could claim Carson Wentz.



<< Left—picture of Wentz playing against the Washington Redskins in 2016

Wentz became an immediate millionaire and good for him.

On May 12, 2016, Wentz signed a four-year deal worth \$26.67 million, fully guaranteed, featuring a \$17.6 million signing bonus.

He suffered a rib injury in the team's first preseason game of 2016, but was fully healthy for the beginning of the 2016 regular season.

Pederson originally intended to have Wentz sit and learn for the 2016 season, but those plans changed on September 3, 2016,

when the former QB Pederson OK'd the Eagles trading the still unproven Sam Bradford to the Minnesota Vikings.

To make it easy on an already steady Carson Wentz, the rumors reported that the Eagles planned to start Wentz for the 2016 season

as soon as he became healthy. No kidding! On September 5, 2016, Wentz was officially named the starter for the Eagles' 2016 season opener against the Cleveland Browns.

Nobody could believe how good Wentz was right out of the gate. But, I bet you folks, who have now read about his early years do know why he was so good. He was born a quarterback. It sure seems so, don't you think. I don't know anybody watching him for two years now with me on Sundays and beyond, that is not pleased that Carson Wentz plays for the Philadelphia Eagles. Bravo Carson Wentz!

Wentz made his first regular season start on September 11 against the Cleveland Browns, throwing for 278 passing yards and 2 touchdowns in the 29–10 victory. He was named the Pepsi NFL Rookie of the Week for Week 1. Wentz threw for 190 yards and a touchdown in a 29–14 win over the Chicago Bears in Week 2. He became the first rookie quarterback since 1970 to win his first two games of the season and not throw an interception. In Week 3 against the Pittsburgh Steelers, Wentz finished with 301 passing yards and 2 touchdowns as the Eagles won 34–3. He was named the NFC Offensive Player of the Week for his performance against the Steelers.

I can recall my brother and I talking about how the Eagles, with this new guy Wentz, had become invincible. We were not the only Eagle fans thinking that. What a treat, to think something good and to believe good was the order of the day. Thank you Mr. Wentz. After all that good stuff, the season became a regular season.

### **What about Wentz's Super Bowl Season?**

In Week 1 v Washington, Wentz had 307 passing yards, two touchdowns, and an interception from a pass tipped at the line of scrimmage as the Eagles won 30–17. In Week 2, Andy Reid was motivated to beat the Eagles. Though Wentz threw for 333 yards, two touchdowns, and one interception, and rushed for 55 yards, Andy Reid still beat the Eagles 27–20. There were a lot of other



great games won by the shifty and great work of Carson Wentz. Nick Foles got little to no field time because the starter plays.



During Week 9 against the Broncos , Wentz finished with 199 passing yards and 4 touchdowns as the Eagles won 51–23. Wentz and the Eagles were rolling. During Week 14 against the Los Angeles Rams, Wentz left the game due to an apparent knee injury. Nobody knew how serious it might have been as he finished with 291 passing yards, 4 touchdowns, and an interception as the Eagles won 43–35. Nick Foles finished up the game.

The next day, an MRI revealed that Carson Wentz had a left knee that would not support him for the rest of the season. The diagnosis was a torn ACL. The prognosis was that he would be OK after an operation, but his recovery would keep him out for the remainder of the 2017 season.

In 13 starts, Wentz finished the year with 3,296 passing yards, 33 touchdowns, 7 interceptions, a 60.2 completion percentage, and a 101.9 quarterback rating. On December 13, Wentz underwent surgery on his ACL. All Eagles' fans were thrilled with the successful results. It was just a matter of time but not in 2017.

Wentz had amassed enough great stats that he still could be selected for post-season honors in 2017. These are not reserved for Super

Bowl contenders—just for great NFL players who excel compared to other players in the same year.

Carson Wentz was selected to his first Pro Bowl on December 19, but he could not participate due to the aftermath of his recent knee surgery.

The Eagles were ver fortunate to have Nick Foles as the backup for Carson Wentz. As the full season went to its natural conclusion, Eagles would go on to defeat the New England Patriots 41–33 in Super Bowl LII, the first Eagles’ Super Bowl win in franchise history. Bravo Carson Wentz! Bravo Nick Foles. Nothing in life worth having is easy. We all look forward to the 2018 season in the fall.

