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#1 Bud Wray



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#19 Ray Rhodes



#9 Nick Sica



#11 Dick Vernoil



#4 Bo McMillin



#20 Andy Reid



#10 Joe Kapp



#16 Brian Campbell



#5 Wayne Walter



#21 Chip Kelly



#11 Jerry Mottley



#13 Fred Bracey




#6 Jim Trimble



#22 Doug Pederson

Great Moments
in
Philadelphia
Eagles
Football

by
BRIAN KELLY





#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



#17 Buddy Ryan



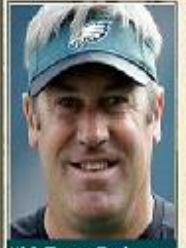
#18 Rick Kotite



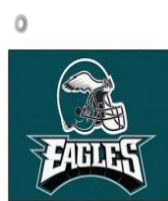
#19 Ray Rhodes



#20 Andy Reid



#22 Doug Pederson



Great Moments in Philadelphia Eagles Football

This book begins at the beginning of Football and goes to the Doug Pederson era.

This book is written for those of us who love Philadelphia Eagles Football. Those who hate the Eagles will also want this book, so they can try to get a leg up on the facts missing from the bookshelves of those Eagles fans who do not have this book.

The book first tells the story about the founding of the Eagles as a new team in 1933, but it reaches even back further in history than 1933 to find the precursor teams to the Eagles that amazed Philadelphia fans for years, and even before that to set the stage for pro-football. This book takes the Eagles fan on a journey from when there was no football at all, to where American football was only a dream, to where American football was played only by colleges with a mixture of soccer and rugby rules.

After talking about how primitive man played football, this book quickly moves on to describe the beginning of football in the US and it recounts the first "American Football Game" in 1867. From there, the progression includes college football teams loving the new sport and their graduates looking for a place to play football after college. Eventually all of this build-up after the "Philadelphia" Yellow Jackets, leads to the Philadelphia Eagles first football game in 1933, and the first Eagles coach, Ludwig Wray, in 1933.

It seems like yesterday but for those pros trying to create a league out of nothing, there would have been nothing without their work. And of course, this great book about the Eagles eventually gets a deep look at the great and soon-to-be-immortal-Eagles' coaches including #2, Dick Vermeil, #3 Andy Reid, #4 Buddy Ryan, #3 Greasy Neale, #6, Buck Shaw, all the way to the current immortal with lots of years left, #1 Doug Pederson, who tops the list of many pundits in just his second year at the helm.

This book captures the great moments in Eagles Football even before the Eagles were the Eagles and when for one season during the war they combined with Pittsburgh and were the Steagles. This Eagles-first book takes the reader through stories about the Eagles 22 coaches to great stories about the 85 seasons worth of great games (1231 games) with 590 great wins. The book often stops in time and talks about a particular great player such as Norm Van Brocklin, Tommy McDonald Wilbur Montgomery, Reggie White, Chuck Bednarik, Brian Dawkins, David Akers, and of course Carson Wentz, and Super Bowl MVP, Nick Foles. These stops will add substantially to your reading enjoyment.

I dare you to pick up this book for, if you are an Eagles fan, you will never put it down again. You cannot ever get enough of Eagles' greatness, but we do provide as many stories together in one spot as we can in this can't miss book.

Brian Kelly



Great Moments in Philadelphia Eagles Football

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Publisher/ Editor,

Brian W. Kelly
Brian W. Kelly
Brian P. Kelly

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**LETS
GO**

PUBLISH



Philadelphia Eagles Season Records from 1933 to 2018

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 rd	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 th	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"> • Won Eastern Divisional Playoff (at Steelers) 21–0 • Lost NFL Championship (at Cardinals) 21–28
1948	Greasy Neale	x	East	1st	9-2-1
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won NFL Championship (1) (Cardinals) 7–0
1949	Greasy Neale	x	East	1st	11-1-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won NFL Championship (2) (Rams) 14-0
1950	Greasy Neale	American	x	T3 rd	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 nd	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 th	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	T5th	2-9-1
1959	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	T2nd	7-5-0
1960	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	1st	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	2nd	10-4-0
1962	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	7th	3-10-1
1963	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	7th	2-10-2

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

1964	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	T3rd	6-8-0
1965	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	T5th	5-9-0
1966	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	T2nd	9-5-0
1967	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	Capitl	2nd	6-7-1
1968	Joe Kuharich, Eastern		Capitl	4th	2-12-0

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1979	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	2nd	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	1st	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	2nd	10-6-0
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- Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Giants) 21-27

1982	Dick Vermeil, NFC		East	13th	3-6-0
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- Players Strike

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

1983	Marion Campbell	NFC	East	4th	5-10-0
1984	Marion Campbell	NFC	East	5th	6-9-1
1985	Marion Campbell	NFC	East	4th	7-9-0
1985	Fred Bruney	NFC	East	4th	1-0-0 (wk16)

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	4th	5-10-0 —
1987	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	4th	7-8-0, —
1988	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	1st	10-6=0
					• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Bears) 12–20
1989	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	2nd	11-5-0,
					• Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Rams) 7–21
1990	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	2nd	10-6-0
					• Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Redskins) 6–20

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

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

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

1995	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East,	2nd	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,	2nd	10- 6- 0,
					• Lost Wild Card Playoff s (at 49ers) 0–14
1997	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East	3rd	6-9-1
1998	Ray Rhodes,	NFC,	East	5th	3-13-0

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

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

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>Pl</u>	<u>W-L-T</u>
2008	Andy Reid	NFC	East	2nd	9-6-1
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost Wild Card Playoffs (at Cowboys) 14-34
2010	Andy Reid	NFC	East	1st	10- 6-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Andy Reid final record (140-102-1)

2013	Chip Kelly	NFC	East	1st	10-6-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 th	7-9-0
2017	Doug Pederson	NFC,	East	1st	13-3-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 2017

Total reg. season wins & losses thru Feb 4, 2018 **(577-601-26)-**

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

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

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 152 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 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 152 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 moments 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 many great moments in 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 SU's 590 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

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.

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.

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 this year, 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 this season after so many dry holes.

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 new book by Brian Kelly, which highlights the Great Moments in Philadelphia Eagles Football is one of the items that is expected to be available all 52 weeks and in fact all 365 days each year except in LEAP YEAR where the Eagles add an extra day for your book shopping pleasure. Amazon, Kindle, Barnes & Noble and other online sites in the US and overseas carry this book and it will add to your year-round football experience especially in the off-season. Once you get this book, it is yours forever unless, of course you give it away to one of the many Eagles fans, who will be in awe of your new possession.

Reading this book is like reliving the last game, the last football season, and / or all the seasons before last season without ever having to get on or off a plane. Seeing a game in Lincoln Financial Field is an exhilarating adventure. I know from experience. This book will help you relive the phenomenon over and over. Besides the great read, with this book in your hand at your private venue, there is no limit on the hours for book-tailgating. Moreover, there is no charge, as long as you have stocked up before the read.

The book examines more than just great moments. There are some moments that are not so great in every team's football seasons and

the Philadelphia Eagles offer no excuses for those times. Your author shows the bad with the good to get the proper perspective for those great moments.

Not all Philadelphia coaches for example, are named Ryan, Reid, Vermeil, Neale, Shaw, or Pederson, so not all games are in the W column. However, all teams from 1933 to the present, no matter who the coach is, were Eagles tough, nonetheless. That means they all fought hard for wins for the good of the team and the fans.

Opening with its first story at the very beginning of Football as a sport in America, this book goes all the way to Coach Doug Pederson in his second season, which by many standards was a miracle season.

This book is written for those of us who love Eagles football as played in many of the great venues over the years. After discussing the origins of football and then the origins of pro-football, the book first tells the story of the first Philadelphia Eagles Football Game in 1933. It then advances to the games, the victories and losses, and the onward to the great immortal Philadelphia coaches of historical fame—Bert Bell, Lud Wray, Greasy Neale, Buck Shaw, Dick Vermeil, Buddy Ryan and Andy Reid.

Predicting that another future immortal great is already in our midst, the book then takes us up to the last season with Coach Doug Pederson.

This book is all about the great moments in Philadelphia Eagles Football. It touches every aspect of the historical and mythical Eagles Football Teams. It tells exhilarating stories about the 22 coaches and its 85 seasons worth 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 Great Moments in Philadelphia Eagles Football 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. They are for sale at Amazon, Kindle, and Barnes & Noble, 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. Brian is the author of 153 books, including 25 Sports Books, and hundreds of magazine articles. He has been a frequent speaker at technical conferences throughout the United States.

Brian was a candidate for the US Congress from Pennsylvania in 2010 and he ran for Mayor in his home town in 2015. Kelly loves the Eagles and he became a big fan in the 1950's and 1960's watching games with his dad on Sundays on the 21" Admiral B/W TV.

This is Brian's eighth "Great Moments" book and his first about a professional NFL team. Writing about the Philadelphia Eagles has been a special treat.

Chapter 1 Introduction to the Book

The Eagles celebrate 85th year of football



Everybody loves the Eagles!

In 2017, Philadelphia celebrated its 85th year of Eagles' football.

This book celebrates Philadelphia Eagles Football; its founding; its struggles; its greatness; and football's long-lasting impact on American life. 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 great moments in Philadelphia Eagles Football History, and there are many great moments. No book can claim to be able to capture them all, as it would be a never-ending story, but we sure try. The great moments 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 discuss the beginning of football, the beginning of the NFL, and 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.

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 survive themselves,

while the Eagles football program has grown both in acceptance and popularity.

Look across the Internet with your web browser and you will be reminded that the Philadelphia Eagles are current world champions, 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, Philly got the prize.

I have done my best to portray an accurate depiction of Philadelphia Eagles Football History, displayed in a properly summarized format so that none of us are reading this book forever. There are 500 pages to this book however, so there is more than enough to accompany you on those cold winter nights after the close of the football season.

There are a ton of great stories 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. 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 Great Moments 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 games are played. I have always been a Sunday football watcher, and a proud Philadelphia Eagles Football Fan, though until this year, I too have had my share of frustrations with my team coming so close but staying so far away from the big prize.

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. 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 and 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, 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.

They finished second in the NFL Eastern division in 1944, 1945 and 1946, won the division title in 1947 and then scored successive shutout victories in the 1948 and 1949 championship games. To be sure we know what I am saying, before the Super Bowl and Super Bowl Champions, there playoffs and was an NFL Championship team.

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.

Football was always 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. 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.

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.

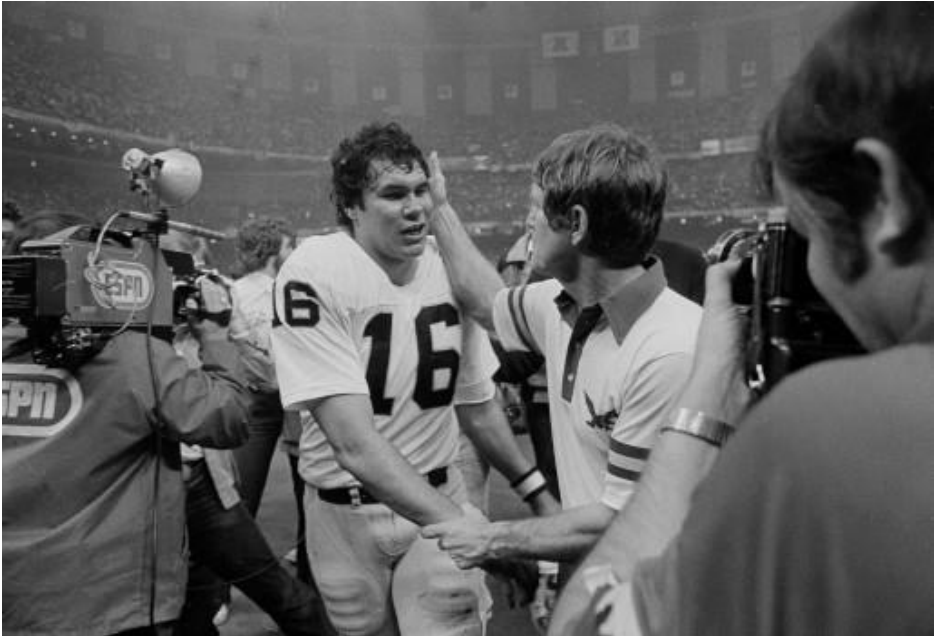
The great results during this time came from Van Brocklin's expert play and his on-the-field leadership. The Eagles won the Eastern division with a 10-2 record and then defeated the Green Bay Packers 17-13 for the NFL championship. In the game, Chuck Bednarik saved the day for the Eagles with an open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



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).



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.

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 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 this year 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 do. 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 2018 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*

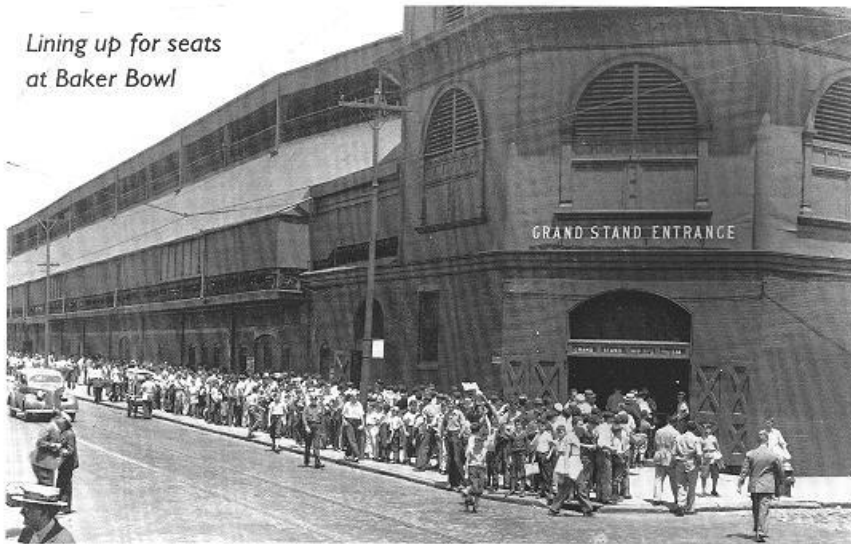
Melissa Romero wrote a nice piece that day – just the day after my birthday January 31, 2018. It was titled: “A history of the Philadelphia Eagles’ home stadiums.” I start many of my historical sports books with an early chapter, such as this, about the various stadiums in which the teams operated. It 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.

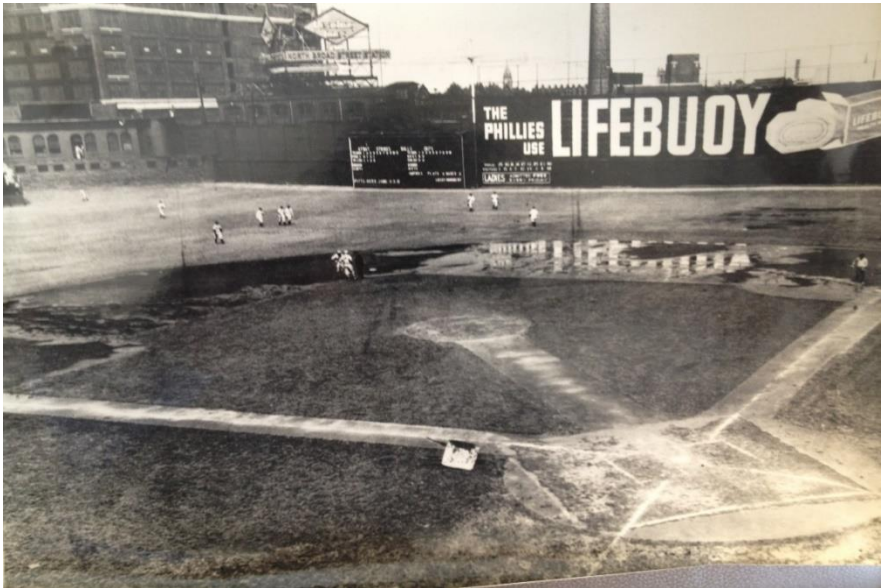
Eagles' owner Bert Bell had hoped to play home games at the larger Shibe Park, which had another name (Connie Mack Stadium) but negotiations with the Philadelphia Athletics (major league baseball team) were not fruitful. So, Bell agreed to a deal with Phillies' owner Gerry Nugent for the rights to use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

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 championship game 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.

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. Finally, they broke out for their second appearance in franchise history.

Neither Andy Reid's misfortunes, nor their franchise misfortune changed, however, as they lost 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 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, 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. The 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.

Let's look at how the Yellow Jackets became or did not become the Philadelphia Eagles and then we can fight over the first “Eagles” game being in 1922 or in 1933.

Frankford Athletic Association

The Yellow Jackets thus were the predecessor team to the Philadelphia Eagles. They originally played under the auspices of The Frankford Athletic Association, which was organized in May 1899 in the parlor of the Suburban Club. A dollar was not a dollar back then but even with inflation, at \$10 a share, the cost of purchasing a share in the association was quite affordable. Additionally, there were contributing memberships, ranging from \$1 to \$2.50. These contributing memberships were made available to the general public.

The Association was thus a community-based non-profit organization of local residents and businesses. In keeping with its charter, which stated that "all profits shall be donated to charity", all of the team's excess income was donated to local charitable institutions. The beneficiaries of this generosity included Frankford Hospital, the Frankford Day Nursery, the local Boy Scouts, and the local American Legion Post 211. The officers of the Association never received a salary or compensation for their work on behalf of the team.

The association had a nice clubhouse that was originally located at the current site of Frankford High School. The field at this site, known as Wistar Field, became the first official sports home for the Yellow Jackets. Several years later, when the construction of the current high school was proposed, the team moved to Brown Field. With baseball at the time, being the national past-time, and football just coming into being, the Association initially organized a baseball team. They later formed soccer and American football clubs. The Association's football team played several games in 1899 and gained victories over the Pioneer Athletic Association, Jefferson Medical College, the Philadelphia Athletic Club, and a team from Atlantic City.

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.

Penn offered a model for excellence and had another great season in 1899 when the Frankford Athletic Association was created. Its record was 8-3-2 that year with George Washington Woodruff as the head coach in his eighth season. For an example of how dominant Penn was, consider that in 1899 they shut out Franklin and Marshall to open the season W (48-0) and they closed the season with a shutout of Penn State W (47-0). Over the years from the late 1880s to the 1920's, Penn claimed seven national championships, with championship selectors declaring them a champion for six of their seven titles. The Quakers claimed the 1907 season as a championship in their own view, although Yale was declared champion that year by most selectors.

The original Frankford Athletic Association apparently disbanded prior to the 1909 football season. Several of the original players from the 1899 football team kept the team together, and they became known as Loyola Athletic Club. In keeping with Yellow Jackets tradition, they carried the "Frankford" name again in 1912, to become again, the Frankford Athletic Association.

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.

Yellow Jackets 1924 season

Punk Berryman was the coach of the Yellow Jackets in their inaugural NFL season in 1924 as they began their preparations for the season to come. The team included Harry Dayhoff, Russ Stein, Joe Spagna, Whitey Thomas, Al Bedner, and Bob Jamison. The players were iron men as football teams often played 15 to 20 games a season. Often, they would schedule two games on the same weekend, typically one at home on Saturday and, because of Pennsylvania's blue laws, an away game on Sunday. In their very first game as a member of the NFL, the Yellow Jackets defeated the Rochester Jeffersons W (21–0). Frankford finished the season with an overall record of 17–3–1, with an 11–2–1 record in league play. They finished third in league standings only behind the Cleveland Bulldogs and Chicago Bears; under modern standings tabulation procedures, Frankford would have finished in first place.

Yellow Jackets 1925 season

In its second year running the Yellow Jackets, 1925, the Frankford Athletic Association gained the services of Guy Chamberlin, who served as a player-coach for NFL championship teams such as the 1922 and 1923 Canton Bulldogs and the 1924 Cleveland Bulldogs. After a 9–0–1 start, Frankford lost several key players, including Chamberlin, to injuries. Football was a tougher game back then and the protective equipment was very lacking. After a 49–0 defeat to the Pottsville Maroons, Frankford's captain Bull Behman was suspended indefinitely from the team for indifferent play. He was accused of not giving his best during the prior few weeks because of some dissension with other players. The suspension actually helped to improve the team, which posted a 13–7 record in league play.

1925 NFL Championship controversy

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.

1926 Championship season

The Yellow Jackets 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.

The Yellow Jackets then headed to Buffalo for the Sunday game; however, the Rangers canceled due to "wet grounds". The Yellow Jackets prepared for another two-game set, this time against the New York Giants, resulting in a pair of 6–0 Frankford victories. The Canton Bulldogs, a tough team in those days, were next on the schedule; Frankford won the first game 10–0, while the second game was canceled due to rain.

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 team's November schedule included only single-game weekends, and a Thanksgiving Day game. This turned out to be an advantage for the Yellow Jackets. The team garnered victories over the Chicago Cardinals, Duluth Eskimos, and the Dayton Triangles. This string of victories left Frankford in great shape in the standings as the team headed into its Thanksgiving Day game with the Green Bay Packers.

Two Jackets of Frankford's Stinging Backfield



MORAN (Hap)

HOUSTON STOCKTON
(Hust)
Ganzaga Univer. '22-'23-'24.
Sensation on the coast; Good
line plunger and one of the
greatest forward passers in
the country.
Yellow Jackets '25.
Weight, 190; Height, 5-11;
Age, 24.
Position—Back.

DAYLE MORAN (Hap)
Boone, Iowa, High School.
Played in backfield 3 years,
and 1 year, captain 2 years.
Was All-State halfback one
year. Beat one team 88-0
scoring 82 points.
'22 at Carnegie Tech, Half-
back.
'24 and '25 at Grinnell College
Halfback and Fullback.
'24 In game with Coe College
returned first kick 97 yds.
for only score of game.
'25 Playing against Minne-
sota returned initial kickoff
85 yds. for only score of his
team. All-State back.
While with Carnegie Tech
scored only touchdown
against Yale. Good kicker.
Weight, 190; Height, 6-1½.
Age, 25.
Position—Back.



HOUSTON STOCKTON

Stockton and Moran of the Yellow Jackets 1926

For the next five seasons the Frankford-Green Bay Thanksgiving Day game would become an annual tradition. Frankford went on to win the 1926 game 20-14, due mainly to a touchdown pass from Hust Stockton to "Two-Bits" Homan. The Yellow Jackets then posted a 7-6 victory over the Detroit Panthers two days later. After a win over the Chicago Bears, the Yellow Jackets played a second two-game series against the Providence Steamroller. Frankford won the first game 24-0, but the second was cancelled because of heavy snow. Frankford then had to play their final game of the season against the Pottsville Maroons, who were still upset after their NFL championship title had been stripped from them after complaints from Frankford.