Carson Wentz, when his season ended was already 2nd in the NFL in touchdown passes with 33, as well as being a big favorite in the NFL MVP race. However, he missed the last three games of the season due to a season-ending ACL injury in his left knee, and for 2017, that was that for Carson Wentz.

### **When did Wentz really get hurt?**

After the game in the post analysis of the touchdown that ultimately won this important game, there was more than conjecture about whether the great QB is actually an even greater battler than the original game footage showed him to be -- without expert scrutiny.

Wentz’s injury appeared to happen on the 2-yard touchdown scramble late in the third quarter of the Eagles’ Sunday win at the Rams. This of course eventually brought Nick Foles off the bench to assure the win. But, did Wentz stay around for a while after he was hurt without making a peep before he was able to score the deciding TD?

### **It was not a TD!**

But, then we found out it was not a TD but it would have been if not called back. Yes, the touchdown Wentz scored did not count. He

looked pained, but this could have been disgust that the score did not count. He stayed in the game.

Before exiting the 2017 season for good, Wentz ran four more snaps. You may recall that the first play was a handoff. The second play was another handoff. The third play was an incomplection, on a toss intended for Alshon Jeffery. Now what? If you are watching the game, at the time, you too are saying, Now What? – from the 2 yard line?

The fourth and last play of this series was the last call and the last play for Wentz for the rest of the 2017 season. It was another pass to Jeffery. It came with tons of pressure on a fourth-and-goal at the Rams 2 — the same spot the Eagles snapped from on Wentz's original TD scramble. The pass was complete for an Eagles TD. It was a great play and a great pass from Wentz to Jeffery.

Wentz played gingerly on each play of the four. In reviews of the series, he was effectively a statue, only moving his feet to reorient himself as he scanned the field. He didn't look anything like the athletic presence we all had gotten accustomed to watching for 11 games. The plays are captured on the Internet and they do hurt to watch.

Yet, these four plays reveal the solid truth that Carson Wentz still hung in the game despite his season-ending injury to create “two” touchdowns on the final five snaps of his season. The last one counted and proved critical in a 43-35 win.

His backup, Nick Foles, relieved him down the stretch in this game, and got enough help from the Philadelphia's defense to win.

Wentz's year was incredible. That it was over right after this game was horrible. He exited in a fitting way, though: pitching a crucial touchdown to help clinch the NFC East. His grit and that of Doug Pederson and Nick Foles motivated all the Eagles not to give up and to give it their best; get to the dance; and then win the biggest dance contest of their lives. What a season for the Eagles and all of us!

We all know the rest of the story. Led by Nick Foles, an able backup, the Eagles rolled on to win Super Bowl LII, the first in

franchise history, earning Wentz a championship ring for his great prep work to put the Eagles in position to be champs.

## Who is Nick Foles?

Nick Foles has made a quick run from Eagles hero to an injured Eagle to a non-Eagle to a backup Eagle to a Superhero Eagle. What a great game he played in the Super Bowl and the games leading up to the big dance.

Foles was born on January 20, 1989 in Austin Texas. He turned 30-years-old during the playoffs a few days before Coach Pederson turned 40.

Foles took over for Carson Wentz as Eagles starting quarterback in Week 14 when Wentz suffered a season-ending ACL injury in Philadelphia's 43-35 win over the Rams. Foles finished and won that game in week 13 and he led the Eagles all the way through games 14 to 16 and through the playoffs to the victory over Tom Brady and the Patriots in the Super Bowl. Nobody would have made a bet on that. Yet, it happened.

From the back of the helmet, Foles and Wentz might be almost identical. When Foles and Carson Wentz are under center, they are of similar size, but Nick Foles is an inch taller at 6 ft 6 in (1.98 m). He weighs 243 pounds. Carson Wentz is 6 ft 5 in and weighs 237 pounds. No, I won't give you either my height or weight.

Foles was a third-round draft pick by the Eagles in 2012, he's been released twice, and has played elsewhere. We're all glad he came back. This season his skill and calm demeanor brought Philadelphia its first ever Super Bowl.

The Eagles are World Champions because of the whole team for sure but without Carson Wentz early on and Nick Foles at the end of the season, the Eagles would have had an ordinary close, and nobody would have been lighting big cigars at the big dance.

The underdog Eagles fought through injuries and adversity all season, and on Super Bowl Sunday they defeated the New England Patriots 41-33 in one of the most thrilling Super Bowls we've ever had the pleasure to watch.

Nick Foles came back to the Eagles and began the season as a backup behind star sophomore and what some called the “face of the franchise,” Carson Wentz. Foles had one of the greatest postseason runs I've ever seen—ever. Nick Foles was as good as he could have been. He capped off his performance with three-touchdowns, 373-yards and the MCP crown for his great showing in Minnesota.

When he first played for the Eagles, fans liked him. But, we woke up one day and Foles was gone after having been injured. It was just a short time ago that the talented QB was considering an early retirement after a tough time as a St. Louis Ram.

Then, he got back to the Eagles and he got a chance on the biggest stage, and he did not flinch. It is an understatement to say Foles was cool, calm, and collected under extreme pressure. He is the only person ever to give Philadelphia what we have desired for decades and decades. Thank you, Nick Foles, for being a Philadelphia Eagle at the most opportune time for Eagles fans ever!

Let's look at Foles background for though it appears he came out of nowhere from a magical puff of smoke, before 2017, Foles had led an ordinary life. Like everybody else in life, he graduated from high School.

OK, maybe his life was not so ordinary. At Westlake High School, he was a very accomplished and he was a record-breaking quarterback. They weren't minor records that Foles broke. Nick Foles went to the same high school as Drew Brees and his results surpassed the current Saints superstar with over 5,000 yards and 50 touchdowns for the Chaparrals.

Foles may have out-dueled Brees in high school, but he did not have the same storied college career as the Super Bowl XLIV MVP. Foles found Kirk Cousins in his way at Michigan State University. In case that was not enough, there was New England's Brian Hoyer. So, after sitting on the bench for a brief time, Nick Foles figured a

transfer would be a better option. He found the University of Arizona much to his liking for a starting role as QB.

To be drafted in the third NFL round, Foles had to be quite adroit; taking advantage of a great record and a lot of promise. Kirk Cousins from Michigan State, his one-time rival at Michigan State, was taken in the fourth round so that had to make his day. Brian Hoyer, one of the top QBs in his year, who played in front of him, went undrafted. Foles talent could be described as my friend Randy Carlo would say, "Cream rises to the top!"

At Arizona, Foles was a top player. His production (10,011 yards, 67 touchdowns and a 138.2 passer rating) was about as good as it can get. Unfortunately, Arizona, the team, did not do as well (15-18) when Foles was the QB. It helps to recall there is an O and there is a D., and both have to work well for the team to excel.

When interviewed before going with the Eagles, Foles said the Eagles were the only team that worked him out, and the coach who flew out to Texas to hold the workout was... **Doug Pederson**, the Eagles quarterbacks coach at the time.

When the 2012 NFL Draft rolled around, Foles was recognized as a team player, a person of great character and someone who wasn't fazed by anything. That guy is the guy who won the Super Bowl for the Eagles in February 2018.

Nick Foles had all it should have taken. He had the size and a strong arm, but his supposed lack of mobility and the losing seasons from Arizona pushed him down in a college class with lots of other talented quarterbacks.

Nonetheless, Foles arrived as an Eagle after the third-round selection (88th overall), even though head coach Andy Reid was hoping to snag Russell Wilson instead. The Seahawks took the Super Bowl XLVIII winner one selection before Philadelphia's original pick. Reid's team picked up Foles as a consolation prize and we are so glad that Andy gave us such a fine great parting gift.

Some skeptics, especially those that showed up when Wentz was injured, wanted to suggest that Foles had an unpredictable career and there was a “good Nick, and a bad Nick.” After Reid was fired at the end of Foles’ rookie season and Chip Kelly took over, the QB was as good as it gets. He was on fire. No lesser QB stood between him and success.

Nick Foles, before Carson Wentz made it to the roster after college. He found himself setting a new NFL record for TD-INT ratio with 27 passing touchdowns compared to just two interceptions, surpassing the previous record held by none other than Tom Brady.

At 6’6”, Foles was a very good basketball player and in HS was recruited by a number of colleges to play basketball.