The game resulted in a scoreless tie. However, a 14-1-2 final record left the Yellow Jackets alone on top of the NFL standings. Since a Championship Game would not exist in the NFL until 1933, the team with the best regular season record was named the NFL Champion. This gave the Yellow Jackets undisputed claim to the league crown.

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.

One day after capturing the title, however, Theodore "Thee" Holden and Guy Chamberlin stepped down as president and coach of the Frankford Athletic Association. It is amazingly similar to what happens today in pro sports with coaches and players here one day and gone the next.

Yellow Jackets 1927–1929 seasons

The Association named James Adams as president in 1927. He hired Charley Moran as the team's new coach. However, Moran's son Tom briefly served as the team's interim coach that year after Charley took a leave of absence to officiate in the 1927 World Series between the New York Yankees and the Pittsburgh Pirates. The Yellow Jackets continuity suffered as a result of these changes and their record was a poor 2–5–1 after eight league games.

Ed Weir took over as the new Yellow Jackets player-coach. Weir had fellow players Russ Daugherty, Charlie Rogers, and Swede Youngstrom serve as his assistant coaches. Under Weir's leadership the team finished with a 6–9–3 record in 1927. The following year, 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.

Yellow Jackets 1930 Season

Teams with minimal finances suffered the most in 1930 due to the financial hardships brought on by the Great Depression in 1930. The Yellow Jackets suffered during this time and it would be their undoing. Shep Royle, president of the Franklin Athletic Association, arranged for coaches Bull Behman and Wally Diehl to attend a coaching clinic in Chicago run by Glenn "Pop" Warner and Dick

Hanley, in the hopes that it would improve their coaching techniques and develop a way to better utilize their players.

At the same time, however, the Association's management decided to retain only a few veteran players, replacing most of the squad with rookies direct from college. It was tough to afford the veterans, Unfortunately, college rookies were not as hardened as the veteran pros and the results showed it immediately. The lack of talent resulted in a string of ten 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

Before the beginning of the 1931 season, another hardship hit the team. A fire struck Frankford Stadium and severely damaged the yellow Jackets' home site. This forced the club to find a suitable location for its home games. However, most facilities suitable for professional football were already booked. The Yellow Jackets had to overcome this scheduling problem by playing at three different locations around the city of Philadelphia: Philadelphia Municipal Stadium, and the Baker Bowl. Philadelphia Municipal Stadium and Shibe Park were located outside of walking distance to the Frankford area. This made attendance very difficult for local fans. The team had hoped to draw broader support from Philadelphia at large. It wasn't to be.

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.

The Frankford Athletic Association was a great group, but the team needed more than their good will to survive. The Association not only fielded the Yellow Jackets football team, but also the Yellow Jackets' Band and the Frankford Legion Post 211 Drum & Bugle Corps. The Association also sponsored bus and train trips for fans to travel along to games in such places as Pottsville and New York City, where even the host teams' sportswriters took notice of their enthusiasm. The club occasionally sponsored half-time exhibitions by the Frankford Midgets, as well as a women's football team.

During their time in the NFL, Frankford's Ignacio Molinet became the league's first Latino player.

Today the Philadelphia Fire Department's Engine 14, stationed in Frankford, has adopted the Yellow Jackets moniker on its fire trucks. The Frankford Athletic Association was a great contributor to the success and the sustenance of football in Philadelphia. In 2018, the r legacy they left behind won the Super Bowl. What a tribute to the care and feeding of all those Yellow Jackets and all those Eagles for all those years

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 Without the Yellow Jackets great play for many years, marking time until the Eagles became the Eagles, who knows whether there would be an Eagles team or a Steagles team in 2018. Philadelphia ought to step in and make this right. The Yellow Jackets became the Eagles regardless of the business aspects of how that happened. Amen! Go Eagles

Despite claiming little residue of the old Yellow Jackets, for the first few years of the Eagles' existence, however, they did wear powder blue and yellow uniforms similar to those worn by the Yellow Jackets; these are also the colors of Philadelphia's flag. Additionally, under those uniforms was a lot of old Yellow Jacket gear. Replicas were even worn later as 1934 throwbacks in a game played against the Detroit Lions on September 23, 2007 as part of the team's 75th anniversary season. Go Eagles

as

Lud Wray was the coach of the Philadelphia Eagles in their first season in the NFL, 1936. Lud was a nickname as his full name was James R. Ludlow "Lud" Wray (February 7, 1894 – July 24, 1967). Wray did it all. He was a professional American 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) and of the Eagles. He also served as head coach at his alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania, which as noted previously was the premiere Pennsylvania football team in the early days of football.

Soon the Eagles would 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. The Frankford Yellow Jackets had played their games on Saturday mostly when at home.

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 The Evolution of Modern Football



Lots of playing before playing became official

The official agreed upon date for the first American-style football game is November 6, 1869. There would be more than thirty years after this for the Philadelphia Eagles to meet the NY Giants on the gridiron. If you can find a replay of the first game someplace in the heavens, however, you would find its replay would not look much like football as we know it. But, it was not completely soccer or rugby either.

Before this game, teams were playing a rugby style similar to that played in Britain in the mid-19th century. At the time in the US, a derivative known as association football was also played. In both games, a football is kicked at a goal or run over a line. These styles were based on the varieties of English public-school football games. Over time, as noted, the style of "football" play in America continued to evolve.

On November 6, 1869, the first football game in America featured Rutgers and Princeton. Before the teams were even on the field it was being plugged as the first college football game of all time. Syracuse University opened in 1870, the year after the first college football game.

The first game of intercollegiate football was a sporting battle between two neighboring schools on a plot of ground where the present-day Rutgers gymnasium now stands in New Brunswick, N.J. Rutgers won that first game, 6-4.

There were two teams of 25 men each and the rules were rugby-like, but different enough to make it very interesting and enjoyable.

Like today's football, there were many surprises; strategies needed to be employed; determination exhibited, and of course the players required physical prowess.



1st Game Rutgers 6 Princeton 4 College Field, New Brunswick, NJ

Before we begin to focus solely on the Eagles, the next several chapters will describe the origins of football, the origin of the football, and how the NFL grew out of something that became known as American football that was first played on college campuses.

Chapter 5 The First American College Football Game



Early American Football

We can all read Walter Camp's books about how the rules of American football came about. We can also learn a lot from the writings of the day. However, since nobody alive today was alive way back when, it is safe to say that nobody actually knows. But from all the accounts, we do have a pretty good idea.

There are a lot of guessers and some wrong readers out there because nobody from November 1869, of which I am aware can refute anything via an eye-witness account. So, there are a lot of great stories, some duplicated many times over. Some are right on the money and others are inexact. We'll do our best to bring you the story as it really happened in this book.

Once the first College football game was played, the next major game to be played was the first professional football game. Though there were dribs and drabs of pro football being played by

some famous coaches such as Knute Rockne, it took a while for professional football to take off.

In these pre-Eagles football chapters that eventually get us to the first pro-football game, know that the facts in this section come from a book written by your author that sells much better in England than in the US. Its title is *The Birth of American Football*. The modified excerpts from this book help set the stage for a proper introduction to professional football, the NFL, and the road to Super Bowl LII, a game won by our very own Eagles.

It has been almost 150 years since the first American College Football game. Therefore, it helps to recall the old schoolroom exercise of whispering into a person's ear a little passage and thirty students later seeing what comes back. The good news is that the further back that you get from the time of Walter Camp, the stories are all similar and there are fewer and fewer of them.

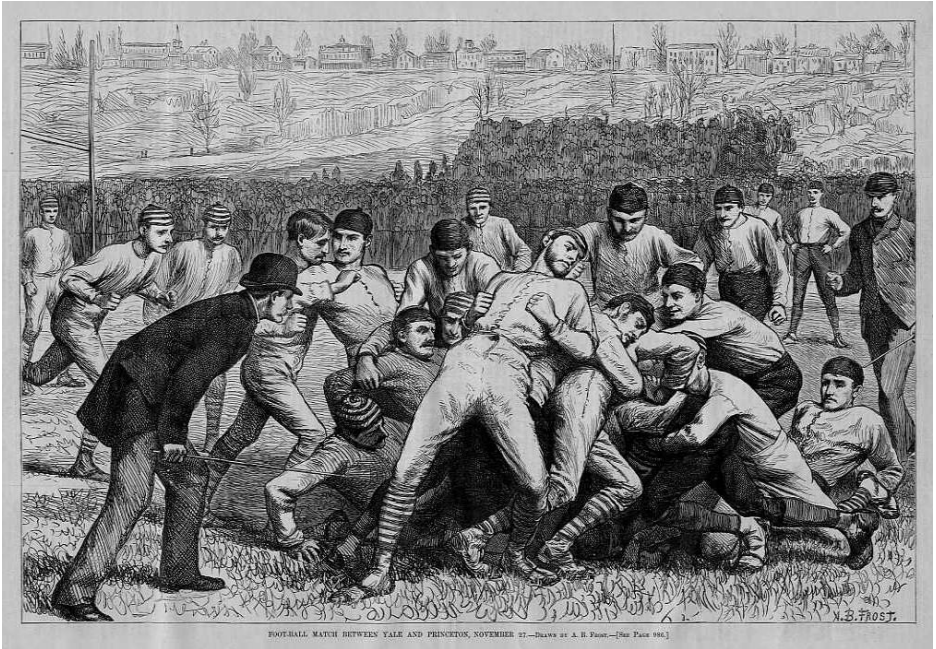
Camp had all the future rules in his head!

Eventually, in the 1870's, shortly after the very first recognized collegiate football game in America, the great Walter Camp began to get really interested and he wrote a lot of football history and football rule books. These are trusted implicitly today by most experts as the defining moments in American football.

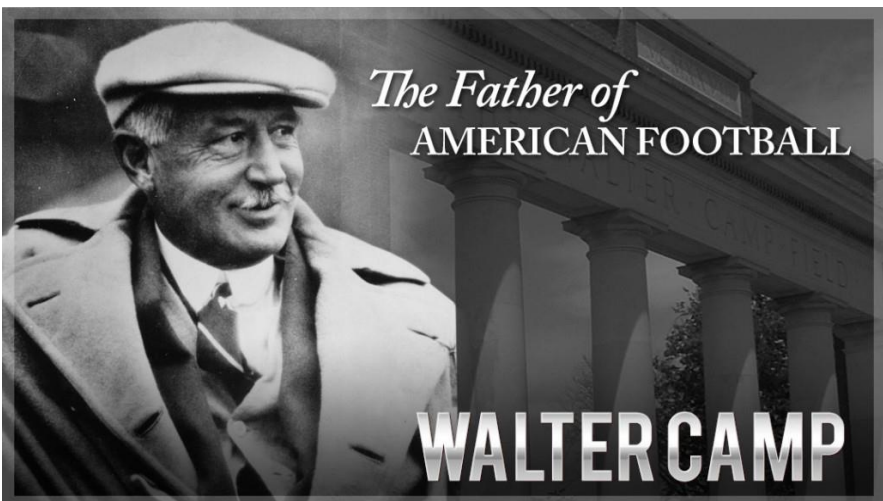
One of the few things about early football that we do know with reasonable certainty is that professional football as we understand it, was non-existent until long after collegiate football was established. It can also be said with certainty that if it were not for the colleges and Walter Camp, in particular, there probably would be no American football today at any level. Of course, more than likely there would still be rugby and soccer.

We also know that there was a great gifted athlete who played every sport imaginable including soccer and rugby, and then American football. His name is Walter Camp. He is universally recognized as the Father of American Football.

There is some irony in putting this out as a two plus two equals four story, however. You see, Walter Camp, as noted, widely considered the most important figure in the development of American football, was not playing organized football when the first football game took place in 1869. So, who gave them their football rules. Voila, a conundrum!



1879 Football Game Depiction



As a youth, we know that Camp excelled in sports such as track, baseball, and association football, and after enrolling at Yale in 1876, he earned varsity honors in every sport the school offered. But, what about 1869 which is the consensus origin date for the beginning of American football in the US?

Many apologists have written about this period from 1869 onward as if it were the beginning of American football that, at the time was played only at the collegiate level. In essence, the true beginning of college football was in fact, the beginning of American football. However, the rules of the game began more as rugby rules than football rules but over the years, changes were made. Today, no other country plays the type of football played in America. America created its own game of football and it is unique.

There were other rough games out there at the time and they still exist across the world. One might conclude that football was unnecessary as those who played soccer and rugby could be maimed or killed in a contest without needing Camp's American football rules.



Scenes from First Football Game

Considering that the centennial of the US was approaching in 1869, the year of the first game, some feel there was a need to create a game besides the American past-time of baseball, that was a cool-weather sport. Yes, there was soccer and rugby, but these have a European or English heritage, from whom America had declared independence about 100 years prior. England for the most part owned the rules of soccer and rugby for some time.

Nonetheless, historians trace the roots of American football to early versions of rugby football and association football. Both games have their origin in varieties of football played in Britain in the mid-19th century, in which a football is kicked at a goal or kicked over a line. These varieties of style in England were based on the various English public school football games.

It helps to be reminded in this story that our nation's birth date is July 4, 1776 and so 1869 was just 93 years from the founding.

There are lots of stories about the evolution towards American football, and this part of this discusses many ideas supplied by Walter Camp for the transition. American football resulted from several major modifications from association football and rugby football, most notably the rule changes instituted by Camp at Yale University and as a Hopkins School graduate. To repeat Camp is significant as he is attributed as being the designated "Father of American Football."

One of the changes not attributed to Walter Camp was the shape of the ball. As you will see, the forward pass did not become legal until 1906 and so the spherical shape of modern footballs was not required until passing became a bigger part of the game.

The football was evolving steadily from the first game. But, it was not completely perfected until 1935. The ball used in the very first game was round, like a soccer ball and like early rugby balls. It was tough to carry, and awkward to throw. In 1874, in a McGill and Harvard game, they used a ball that looked like a watermelon. Over time, balls became more plum-like and easier to throw. The problem was that pigs' bladders, not balloons were used and they by definition were inexact. We refine this study of the ball later in this section

before we look at Eagle's season summaries, so please hang on. For now, know that Walter Camp was not involved.

Among these important changes to rugby that Camp brought into American football were the introduction of the line of scrimmage, of down-and-distance rules. He also introduced the notion of legal interference, which today is called blocking. Camp was the rules guy but before he went to Yale, like most New Englanders of the day, he played soccer, which was the preferred cool-weather fall sport of the day. He did not play much rugby football until his time at Yale University from 1876 to 1881.

Camp was not the first person to play football—any kind of football—be it soccer, rugby, or Harpastum. Some joke that Adam and Eve may have played football with a round fruit. Most of us would hope it was an orange or a grapefruit.

A sport called Harpastum and others

You can go back through history and find sports that had some of the roughness and rudiments of soccer, rugby, and American football but the games they played were not very rule-based.

In a “sport” called *Harpastum*, a form of ball game played in the Roman Empire, for example, the Romans enjoyed their own form of football.

There have been many forms of traditional football that have been played throughout Europe and beyond since the beginning of mankind.

We have already discussed the possibility that there may have been nicht-verboten round or oval fruits in the Garden of Paradise used for football.

From the beginning of antiquity, knowing man's propensity to exercise, have fun and use various shaped balls in so doing, if not in the garden, then one can bet it was not long after Paradise that ancient forms of football abounded. See pic of *Harpastum* next page.



Many of these ancient matches would involve handling of a ball and scrummage-like formations. Several of the oldest examples of football-like games include the Greek game of *Episkyros* and the Roman game of *Harpastum* (both pictures on prior page).

Over time many countries across the world developed their own national football-like games. For example, New Zealand

has Ki-o-rahi, Australia has Marngrook, Japan has Kemari, China has Cuju, Georgia has Lelo Burti, and the Borders have Jeddart Ba' and Cornwall Cornish have Hurling.



The pictures below of balls and balls in play are interesting and make the point. Left to right, Ki-o-rahi ball, Marngrook ball, and a snap of a game of Kemari in process. None of these forms appear to have a direct link to American football but they surely are forerunners.



In football-story-telling, there is also an often-told story about a ship in 1586, almost 100 years after Columbus, in which the men from the ship wanted to play a little sport. The ship was reportedly commanded by an English explorer named John Davis. The young crew would go ashore to play a form of football with the Inuit (Eskimo) people in Greenland. There are other later accounts of an Inuit game played on ice, called Aqsaqtuk.

This game had a similarity to football in that each game, which was called a match, began with the two teams facing each other in parallel lines. The objective was to kick the “ball” through each other team's line and then kick it at a goal. Moving along in time, it is recorded from 1610 that William Strachley from Jamestown Virginia, an English Colonist, wrote the account of a game played by Native Americans. They called the game Pahaseman.

Though there are stories of Native Americans playing games, a variety of American football historians agree that the game has its roots from the traditional football games played all over Europe in villages, towns, and schools for centuries before Columbus.

The scuttle on those is that the early games appear to have had much in common with what has been called "mob football" from England. There were typically no uniforms or coaches nor hard and fast rules.

In the 19th century, intramural games of rugby, soccer, and association football began to be played on American college campuses. There were no rules committees and no Walter Camp at the time and so each school played its own variety of football with its own rules.

Princeton University students, for example, are reported to have played a game called ball-own, as early as 1820.

Harvard had its own tradition known as "Bloody Monday," which began in 1827. This was all about a mass ballgame between the freshman and sophomore classes. In 1860, both the town police and the college authorities agreed the Bloody Monday had to go. There was too much blood for the good of the game.

The gendarme would not permit "football" for well over twelve years. Then the game was played again. Dartmouth had its own version which they called "Old division football." Its rules were first published in 1871, though it is said they played the game from the 1830's.

There were commonalities in all these games Yet, they remained largely "mob" style games, with huge numbers of players on the "field" or whatever makeshift was available. All players were on the field at the same time. There was a little rhyme and some reason as the objective seemed always to be to advance the ball into a goal area, quite often by any means possible and necessary.

There were no complicated rules as the games were played for sport—just for fun. Rules were simple, and so without protection by rules, violence and injury were common. There was supposedly no beer drinking at the games, but plenty was consumed shortly thereafter by the young adult participants.

Yes, to be sure, the games were often heated as no group wanted to lose. Some games were actually violent. Yet, afterwards, sometimes after beating each other to a pulp, both squads normally would choose to gather together from their rivalry for some post-game revelry that often included the singing of songs, awarding of small prizes, and of course lots of beer-drinking.

There is an old football / rugby saying that parallels the US Las Vegas slogan: "What happens on the pitch, stays on the pitch. "This is an oft-quoted rugby truism.

Take away the violence!

The brutality and frequent bloodshed of these mob-style games led to widespread protests and there were many separate decisions from cities and schools to abandon the games. Yale, for example, under pressure from the city of New Haven, banned the play of all forms of football in 1860. Eventually, because of popular pressure, the games would be brought back in one form or another.

From 1854 to 1882, there was a variant of the mob football style that was once again played at Yale in the form of bladderball. The objective, of this “game” was to gain control of an oversized inflatable ball and bring it through the gates of the residential college represented by another on-campus intramural team.

As one would expect, this game was eventually banned by school authorities for a number of reasons, not the least of which was alcohol fueled violence. The violence and the alcohol were most often precipitated by the game. Revival games were played in 2009 and 2011, and very briefly, in 2014. The revivals are most often scripted though the grog surely flows.

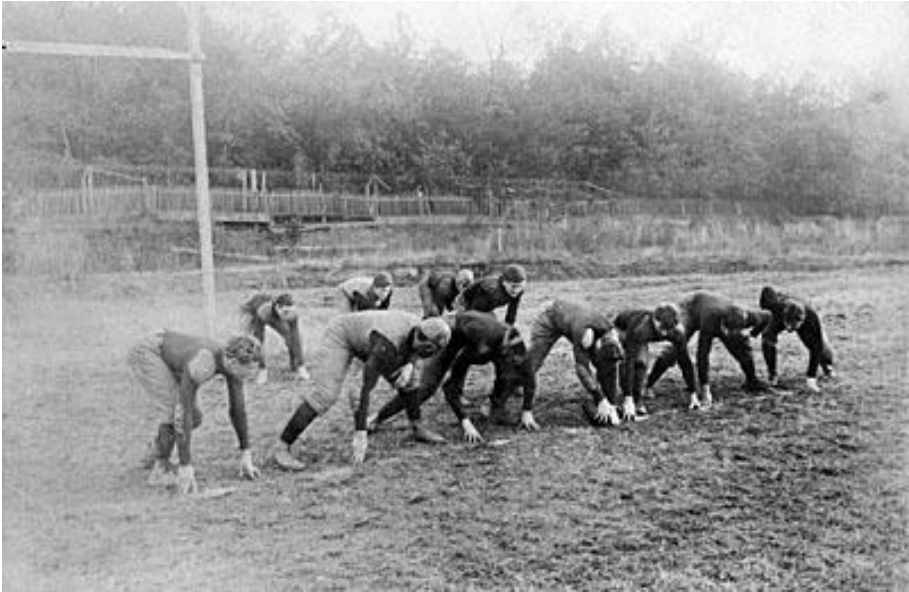
Eventually, the informality of the matches gave way to formality as bona fide institutions began to sponsor collegiate level teams. The 1869 college football season is recognized as the first season of intercollegiate football in the United States, though at the time, there were only two teams in the league – Rutgers and Princeton.

The rules were not refined and so the teams used “agreed-upon improvised rules” resembling soccer and rugby as much as the modern American sport. 1869 is considered by historians as the inaugural college football season.

This 1869 football season consisted of only two total games and as noted, there were just two teams – Rutgers University and Princeton University; The first game was played on November 6 at Rutgers' campus, and the second was played on November 13 on the Princeton's campus.

1869–1875

As noted, the November 6, 1869 football game between Rutgers and Princeton, which by the way was then known as the *College of New Jersey*, was played with a round ball. The rules were provided by Rutgers captain William J. Leggett. They were based on the Football Association's first set of American football rules.



Rutgers Scarlet Knights practice 1869

Walter Camp did not write the first set of rules, but he made them all better. These rules were an early attempt by those who had studied football in England's public schools, to codify the rules and create what hopefully would become a universal and standardized set of dictates for the game. Let me posit an analogy of the *evolution* of American Football Rules.

I remember back in the late 1980's when Windows 2.0 came out and it was a major improvement on DOS and the prior Windows. I am sure if the hardware were capable then, the Bill Gates led Microsoft team would have built Windows 10 or Windows 11 instead of going through all the iterations to make the program better over the next thirty years. But, for lots of reasons, they could not.