In that same Eagles’ season, 2014, Foles became the first quarterback ever to throw seven touchdowns and post a perfect passer rating in a game against the Raiders in a 49-20 win. Despite a strong playoff performance (two touchdowns and a 105.0 passer rating), the Eagles fell just short in a 26-24 loss to New Orleans. Maybe Chip Kelly blamed Foles, Kelly and I are not related so I was not privileged to ask.

Eagles fans did not blame Foles nor did they blame Chip Kelly for that season but the Eagles fan set have been down the road to the dance too many times to not get into the dance once and a while so the Eagles can show off their stuff. It takes its toll on a loyal fan.

Kelly’s offense had a tough time the next year as did Nick Foles. His 2014 production dipped from the prior year. He also sustained an injury and was traded to the St Louis Rams for Sam Bradford. As a Ram in 2015, he did not regain his early career form, and between the two seasons, he threw for the same number of scores as he did picks (20-20).

Foles had no major advocates on the Rams like he did with the Eagles—Doug Pederson, and he began to doubt himself. He and his wife talked about his football future more at the Rams than in the early years. They are both kids and Foles already had a few bucks so if football was no longer going to be productive and fun, why do it?

When the Rams drafted Jared Goff in 2016, Foles became *persona non-grata* and soon found himself released from the team. He had the rare privilege of entering the pool of career backups in the league. There were many in the pool so if he were a commiserater, he had many others in similar plight to speak with.

Foles did not do that. He signed up with Andy Reid in Kansas City for the 2016 season, though he did consider seriously getting out of the game. He came back to Philadelphia at the start of 2017 to back Carson Wentz. Foles is a pro. He knew there were no guarantees. But, he wanted to be back in Philadelphia.



Nick Foles finally got in when it counted, and despite many thinking that nobody could be ready so quickly, Foles stepped in for the injured Carson Wentz in Week 14 and he did well.

Nick Foles played well enough to secure the road win against the Rams. Wentz had gone down but knew how to get back up. In his first start the next week, he threw four touchdown passes and got the Eagles another road win.

The ‘Good Nick’ was alive and well.

However, in Weeks 16 and 17, since the Eagles were assured of the playoffs, there was not much real game time to be had. Foles was re-



learning the system. The offense seemingly collapsed as the coaches thought it was OK for the team to rest for the playoffs. I have a personal feeling about football teams not always going for the gold but I am rarely consulted, and my opinions at this juncture, would not help in the story we are all enjoying.

The Eagles all knew they were in the playoffs. Why with an injury-riddled lineup should the coach risk injuring others? OK, I am done with that.

Against Oakland for example, Foles completed only 50% of his passes and had just 163 yards on 38 attempts. In the regular season finale against the Cowboys, the backup QB played just one quarter, and he posted a terrible 9.3 passer rating as the Eagles were shut out. This had some seeing that the ‘bad Nick’ was back. Not me! None of the Eagles were doing their best when they knew the playoffs were already theirs. We’ll talk about that another time.

When it is all counted, the residue of a regular season meant nothing compared to what needed to be achieved in the playoffs—where Nick Foles reigned supreme. In the 15-10 win over Atlanta for example, Foles did not throw any touchdowns, but he completed 23 of his 30 passes (76%) for 246 yards and a 100.1 quarterback rating. He won the game for Philadelphia.

In the NFC Championship game, Foles took down the NFL’s #1 defense. He topped his completion percentage again (26-of-33, 78%), yards (352) and also tossed three touchdowns. His 141.4 passer rating made him the first player in NFL history with a mark of 100 or more in his first three playoff games. Nick Foles had shown up to play ball. And play ball quite well, he did. Something says that the combination of Carson Wentz and Nick Foles has changed the luck of the Philadelphia Eagles and its fans, hopefully forever and for good.

## **2017 Doug Pederson #22**

The 2017 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their eighty-fifth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Doug Pederson in his second year as head coach of the Eagles. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. The team had a

great winning record in the regular season of 13-3, the best since Andy Reid's great 2004 season.