Rules changes work well through an iterative process of testing new rules, introducing them to the “game,” and then removing objectional parts. In the process, some rules are enhanced; others eliminated; while still other rules are added.

The 1869 football games bore little resemblance to the American game, which would be developed slowly in the following decades through the continual work of Walter Camp and others. Nonetheless, it is still regarded as the first game of Intercollegiate American Football.

Think of the mob playing this first game at a Rutgers field. It could have been worse. Two teams of 25 players lined up and attempting to score by kicking the ball into the opposing team's goal. Throwing or carrying the ball was not allowed, but there was plenty of physical contact between players. The first team to reach six goals was declared the winner. Rutgers won by a score of six to four.

A rematch was played at Princeton a week later under Princeton's own set of rules. There was a major difference in the rules of this game as a team was awarded a "free kick" when any player caught the ball on the fly. This feature had been adopted from the Football Association's rules. The fair catch kick rule has survived through our modern American game.

Princeton won the second game with home field advantage by a score of 8–0. More teams began to play each other in 1870. Columbia was next to join the series and then by 1872 several other schools began to field intercollegiate teams, including Yale and the Stevens Institute of Technology.



Chapter 6 Moving Closer Towards American Football

Nothing happens overnight



Soon after the early football changes, in the late nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries, more game-play type developments were introduced by college coaches.

The list is like a who's who of early American College Football. Coaches, such as Eddie Cochems, Amos Alonzo Stagg, Parke H. Davis, Knute Rockne, John Heisman, and Glenn "Pop" Warner helped introduce and then take advantage of the newly introduced

forward pass.

In later chapters, we will look at the enhancements attributed to these football greats.

We have learned that American College football as well as professional football, were introduced prior to the 20th century. Pro football remained ragtag until 1920 when the American Professional Football Association was formed. Fans were lured into watching again and again once they saw the game played. How could we not love American football?

American college football especially grew in popularity even after the beginning of professional football. It became the dominant version of the sport of football in the United States. It was this way for the entire first half of the 20th century. For many fans, it still is this way. There are pro football fans who do not enjoy college football and vice versa.

Bowl games made the idea of football even more exciting in the college ranks. Rivalries grew and continued, and the fans loved it! This great football tradition brought a national audience to college football games that still dominates the sports world today.

Edgar Allan Poe – No kidding!



In researching this section, I found that some players with some great names played football in the early years. For example, Edgar Allan Poe was an All-American for Princeton in 1889. Additionally, in 1889, first-year players were permitted to wear numbers representing their names in college football games.

This particular Edgar Allan Poe was also a great historical figure. He served as Attorney General of the State of Maryland from 1911 to 1915. Born in Baltimore, Poe was named for his second cousin, twice removed, the celebrated author & poet, Edgar Allan Poe, who died in 1849.

What number is he?

Another interesting tidbit on the formation of football is that teams played without uniform numbers. Nonetheless somehow the players were identified. Just two years after Penn State as well as Notre Dame formed their teams and played their first official football games in 1887, the first All-America team was named in 1889.

There is some scuttle about that as Walter Camp and some others with mostly Eastern College roots were accused of picking players from the big Eastern Colleges almost exclusively and so there were few All Americans at Notre Dame or Penn State or Alabama in the early years.

Seventeen years after the first all-American for example, W. T. (Mother) Dunn was Penn State's first All-American in (1906). He was named by Walter Camp. He was both a linebacker and a center. The next All-American for PSU was Bob Higgins, the long-time PSU football coach who, as an End, gained the honor both in (1915 & 1919). The PSU football program has produced 88 consensus all-Americans in total. Notre Dame has 90. Alabama has 68.

Notre Dame had two All-Americans in 1913 – Knute Rockne, an End, and Gus Dorais, a quarterback. By 1913, the forward pass was legal and that is how ND was winning its games in this undefeated season.

As touched on in this section, in 1889, numbers to identify individual players were permitted but not recommended. It took until 1915 that they were recommended. But, it wasn't until 1937 that numerals were required on both the front and back of game jerseys. In 1967 this rule was further modified to require numbering according to position, with offensive players ineligible to receive forward passes assigned numbers in the 50-79 range.

Pro football came from American college football

There is no denying that the greatest college football players more often than not eventually find their fortunes in professional football. Pro football can be traced back to 1889, just a few years after Penn State and Notre Dame rolled out their programs, and just before Alabama got in the game.

As previously noted, it was 1892 when William "Pudge" Heffelfinger signed a \$500 contract to play for the Allegheny Athletic Association against the Pittsburgh Athletic Club.

Twenty-eight years later, the American Professional Football Association was formed. This league changed its name to the National Football League (NFL) just two years later.

Eventually, the NFL became the major league of American football. Originally, pro football was just an unaffiliated sport played in Midwestern industrial towns in the United States. Yet, professional football eventually became a national phenomenon.

We all know this because from August to February, in America, every year, many of us are glued to our TV sets or chained to our seats in some of the most intriguing pro-football stadiums in America—mostly on Sundays.

The end of football?

Football was never a game for the light of heart. You had to be tough physically and tough mentally to compete. Way back in 1906, for example complaints were many about the violence in American football. It got so bad that universities on the West Coast, led by California and Stanford, replaced the sport with rugby union rules.

At the time, the very future of American college football, a very popular sport enjoyed by fans nationwide was in doubt. The schools that eliminated football and replaced it with Rugby Union believed football would be gone and Rugby Union would eventually be adopted nationwide.

Soon other schools followed this travesty and made the switch. Eventually, due to the perception that West Coast football was an inferior game played by inferior men when compared to the rough and tumble East Coast, manhood prevailed in the West over the inclination to make the game mild.

The many tough East Coast and Midwest teams had shrugged off the loss of the few teams out West and they had continued to play American style football.

And, so the available pool of Rugby Union "football" teams to play remained small. The Western colleges therefore had to schedule games against local club teams and they reached out to Rugby Union powers in Australia, New Zealand, and especially, due to its proximity, Canada. America at the time was almost exclusively playing American football.

American football OK without the west

The famous Stanford and California game continued as rugby. To make it seem important. The winner was invited by the British Columbia Rugby Union to a tournament in Vancouver over the Christmas holidays. The winner of that tournament was rewarded

with the Cooper Keith Trophy. Nobody in the American football America cared. Eventually the West Coast came back to American-style football ala Walter Camp.

Nonetheless the situation of injury and death in football persisted and though there was a lot of pushback, it came to a head in 1905 when there were 19 fatalities nationwide. Nobody wanted this.

President Theodore Roosevelt, a tough guy himself, is reported to have threatened to shut down the game nationwide if drastic changes were not made. Sports historians however, dispute that Roosevelt ever intervened with any wielded power.

What is certified, however, is that on October 9, 1905, the President held a meeting of football representatives from Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. The topic was eliminating and reducing injuries and the President, according to the record, never threatened to ban football.

The fact is that Roosevelt lacked the authority to abolish football but more importantly, he was a big fan and wanted the game to continue. The little Roosevelts also loved the sport and were playing football at the college and secondary levels at the time.

This was over 110 years ago, a century plus. That is why they say football was an even more brutal sport then, than some believe it is today. There are accounts of games that left dozens of dead on college and prep school gridirons. Though I have the reference, I cannot find any of the games in which such carnage may have occurred.

Many in the country were asking for action from politicians. With the very existence of the sport in jeopardy, President Theodore Roosevelt, who actually loved the sport, entered the fray and urged the schools noted above to institute some radical reforms that according to observers at the time saved the sport and gave another birth to the modern game of American football.

On the next page is a picture of a Teddy's Nephew being carried off the field after an injury in the brutal game of football.

There are those who went as far as calling the turn of the 20th century America's football gridirons killing fields. College games drew tens of thousands of spectators and had even more fan appeal than professional baseball, the national pastime.

Baseball was a gentle sport compared to football. American football in the early 1900s was lethally brutal. It was a grinding, bruising sport that required major physical contact on each play. In 1905, the forward pass was still illegal and, so it was sheer brute strength that was required to move the ball.



One of the Roosevelt offspring carried off after injuring his ankle. Huge players were permitted to lock their arms in mass formations and they would use their unprotected helmetless heads as battering

rams. Gang tackles routinely buried ball carriers underneath a ton and a half of “tangled humanity.”

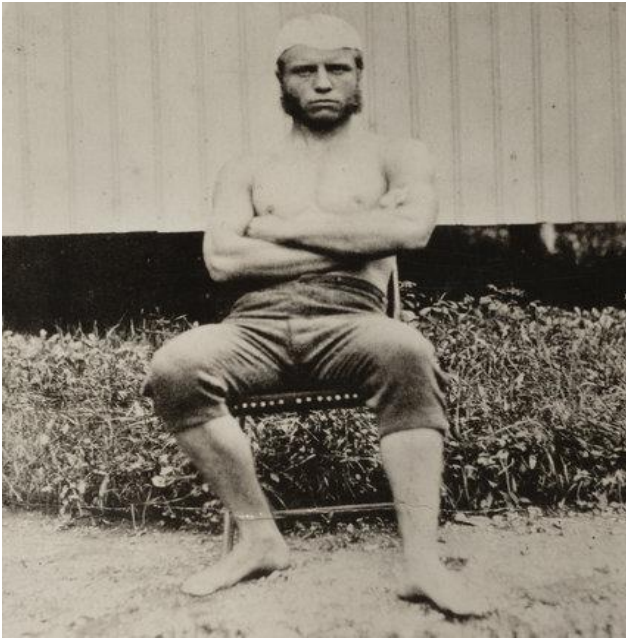
Football players fought like gladiators

There was little in the way of protective equipment. Apparently, nobody had ever thought of pads and helmets. Players would often sustain gruesome injuries such as wrenched spinal cords, crushed skulls and broken ribs that were sometimes so severe they pierced their hearts. It did not go unnoticed.

The Chicago Tribune wrote a piece that in 1904 alone, the year before Roosevelt’s involvement, there were 18 football deaths and 159 serious injuries, mostly among prep school players. It was sad.



A look at tangled humanity



TR as a college undergraduate; Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard College Library

There were obituaries of young pigskin players on a near-weekly basis during the football season. The carnage appalled America. Everybody loved the sport but not the maimings. The Newspapers did not take it easy on the game. Editorials called for the outright banishment of college and high school football.

Football was often compared to the Roman Gladiators: “The once athletic sport has degenerated into a contest that for brutality is little better than the gladiatorial combats in the arena in ancient Rome,” opined the *Beaumont Express*. The sport had reached such a crisis that one of its biggest boosters—President Theodore Roosevelt—got involved.

Roosevelt’s glasses gave away his nearsightedness. But, as a youth in college he did not wear them. This, however, was more than enough to keep this tough man from making the Harvard varsity squad. Yet, he was always a vocal exponent of football’s contribution to the “strenuous life,” both on and off the field.

When “Teddy” was New York City police commissioner, he helped bring back the old Harvard-Yale football series after it had been canceled for two years following the violent 1894 clash that was labeled “the bloodbath at Hampden Park.”

He believed that the football field was more or less a proving ground for the battlefield. This was validated by the performance of his fellow Rough Riders who were mostly former football standouts. “In life, as in a football game,” he wrote, “the principle to follow is: Hit the line hard; don’t foul and don’t shirk, but hit the line hard!”

Teddy Roosevelt liked football

In 1903, the president told an audience, “I believe in rough games and in rough, manly sports. I do not feel any particular sympathy for the person who gets battered about a good deal so long as it is not fatal.” Unfortunately, in 1904-1905, football injuries were too often fatalities, and it was not improving.

Yes, even the President knew that football had become fatal, and he acknowledged that it needed reform if it were to be saved. With his son, Theodore Jr. who had begun to play for the Harvard freshman team, he had a major league paternal interest in reforming the game as well.

Roosevelt was the guy to negotiate with the foot-ballers for sure. He was straight from having negotiated an end to the Russo-Japanese War. He sought to end violence on the football field as well as the battlefield. Using his “big stick,” the gentleman known as the “First Fan” brought the necessary parties together—especially those from the premier collegiate football powers of the day—Harvard, Yale and Princeton—to the White House on October 9, 1905.

Roosevelt made no threats. But, he did urge them to curb excessive violence and set an example of fair play for the rest of the country. The schools responded with a heartfelt and effective press release condemning brutality and pledging to keep the game clean.

Ironically, Roosevelt, in taking on the problem of football fatalities, learned that real war may be even easier to gain peace than getting this new American sport to clean up its act. Fatalities and injuries continued and in fact increased during the 1905 season. In the freshman tilt against Yale, the president's son was bruised and his nose broken—some say quite deliberately. This would not do. Yet, it continued

The following week, Harvard's entire varsity were ready to leave the field of play against Yale, after their captain was felled by an illegal hit on a fair catch. His nose was broken and bloodied. Union College halfback Harold Moore suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died the same afternoon after being kicked in the head while attempting to tackle a New York University runner.





THE TWELFTH PLAYER IN EVERY FOOTBALL GAME.

It was a grim and savage season and it finally ended. There was work to be done. The Chicago Tribune saw the senseless deaths as a “death harvest,” The football season had brought about 19 player deaths and 137 serious injuries. Newspaper artists had a field day creating “cartoons” of figures such as the Grim Reaper on a goalpost surveying a twisted mass of fallen players. It was similar to the cartoon on the prior page.

It was so tough that some tough schools such as Stanford and California switched to rugby while Columbia, Northwestern and Duke dropped football all together. Harvard president Charles Eliot, who considered football “more brutalizing than prizefighting, cockfighting or bullfighting,” warned that Harvard would be next. This would be a totally crushing blow to the college game and the Harvard alum, President Roosevelt who worked every day in the Oval Office.



Helmet testing was quite animated in the early 1900's

Roosevelt appreciated the need for men to play men sports and he captured his views in a letter to a friend. He stated that he would not permit the Harvard College president Elliott to “emasculate football,” and that Roosevelt hoped to “minimize the danger” without football having to be played “on too ladylike a basis.” Roosevelt was a tough man and, so he again used his bully pulpit. He urged all parties from the Harvard coach to other leading football authorities to quickly adopt radical rule changes. He invited other school leaders and football aficionados to the White House in the offseason for productive discussions.

Good rules made football even better

Many good rules were put forth at an intercollegiate conference, which would become the forerunner of the NCAA. The “radical”

rules were approved for the 1906 season. They would have a very positive effect on the game and eventually would substantially reduce injuries.

The rules legalized the forward pass, abolished the dangerous mass formations, created a neutral zone between offense and defense and doubled the first-down distance to 10 yards, to be gained in three downs. The rule changes did not completely eliminate football's dangers, but fatalities declined—to 11 per year in both 1906 and 1907—while injuries fell sharply. A spike in fatalities in 1909 led to another round of reforms that further eased restrictions on the forward pass and formed the foundation of the modern sport.

So, the rule changes were good. There were others such as the notion of reducing the number of scrimmage plays to earn a first down from four to three in an attempt to reduce injuries. The LA Times reported an increase in punts in an experimental game and thus considered the game much safer than regular play. Football lovers did not accept many of the new rules because they felt they were not "conducive to the sport." There was a period when rapid rule changes interfered with coaching strategies as a favored play in early season might be illegal before the season ended.

Because nobody wanted players injured or killed in a game, on December 28, 1905, to be sure the rules were put out for 1906, a group representing 62 schools met without the president in New York City to discuss the proposed major rule changes to make the game safer. From this meeting, the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States, later named the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), was formed.

The forward pass is legalized

One particular rule change that was introduced in 1906 was devised to open up the game and thus reduce injury eventually gained favor with the coaches, players, and fans. This new rule introduced the legal forward pass. Though it was underutilized for years afterwards,

this proved to be one of the most important rule changes in the establishment of the modern game. Those coaches, such as Eddie Cochems, who adopted the pass early, had a major advantage in winning games.



Because of these 1905-1906 reforms, mass formation plays in which many players joined together became illegal when forward passes became legal.

Chapter 7 Origin of the Oval-Shaped Sports-Ball



The coming of the sports-ball!

One of my great curiosities in researching this book is who would have ever thought of using an oval ball shaped like today's modern football? Secondly, why don't we all know that answer?

To answer the question, I got some help from the people at Inventors-Handbook as surely the oval football was a key invention for the game of football.

Please note that the folks from the Inventor's handbook have a different interest than I, in pursuing this information. They use the invention of the football as a reason why inventors should patent their works while I was merely interested in learning who the inventor was and how he came about inventing the football.

The invention of the *football*, the ball used in the popular team game is not necessarily attributed to one inventor. But most historians agree that one English shoe maker is more than likely responsible for the way footballs look today.

This description is not for the faint of heart, and in fact, there is a death reported in this account.

Early footballs were essentially pig's or other animals' bladders which were inflated by the power of the human lungs (blowing hot air into them). They were then tied and sealed, much like balloons would be sealed – knotted at the end.

As a result, they were often plum, or pear shaped, and not round, depending on the size of the individual animal's bladder.

Before the invention of football as we know it, balls were often prone to exploding while in use. This led to shoemakers selling leather cases to protect the inflated bladders. Shoes and boots makers used leather on a daily basis and were the most appropriate people to be able to sew the ball's leather cases around the bladder.

You may ask why rubber was not used instead of animal bladders. It took a while to be able to work rubber into all the uses we have today. Rubber was invented in 1839 by Charles Goodyear. He accidentally dropped Sulphur and white latex from a rubber tree onto a hot stove. This resulted in the formation of a dark elastic substance which came to be called vulcanized rubber, and the rest is history but not yet for football.

Until the 1860's, football, soccer and rugby were all played with a plum or pear-shaped ball made of leather, encasing an inflated animal bladder.

In Europe, the first proper football invention is attributed to two shoemakers: Richard Lindon and William Gilbert who invented round and oval shaped balls. Lindon is credited for inventing the rubber inflatable bladder.

In 1849, at the age of 33, Lindon, who worked just in front of the rugby school in Rugby England, was constantly asked to create footballs for the school's boys.

As a shoemaker, he was regularly receiving leather supplies for making shoes and, so he used some of this supply to also create balls for the boys' teams by covering the pig's bladders with leather.

Both Lindon and his wife worked at the craft and prepared the balls when requested. Because she was not a craft shoemaker and yet wanted to help with the many orders, Lindon's wife took on the additional responsibility of inflating the bladders by blowing air into them.

This was not as simple and innocuous as it sounds. In many ways, it was downright dangerous as many bladders were infected, having originated from diseased pigs.

It was around 1862 that Lindon had begun looking for an alternative to inflated pig's bladders that would be safer than the current practice. For his wife, those efforts came way too late. She eventually died by falling ill from inflating too many infected pig's bladders.

Lindon invented an inflatable inner tube made of natural rubber, instead of the existing animal bladders. Because of the newly understood pliability of rubber, the shape of the football was able to be molded to the shape of a perfect round sphere.

His first prototype was made from such a rubber inflated tube covered with 7 strips of leather, stitched at the end with "bottoms" on both sides. The ball was almost spherical. This design gained popularity and became the one he used for all of the "footballs" that he sold.



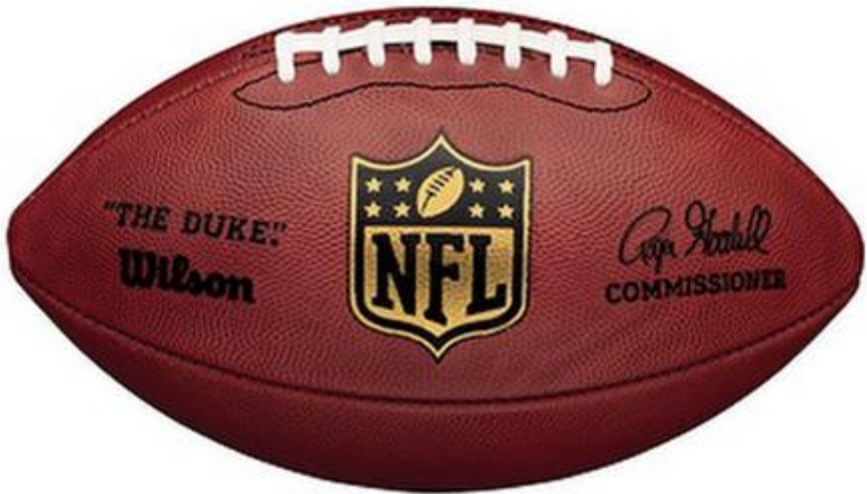
Lindon's Brass Pump Invention

Since he found inflating the rubber that he used too hard to do by hand, Lindon also invented a brass pump, inspired by a simple ear syringe. This could be used to inflate his footballs without the need to blow them up with one's mouth. Thus, he is also credited not only for the invention of the football but also for the invention of the air pump. Until his death, Lindon had never patented the bladder, ball or air pump, which he invented. Yet, these were key inventions for football. The moral of the story for the invention people is that he could have made a ton of money, which could have been passed on to his family on his death if he had only patented his invention.

The shape of the football

On October 5, in 2012, Jimmy Stamp of Smithsonian Magazine wrote an expose on how the "pigskin" for modern football got its shape. "How Did the Pigskin Get Its Shape?"

Stamp put forth that even though American football may have evolved from soccer and rugby, the football was never truly designed; it just sorta happened.



Like the shoemaker's invention, Stamp also points out that the "pigskin" is not made of pig skin or pig's bladders but is, in fact, made from cowhide, aka leather, and not the tanned skin of a pig.



He cites that the shape is mysterious, but we know it is because of the inexact shape of the original pig's bladder. He asks, "If the sport evolved from soccer and rugby, how and when did the football gain its distinct shape – technically known as a prolate spheroid?" Stamp answers:

“Well, it turns out that the football was never truly designed, it just sorta happened.” This fact comes from one Henry Duffield, a man who happened to be a spectator at the Princeton and Rutgers American Football Game in 1869, which as we know is considered the first intercollegiate game ever:

“The ball was not an oval but was supposed to be completely round. It never was, though — it was too hard to blow up right. The game was stopped several times that day while the teams called for a little key from the sidelines. They used it to unlock the small nozzle which was tucked into the ball, and then, the players took turns blowing it up. The last man generally got tired and they put it back in play somewhat lopsided.”

This would surely indicate that the football that bounces erratically all over a field and can fly through the air in a perfect spiral is not, in fact, the product of a grand design. According to Stamp, it is simply the result of a leaky sphere and some lazy inflators.

Rugby balls had been constructed long before this game but for some time, the round ball dominated the scene in soccer style / association football. The rugby balls were always in the shoemakers for repair because of their pointy ends.

In 1879, Thomas Sherrin, from Australia took the point off the ends of the rugby balls and made his own design. His nephew noted that “He made a ball and created the ball that had less pointy ends. It was still able to bounce unpredictably but it was a little more consistent in its movement.” Sherrin also made leather punching bags.

Stamp wraps up his Smithsonian article with an interesting summary:

“Initially, football was a very different game – or perhaps I should say games. There were kicking games and running games, but as those two games began to merge together, as rules began to standardize, the ball began to slightly stretch out in order to accommodate more types of use. The unique shape of the ball was somewhat formalized in the early 20th century and that form was

exploited to great success when the forward pass was introduced to football in 1906.”

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(Signed), E. L. WILSON, Secretary.

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Chapter 8 The Birth of Play with Pay



When you look at the records of the college teams in the early years of their sports programs, you find they did not always play other colleges. Sometimes they played associations such as the Frankford Athletic Association, a precursor of the Eagles, and sometimes, they played high school powerhouses and they did not always win those games. Football was no different in its growth as a respected sport than other sports.

It was very popular with the many athletic clubs that proliferated in the late 19th century. Just like high school teams and prep schools and junior colleges, full four-year colleges often played athletic clubs from their area to get a good football game on a Saturday afternoon. When the pros fired up, Sunday was the only day of the weekend that was available.

These clubs were formed to compete against one another, but they had no problem saying yes to play Notre Dame or Penn State, or

Alabama or any great college team of the day. Soon, the players were making real money.

The first documented professional football player was Pudge Heffelfinger. He broke the bank on November 12, 1892, when he received \$500 for just one game with the Allegheny Athletic Association. There were no easy ways to record information other than pencil and paper back then, so a lot of stories and their history did not make the newspapers and, so they are lost forever. The Pudge Heffelfinger story is the exception.

It is a safe bet that many other athletes played for money but managed to keep their earnings a deep secret. In 1893, the Pittsburgh Athletic Club signed one of its players to a contract to play for the entire season. By 1896, several of the clubs from the Pittsburgh area were openly professional.

For years after college football took off, there were attempts by graduates and coaches and others to create leagues with rules and better opportunities for players and fans. The first documented attempt came in 1902 with a Pennsylvania league known as the National Football League (NFL) with no relationship to the modern-day league. A lot of the action in these endeavors came about in Pennsylvania and then later, Ohio.

John Rogers, who owned the Philadelphia Phillies baseball team, founded a football team called the Phillies in 1901. This prompted another man with some extra change in his pocket, Ben Shibe, who owned the Philadelphia Athletics to create another new team in 1902. The baseball rivals tried to get other teams to join with them to compete for a self-proclaimed “football world championship.” Great ideas, however, are easier to conceive than to implement.

There was just one taker, a promoter in Pittsburgh. Out of nowhere, the National Football League was conceived, and it got a bump start. It was also a bumpy start. The three teams enjoyed being THE National Football League and they went ahead and played each other in a round-robin tournament.

The beauty of a “league” without rules is that each team, though each finished with a 2-2 record, could claim the national championship. Who could cast aspersions on three teams with equal records?

I surely do not want to make light of this effort as many of the best football players of the day participated in this league, as did three well-known baseball Hall of Famers who happened to love the emerging sport of football. Christy Mathewson, ace pitcher for the New York Giants played halfback and punter for the Pittsburgh Stars. Connie Mack, manager of the Athletics baseball team also managed the Athletics football team, and Rube Waddell one of the best left-handed pitchers in history, was a reserve lineman for Mack’s squad.

Waddell put his weight in each pitch and it was enough weight for him to change sports at will, and block for the backs in this pro-league or tackle as many opponents’ backs as may have made the mistake of running his way.

Think about how exciting those days had to be. There was no real NCAA and there was no real NFL to tell the players or the organizers that they needed to behave one way or another. Nobody said they had to wear stuff under their eyes during games or that they could not have a beer after practice. There was no bureaucracy with which to deal.

Nothing good happens overnight. Nothing worth having in life is easy. And, so players and investors with a lot of chutzpah chose to face the difficulties and they took up the challenge of making football, which was beginning to be very successful in American colleges, into a professional sport. Players, other than twenty-year old college kids could compete and could earn a few dollars on Sunday after they passed the hat.

The “NFL” three teams played a yearly football tournament in New York in 1902 and 1903. It was dubbed the “World Series of Football.” With less than 2000 tickets sold for each game, there wasn’t much evidence that there was much money to be made by

running a football team. But, somehow Baseball teams were making it; but then again, baseball teams played a lot more games.

Baseball teams played games every day for six months, and that produced enough revenues that teams could afford to travel from New York to Chicago, Boston to Cincinnati, or St. Louis to Philadelphia. The pageantry of college football drew fans in droves, and it wasn't unusual for crowds of 60,000 to see a matchup between rival schools when they could book a big stadium. That helped colleges pay to build their own stadiums and eventually pay coaches handsomely.

It was tough to do when everybody had to reach into their pockets in order to be able to put something into their pockets from pro-football. The pro game did not draw the numbers of college games with ardent fans. It was just a passing interest, so teams were forced to minimize costs in whatever ways they could.

There was no concentration on player safety in the early days so that cost nothing. The best way to reduce expenses was to limit team travel. Consequently, big entrepreneurs, who knew how to make a buck, were not stepping quickly into unorganized pro-football so they could make a killing. There was no killing to be made.

There was not much of an incentive for a nation-wide league of professional football teams in the 1910s. It made more sense to stay closer to home, with teams sponsored by local businessmen, whose chief interest was promoting their company. If local businesses were not gaining sales, they too would have abandoned pro-football in its infancy, in a heartbeat.

Over the next few years, the center focus of pro football moved from Pennsylvania to central Ohio. By 1905 there were at least seven pro teams playing in Ohio. They had great names such as the Massillon Tigers and the Canton Bulldogs. There was no really organized league, so these were independent teams. They had to fend for themselves. Though some were more successful than others, they all faced the same challenges.

Pro football needed to be profitable

Prior to television and the phone technology revolution, fans looked upon football as a great form of entertainment, even better, say some, than movie theatres. World War I soured a lot of people on life and everybody in the second decade of the twentieth century needed a pick-me-up. Football and the movies often lifted their spirits.

Nonetheless, it was tough for pro football teams to generate revenues without really good players. Since such players cost pro-teams big money, it became tougher for small football enterprises to make ends meet. Besides player raiding, steadily rising salaries made it difficult for many teams who wanted to win games and not be also-rans, to continue operating.

Finding and signing players was tough enough; but keeping them was even tougher. There were no rules for players having to stay with a team and their major opponents would often snatch players by offering bigger paydays. The poorly financed teams just as today did poorly in the standings.

There were also issues with what were known as “ringers.” Knute Rockne was a ringer in his day. There were lots of other college athletes who either coached or played while still enrolled in school. The pros were offering them comparatively big bucks to move out and join them. Certain teams with lots of cash were “stockpiling” college stars to make sure their teams won. If your team could not afford the going rate, your team’s talent level was at a major disadvantage.

Cooperation of the teams without a formal league framework could have resolved most of these issues in the twenty-years from 1900 to 1920 but it did not happen. The teams were more concerned about winning than cooperating.

Chapter 9 When Pro Football Was Unorganized

**ORIGINAL
NATIONAL
FOOTBALL
LEAGUE**

1902
Pittsburgh Stars



Former college players and coaches wanted to keep playing football

There were no million-dollar players in the professional football ranks at the beginning of the twentieth century, but there were a lot of players and coaches who wanted to play football and hoped to get paid to play their favorite sport. Just like there are social clubs, dart clubs, shuffleboard clubs, rod and gun clubs, and a host of other clubs, before the NFL pro football league, there were a lot of athletic clubs that focused on football as it was evolving into American football.

The current NFL compiled a brief snapshot of what was going on in these early football days from 1900 to 1909 and then the Football Hall of Fame continued their work from 1910 to 2012. It is nice work and I hope the Hall of Fame picks it up again and keeps it current. We thank these groups for putting together this very brief compendium that takes us through the Early Pro Football period

right up until the formation of a league that lasted, the NFL. And, so the rest of this chapter is courtesy of the NFL and the Pro football Hall of Fame:

1900

William C. Temple took over the team payments for the Duquesne Country and Athletic Club, becoming the first known individual club owner.

1902

Baseball's Philadelphia Athletics, managed by Connie Mack, and the Philadelphia Phillies formed professional football teams, joining the Pittsburgh Stars in the first attempt at a pro football league, named the National Football League. The Athletics won the first night football game ever played, 39-0 over Kanaweola AC at Elmira, New York, November 21.

All three teams claimed the pro championship for the year, but the league president, Dave Berry, named the Stars the champions. Pitcher Rube Waddell was with the Athletics, and pitcher Christy Mathewson a fullback for Pittsburgh.

The first World Series of pro football, actually a five-team tournament, was played among a team made up of players from both the Athletics and the Phillies, but simply named New York; the New York Knickerbockers; the Syracuse AC; the Warlow AC; and the Orange (New Jersey) AC at New York's original Madison Square Garden. New York and Syracuse played the first indoor football game before 3,000, December 28. Syracuse, with Glen (Pop) Warner at guard, won 6-0 and went on to win the tournament.

1903

The Franklin (Pa.) Athletic Club won the second and last World Series of pro football over the Oreos AC of Asbury Park, New Jersey; the Watertown Red and Blacks; and the Orange AC. Pro football was popularized in Ohio when the Massillon Tigers, a strong amateur team, hired four Pittsburgh pros to play in the season-ending game against Akron. At the same time, pro football declined in the

Pittsburgh area, and the emphasis on the pro game moved west from Pennsylvania to Ohio.

1904

A field goal was changed from five points to four. Ohio had at least seven pro teams, with Massillon winning the Ohio Independent Championship, that is, the pro title. Talk surfaced about forming a state-wide league to end spiraling salaries brought about by constant bidding for players and to write universal rules for the game. The feeble attempt to start the league failed. Halfback Charles Follis signed a contract with the Shelby (Ohio) AC, making him the first known black pro football player.

1905

The Canton AC, later to become known as the Bulldogs, became a professional team. Massillon again won the Ohio League championship.

1906

The forward pass was legalized. The first authenticated pass completion in a pro game came on October 27, when George (Peggy) Parratt of Massillon threw a completion to Dan (Bullet) Riley in a victory over a combined Benwood-Moundsville team. Arch-rivals Canton and Massillon, the two best pro teams in America, played twice, with Canton winning the first game but Massillon winning the second and the Ohio League championship.

A betting scandal and the financial disaster wrought upon the two clubs by paying huge salaries caused a temporary decline in interest in pro football in the two cities and, somewhat, throughout Ohio.

1909

A field goal dropped from four points to three.



1909 Shibe Park Opened. It became Connie Mack Stadium, Philadelphia

1912

A touchdown was increased from five points to six. Jack Cusack revived a strong pro team in Canton.

1913

Jim Thorpe, a former football and track star at the Carlisle Indian School (Pa.) and a double gold medal winner at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, played for the Pine Village Pros in Indiana.

1915

Massillon again fielded a major team, reviving the old rivalry with Canton. Cusack signed Thorpe to play for Canton for \$250 a game.

1916

With Thorpe and former Carlisle teammate Pete Calac starring, Canton went 9-0-1, won the Ohio League championship, and was acclaimed the pro football champion.

1917

Despite an upset by Massillon, Canton again won the Ohio League championship.

1919

Canton again won the Ohio League championship, despite the team having been turned over from Cusack to Ralph Hay. Thorpe and Calac were joined in the backfield by Joe Guyon.

Earl (Curly) Lambeau and George Calhoun organized the Green Bay Packers. Lambeau's employer at the Indian Packing Company provided \$500 for equipment and allowed the team to use the company field for practices. The Packers went 10-1.

1920

Pro football was in a state of confusion due to three major problems: dramatically rising salaries; players continually jumping from one team to another following the highest offer; and the use of college players still enrolled in school. A league in which all the members would follow the same rules seemed the answer.

An organizational meeting, at which the Akron Pros, Canton Bulldogs, Cleveland Indians, and Dayton Triangles were represented, was held at the Jordan and Hupmobile auto showroom in Canton, Ohio,

The meeting was on August 20, 1920. Just seven men, including legendary all-around athlete and football star Jim Thorpe, met with the purpose as noted above of organizing a professional football league. The meeting led to the creation of the American Professional Football Conference (APFC), the forerunner to the hugely successful National Football League.

The APFA began play on September 26, with the Rock Island Independents of Illinois defeating a team from outside the league, the St. Paul Ideals, 48-0. A week later, Dayton beat Columbus 14-0 in the first game between two teams from the APFA, the forerunner of the modern NFL.

The teams were from four states-Akron, Canton, Cleveland, and Dayton from Ohio; the Hammond Pros and Muncie Flyers from Indiana; the Rochester Jeffersons from New York; and the Rock Island Independents, Decatur Staleys, and Racine Cardinals from Illinois.

Hoping to capitalize on his fame, the members elected Thorpe president; Stanley Cofall of Cleveland was elected vice president. A membership fee of \$100 per team was charged to give an appearance of respectability, but no team ever paid it. Scheduling was left up to the teams, and there were wide variations, both in the overall number of games played, and in the number played against APFA member teams.

Four other teams-the Buffalo All-Americans, Chicago Tigers, Columbus Panhandles, and Detroit Heralds-joined the league sometime during the year. As noted, on September 26, the first game featuring an APFA team was played at Rock Island's Douglas Park. A crowd of 800 watched the Independents defeat the St. Paul Ideals 48-0.

A week later, October 3, the first game matching two APFA teams was held. At Triangle Park, Dayton defeated Columbus 14-0, with Lou Partlow of Dayton scoring the first touchdown in a game between Association teams. The same day, Rock Island defeated Muncie 45-0.

By the beginning of December, most of the teams in the APFA had abandoned their hopes for a championship, and some of them, including the Chicago Tigers and the Detroit Heralds, had finished their seasons, disbanded, and had their franchises canceled by the Association.

Four teams-Akron, Buffalo, Canton, and Decatur-still had championship aspirations, but a series of late-season games among them left Akron as the only undefeated team in the Association. At one of these games, Akron sold tackle Bob Nash to Buffalo for \$300 and five percent of the gate receipts. It was the first APFA player deal.

1921

At the league meeting in Akron, April 30, the championship of the 1920 season was awarded to the Akron Pros. The APFA was reorganized, with Joe Carr of the Columbus Panhandles named president and Carl Storck of Dayton secretary-treasurer. Carr moved the Association's headquarters to Columbus, drafted a league constitution and by-laws, gave teams territorial rights, restricted player movements, developed membership criteria for the franchises, and issued standings for the first time, so that the APFA would have a clear champion.

The Association's membership increased to 22 teams, including the Green Bay Packers, who were awarded to John Clair of the Acme Packing Company.

Thorpe moved from Canton to the Cleveland Indians, but he was hurt early in the season and played very little.

A.E. Staley turned the Decatur Staleys over to player-coach George Halas, who moved the team to Cubs Park in Chicago. Staley paid Halas \$5,000 to keep the name Staleys for one more year. Halas made halfback Ed (Dutch) Sternaman his partner.

Player-coach Fritz Pollard of the Akron Pros became the first black head coach.

The Staleys claimed the APFA championship with a 9-1-1 record, as did Buffalo at 9-1-2. Carr ruled in favor of the Staleys, giving Halas his first championship.

1922

After admitting the use of players who had college eligibility remaining during the 1921 season, Clair and the Green Bay management withdrew from the APFA, January 28. Curly Lambeau promised to obey league rules and then used \$50 of his own money to buy back the franchise. Bad weather and low attendance plagued the Packers, and Lambeau went broke, but local merchants arranged a

\$2,500 loan for the club. A public nonprofit corporation was set up to operate the team, with Lambeau as head coach and manager.

The American Professional Football Association changed its name to the National Football League on June 24. The Chicago Staleys became the Chicago Bears.

The NFL fielded 18 teams, including the new Oorang Indians of Marion, Ohio, an all-Indian team featuring Thorpe, Joe Guyon, and Pete Calac, and sponsored by the Oorang dog kennels. Canton, led by player-coach Guy Chamberlin and tackles Link Lyman and Wilbur (Pete) Henry, emerged as the league's first true powerhouse, going 10-0-2.

Thank you to the NFL and to the Football Hall of Fame for these facts about the formation of the NFL.

Chapter 10 NFL's Fast Start from 1920 Set the Stage for Today



1920 American Professional Football

Association (1920 - 1922)

Consisting of 12 Teams:

Canton Bulldogs	Dayton Triangles
Cleveland Indians	Akron Professionals
Rochester Jeffersons	Rock Island Independents
Massillon Tigers	Muncie Flyers
Decatur Staleys	Racine Cardinals
Hammond Pros	Buffalo All-Americans

NFL growth: One thing right after another

Americans, and in fact the whole world sports community, know that the National Football League today is a multi-billion-dollar enterprise. Few know the early history provided by the NFL et al in Chapter 8. We just learned that its origins as the American Professional Football Association were much humbler than today's millionaire players and billionaire players and luxury-box stadiums with capacities of over 100,000 fans.

Pro-football lovers look back at the league's inaugural 1920 campaign, which we know featured its birth in an Ohio auto dealership. They see strange teams such as Decatur and Muncie and the crowning of a champion that was not immediate as today in the middle of the Super Bowl Field. Instead, it took four months after the last snap was taken to get it right—back in 1921.

As promising as the pro-football scenario was in 1920, even though things looked good for the future of the pro sport, just like today, College Football dominated. Pro football remained completely overshadowed by the college game. This was tough for team owners, as we discussed. Most were in it for the profits and there were few to none.

The owners were almost literally bleeding cash because of soaring player salaries and intense bidding wars as they poached players from other squads. The owners of these independent pro teams desired a strong league using the baseball model which had worked for so long. They wanted to gain more control over the sport—and their finances. A fully functional NFL was right around the corner and it would eventually provide this stability.



As we learn in exploring the early days of American football, everything was changing to comply with Camp's rules and others—even the field size. Yes, even the field size in early American football was changing regularly but by 1920, the size had stabilized. The gridiron dimensions were the same in 1920 as today. However, the game of professional football was much different. Back then, there were no Johnny Unitas's, Charley Conerly's, Norm Van Brocklin's, Bart Starr's, Joe Namath's, Tom Brady's, Carson Wentz's, or Nick Foles's.

The Quarterback slot on the offense was often a running position. Forward passes were rare. Even things we take for granted today

were prohibited. Can you imagine that coaching from the sidelines was not permitted?



When the pass was legalized in 1906, it still was not like today. It was not readily accepted by “real teams.” Established coaches in the elite Eastern schools like Army, Harvard, Pennsylvania and Yale did not embrace the pass. It was also a gamble. You had to be pretty darn good to not lose more than the potential gain.

Here are some of the stipulations. Passes could not be thrown over the line on five yards to either side of the center. An incomplete pass resulted in a 15-yard penalty, and a pass that dropped without being touched meant possession went to the defensive team. According to Kent Stephens, a historian with the College Hall of Fame in South Bend, “Because of these rules and the fact coaches at that time thought the forward pass was a sissified type of play that wasn’t really football, they were hesitant to adopt this new strategy.”

Each athlete played on both offense and defense. The late great Chuck Bednarik was the last consistent two-way player in the NFL, Bednarik played center and linebacker for a franchise-record 14 seasons with the Eagles from 1949 to 1962. In 1920, just about every

player competed on both offense and defense. Money was so tight that the great coach of the Bears, George Halas carried equipment, wrote press releases, sold tickets, taped ankles, played and coached for the Decatur club. Having two platoons would cost twice as much.

Today the league has a standard 16-game schedule, all nice and tidy and made up by the NFL itself. Back then, in 1920, the teams scheduled their own opponents and could play nonleague and even college squads if they chose and it all counted toward their records.

There simply were no established guidelines. Everything was ad hoc—the number of games played, and the quality of opponents scheduled. The league did not even maintain official standings in its fledgling years.

By 1925, it looked like the NFL was going to make it. Late in the season, it pulled off its greatest coup in gaining national attention. The University of Illinois season ended in November, and that made All-America halfback Harold (Red) Grange eligible conflict-free to do as he wanted with his life.

Grange signed a contract to play with the Chicago Bears. On Thanksgiving Day, a crowd of 36,000, which was the largest in pro football history at the time watched Grange and the Bears play the Chicago Cardinals to a scoreless tie at Wrigley Field. At the beginning of December, the Bears hit the jackpot when they went out on the road playing all around the country in 12 days.

They actually played eight games in 12 days, in St. Louis, Philadelphia, New York City, Washington, Boston, Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Chicago. A crowd of 73,000 watched the game against the Giants at the Polo Grounds.

This helped assure the future success of the troubled NFL franchise in New York. The Bears then played nine more games in the South and West, including a game in Los Angeles, in which 75,000 fans watched them defeat the Los Angeles Tigers in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Owners, players, and coaches were ready to do anything to make sure the new league was a success.

In 1930, the league had changed its whole complexion, literally. Dayton was one of the NFL's original franchises. In 1930, it became the last of the NFL's original franchises when it was purchased by William B. Dwyer and John C. Depler, and the whole team was moved to Brooklyn, and renamed the Dodgers. They were a football team, nonetheless even with the Dodgers name. The Portsmouth, Ohio Spartans also entered the league at the same time. Things were changing rapidly

Other things were happening such as the Packers edged the Giants for the title, but the most improved team was the Bears. George Halas retired as a player and replaced himself as coach of the Bears with Ralph Jones. Jones refined the T-formation by introducing wide ends and a halfback in motion. He also brought in rookie All-America fullback-tackle, the great Bronko Nagurski.

Anybody would still play anybody. The Giants whooped a team of former Notre Dame players coached by Knute Rockne 22-0 in a successful match before 55,000 at the Polo Grounds on December 14. This was a charity game as the proceeds went to the New York Unemployment Fund to help those suffering because of the Great Depression. The easy victory helped the NFL's credibility with the press and the public. Everybody likes an act of kindness.

Carl Storck takes over the NFL as 2nd commissioner

In 1939, as the league was moving closer to 20 years in operation, Joseph Carr, who had been NFL president since 1921, died in Columbus on May 20. Carl Storck was named acting president of the NFL on May 25. Technology was about to help the NFL. The first televised NFL game saw NBC broadcast the Brooklyn Dodgers v Philadelphia Eagles game from Ebbets Field to the approximately 1,000 TV sets that were known to be in the New York Area.