Nick Foles came back to the Eagles this year to be Carson Wentz's understudy but was needed more than anybody ever imagined. He came through big time. The Birds finished first in the NFC East then won it all, including their first ever Super Bowl victory

- Won Divisional Playoffs(Falcons) 15–10
- Won NFC Championship(Vikings) 38–7
- Won Super Bowl LII (vs. Patriots) 41–33

For all his great work, Nick Foles was announced as the Super Bowl MVP)

The Eagles tied their 2004 season for the highest winning percentage in franchise history. Their win in week 14 against the Los Angeles Rams won the team the division title for the first time since 2013, but it came with the loss of Carson Wentz who was injured with a torn ACL.

A close win against the New York Giants in Week 15 helped the Eagles clinch a first-round bye for the first time in 13 years, and a Christmas Night home win over the Oakland Raiders gave the Birds the home-field advantage throughout the playoffs for the first time since 2004.

The Eagles were on key all year. They defeated the Atlanta Falcons 15–10 in the Divisional Round and routed the Minnesota Vikings 38–7 in the NFC Championship. The win against the Falcons in the divisional round was their first playoff win since 2008.

Philadelphia was the first #1 seed in the playoffs since 1980 to be an underdog in the Divisional Round, as well as in the Conference Championship. In total, six Eagles players were selected for the Pro Bowl, including four first-time recipients. However, none of them participated due to preparations for Super Bowl LII.

What a Super Bowl! The Eagles surprised the New England Patriots by a score of 41–33 in Super Bowl LII for their first Super Bowl victory in franchise history. The win came with a trick play right before halftime. It was also their fourth NFL Championship, and their first league title since 1960.

It was the second time the Eagles and Patriots went at each other in a Super Bowl. The last time they met in Super Bowl XXXIX, and the Patriots won 24–21. Backup quarterback Nick Foles was named Super Bowl MVP. He is the first backup to receive this award since his opponent, Tom Brady received the honor in Super Bowl XXXVI. The Eagles also faced and defeated both Super Bowl teams from the previous NFL season (the New England Patriots and the Atlanta Falcons) in the playoffs. It was a great year indeed for the Eagles.

Before the Eagles could compete for the Super Bowl and all of the playoffs between the regular season and those playoffs, they first had to play the regular season in 2017. Let's take a look at that in summary. Enjoy. This is the season that got the Eagles their Super Bowl dance and their big win.

## Games of the 2017 Season

In the season opener on September 10, 2017, at Washington, the Eagles defeated the Redskins W (30–17). Playing Andy Reid's KC Chiefs in week 2, the Eagles were surprised with a loss at Kansas City L (20–27) At home on Sept 24, the Eagles got by the Giants with a field goal W (27–24) The game was a lot more exciting than that.

The Eagles defense was playing great the whole game and the Eagles were ahead by two touchdowns. But, for whatever reason, the D broke down in the fourth quarter and the Giants score 21 unanswered points to start the fourth quarter, as quarterback Eli Manning found his all pro wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. twice for touchdowns, and second year wide receiver Sterling Shepard once for a 77-yard touchdown. It was getting dicey out there.

Fletcher Cox had to leave the game with a calf injury. Eagles rookie running back Corey Clement ran for a 15-yard touchdown to tie the

score at 21. After exchanging field goals, and time was wearing thin, Wentz and the Eagles offense took over, looking to move into field goal range. It was tougher to do than plan and the Eagles were faced with a fourth down.

Wentz had connected with Alshon Jeffery for a 17-yard pass, but on fourth they were not really in field goal range. They decided to try anyway. They gave rookie Jake Elliott a 61 yard shot hoping to not need OT. In his NFL debut the prior week against the Chiefs, Elliott, a rookie out of Memphis, missed a 30-yard chip shot. The Eagles knew he had a big toe. Against the Giants he hit a kick twice as long as the one he had missed, nailing a 61-yard, setting the Eagles up to win the game with 1 second remaining... game-winning field goal

Rookie Jake Elliott converted on the 61-yard attempt, the longest in Eagles franchise history as time expired. Wentz was quietly efficient in the game, completing 21 of 31 attempts for 176 yards and one touchdown despite playing behind a struggling offensive line.



Jake Elliott drills 61-yarder

The win came with a high injury expense, as dynamic running back Darren Sproles was ruled out for the remainder of the season with a

broken arm and torn ACL, both of which occurred on the same play. Despite this injury, the Eagles ran the ball efficiently through most of the game.