Championships were beginning to be a big thing in pro-football as Green Bay defeated New York 27-0 in the NFL Championship

Game, December 10 at Milwaukee. This was the first year that NFL attendance exceeded 1 million in a season, reaching 1,071,200.

Pro Bowl gave football an All-Star Game

In 1939, The New York Giants defeated the Pro All-Stars 13-10 in the first Pro Bowl. It was played in Chicago at Wrigley Field on January 15. The NFL also decided to change the format of the field, but not the dimensions. Each field would need just a paint job. The inbounds lines or hashmarks were moved from 15 yards away from the sidelines to nearer the center of the field-20 yards from the sidelines.

Funny things were happening that were unexpected. For example, Brooklyn and Boston merged into a team that played home games in both cities and was known simply as The Yanks. Additionally, George Halas rejoined the Bears late in the season after service time with the U.S. Navy during World War II. He took over much of the coaching duties, but he kept the prior coaches throughout the season. Steve Van Buren of the Philadelphia Eagles led the NFL in rushing, kickoff returns, and scoring.

Rookie quarterback Bob Waterfield led Cleveland to a 15-14 victory over Washington in the NFL Championship Game,

At the end of World War II, after the Japanese surrender, 638 players had served in the Armed forces and 21 of them had died in action.

After the 1942 Pro-Bowl game, during the war period, the game was not played again until 1951. This classic contest was revived. On January 14, the American Conference defeated the National Conference in a nail-biter 28-27.

More rules were passed including some we might think were in the rulebook forever. For example, no tackle, guard, or center would be eligible to catch a forward pass.

The 1951 NFL Championship Game was televised coast-to-coast for the first time The Rams defeated the Browns 24-17.

Ted Collins sold the New York Yanks' franchise back to the NFL in 1952 and a new franchise was awarded to a group in Dallas after it purchased the assets of the Yanks on January 24. The new Texans went 1-11. This of course was not too good for the new owners. At the end of the season the franchise was canceled. It was the last time that an NFL team would fail.

The Pittsburgh Steelers abandoned the Single-Wing for the T-formation, the last pro team to do so. The Detroit Lions won their first NFL championship in 17 years in 1952 defeating the Browns 17-7 in the title game, played before New Year's on December 28.

In 1953 the Old Yanks came back to life again as a Baltimore group headed by Carroll Rosenbloom got the franchise and the holdings of the defunct Dallas organization. The new team became The Baltimore Colts. It was the product of the largest trade in league history, acquiring 10 players from Cleveland in exchange for five. In a cosmetic name change, American and National conferences were changed to the Eastern and Western conferences.

Another major happening was that the immortal great Jim Thorpe died on March 28. Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania agreed to terms with Thorpe's widow to build a memorial and change the Town's name to Jim Thorpe. Thorpe's bones are buried in this beautiful memorial, which I visit every year on my annual visit to this wonderful town where Sean Connery and Richard Harris tipped a few in the filming of the Molly Maguires.

In 1956, the NFL Players Association was founded to give players a bigger voice in what was going on in the NFL. In 1959, the immortal Vince Lombardi was named coach of the Green Bay Packers and Tim Mara of New York Giants fame passed away.

The NFL was so successful, it spawned the AFL

The American Football League (AFL) was formed as a major professional American football league in 1960 and it was very successful. It was a lot of fun watching all the new teams in action.

The teams included the Dallas Cowboys, Houston Oilers, New York Jets, Kansas City Chiefs, Boston Patriots, and even John Madden's Oakland Raiders. It operated for ten seasons from 1960 until 1969, when it merged with the older National Football League (NFL), that had been established in the 1920-1922 period.

The first AFL-NFL World Championship Game in professional American football was dubbed retroactively as Super Bowl I. It had been referred to in some contemporaneous reports, including the game's radio broadcast, as the Super Bowl. The name stuck. It was played after the 1966 season on January 15 at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. In this game, NFL Green Bay Packers defeated the AFL champion Kansas City Chiefs by the score of 35–10.

John Madden is still a people's favorite at 83 years of age. He was hired by Al Davis when the AFL was in its prime as the linebackers' coach for the AFL's Oakland Raiders. This was in 1967 and the league would last only two more seasons. He helped the team reach Super Bowl II that season. A year later, after Raiders head coach John Rauchleft, John Madden stepped in to become the Raiders' head coach. This made Madden professional football's youngest head coach at the age of 32.

Former Raiders coach Dennis Allen in interviews noted that John Madden was arguably the best Oakland Raiders coach in the history of the team. His Raiders reached but lost five AFC Title games in seven years. This left the Raiders with the same image that the Dallas Cowboys had previously had—as a team unable to "win the big one."

Despite a 12–1–1 mark in 1969, for example the team lost 17–7 to the Kansas City Chiefs in the final American Football League championship game. The next year, the Raiders would be in the AFC Division of the NFL as the AFL lost its identity.

Was the AFL Any Good? See Super Bowl III

Super Bowl III was the third AFL–NFL Championship Game in professional American football, and the first to officially bear the

name "Super Bowl". It was not AFC v NFC. It was the last interleague Super Bowl and the AFL did not win either of the first two games.

This game was played on January 12, 1969, at the Orange Bowl in Miami, Florida. Everybody over five years old at the time remembers Broadway Joe Namath, cocky as can be, making a prediction that the AFL's Jets would win the game.

This game is still regarded as one of the greatest upsets in American sports history. The heavy underdog American Football League (AFL) champion New York Jets, led by former Alabama QB Joe Namath defeated the National Football League (NFL) champion Baltimore Colts by a score of 16–7. I was a senior in College at the time. What a great football game. I watched it from pre-game through post-game.

This was the first Super Bowl victory for the AFL. Though the AFL had been in existence ten years, before the start of this game, most sports writers and fans had written off the AFL teams as being less talented than every one of the NFL clubs. There were few who expected anything less than the Colts to whoop the Jets by a wide margin.

Baltimore had posted a 13–1 record during the 1968 NFL season before defeating the Cleveland Browns, 34–0, in the 1968 NFL Championship Game. The Jets finished the 1968 AFL season at 11–3, and defeated John Madden's great Oakland Raiders, 27–23, in the 1968 AFL Championship Game. Darryl Lamonica had a poor game and Kenny, the Snake, Stabler, who took Oakland to Super XI had just joined the Raiders.

After beating the Raiders and despite the hype saying the Jets did not have a shot, Joe Namath was undaunted. This unafraid Jets quarterback made an appearance three-days before the Super Bowl at the Miami Touchdown Club and brashly guaranteed a victory. The Jets could not have been more pleased with the prediction and they backed up Broadway Joe's words by controlling most of the game. They built a 16–0 lead by the fourth quarter off of a touchdown run by Matt Snell and three field goals by Jim Turner.

Colts quarterback Earl Morrall threw three interceptions before being replaced by the great Johnny Unitas, who then led Baltimore to its only touchdown during the last few minutes of the game.

With the victory, the Jets remain the only winning Super Bowl team to only score one touchdown (either offensive, defensive, or special teams). Namath, who completed 17 out of 28 passes for 206 yards, was named as the Super Bowl's Most Valuable Player, despite not throwing a touchdown pass in the game or any passes at all in the fourth quarter. The recap of the game is not as exciting as its reality.

And that, my friends, is how the NFL got to where it is today.

Chapter 11 Eagles Football – The Inaugural Season 1933

Coach #1 Lud Wray

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Pl</u>	<u>Conf/Div</u>
1933	Lud Wray	3-5-1	4 th	East



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 today are Super Bowl Champions, making them the best in football.

The season began with a disappointing blowout at the hands of the New York Giants on October 15, 1933 in an away game at the Polo Grounds before 18,000. Because the Eagles were new, they were given a pass for the first four weeks of the season without it affecting their overall record. Thus, from September through October 8, the official record shows the Eagles with four byes during this period.

On October 18, 1933, in an unusual Wednesday game played at home before 1750 fans at the Baker Bowl, the Eagles bought back some of the scoring difference from the prior Sunday's game but lost nonetheless to the Portsmouth Spartans L (0-25). This brought he season record to 0-2-0. On Sunday, October 29, the Eagles traveled to Green Bay Wisconsin for a game played at City Stadium. The Eagles scored their first points as a team in this 9-35 loss to the Green Bay Packers before 3,007 fans. Their record was then 0-3-0.

On Nov5, the Eagles grabbed their first win W (6-0) of the season in a game played at Redland Field in Cincinnati against Reds, bringing their season record to 1-3-0. On Nov 12, the Eagles tied the Chicago Bears at home at Baker Bowl T (3-3) before 17,850. With that crowd, the team made enough that day to be paid.

Pittsburgh had not changed its name yet and so on Nov 19 at home in the Baker Bowl, before 6,000 fans, Philadelphia defeated the brand-new Pittsburgh Pirates W (25-6) bringing their record to 2-3-1. Next up was Cincinnati at home before 10,000 fans. The Eagles won again against the Reds W (20-3). Their record was now 3-3-1. It

looked like It might be a positive season, but the Eagles finished off with two losses.

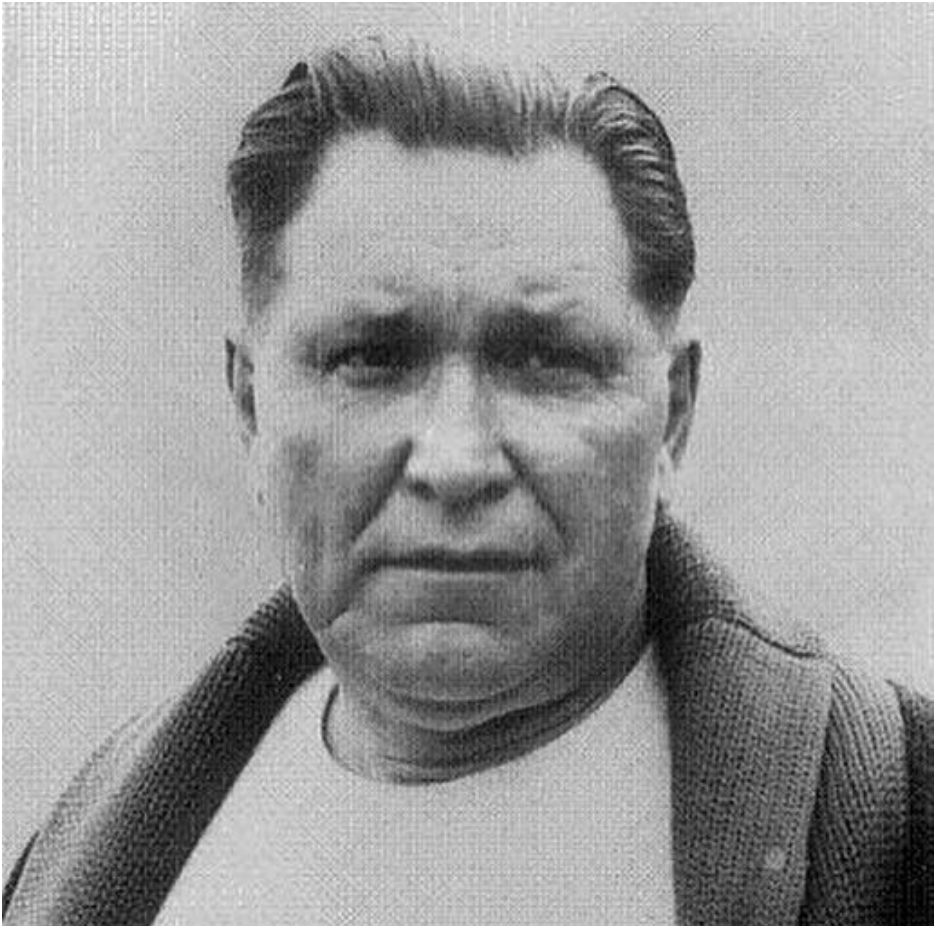
The first was on Dec 3 against Green Bay at home L (0-10) before 9,500. The last game of the season, a loss, was at home against the NY Giants. The Eagles showed a vast improvement losing in this contest by just six points L (14-20) at home.

Chapter 12 Eagles Football Lud Wray & Bert Bell

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 rd	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 th	1-9-1
1940	Bert Bell,	x	East	5th	1-10-0



James R. Ludlow "Lud" Wray 1st 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



Lud Wray as a player

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.

From 1923 to 1929, Wray served as an assistant football coach at Penn. In 1930 he succeeded Lou Young as head coach of the Quakers. There was some team friction after the first season and Wray was fired.

In 1932, Wray was named head coach of the Boston Braves, a National Football League expansion team. The Braves went 4–4–2

in their initial season. He left the team after one season to be the Eagle's coach and was replaced by Lone Star Dietz.

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.

By third year, the franchise was suffering significant financial losses and was offered for sale at a public auction. Bell was the only bidder and became the team's sole owner. On April 28, Wray chose not to accept a 66% pay cut and left the team.

In 1938, Wray became an assistant coach at Manhattan College. He remained with the school until his resignation in November 1940.

In 1941, Wray served as an assistant to Anthony H. Scanlan at Saint Joseph's University. When Scanlan became head coach at Holy Cross, Wray went with him. In 1943, Scanlan was involved in WWII which limited him to only being able to coach on game day. Wray led the team the rest of the week. Wray and Scanlan eventually had a falling out and Wray was replaced by Ox DaGrosa for 1944.

Wray married Juanita Sauveur in December 26, 1933. He died on July 25, 1967 in Philadelphia. At the time of his death, Wray resided in Oreland, Pennsylvania. He was survived by his wife.

1934 Lud Wray, Coach #1

The 1934 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their second season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Lud Wray in his second season of three as head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles. This Eagles team finished with a losing season of 4-7-1. Though there was a slight improvement in the record, the 1934 team failed to improve on their previous record of 3-5-1, losing seven games. They failed to qualify for the playoffs for the second consecutive season.

On Sept 16 at Green Bay, the Eagles were beaten by the Packers-L (6-18) before 5,000. Then, on Sept 26, at Pittsburgh, the Eagles picked up their first win W (17-0). On Oct 7 at home, Pittsburgh squeaked out a victory over the Eagles L (7-9). This was followed on Oct 14 with a shutout loss at home to the Detroit Lions L 0-10) before 9860 fans.

On Oct 21 at Boston, the Eagles lost another game by one TD L (0-6) against the Redskins-before 10,344. On Oct 28, at New York, the Giants-beat the Eagles in a shutout L (0-17). In another home game on Nov 6, the Eagles blew-out the Cincinnati Reds at home, W (64-0). Then, on Veterans day, Nov 11, at home the Eagles were barely beaten by the Brooklyn Dodgers L (7-10).

The following Sunday on Nov 18, in another home game, the Eagles lost to the Boston Redskins-L (7-14) before 8,500. On Nov 25, at Brooklyn, the Eagles shut-out the Dodgers W (13-0). Then, in the season finale, on Dec 2, at home, the Eagles beat the New York Giants for the first time ever in a close shutout, W 6-0 before 12,471 fans.

1935 Lud Wray, Coach #1

The 1935 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their third season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Lud Wray in his third season of three as head coach. Like the prior year, this Eagles team finished with a losing season record of 2-7-1, Winning only two games. They failed to qualify for the playoffs for the third second consecutive season. A home game against the Boston Redskins scheduled for November 17 was canceled due to snow and rain.

On Sept 13 at home, the Eagles were beaten by the Pittsburgh Pirates L (7-17). Then, on Sept 13, at Detroit the Eagles were shut out L (0-35) before 12,000. On Oct 9 at Pittsburgh, the Birds pulled off a victory over the Pirates before 6,271 W (17-6). This was followed on Oct 13 with a shutout loss at Chicago to the Bears L 0-39 before 9860 fans.

n Oct 21 1 at Boston, the Eagles lost another game by one TD L (0-6) against the Redskins-before 10,344. On Oct 28, at New York, the Giants-beat the Eagles in a shutout L (0-17). In another home game on Nov 6, the Eagles blew-out the Cincinnati Reds at home, W (64-0). Then, on Veterans day, Nov 11, at home the Eagles were barely beaten by the Brooklyn Dodgers L (7-10).

On October 27, at, Brooklyn, the Eagles fell to the Dodgers-L (6-17). On Nov 3, at Boston, the Eagles defeated the Redskins-W 7-6-before 10,000. At home on Nov 5, the Dodgers beat the Phillies at Brooklyn L (0-3) Then, on Nov 10, at Chicago. The Eagles lost to the Cardinals L 3-12) before 6,000.

On Nov 17, the game scheduled with the Boston Redskins at home - was cancelled due to snow and rain. On Nov 24. At New York, the Giants shut out the Eagles in a tight game L (0-10). At home against the Giants the following week at home, the Giants picked up another victory against Philadelphia, L (14-21). Wrapping up the 1935 season, the Eagles lost at home to the Green Bay Packers L (6-13) before 4,000 fans. The crowds continued to be sparse.

1936 Bert Bell, Coach #2

The 1936 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fourth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Bert Bell in his first season of five as head coach. Like the prior year, this Eagles team finished with a losing season record of 1-11, winning just one game and being shut-out in six of their twelve games. They failed to qualify for the playoffs for the fourth consecutive season.

The Eagles moved their training camp, after the first 2 years in Atlantic City, New Jersey and 1935 in Philadelphia at the Chestnut Hill Academy, to Temple University in Philadelphia. The Eagles would bring 7 former Temple Owls football players on the team. Additionally, the club would move all home games to the larger Philadelphia Municipal Stadium from the Baker Bowl. Hoping to rescue all pro teams from lack of players and talent, Bert Bell

convinced the NFL to hold a college players' draft to stock league with talent.



Bert Bell 2nd 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.

On Sept 20, at home, the Eagles lost to the Boston Redskins L (3-26) before 20,000. Then, on Sept 27, they lost to the Chicago Bears at home in a shutout L (0-17 before 25,000. On Oct 4, at Brooklyn, the Eagles were shut out by the Dodgers L (0-18)

On Oct 11 at home, the Eagles were shut out by the Detroit Lions L (0-23) before 15,000. After traveling to Pittsburgh on Oct 14, the Eagles were shutout by the Pirates L (0-17) before 10,042. On Oct 18, at Boston, the Redskins beat the Eagles L (7-17) before 4,000 fans. . In another away game on Oct 25 at New York, the Eagles lost to the Giants L (17-21) before 15,000.

On Nov 5, at home, the Eagles were beaten by the Pittsburgh Pirates L (0-6). On Nov 8, at Chicago, the Eagles were shut out by the Cardinals L (0-13) before 1500. Then, on Nov 22, the Chicago Bears beat the Eagles L (7-28) At home on Nov 29, the Brooklyn Dodgers defeated the Eagles L (7-13)

1937 Bert Bell, Coach #2

The 1937 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fifth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Bert Bell in his second season of five as head coach. Like the prior year, this Eagles team finished with a losing season record of 2-8-1, winning just two games and tying one. They failed to qualify for the playoffs for the fifth consecutive season.

The 1937 NFL Draft took place December 12, 1936. It would be for 10 rounds and the teams picked a total of 100 players.

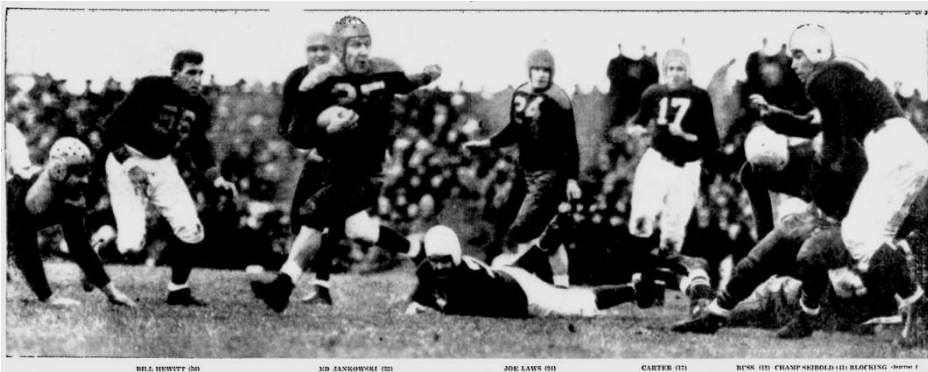
The Eagles would have the 1st pick in the draft. They used this pick to choose the runner-up for the Heisman Trophy, Sam Francis, a back out of Nebraska. He never played a game for the Eagles but he did play for the Chicago Bears

In the season opener on Sept 5, at Pittsburgh, the Eagles were defeated by the Pirates-L (14-27) before 8,588. After a short bus ride

to Brooklyn, the Dodgers defeated the Eagles L (7-13) before 5,221. At home on September 21, the Cleveland Rams got the best of the Eagles L 3-21) before 3,107. Then, on Sept 26, at home the Eagles and the Chicago Cardinals tied T (6-6) before 3,912

On Oct 3 at home, the New York Giants beat the Eagles L (7-16) before 4,878. The Eagles then traveled to Washington DC and beat the Redskins W 7-0) before 7,320. On Oct 17, at New York, the Giants shut out the Eagles -L (0-21) before 20,089. On Oct 24 at home, the Washington Redskins beat the Eagles L (7-10) before 6,580.

9-October 31, 1937-at Pittsburgh, the Eagles were beaten by the Pirates-L (7-16) before 2,772. Then on Nov 7, at Brooklyn, the Eagles beat the Dodgers W (14-10) before 8,373. Closing out the season on Nov 14, at Green Bay, the Packers-beat the Eagles L (7-37) before 13,340 fans



Bill Hewitt (00) Ed Jankowski (11) Joe Laws (11) Carter (11) Bess (11) Champ Sherold (11) Blocking - Herman ?

Packers v Philadelphia

1938 Bert Bell, Coach #2

The 1938 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Bert Bell in his third season of five as head coach. Like the prior year, this Eagles team finished with a losing season record of 5-6-0, winning five games – three more than 1937. They failed to qualify for the playoffs for the sixth consecutive season.

The 1938 NFL Draft was held on December 12, 1937. It consisted of 12 rounds. The Eagles got the second pick in each round, as the

expansion Cleveland Rams got the first pick. With their first pick they chose Corbett Davis, a back from Indiana University. Bert Bell's idea of a draft seemed to be working quite well and would eventually be one of the rationale's used in the future to make him the Commissioner of NFL Football.

The Eagles 5–6–0 record was not good enough to make it to the 1938 NFL Championship Game. The game was played on December 11, 1938, at the Polo Grounds in New York City. The game attendance was 48,120, a record crowd for a title game.

The game paired the champions of the Eastern Division, New York Giants (8–2–1) against the Western Division Champion Green Bay Packers (8–3–0). The Giants won the game, 23–17.

The Eagles had two pro-Bowl Selections in 1938—Joe Carter, a fifth-year player from Austin college and Bill Hewitt, a 6th year veteran from Michigan.

Games of 1938



<< Eagles v Giants at NY

On Sept 11 in the home and season opener, the Eagles were beaten by the Washington Redskins-L (23-26) before 20,000. On Sept 16, after traveling to Pittsburgh, the Eagles beat the Pirates W 27–7 before . At home on Sept 25, the Eagles defeated the New York Giants-W 14–10-before 20,000. Then, on Oct 2 at home, the Chicago Bears beat the Eagles L (6-28).

On Oct 16 at New York, the Eagles were defeated by the Giants-L (7-17) before 33,187. On Oct 23, at Washington, the Redskins-beat

the Eagles L (14-20) before 3,000. Then at home against the Chicago Cardinals, the Eagles got the win W 0-7) before 15,000. On Nov 6 at home, the Brooklyn Dodgers beat the Eagles L (7-10) before 12,000. This time on Nov 13, the game was at Brooklyn and the Eagles lost again L (14-32) before 13,052

On Nov 20, at home on Nov 20, the Eagles beat the Pittsburgh Pirates-W (14-7) before 6,500. The following week on Dec 4, the Eagles traveled to Detroit and beat the Lions W (21-7) before 19,000

1939 Bert Bell, Coach #2

The 1939 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventh season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Bert Bell in his fourth season of five as head coach. Like the prior year, this Eagles team finished with a losing season record of 1-9-1, winning just one game—four less than 1938. They failed to qualify for the playoffs for the seventh consecutive season. This season would be the last for the Eagles using Municipal Stadium (to be JFK). In the next several years, games would be played in Shibe Park.

The 1939 NFL Draft had 22 rounds and was held on December 9, 1938. The Eagles drafted in the 4th spot in the 20 rounds they had picks. They chose a total 20 players, of which 9 made the team for the 1939 season.

In the season and home opener at Shibe Park, on Sept 17, the Washington Redskins beat the Eagles L (0-7) before 33,258. At home again on Sept 24, the Eagles were beaten by the New York Giants L (3-13) before 30,600 In the third home game in a row, the Eagles and the Brooklyn Dodgers tied T (0-0) on Oct 1, before 1,880. After traveling to New York, the Eagles were beaten by the Giants, L (10-27) before 34,471. At Brooklyn, the Eagles suffered their fourth non-win against the Dodgers on Oct 22, L (14-23) before 13,057

On Nov 5, at Washington, the Eagles lost in a nail-biter to the Redskins-L (6-7) before 20,444. Then, on -Nov 12, at home the Eagles were beaten by the Green Bay Packers-L (16-23) before

23,000. On Nov 19, at Chicago, the Eagles lost to the Bears L (14-27) before 21,398. Then, on Nov 23, 1939, the Eagles got their first win of the season at home against the Pittsburgh Pirates-W (17-14)-20,000

On Nov 26, at Pittsburgh, the Pirates beat the Eagles L (12-24) before 8,788. In the final regular game of the 1939 season, in a game played on Dec 3, at Cleveland, the Rams defeated the Eagles L 13-35) before 9,189

1940 Bert Bell, Coach #2

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.

The 1940 NFL Draft was held on December 9, 1939. This year again it was to have 22 rounds, with each team getting 20 picks. The weaker teams only picked in the 2nd and 4th rounds and were passed over in rounds 21 and 22.

The Eagles and Pittsburgh Pirates, before being called Steelers, both finished with 1-9-1, .100 records, but the 1939 Chicago Cardinals ended up at 1-10, .091 and thus, they got the first pick in the draft. The Eagles and Pirates would alternate picking 2nd or 3rd in each round.

Bert Bell was really struggling as a coach. As the owner, he sure saved a lot of money by not paying a coach, but after this season,

even he would rethink whether the savings were worth the poor record. The Eagles 298 rushing yards in 1940 were the fewest in the history of the NFL. The team gained only 0.94 yards per carry.

As we look at the extremely poor records in the first eight seasons, with several seasons of just one win, there were a preponderance of losses during this period. As Eagle Fans examine the overall record, it might provide some solace to know that to overcome the 19-65-3 record after Bert Bell would require an awful lot of excellent seasons.

The Eagles so far over 85 years, have had a ton of excellent seasons, mixed in with a few not so good and a few so-so, bringing the team record from 1933, including playoffs up to 2018 as (590-615-26). If the 19-65-3 cumulative record at the time in 1940 had just twenty-six more wins, then, by removing the 26 losses from that column would take today's record to (590-589-3), giving the Eagles a winning record through 2017 and entering 2018. Would that not be nice? 19-53-3 was not a good record, but the team was just forming.

So, if you think the many losses Lud Wray and Bert Bell collectively contributed to the Eagles record from 1933 through 1940, have nothing to do with today's record, think again. If we could wipe those seasons out by subtracting just 26 of those losses, the 2018 Eagles would be starting its fall 2018 season with an overall winning record instead of an overall losing record. So, as a fan first and a pundit second, I would vote for exchanging the Lud Wray and Bert Bell records for the Yellow Jackets record and give the Eagle's the glory as deserved. Just saying!

It is clear that from 1933 through 1940, the Eagles were happy to have a franchise, but they did not really know how to make it successful until 1941. We'll see soon

Games of 1940

In the season opener on Sept 15 at Green Bay, the Eagles did not get the job done and lost to the Packers L (20-27) before 11, 657. On Sept 22, at Cleveland, the Rams-beat the Eagles L (13-21) before 15,941. Then, on Sept 28, at home, the New York Giants-beat the Eagles by a score L (14-20) before 26,431. On Oct 4, my wedding

anniversary date, at Brooklyn, the Dodgers beat the Eagles L 17-30) before 24,008

On Oct 13, in a game played in New York, the Giants beat the Eagles L (7-17) before 30,317. On Oct 20, at home the Eagles bit the dust at the hand of the Washington Redskins-L (17-34) before 25,062. On Oct 26, at home, the Eagles were beaten by the Brooklyn Dodgers-L (7-21) before 6,500. Then, on Nov 10, 1940-at Pittsburgh, now with a name change to the Steelers, the Eagles lost to the newly christened Steelers in a very close match L (3-7) before 9,556.

On Nov 17, at home, the Detroit Lions-shut out the Eagles L (0-21) before 6,327. Then, on Nov 28, at home, in the season rematch against the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Eagles got it together and won the game W (7-0) before 4,200. All seasons, good and bad must come to an end. On Dec 1, the Eagle's pain ended but only after being defeated by the Redskins at Washington (6-13) before 25,838.

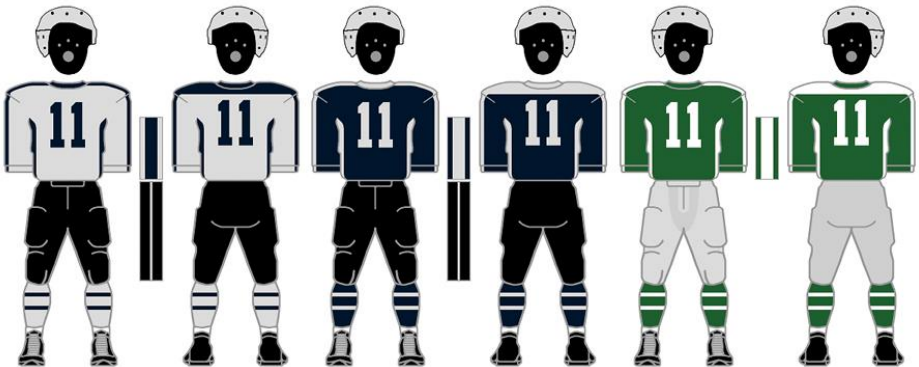
Bert Bell was very likeable but after such poor seasons, even his friends were hoping he would figure out how the Eagles could win a few games.

Chapter 13 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	4th	2-8-1
1942	Greasy Neale	x	East	5th	2-9-0
<i>1943 The Eagles & the Steelers aka The Steagles</i>					
1943	Greasy Neale	x	East	3rd,	5, 4, 1, —
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	1 st	8-4-0
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won Eastern Divisional Playoff (at Steelers) 21-0 • Lost NFL Championship (at Cardinals) 21-28 	
1948	Greasy Neale	x	East	1st	9-2-1
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won NFL Championship (1) (Cardinals) 7-0 	
1949	Greasy Neale	x	East	1st	11-1-0
1950	Greasy Neale	American	x	T3rd	6-6-0
<u>1941-1950 Greasy Neale final record (66-44-5)</u>					

There was not one losing season from 1943 to 1950



Philadelphia Eagles

1941: 2-8-1

4th in Eastern Division

Great Eagles Coaches—Greasy Neale

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 Neale. Well, 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, who knows if the Eagles would have survived as the Eagles.



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.

He played in the Major Leagues as an outfielder with the Cincinnati Reds between 1916 and 1924 and he put some time in with the Philadelphia Phillies for part of the 1921 season. Pro football had yet to be accepted 100% when Neale was looking to play professional sports. He was good in whatever sport he chose.

Greasy Neale was the starting right fielder for the 1919 Cincinnati Reds. He batted .357 in the 1919 World Series and he led the Reds with ten hits in their eight-game series win over what today are known as the “Scandalous White Sox.”

Because I think you will like this picture, here it is. Please remember, Neale was on the Reds.



The Chicago White Sox lost to the Cincinnati Reds during the 1919 World Series and eight players were later accused of fixing the series. The 1921 Black Sox trial acquitted the eight ball players, but they were banned for life from playing professional baseball. The eight acquitted players are White Sox pitcher Eddie Cicotte, first baseman Arnold 'Chick' Gandil, shortstop Charles 'Swede' Risberg, center fielder Oscar 'Happy' Felsch, pitcher Claude 'Lefty' Williams, star outfielder 'Shoeless' Joe Jackson, third baseman George 'Buck' Weaver and utility infielder Fred McMullin. Buck Weaver did not go in on the fix, but he knew of the plan and was therefore banned due to this knowledge.

Neale spent all but 22 games of his baseball career with the Cincinnati Reds. He had a career batting average of .259 and finished in the top ten in stolen bases in the National League four times. When football season came around, often he would leave baseball and fulfill his football duties (albeit playing about 90% of a

baseball season most years, with the exception of 1919 when he played the entire season, including the 1919 World Series).

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, and 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.

His 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 and is buried at Parkersburg Memorial Gardens in West Virginia. He is one of the best athletes ever.

1941 Greasy Neale, Coach #3

The 1941 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their ninth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football.



The Eagles were led by Greasy Neale in his first season of ten as head coach. Like Bert Bell's last year, though his team won just one game, this Eagles team finished with a losing season record of 2-8-1, winning just two games. They failed to qualify for the playoffs for the ninth consecutive season. This would be the Eagles second season at Shibe Park.

A once of a kind happening occurred in late 1940. The Pittsburgh Steelers owner Art Rooney bought half

interest in the Eagles and sold the Pirates to Alexis Thompson. Before the start of the 1941 season Rooney and Thompson swap city and NFL rights for Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh Pirates players from 1940 and before became members of the Philadelphia Eagles and the Philadelphia Eagles players became members of the renamed Pittsburgh Steelers.

Training camp this year was not in a schoolyard around the corner. Instead, Coach Greasy Neal moved the Eagles hold training camp to the High School Bowl, in Two Rivers, Wisconsin about. It was about 50 miles (80 km) southeast of Green Bay, Wisconsin and 90 miles north of Milwaukee on Lake Michigan.

The 1941 NFL Draft was held on December 10, 1940. Having such a poor record 1-10, the Eagles got the 1st pick in the 22 rounds of the draft. Because the players in the trade were drafted before the Eagles and Steelers franchise swap of cities, these players ended up playing for the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1941. The Pittsburgh draft picks would come to Philadelphia. The Chicago Bears wound up with the number one pick in the draft. They choose Tom Harmon, the 1940 Heisman Trophy winner, a halfback from the University of Michigan

On Sept 13 in the home and season opener in Shibe Park, the Eagles were shut out by the New York Giants, L (0-24) before 25,478. On Sept 21, at Pittsburgh, the Eagles beat the former Eagles, now operating as the Pittsburgh Steelers W 10-7, before 12,893. Then, on Sept 27, at home, the Brooklyn Dodgers defeated the Eagles L (13-24) before 16,341. At New York on Oct 12, the Giants beat the Eagles L (0-16)

On October 19 at Washington, the Eagles lost to the Redskins L (17-21) before 19,071. On Oct 26 at home, the Eagles defeated the Chicago Cardinals W (21-14) before 12,683. On Nov 2 at Brooklyn, the Dodgers beat the Eagles L (6-15) before 15,899 fans. Then, on Nov 9, at home, the Eagles and the Steelers tied T (7-7) before 15,601.

On Nov 16, at Detroit, the Eagles lost to the Lions L 17-21) before 16,306. At home on Nov 30, the Chicago Bears whooped the Eagles

L 14-49) before 32,608. Then, in the final game of the season at Washington, the Eagles lost to the Redskins L (14-20) before i 27,102 to complete the 1941 season.

1942 Greasy Neale, Coach #3

The 1942 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their tenth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Greasy Neale in his second season of ten as head coach. This Eagles team finished with a losing season record of 2-9, winning just two games. They failed to qualify for the playoffs for the tenth consecutive season.



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

This book continues adding information of the Draft in the beginning information to the Eagles' seasons as having a great draft was key back then for the Eagles to get out of its funk with ten losing

seasons and no winning seasons. In later chapters, we will not discuss the draft in such detail

This year's draft (1942) was held on December 22, 1941. The draft was 22 rounds long and each team got 20 picks. A total of 200 players were selected. The Eagles got to select 3rd in each of the 1st 20 rounds. The top 5 teams record wise in 1941 did not get picks in rounds 2 and 4, as the lowest 5 teams did not pick in rounds 21 and 22.

With the first pick in the draft the Pittsburgh Steelers selected Bill Dudley, a Halfback from Virginia. He was the first Virginia player to earn All-America honors and was awarded the Maxwell Award for best college football player of the year for 1941. He was also named the best college player of the year by the Washington D.C. Touchdown Club. The Eagles first pick in the draft was the third player, Pete Kmetovic, a Halfback from Stanford University. He would not play Pro football until 1946 for the Eagles.

In the Season opener on Sept 13 at Pittsburgh, the Eagles beat the Steelers W (24-14) before 13,349. On Sept 20, at Cleveland, the Eagles lost to the Rams L (14-24) before 6,434. On Sept 27, at home, the Brooklyn Dodgers beat the Eagles L (14-35) before 5,286. On Oct 4, at home, the Eagles lost to the Washington Redskins L (10-14) before 15,500.

On October 11, at New York, the Giants beat the Eagles L (17-35) before 28,264. Then, on October 18, the Eagles lost to Pittsburgh L (0-14) in a shutout before 12,500. At Chicago, on Oct 25, the Bears beat the Eagles L (14-45) before 15,372. On Nov 1 at Washington, the Eagles lost to the Redskins in a close match L (27-30) before 32,658

Then, on Nov 8 at home, the NY Giants shut out the Eagles L (0-14) before 13,600. On Nov 15, at home, the Eagles beat the Brooklyn Dodgers W (14-7) before 3,858. In the season finale at home, on Nov 29, Green Bay shut out the Eagles in a close match L (0-7) before 13,700.

1943 Greasy Neale, Coach Steagles

1943 Walt Kiesling, Coach Steagles

Because there were not enough players to field either Pittsburgh's or Philadelphia's NFL teams, due to the manpower needed for the war effort in 1943, for one-year only, the two teams combined so that they could have a season. Greasy Neale and Walt Kiesling shared the coaching duties for this makeshift team.

This team was referred to as the Steagles for Steelers-Eagles, and they finished 5-4-1. The combination team did not qualify for the playoffs. The league's official record book refers to the team as "Phil-Pitt Combine," but the unofficial "Steagles", despite never being registered by the NFL, has become the enduring moniker.



There were always those out there who dreamed about a unified Pittsburgh-Philadelphia team. The word on the street is that this idea was prevalent when teams were struggling, and the Eagles could not find a win anywhere. It therefore predated World War II by several years.

The Pennsylvania Keystoners were a team idea that was brought forth in 1939. It was put together as a team idea as well as a money-making scheme for the owners. The intention was for the owners of the "Pirates" and Eagles buying into one of the two teams, then spinning the other off to an ownership group in Boston, Massachusetts. League officials rejected the plan, though it resulted in a convoluted ownership "two-step" that eventually gave Eagles owner Bert Bell a share of the Steelers franchise.

We all know that America entered World War II on December 7, 1941 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Most of the young men who were of pro-football age were the same aged young men being called on to fight for their country. There were 600 NFL players who joined the armed forces for the war effort.

Government officials understood that the country could not sit idle without entertainment while the young men were off to war. They felt that that a country at war still needed entertainment and sports were a much-needed diversion. Therefore, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an inspirational message focused on the importance of Major League Baseball to Americans' morale.

He made no mention of football, during that address, as baseball far surpassed football in popularity at that time. However, at its 1943 annual spring meeting, the NFL decided to follow baseball's lead and continue play. Other football leagues, such as the 1940–41 American Football League, Dixie League and the American Association, decided to suspend operations instead, leaving the NFL and its West Coast counterpart, the Pacific Coast Professional Football League, as the only leagues playing professional football at the time.

Without being labeled cowards and without a label of being unpatriotic, the young men who remained in the States to play football were deferred by the government from the draft. The Steagles players were either unfit for military service for physical reasons or age, or active servicemen who had obtained leave to play. Three types of deferments defined 1943 NFL players.

The first group called 3-As were those supporting a family. The draft board would not make these a priority. The government defined a 3-

A as a father whose child/children was born or conceived prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor. The cutoff date for birth was September 15, 1942, precisely nine months and one week after Pearl Harbor.

The second group consisted of those men who worked in the war industry, producing and preparing ammunition, weapons and materials. The third group (4-F'S) were those deemed physically unfit due to ailments such as ulcers, flat feet and even partial blindness. Most NFL football players wanted to join the war. In the early 1940s it was considered a patriotic duty to serve and fight for the country. For the men who played professional football, being classified as a 4-F could be considered an embarrassment. There was a feeling that if a man could play football then he could fight in the war.



Bill Hewitt, Steagles, The Eagles' First Star Player

One Steagle and future Hall of Famer, Bill Hewitt, quit in the middle of the season. He could not take the ridicule and subsequent guilt feelings anymore. Hewitt was good enough to be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1971. However, the players were not making the decisions on who could or could not fight. Men with flat feet (fallen arches) were not drafted. Despite flat feet, they could lead normal lives and even play football, but the Army deemed that flat feet was not conducive to marching long distances.

Similar reasons existed for other 4-F deferments. But numerous NFL players in 1943 had medical problems that kept them out of the military. Tony Bova, the Steagles' leading receiver with 17 receptions, was blind in one eye and partially blind in the other. Steagles guard Ed Michaels was nearly deaf and center Ray Graves was deaf in one ear. One starting defensive end was blind in one eye and nearly legally blind in the other. The Steagles tailback John Butler made his first start one day after being ruled 4-F by his draft board for poor eyesight and bad knees.



1943 Steagles starting line-up-- **Back row** (left to right): unknown, back (#11); Ben Kish, back (#44); Ernie Steele, halfback (#37) **Middle row**: Roy Zimmerman, quarterback (#7) **Front row** (left to right): Larry Cabrelli, end (#84); Bucko Kilroy, tackle (#76); Ed Michaels, guard (#60); Ray Graves, center (#52); Elbie Schultz, guard (#71); Vic Sears, tackle (#79); Bob Masters, end (#31)

At the 1943 NFL Spring Meeting, it was noted that even with the deferments, NFL rosters were tough to fill. There was some fallout. For example, The Cleveland Rams suspended operations in 1943 and the Pittsburgh Steelers had only six men left under contract while the Philadelphia Eagles had only sixteen. The 1943 NFL Draft did not help much. Most players drafted by the NFL went off to the war instead of joining NFL teams.

Making the problem even worse was the continued insistence of George Preston Marshall and other NFL owners on continuing the ten-year-old ban on black players. What should have been an opportunity for blacks to overcome such blatant racism and help the country instead disqualified potential replacement players such as Kenny Washington.

Things got so bad that the NFL nearly ceased its operations before the 1943 season, but it chose to continue. Special accommodations needed to be made. Steelers' owner Art Rooney believed that the league needed at least eight teams to survive. It was his idea for the merger of the Steelers with the Eagles. This idea came quickly to him since, as already noted, two years prior, he had thought about combining the two teams into the Pennsylvania Keystoners.

Eagles' owner Alexis Thompson, who was serving in the US Army as a corporal, was not as keen on the plan since he at least had 16 players under contract. However Thompson remembered how Rooney in 1941 swapped cities with him, allowing him to keep the Eagles in Philadelphia, close to his New York City home. This led to an agreement on combining the teams.

The league approved the merger by a vote of 5–4. However, several owners expressed fears that the merger would produce a team with an unfair advantage. The merger had a slight lean in favor of Philadelphia based on stipulations imposed by Thompson. The team would be known as the Philadelphia Eagles and be based in Philadelphia. Rooney had very little leverage, bringing only six players to the table. However, he was successful in landing two home games in Pittsburgh, while Philadelphia would host four.

The team was also to wear the Eagles' green and white colors instead of Pittsburgh's black and gold. It's funny how the trivial things in life can take on an air of importance. This event officially marked the only time in the Steelers history other than 1941, when green and white were used as well as black and gold, that the team colors were something other than black and gold. The league also stated that helmets were mandated for the first time and that the league would expand in 1944, with the Boston Yanks paying \$50,000 for entry into the league.

Games of the 1943 season

Pittsburgh-Philadelphia "Steagles" vs. New York Giants

The game was played at Shibe Park on October 9, 1943

Philadelphia's Greasy Neale and Pittsburgh's Walt Kiesling became co-head coaches y default because each coach refused to be



demoted. This led to several problems: the first being that the two men hated each other. Secondly even Kiesling's own players did not like him so asking the Eagles players to like him was too much to ask. However, Neale took advantage when Kiesling was delayed en-route to camp, which was held at St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia.

By the time Keisling arrived, Neale already had the offense learning the T-formation, which was the Eagle's style. The T was in vogue in those days because of its success in college football by Frank Leahy at Notre Dame and Red Blaik at Army. This conflict led to Neale serving as the team's offensive coordinator while Kiesling served as the defensive coordinator.