With this close win, the Birds moved ahead to 2–1 tying the Cowboys and the Redskins for first place in the NFC East while the Giants fell to 0–3 in the basement of the division.

On Oct 1 at Los Angeles, the Eagles squeaked by the chargers W (26–24) On Oct 8 at home, the Eagles squashed Arizona W (34-7). At Carolina on Oct 12, the Eagles got by the Panthers W (28-23). At home on Oct 23, the Birds beat the Redskins W (34–24). At home on oct 29 at San Francisco, the Eagles slugged the 49ers W (33–10). Then, on Nov 5 at home, the Eagles pummeled the Denver Broncos W (51–23) In week 10, the Eagles took a bye.

In week 11, at Dallas, the Eagles manhandled the Cowboys W (37–9) At home against Chicago, the Eagles shellacked the Bears, W (31–3). On Dec 3, at Seattle. The Eagles, on their way to glory, took a heartbreaking loss to the Seahawks L (10–24). Om Dec 10 at Los Angeles, the Birds clinched the title in a tough match against the Rama W (43–35). On Dec 17 at New York, the Eagles barely escaped the Giants (W 34–29). On Christmas Day Dec 25, Santa was with the Eagles on both sides of the line at the Linc as he helped them power over the Raiders W (19–10).

In the final game of the season with all that could be gained having been gained, on Dec 31, the Eagles sat out some starters and lost to the Dallas Cowboys L (0-6)

## 2017–2018 NFL playoffs

This was a big year for the Eagles in that other than the first round, in which they got a bye for having such a fine record, they played in every round right up to the Super Bowl, and then top off the season they played in the Super Bowl, and they won that game too.

Here is a snapshot of the Eagles 2018 playoff picture:

- Wild Card First-round bye
- Divisional January 13, 2018 4:35 p.m. EST Atlanta Falcons Lincoln Financial Field
- NFC Championship January 21, 2018 6:40 p.m. EST Minnesota Vikings Lincoln Financial Field
- Super Bowl LII February 4, 2018 6:30 p.m. EST v New England Patriots U.S. Bank Stadium

On January 13, 2018, The Philadelphia Eagles took the stage for the first time in a playoff game since 2013, Chip Kelly's first year. The Game was at the Linc in Philadelphia. The Eagles were not favored. They were the first ever # one seed underdog in the divisional round. Following a theme set in the last two games of the regular season, the Eagles relied heavily on their defense, surrendering just 10 points to a strong Falcons offense.



Enjoying being an underdog

The definitive moment of this game came up on the Falcons' final drive when the Eagles defense stopped four Falcons scoring attempts.

On 4th & Goal for example, from the two-yard line, Matt Ryan threw an incomplete pass to Julio Jones, This sealed a 15-10 win for the Eagles. Against many pundit predictions, the top seeded Philadelphia Eagles advanced to the NFC Championship game.

## NFC Championship: Eagles v Minnesota Vikings

Underdogs once again, the Eagles out did the pundits. This game was against #2 seeded Minnesota . The Eagles had a bit of drought in this fabled playoff game. It was Andy Reid's team in 2008 when the Eagles broke the Championship glass last. This time the Birds would fare much better.



Foles in action, humbly winning one for the Eagles and Eagles' fans

The Eagles permitted a Vikings touchdown on the opening drive. It served as Philadelphia's wake-up call. There would be no more sleeping. The rest of the game demonstrated total domination from



Nick Foles and the Eagles' offense. After 38 unanswered points against one of the league's top defenses, the Eagles accepted their invitation to their 3rd ever Super Bowl berth, and an opportunity to avenge their Super Bowl XXXIX defeat to the New England Patriots. The Eagles could not wait for game day two weeks later. Nor could Eagles' fans.

## **Super Bowl LII: Eagles vs. New England Patriots**

This game was held at U.S. Bank Stadium, in Minneapolis, Minnesota at 6:30 PM on February 4, 2018 before 67, 612 excited fans. With a dome stadium with freezing outdoor weather, this game was played inside the dome. The foes were the perennial Super Bowl contenders, the New England Patriots. The Pats claimed to be ready for anything that former starter, now backup QB, now starter, Nick Foles could throw at them.