They would then split head coaching duties. According to defensive back Ernie Steele, the situation between the two coaches got so bad that Kiesling and Neale walked off the field after a heated argument in practice the Friday before a game. They returned for the game, but the players were taken back at the behavior. However, after the Steagles' in 1943 & Card-Pitt in 1944, Pittsburgh reverted to using the single-wing formation through 1952, becoming the last NFL team to ever use it as its primary offensive set.

Another difficult issue that at the time, was that the Steelers and Eagles were bitter interstate rivals, much like the NHL's Pittsburgh Penguins-Philadelphia Flyers rivalry of today, and usually ended up at near the bottom of standings each year. The Steagles were the only professional sports team where all the players held full-time war jobs, as it was a requirement of the team.

Playing football was seen as an extracurricular activity. All of the 25 players on the roster kept full-time jobs in defense plants. One of Pittsburgh's players, Ted Doyle, worked at Westinghouse Electric

and figured out later that his work assisted the Manhattan Project, which was America's effort to build the first atomic bomb, according to Matthew Algeo's book *Last Team Standing*.

As the season got underway, fans and newspapers began calling the team the Steagles, a combination of Steelers and Eagles. It had a nice ring to it and was fair to both cities. Steagles eventually became the common name used for the team throughout most of the country, except in Philadelphia, where the writers and even the team insisted on being called the Philadelphia Eagles. Chet Smith, the sports editor of the Pittsburgh Press, was initially the one who wrote in a column the moniker Steagles, for the merged team.

Through hard work, sacrifice, and by playing like a team, slowly, the Steagles began to come together. They even won some games. The Steagles jumped out to a 2–0 start after defeating the Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants at Shibe Park. During the New York game the Steagles fumbled the ball a record 10 times; but managed to win 28–14. The Steagles record of 10 fumbles in a game by 1 team is still in existence today.

The squad was referred to at times as a bunch of outcasts and misfits, yet they banded together and managed to tie the defending champion Washington Redskins in their first meeting, and then they defeated Washington in their second meeting. The team stumbled on the road and after seven games had a 3–3–1 record. However, the team regrouped during two games at Pittsburgh's Forbes Field, which were wins over the Chicago Cardinals on Halloween Night and over the Detroit Lions on Nov. 21. The team's final game was played in front of 35,000 fans at Shibe Park against Don Hutson and the Green Bay Packers Green Bay would go on to win the game 38–28.

There were so many issues with the coaches not getting along in this strange merger arrangement of one-time rivals that the players had none of it. In fact, the offense enjoyed playing the T-formation employed by Neale. There was a special bond among the Steagles' 4-Fs—those who wanted to be in the military but were rejected. They took solace in some small way that they were contributing to the war

effort. From the post-gazette: “If they couldn’t fight the war, at least they could take people’s minds off it.”

My dad was “4-F” plus he was married and had a young family. He had five brothers in the war and all came back safely. He had a small sense of guilt about it as he wanted to help the country. He worked for the Carriage Company, which had converted over to making armaments for the war effort plus he was an Air-Raid warden. I can still recall as a kid wearing his white helmet around every chance I got because it was special.

WHAT TO DO IN AN AIR RAID

Official—by the U. S. Office of Civilian Defense



1. KEEP COOL

When an alarm sounds, don't lose your head. Stay calm and follow the instructions. Don't panic. Remember that you are not alone. Stay calm and follow the instructions. Don't panic. Remember that you are not alone. Stay calm and follow the instructions. Don't panic. Remember that you are not alone.



2. STAY HOME

The safest place to be during an air raid is at home. Stay home unless you are ordered to do otherwise. Stay home unless you are ordered to do otherwise. Stay home unless you are ordered to do otherwise.



3. PUT OUT LIGHTS

Remember to put out your lights. Remember to put out your lights. Remember to put out your lights. Remember to put out your lights. Remember to put out your lights.

York News Times, December 15, 1941. Even 1,200 miles from the nearest coast, people were worried about being attacked. NSHS.

1944 Greasy Neale, Coach #3

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 player from the Steagles temporary merger. However, the NFL was still not back to full-strength. 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

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 be 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

Top Eagles Players—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 worst 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

The Eagles v the Chicago Cardinals was the game played for the 1947 National Football League Championship. It was the 15th annual National Football League (NFL) championship game. It was the Chicago Cardinals, 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 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.

Top Eagles Players—Pete Pihos

Pete Pihos began his career in 1947 with the Philadelphia Eagles under coach Greasy Neale. Looking back, he was probably the first or one of the first tight ends in the game to be used as a receiving threat. From 1953-1955, Pihos dominated leading the league in receiving and he was extremely physical after the catch. Defenders thought more than twice before making a tackle on this tough receiver.

Pihos proved he had a handle on the game by earning six consecutive Pro Bowls to end his career. As you can tell by reading this book, most players are lucky to even make one.

The following write up about Pete Pihos is from the NFL Hall of Fame site. It offers a more complete perspective:

PETE PIHOS -- PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

"When I joined the team we started winning, shutting out two teams to win the championship. When you win, everything is great."



Pete Pihos began his nine-year National Football League career as a two-way end with the Philadelphia Eagles in 1947. When the platoon system was instituted, his coaches decided to have him concentrated on playing offense.

Then in 1952, the Eagles suddenly found themselves in need of a defensive end. Without a second-thought they called on the

versatile Pihos, who not only stepped in, he earned All-NFL honors.

Then for the remaining three years of his career, he switched back to offense and led the league in receiving all three seasons.

Pihos was the Eagles fifth-round draft choice in 1945, but two years of the military service prevented him from joining the team until 1947. One of the truly great iron men of pro football, during his nine seasons of play, he missed just one game.

Immediately after Pete joined the Eagles, the team marched to its first divisional championship. In the playoff game against the Pittsburgh Steelers for the Eastern Division crown, he blocked a punt to set up the first touchdown in the Eagles 21-0 win.

Philadelphia won three straight divisional championships and then back-to-back NFL titles by shutout scores. In 1948, the Eagles defeated the Chicago Cardinals 7-0. One year later, Pihos caught a 31-yard touchdown pass in the Eagles 14-0 win over the Los Angeles Rams.

Although Pihos lacked great speed, he was a consistently outstanding pass receiver with sure hands, clever moves, and courage. Any defender who battled Pete for a pass was bound to get the worst of it physically. He played it clean, but very hard and, after he caught a pass, he ran like a bulldozing fullback. Pete led the NFL in receiving from 1953 through 1955 and earned first-team All-Pro or All-League honors six times and was named to six Pro Bowls.

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.



1948 Eagles v Chicago Cardinals NFL Championship in Philadelphia in 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.

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.



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."

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.

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 17th 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.



Eagles v Rams National Title Game

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.

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.

Top Eagles Players—Al Wistert



Al Wistert is a forgotten Eagle. Nonetheless, he was an eight-time All-Pro selection in nine seasons with the Eagles.

Like most at the time, he played on both sides of the ball and was a captain from 1946-1950.

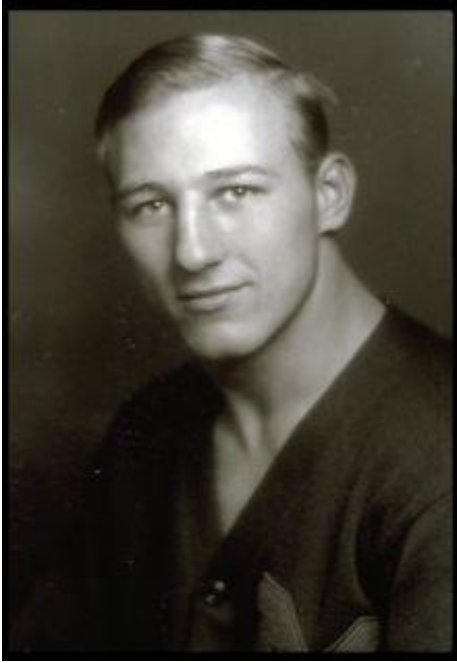
The dates are of significance because the Eagles won consecutive titles in 1948 and 1949. Nonetheless, for the NFL's own reasons, Wistert is not enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He sure should be.

In 1948, the Eagles won their first championship with a 7-0 blanking of the Chicago Cardinals. Wistert and the Birds followed up that championship with another one in 1949. This time, they shut out the Los Angeles Rams 14-0.

No other team in NFL history has ever recorded back-to-back shutouts in championship games.

There are no stats to bolster Wistert's status other than his All-Pro selections. But these should be valued for sure when selecting Hall of Famers as All-Pro status represents a caliber of a man's body of work. Wistert was recognized as one of the best players in the league by those who covered the NFL during the time he played.

His full name and nickname was Albert Alexander "Ox" Wistert. He was born December 28, 1920 and he passed away just a few years ago on March 5, 2016). He was one of the greatest in Eagles' history. He played tackle both ways for Philadelphia. He was named to play in the NFL's first Pro Bowl as an Eagle.



#70 Al Wistert During most of Wistert's career there were no football All-star games, although he was named to the league All-Pro team eight times. He played his college football at Michigan. Al was one of three brothers—along with Whitey and Alvin. They were all named All-American tackles at Michigan and later inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

He was the first Michigan alumnus to be selected to the National Football League Pro Bowl. The Wistert brothers all wore jersey No. 11 at Michigan and are among the seven players who have had their numbers retired by the Michigan Wolverines football program. Their number was put back into circulation starting on November 10, 2012 before a Michigan home game against Northwestern as part of the Michigan Football Legend program.

Wistert did make the Eagles Hall of Fame. "It's marvelous to feel that people really do appreciate what has gone before," Wistert said of his Philadelphia Eagles Hall of Fame induction. "On top of the world is a good way to put it because that's the way I felt then and that's the way I feel now coming back here so many years later."

Known as "Ox" by his teammates, Wistert was drafted in the fifth round by the Eagles out of Michigan in 1943. That was the year when the Eagles and the Pittsburgh Steelers combined to form the Steagles due to World War II.

“There was a war going on. People were doing the best they could to get by. It was a miracle they kept the league going, really,” Wistert told Ray Didinger.

Prior to Wistert's arrival, the Eagles never finished .500 or better in a season. The Eagles played in three championship games, won two, and had a .500 record or better in eight of Wistert's nine years. In fact, the Eagles had a .649-win percentage during Wistert's career.

On offense, the Eagles led the league in rushing and scoring three times during Wistert's tenure. Defensively, the Eagles ranked first in points allowed twice and yards allowed three times. The Eagles never accomplished any of those feats before Wistert was drafted.

“He was as fine a blocker as you could want. He didn't have the size to overpower people on the pass block, but he was a master of every kind of block,” said Pro Football Hall of Fame coach George Allen in his book, *Pro Football's 100 Greatest Players*.

Top Eagles Players—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. This story is a good one and we present it after the games of the 1950 season shown below.

The NFL was doing well but still suffering growing pains. The National Football League and the All-America Football Conference came to an agreement this year to stop competing and merge the teams into one league. The Baltimore Colts, Cleveland Browns, and San Francisco 49ers would join the older NFL. The Philadelphia Eagles would meet the Cleveland Browns in a Saturday night game to open the 1950 season in Philadelphia Municipal Stadium instead of Shibe Park for more seating. On September 16, 1950, a crowd of 71,237 turned out in Philadelphia to watch as the Browns beat the Birds 35–10.

The 1950 NFL Draft was held on January 20–21, 1950. The former AAFC teams got to pick with the NFL teams and the Detroit Lions won the lottery pick. They used it to select Leon Hart, who played end at the University of Notre Dame. With an 11–1 record in the

1949 season and Cleveland at 9–1–2, the Eagles picked last in each round.

The Eagles first draft pick went to University of Minnesota for football and basketball. Leon Hart chose and played for the Minneapolis Lakers in the NBA during the 1950 season, He would join the Eagles in 1951 but left the Eagles after two seasons over money to play in Canadian Football League. He would later go into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame in 1983 and the Pro Football Hall of Fame as a coach in 1994.

The season was extended by one week to include a bye week. Still, the # of games played would be 12, but they would be played over a thirteen-week period. Here are the games of the 1950 season:

On September 16, in the home opener played at Philadelphia Municipal Stadium (JFK), the Cleveland Browns defeated the Eagles L (10–35) before a packed house of 71,237. At Chicago on Sept 24, the Eagles whooped the Cardinals W (45–7) before 24,914. The next game was a nice win on Oct 7 at home v the Los Angeles Rams W (56–20) before. At Baltimore on Oct 15, the Eagles defeated the Colts W (24–14) before 14,413.

At Pittsburgh on Oct 22, the Eagles beat the Steelers W (17–10) before 35,662. On Oct 29, at home the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins W (35–3) before 33,707. After five wins in a row, the Eagles injuries began to mount up and winning became very difficult—but the games were very close. On Nov 5, for example, at home, the Eagles lost to the Pittsburgh Steelers in a tight match L (7–9) before 24,629. At Washington on Nov 12, the Eagles came back for a game to shut out the Redskins, W (33–0) before 29,407.

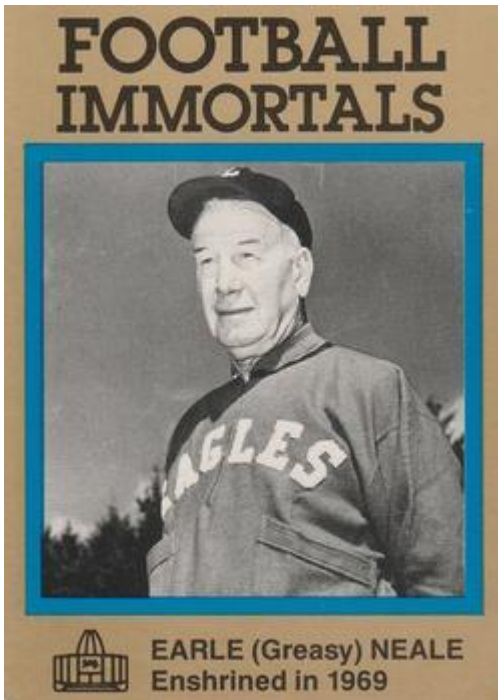
Next at home in Shibe on Nov 19, the Chicago Cardinals picked off the Eagles in a tight game L (10–14) before 28,368. Then, on Nov 26, at New York, in another tight game, the Giants beat the Eagles L (3–7) before 24,093. At Cleveland on December 3, the Browns beat the Eagles in a tight match. In a nail-biter on Dec 10 at home, the Eagles could not finish against the Giants and lost by two points L (7-9). Before 26,440

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

1 THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol.

10, No. 2 (1988) 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 rd 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 14 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 th	2-0-0
1951	Wayne Millner	American	5 th	2-8-0
<u>1951-1951 McMillin / Millner final record (4-8-0)</u>				
1952	Jim Trimble	American	T2 nd	7-5-0
1953	Jim Trimble	Eastern	2 nd	7-4-1
1954	Jim Trimble	Eastern	2 nd	7-4-1
1955	Jim Trimble	Eastern	T4 th	4-7-1
<u>1952-1955 Jim Trimble final record (25-20-3)</u>				
1956	Hugh Devore	Eastern,	6 th	3-8-1
1957	Hugh Devore	Eastern, x	5 th	4-8-0
<u>1956-1957 Hugh Devore final record (7-16-1)</u>				



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.

The 1951 NFL Draft was held later -- on January 18–19, 1951. This draft would be for players coming out of college and because the Baltimore Colts had folded after the 1950 season, the draft split up their players. The draft was 30 rounds with eleven teams picking. There was a total of 362 players drafted. 27 former Colts players were drafted including Y. A. Tittle by the San Francisco 49ers. The Eagles would rotate getting the 5th, 6th and 7th picks through the rounds because of their medsa medsa 6–6 record in 1950, tying them with Pittsburgh and Detroit.

With the lottery bonus pick as the #1 pick of the draft, the New York Giants choose Kyle Rote, a halfback from Southern Methodist University. The 2nd pick in the draft was made by the Chicago Bears. This was the Baltimore Colts' 1st round pick that would have been, but which had earlier been traded to Chicago. With this pick they choose Bob Williams a Quarterback from Notre Dame. With their 1st pick as the 7th selection in the 1st round the Eagles choose, Ebert Van Buren, brother of Steve Van Buren, a Fullback/Halfback from LSU.

To open the season, the Eagles traveled to Chicago and in a close match beat the Cardinals W (17–14) before 16,129. On Oct 6, at home, the Eagles beat the San Francisco 49ers W (21–14) before 23,432. After this game, coach Millner took over for Coach McMillan for the remainder of the season. Then, on Oct 14, at Green Bay, the Birds were beaten by the Packers L (24-37) before 18,489. At New York, on Oct 21, the Giants beat the Eagles L (24-26) in a tight match before 28,656.

At home on Oct 28, the Washington Redskins defeated the Eagles L (23-27) before 20,437. On Nov 4, at Pittsburgh, the Eagles beat the Steelers W (34–13) before 19,649. At Cleveland on Nov 11 the Eagles lost to the Browns, L (17-20) before 36,571. On Nov 18, at home (Shibe), the Detroit Lions beat the Eagles L (10-28) before 25,350.

Again at home on Nov 25, the Eagles lost to the Pittsburgh Steelers L (13-17) before 15,537. Note the crowd size depleting as the team record gets bad. On Dec 2, 1951 at the Washington Redskins, the Eagles prevailed W (35–21) before 23,738. Then at home, the Eagles lost on Dec 9, to the New York Giants L (7-23) before 19,322. In the season finale, at home, the Eagles lost on Dec 16 to the Cleveland Browns L (9-24) before 6,263

Top Eagles Players—Bobby Walston



In the early days of football, players often went both ways – O & D, and some did punting and place kicking besides. Bobby Walston was a great athlete as a skilled wide receiver and talented place kicker. In fact, his versatility and durability allowed him to score 881 points during his career in Philadelphia. He was an Eagle for twelve years of great football from 1951-1962.

That puts him second on the Eagles' all-time scoring list, second only to none other than David Akers, a noted place kicker. His receiving skills were seen by all during the 1954 season, when he scored 11 touchdowns. He did play in an age where two-position players were common, but he was uncommon in that he was a top player in football excelling at both positions.

Bobby's already mentioned 1954 season was his best receiving season, when he caught 41 passes for 750 yards, garnering 18.3 yards per reception. He also scored five touchdowns. The next season, he was no slouch either with 581 yards on 31 receptions, scoring another 11 touchdowns as the Eagles had a nice record of 7-4-1. He also scored 114 points during the season, the most in the NFL that season and most by an Eagle until 1984.

His best kicking season was in 1957, when he made 75% of his field goals and was 1st in percentage in the league, with 9 of 12 field goals made. Despite this, his Eagles went 4-8. But three seasons later, they had made a resurgence in 1960, and Walston went 14 out of 20 in field goal kicking (70 percent) and was first in the league once again, with 39 out of 40 in extra points as the Eagles made their first playoff appearance since 1949.

In his lone playoff appearance, Walston caught 3 passes for 38 yards while making a 17-yard field goal and two extra points as the Eagles won the 1960 NFL Championship Game, their first title since 1949 (Until 2018, this was the Eagles' last title win). In his final season, the Eagles finished 3-10-1. Bobby Walston caught four touchdowns that seasons, his most since 1954, although his kicking game declined, as he had his second worst kicking percentage. Even after over 50 years, he held the all-time Eagles record for points scored before David Akers appeared on the scene in 1999.

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.



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 was not helping the team win games.

The 1952 NFL Draft was held on January 17, 1952. Picks made by New York Yanks were assigned to the new Dallas Texans franchise. There were 12 teams picking for 32 rounds.

The Eagles made the 4th pick in each round and made 31 picks in the 32 rounds they had picks in. The New York Yanks had the Eagles pick in the 5th round.

The Los Angeles Rams received this year's Lottery bonus pick. The Rams used it to pick Bill Wadea Quarterback out of Vanderbilt University. The Eagles used there number 4 pick in the 1st round to take Johnny Bright, a back from Drake University. Johnny Bright, was chosen before other backs and future NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame members Frank Gifford, from University of Southern California and Hugh McElhenny, from the University of Washington.

Drake passed on playing for the Eagles. Bright later commented: “ I would have been their (the Eagles') first Negro player. There was a tremendous influx of Southern players into the NFL at that time, and I didn't know what kind of treatment I could expect. The black factor in NFL football was real.

In the season opener on Sept 28 at Pittsburgh, the Eagles defeated the Steelers W 31–25. On Oct 4, at home, the New York Giants overpowered the Eagles L (31–7). At home on Oct 12, the Eagles just about beat the Pittsburgh Steelers W (26–21). Then, on Oct 9 at home, the Eagles were crushed by the Cleveland Browns L (7-49)

At New York, on Oct 26, the Eagles just about beat the Giants W (14-10). Then at Green Bay on Nov 2, the Packers beat the Eagles L (10-12). Next on Nov 9, at home, the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins W (38–20). On Nov 16, at home, the Eagles won another against the Chicago Cardinals W (10–7).

Then at Cleveland on Nov 23, 1952, the Eagles beat the Browns, W (28-20). At Chicago on Nov 30, the Eagles lost to the Cardinals L (22-28). at Cleveland Browns W 28–20. Then, on Dec 7, at home, the Eagles defeated the new team, the Dallas Texans W (38-21). To wrap up the season, at Washington, the Eagles were defeated by the Redskins L (2-27).

1953 Jim Trimble Coach # 6

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

With the merger of the NFL and the All-America Football Conference, there was one less conference to take players who were drafted by NFL teams. However, the Canadian Football League continued to attract those who got a better deal than from the NFL.

For example, at the end of the 1952 season, 2-year player Bud Grant was offered a pay raise in his contract. He chose instead to play football in the CFL(Canadian Football League). He would have a career worthy of being named to the CFL's Hall of Fame as a player. Later in his career, he would make the Pro Football Hall of Fame as coach of the Minnesota Vikings.

The Eagles held training camp at Hershey Park Stadium in Hershey, PA for the 3rd straight year. Matt Guokas, Sr. was hired to be the PA announcer for the Eagles. He had played basketball for Saint Joseph's Hawks in college and the Philadelphia Warriors in the NBA. After losing his right leg in an automobile accident, Guokas turned to broadcasting, and he served as an announcer for the Philadelphia Eagles for 32 years from 1953 to 1985.

The 1953 NFL Draft was held on January 22, 1953 with 30 rounds and 12 teams picking. The San Francisco 49ers got the Lottery bonus pick. With this pick they chose Harry Babcock an End from the University of Georgia.

The 1952 expansion team Dallas Texans (NFL) could not make it in the league and folded during the 1952 season. Then, they became the new Baltimore Colts on January 23, 1953. The new Colts got the #1 pick and chose Heisman Trophy winner Billy Vessels, a halfback from the University of Oklahoma.