I don't think the Pats were expecting the Kitchen Sink—but, they got it and more. It did not bother the Eagles one iota to be 5.5-point underdogs for they knew the pundit's game and the Super Bowl were not being played on the same field. The Eagles beat the Patriots despite the spot. Philadelphia celebrated all week and some of us are still celebrating.

The Eagles got on the board first when Jake Elliott kicked a 25-yard field goal to make the score 3–0. However, the Pats tied it up when Stephen Gostkowski kicked a 26-yarder not too long afterwards.

The Eagles grabbed the lead again when Nick Foles found Alshon Jeffery on a 34-yard pass. The PAT failed but the Eagles held the lead at 9-3 to close out the quarter. The Birds increased their lead in the second quarter when LeGarrette Blount ran for a 21-yard touchdown (with a failed 2-point conversion), making it 15–3.

The Patriots however managed to score twice when Gostkowski kicked a 45-yard field goal and then James White ran for a 26-yard touchdown, making it 15–6 and then 15–12.



The Trick Play book was opened, and Nick Foles scored a receiving touchdown that was thrown by tight End Trey Burton. Everybody was surprised but the one-yard play went off without a hitch. This made the game 22–12 at halftime.



Andy Lyons/Getty Images Malcolm Jenkins of the Philadelphia Eagles tackles Brandin Cooks of the New England Patriots during the second quarter in Super Bowl ...

In the third quarter, New England drew closer when Brady found Gronkowski on a 5-yard pass, making the score 22–19. However, the Eagles pulled away again as Foles found Corey Clement on a 22-yard pass giving a ten-point cushion at 29–19. The Patriots got closer again near the end of the third, when Brady found Chris Hogan on a 26-yard pass to make the score 29–26.

Into the fourth quarter, Philadelphia increased their lead when Elliott kicked a 42-yard field goal (32–26.) The Pats would eventually grab the lead for the first time when Brady found Gronkowski again on a 5-yard pass. The score was then 32–33.

The Eagles put together a patented 14-play, 75-yard drive which was topped with Foles finding Zach Ertz on an 11-yard pass for the TD. Ahead by 5, at 38-33, New England would need a touchdown to go ahead and to win.



Eagles strip sack on Tom Brady still haunts All-Everything QB

With 2:16 to play, on the Patriots following possession, Brandon Graham drew cheers from Eagles fans as he sacked Tom Brady, who fumbled the ball. The ball was recovered by Eagles' Derek Barnett at the Patriots 31-yard line.

Philadelphia would soon increase its lead after Elliott's 46-yard field goal, making the game score 41–33.

With seconds left, the Patriots were able to move the ball down to midfield. With just under 10 seconds remaining, Tom Brady gave it his best shot with a huge Hail Mary pass that would have sent the game into OT with a touchdown plus 2. However, the Eagles swarmed Gronkowski and the human blanket in the end zone caused a pass with a chance to fall incomplete. This sealed the game and prompted a lot of happy sounds from Eagles and Eagles fans in the stadium and across the world.

The Philadelphia Eagles defeated the 5-time Super Bowl champions by a score of 41–33. Nick Foles also was named Super Bowl MVP after the game. With this win, the Eagles finally won their first Super Bowl, and their first NFL title since 1960. Go Eagles!



## Other Books by Brian W. Kelly: (amazon.com, and Kindle)

[Hope for Wilkes-Barre-John Q. Doe Next Mayor of Wilkes-Barre PA](#): John Doe Plan helps create better city!  
[Democrat Secret for Power & Winning Elections](#): Open borders, amnesty, millions of new Democrat Voters  
[The Cowardly Congress](#): Whatever happened to Congress doing the work of the people?  
[Help for Mayor George and Next Mayor of Wilkes-Barre](#): How to vote for the next Mayor & Council  
[Ghost of Wilkes-Barre Future](#): Spirit's advice for residents about how to pick the next Mayor and Council  
[Great Players in Air Force Football: Air Force's best players of all time](#)  
[Great Coaches in Air Force Football: From Coach 1 to Coach Troy Calhoun](#)  
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[Great Moments in Navy Football: From day 1 to coach Ken Niumatalolo 1](#)  
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