Having a 7–5 record in 1952 gave the Eagles the 7th, 8th or 9th pick in the 30 rounds. They traded their 1st round pick before the drafts began and thus their 1st selection was the 7th pick in the 2nd round, 20th overall. They picked Al Conway a back out of Army and William Jewell College. He did not play due to injury and ended up as an official in the American Football League and an official in the NFL for 28 years. Not everything works out in life or football.

The season opener was on Sept 27, at San Francisco. The Eagles lost to the 49ers, L (21-31). On Oct 2, at home, the Eagles and the Washington Redskins tied T (21–21). Then, on Oct 10, at Cleveland, the Eagles were handed a loss L (13-37). On Oct 17 at home, the Eagles beat the Pittsburgh Steelers W 23–7.

On October 25, at Chicago, the Eagles put a licking on the Cardinals W (56–17). At Pittsburgh. On Nov 1, at home the Eagles overpowered the Steelers W (35–7). On Nov 8, at home, the Eagles beat the New York Giants W (30–7). Then, on 8 Nov 15, at home, the Eagles thumped the Baltimore Colts W (45–14). On Nov 21 at home, the Eagles shut out the Chicago Cardinals W (38–0).

On Nov 29, at New York, the Giants beat the Eagles L (28-37). At Washington for the second away game in a row, on Dec 6, the Eagles were shut out by the Redskins in a close match L (0-10). In the last game of the 1953 season played at home on Dec 13, , the Eagles defeated the Cleveland Browns W (42–27).

1954 Jim Trimble Coach # 6

The 1954 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their twenty-second season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Jim Trimble in his third season of four as head coach. This Eagles team finished with the same a winning record of 7-4-1 as 1953. This was the fifth season in a row for the team to not make the playoffs.

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.

The Eagles held their training camp in Hershey, PA again. The 1954 season was the first in which the Eagles used the "wings" logo that we know today on their helmets.

The 1954 NFL Draft was held on January 28, 1954. The draft is again 30 rounds long, with 12 teams picking. A total of 360 players are taken in this 1-day draft. In 2011, a total 254 players were taken by 32 teams over 3 nights.

The Eagles chose 28 players in this year's draft.

On Sept 26, at the home and season opener, the Birds picked off the Cleveland Browns, W 28–10 before 26,546. At Chicago a week later, on Oct 3, the Eagles beat the Cardinals W (35–16) before 17,084. At home on Oct 9, the Eagles barely beat the Pittsburgh Steelers W (24–22) before 37,322. Then, the next week on Oct 17, at home, the Eagles thumped the Washington Redskins W (49–21) before 22,051.

At Pittsburgh, on Oct 23, the Steelers beat the Eagles L (7-17) before 39,075. Then, on Oct 30, at home, the Eagles lost to the Green Bay Packers L (14-37) before 25,378. At home on Nov 7, the Eagles beat the Chicago Cardinals W (30–14) before 21,963. Then, on Nov 14, at New York, the Giants defeated the Eagles L (14-27) before 46,565.

At Cleveland on Nov 21, the Eagles were shut out in a close match against the Browns before 41,537. At home on Nov 28, the Eagles pushed through a win against a tough Washington Redskins team W (41–33) before 18,517. Then, on Dec 5, at Detroit, the Lions tied the Eagles T (13–13) before a capacity crowd of 54,939. At home in the Connie Mack Stadium, on Dec 12, to end a fine season. the Eagles pulled out a victory over the New York Giants W 29–14, before 28,449

1955 Jim Trimble Coach # 6

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 well. The Eagles fired him after this season. Major league football never really bought on to the recovery notion of better players because every year the players were the best of the best. Nonetheless, firing Trimble may have been premature.

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?

The NFL draft was always a sign that the team savior might be arriving in Spring Training. This year's draft has held on January 27-28, 1955. As usual, it lasted for 30 rounds, with 12 teams selecting 360 players. This was again a draft lottery pick year and the Baltimore Colts got that pick and the third pick in the draft. With the Lottery bonus pick, they chose George Shaw a Quarterback from the University of Oregon football program.

Two picks later they chose 1954 Heisman Trophy winner Alan Ameche, a Fullback that played in the Wisconsin Badgers football program.

Because of a fine 7–4–1 record in the 1954 Philadelphia Eagles season the Eagles normally would have picked 8th in the odd rounds and 9th in the even rounds. They alternated with the San Francisco 49ers The Eagles made a pick in every round.

The Philadelphia Eagles used its 1st round pick, 9th pick in the draft, to select Dick Bielski, a fullback from Maryland. This was not a year for famous football players. The only draftee from this year draft to be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame was Johnny Unitas, a QB from the Louisville, who was taken in the 9th round 102nd overall by the Pittsburgh Steelers. He was a Professional Football Hall of Fame Class of 1979 member. For some, he will always be known as the greatest QB of all time. How about that name?

In the home opener and the season opener on Sept 24, 1955, the Eagles whooped the New York Giants W (27–17) before 29,597. On Oct 1, at home again, the Eagles did not escape the Washington Redskins L (30-31) before 31,891. On Oct 9, at Cleveland, the Eagles were defeated by the Browns L (17-21) before 43,974. Then at Pittsburgh on Oct 15, the Eagles choked and lost the game to the Steelers L (7-13) before 33,413/

At Chicago on Oct 23, 1955, the Eagles tied the Cardinals T (24–24) before 24,620. At home on Oct30, the Eagles shut out the Pittsburgh Steelers W (24–0) before 31,164. Then, on Nov 6, at Washington, the Redskins beat the Eagles L (21-34) before 25,741. At home on Nov 13, the Eagles overpowered the Cleveland Browns W (33–17) before 39,303

At New York, on Nov 20, the Eagles could not move the ball and lost to the Giants, L (7-31) before 22,075. In a nail-biter on Nov 27, at home, the Eagles lost to the LA Rams, L (21-23) before 21,668. Then at home on Dec 4, the Eagles whooped the Chicago Cardinals W (27–3) before 19,478. In the 1955 season-ender, on Dec 11, in a game played at Chicago, the Bears owned the field and beat the Eagles in a tough match L (10-17) before 34,783

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.



For the 6th year in a row the Eagles held their training camp in Hershey, Pennsylvania. They would hold training camp in this venue until 1967.

The 1956 NFL Draft was held early this year on November 29, 1955. The draft was 30 rounds long, with 12 teams making picks. A total of 360 players were selected. The Pittsburgh Steelers got this year's Lottery Bonus Pick and with it, they selected Gary Glick a Quarterback who had graduated from Colorado State University.

The 1955 Eagles had finished with a 4–7–1 record and thus got to pick 4th or 5th in the rounds with the Chicago Cardinals. With their first round pick the Eagles selected Bob Pellegrini. He was a Center from the University of Maryland. He was featured on the cover of the November 7, 1955, edition of Sports Illustrated magazine. The Eagles made a total of 30 picks in the draft for 1956.

In the season opener, the Birds traveled to Los Angeles on Sept 30, and lost to the Rams by twenty-points L (7-27) the biggest margin of victory or defeat in 1956. There was a crowd of 54,412 in the stands to see the game. On Oct 6 at home, the Eagles got one of three wins this season by defeating the Washington Redskins W (13–9) before 26,607. On Oct 14, Pittsburgh, The Eagles made it two in a row and beat the Steelers W (35–21) before 31,375. On Oct 21, at home, the Eagles lost to the Chicago Cardinals L (6-20) before 36,545.

On Oct 28 at New York, the Giants beat the Eagles L (3-20) before 40,960. At Chicago, on Nov 4, the Eagles lost again to the Cardinals L (17-28) before 27,609. At home on Nov 11, the Eagles defeated the Pittsburgh Steelers W 14–7 before 22,652. Then on Nov 18, at home, the Cleveland Browns shut out the Birds L (0-16) before 25,894.

The only tie of the season came on Nv 25 at home against the San Francisco 49ers T (10–10) before 19,326. On Dec 2, at Cleveland, the Browns squeezed out a close win over the Eagles L (14-17) before 20,654. On Dec 9 at Washington, the Redskins beat the Eagles by two points L (17- 19) before 22,333. On Dec 15 at home, the New York Giants bested the Eagles L (7-21) before 16,562 in the last game of the 1956 season.

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. Other

than a walloping by the Washington Redskins in the 11th game, the games were close this year, but the Eagles could not close in their seven other losses.

The 1957 NFL Draft was held on November 27, 1956. This was before the end of the NFL Season and the between time of NCAA College football season and the College bowl games. The draft was still 30 rounds long, with 12 teams picking, and thus, a total of 360 players were selected. This again was a year that there was a Lottery bonus pick. This year's team to get the overall number 1 pick in the draft was the Green Bay Packers that selected, 1956 Heisman Trophy winner, Paul Hornung who was a great Halfback out of Notre Dame. The Eagles drafted two Hall of famers this year, Sonny Jurgenson QB, and Tommy McDonald, Flanker.

The season opener was on Sept 29 at Los Angeles as the Eagles were beaten in a close match by the Rams L (13–17) before 62,506. At home on Oct 5, the NY Giants beat the Eagles L (20-24) before 28,342. On Oct 13, at Cleveland, The Eagles went down again to the Browns L (7-24) before 53,493. Then on Oct 20 at home, the Eagles beat the Browns, 17–7 before 22,443.

On Oct 27, at Pittsburgh, the Steelers beat the Birds L(0-6) before 27,016, At Chicago on Nov 3, the Eagles beat the Cardinals W (38–21) before 18,718. On Nov 10, at home the Detroit Lions beat the Eagles L (16-27) before 29,320. At New York on Nov 17, the Giants beat the Eagles (0-13) before a nice crowd of 42,845

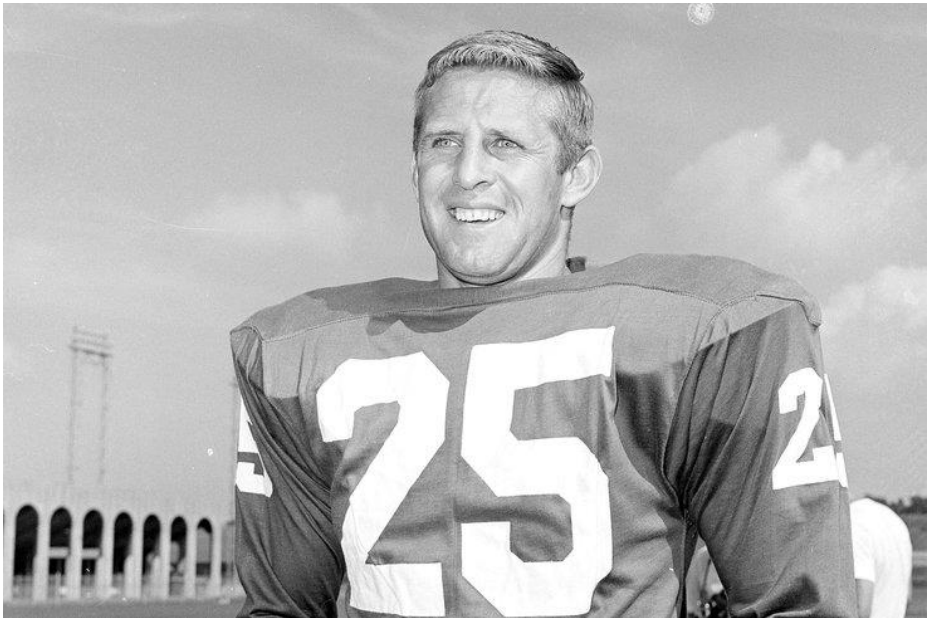
On Nov 4 at home, the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins W 21–12 before 20,730. At home against Pittsburgh, the Eagles beat the Steelers W (7-6) before 16,364. At Washington, on Dec 8, the Redskins walloped the Eagles L (7-42) before 21,304. In the final game of the season, on Dec 14, at home, the Eagles were defeated by the Chicago Cardinals L (27-31) before 12,555

Top Eagles Players—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 defeated 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 15 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	T5th	2-9-1
1959	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	T2nd	7-5-0
1960	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	1st	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	2nd	10-4-0
1962	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	7th	3-10-1
1963	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	7th	2-10-2

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

1964	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	T3rd	6-8-0
1965	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	T5th	5-9-0
1966	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	T2nd	9-5-0
1967	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	Capitol	2nd	6-7-1
1968	Joe Kuharich, Eastern	Capitol		4th	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 competed in their twenty-sixth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Buck Shaw in his first of three seasons as head coach. This Eagles team lost one more game than in 1956 and finished with a losing record of 2-9-1. This was the ninth season in a row for the team to not make the playoffs.

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.

Buck Shaw had been the Air Force Academy's 1st head coach. He took over a last-place Eagles team and began rebuilding immediately. He was also the 1st coach of the San Francisco 49ers when they formed in the AAFC in 1946. He immediately traded Buck Lansford, Jimmy Harris, and a first-round draft choice to the Los Angeles Rams for 32-year-old, nine-year veteran quarterback Norm Van Brocklin, aka, the Dutchman.

The 1958 NFL Draft was held on December 2, 1957 (rounds 1–4) and January 28, 1958 (rounds 5–30). The draft was 30 rounds long with 12 teams making picks. A total of 360 players were selected. With a 4–8 record in 1957 the Eagles got to make the 6th pick in the 1st round.

This was the last year in which the Lottery Bonus Pick was used. The Chicago Cardinals had the number 1 pick of the draft and the Bonus Pick. They used the picks to select as Lottery Bonus Pick King Hill a Quarterback out of Rice University. With the 2nd pick they chose 1957 Heisman Trophy winner John David Crow a halfback out of Texas A&M University

The Eagles picked a pack of no-name selections. None ever made pro-bowl in their years with the Eagles, and few were primary starters on the team in their positions.

This season would be the first played at Franklin Field. From 1958 until 1970, the stadium was the home field of the Philadelphia Eagles of the National Football League.

In the first Franklin Field home game and the season opener on Sept 28, 1958, the Eagles were beaten by the Washington Redskins L (14–24) before 36,850. On Oct 5, at home, the Eagles squeaked out a win against the New York Giants W (27–24) before 23,178. Then, on Oct 12, at Pittsburgh, the Steelers overpowered the Eagles, L (3–24) before 23,153. At home on Oct 19, the San Francisco 49ers beat the Eagles L (24–30) before 33,110.

At Green Bay on Oct 26, the Packers beat the Eagles L (35–38) before 31,043. Then, on November 2, at Chicago, the Eagles and the Cardinals played to a tie T (21–21) before 17,486. On Nov 9, at home, the Pittsburgh Steelers defeated the Eagles L (24–31) before 26,306. At home on November 16, the Eagles beat the Chicago Cardinals W (49–21) before 18,315.

On Nov 23, at Cleveland, the Browns beat the Eagles L (14–28) before 51,319. On Nov 30, at New York, the Giants defeated the Eagles L (10–24) before 35,438. Then, on Dec 7, the Cleveland Browns beat the Eagles L (14–21) before 36,773. In the final game of the 1958 season, on Dec 14, at Washington, the Redskins shut out the Eagles L (0–20) before 22,621.

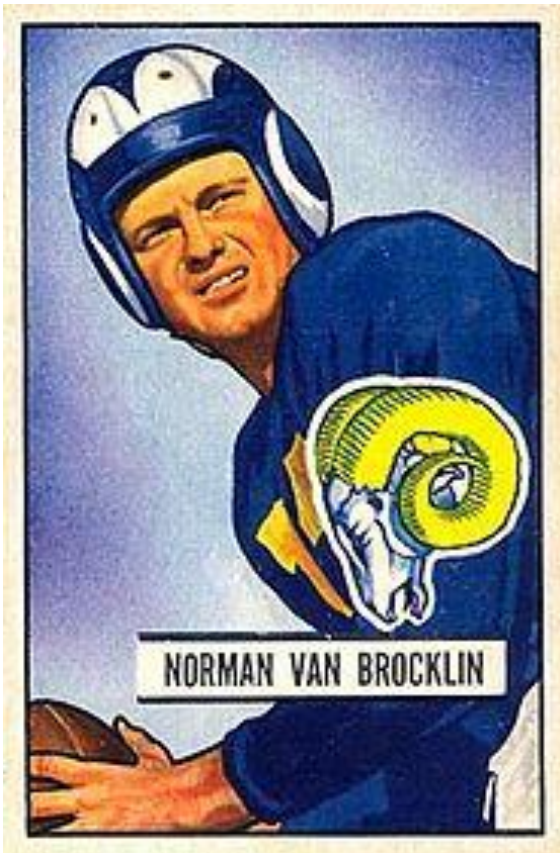
Great Eagles Players—Norm Van Brocklin

Norm Van Brocklin wanted to play football as a starting QB, but he found himself in 1951 sharing QB duties for the Rams again. That year, the Rams' Hirsch set an NFL record with 1,495 receiving yards and tied Don Hutson's record of 17 touchdown receptions.

This time, the Rams won the title rematch against Cleveland, 24-17. Waterfield (9-24, 125 yards) took most of the snaps at the L.A. Coliseum, but Van Brocklin (4-6, 128 yards) threw a game-winning 73-yard touchdown pass to Fears. It was the Rams' only NFL championship while based in southern California; their next came in 1999, several years after the move east to St. Louis.

Earlier in 1951 on opening night, Van Brocklin threw for an NFL record 554 yards on September 28, breaking former ND great, Johnny Lujack's single-game record of 468 set two years earlier.

Waterfield was injured so Van Brocklin played the entire game and completed 27 of 41 attempts with five touchdowns. Despite the increase in passing attacks by NFL teams in recent years, the yardage record still stands, set 67 years ago.



<<Van B in a non Eagles card

Waterfield retired after the 1952 season and Van Brocklin continued to quarterback the Rams, leading them to the title game again in 1955, hosted at the L.A. Coliseum. In that game, the visiting Browns crushed the Rams 38-14 as Van Brocklin threw six interceptions. I suspect he was ill. In early January 1958, Van Brocklin announced his retirement from pro football after nine seasons and had plans to enter private business in Oregon at Portland. He was down on himself; but he still loved football.

Less than five months later in late May, Norm Van Brocklin changed his mind and permitted himself to be traded to the Philadelphia Eagles for two players (offensive lineman Buck Lansford and defensive end Jimmy Harris) and a first round draft pick. It was disclosed that the Dutchman did not want to play

another season for the Rams under head coach Sid Gillman's offense, but it was not a personality issue with Gillman?

Under famed head Philadelphia coach Buck Shaw, Van Brocklin was given total control of the offense in Philadelphia in 1958, and he steadily improved the Eagles' attack. In his third and final season with Philly in 1960, the team had the best regular season record in the league at 10-2, and hosted the Green Bay Packers in the NFL Championship Game at Franklin Field. Throwing to his favorite receiver, 5 ft 9 in (1.75 m) 176 lb. (80 kg) Tommy McDonald, Van Brocklin led the Eagles to victory. In a game dominated by defense, he led a fourth quarter comeback, resulting in a final score of 17-13. My dad and I saw that game together on the 21" B/W finicky tube-style Admiral TV. We were glad to have seen such a great game.

During his twelve-year career, Van Brocklin, aka the Dutchman, played on two NFL championship teams: the 1951 Los Angeles Rams and the 1960 Philadelphia Eagles. Following the latter triumph, he retired. As it turned out, the Eagles were the only team to ever defeat the Packers in a playoff game during Vince Lombardi's tenure as Green Bay's head coach. Van Brocklin was always fun to watch. He led the NFL in passing three times and in punting twice. On nine occasions, he was selected to the Pro Bowl.

All things do not end rosy, but they should. Norm Van Brocklin saw it as it was, and he cut his ties with the Eagles after the season. His eyes saw and his heart believed that the Eagles had reneged on an agreement to name him head coach to replace the retiring Buck Shaw. On January 18, 1961, Van Brocklin accepted the head coaching position for the expansion Minnesota Vikings team, less than a month after winning the NFL Championship game. The Dutchman was a great QB and could have been a great Eagles coach for as soon as Buck Shaw was gone, the Eagles were out of contention for quite a while.

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.

The 1959 NFL Draft was held on December 2, 1958 (rounds 1–4) and January 21, 1959 (rounds 5–30). The draft was 30-rounds long and had 12 teams making picks. A total of 360 players were selected again in this year draft.

The Lottery bonus pick was no more. It had run the course as all 12 teams had been given the bonus pick and it made no sense to keep the happen chance idea.

Since the Green Bay Packers had the worst record, at 1-10-1, in the 1958 NFL season they had the first draft pick and selected Randy Duncan who played Quarterback for the Iowa Hawkeyes. Ironically, the Packers lone win was on Sunday, October 26, 1958 38–35 over the Eagles in Green Bay.

The Philadelphia Eagles and the Chicago Cardinals both had a 2–9–1 record in the 1958 season, and that was the 2nd worst record in the league, rotated in picking 2nd or 3rd in each round. Both of these teams defeated during the season the eventful Eastern Division champion New York Giants during the regular season. The Eagle 1st round pick, 2nd in the draft, was traded to the Los Angeles Rams for Norm Van Brocklin. The Eagles' first pick in the draft was in round 2 with the 15th pick.

In this year's NFL Season, the Eagles and Packers would both improve to 7–5–0. Then in 1960 the Eagles and Packers would meet in the 1960 NFL Championship Game in Philadelphia. The draft had its purpose for sure.

The following six Eagles drafted this year were pro-bowlers at least one-time in their career: J.D. Smith, Wray Carlton, Nick Mumley, Willmer Fowler, Gene Johnson, and Art Powell. This set the stage for some good Eagles play in the coming years.

In the season opener on Sept 27, 1959 at San Francisco, the Eagles lost to the 49ers L (14–24) before 41,697. On Oct 4, at home, the

Eagles whipped the New York Giants, W (49–21) before 27,023. On October, at home, the Eagles beat the Pittsburgh Steelers, W (28–24) before 27,343. At New York on Oct 18, the Giants defeated the Eagles L (7–24) before 68,783.

At Chicago on Oct 25, the Eagles beat the Cardinals W (28-24) On Nov 1, at home, the Eagles defeated the Washington Redskins W (30–23) before 39,854. Then, on Nov 8 at Cleveland, the Browns beat the Eagles L (7–28) before 58,275. On Nov 15, at home, the Eagles beat the Chicago Cardinals W (27–17) before 28,887. After traveling to Los Angeles on Nov 22, the Eagles gained a victory over the Rams W (23–20) before

On Nov 29, at Pittsburgh, the Steelers shutout the Eagles L (0-31). Then, at Washington on Dec 6, the Eagles overpowered the Redskins W (34–14). In the final game of the 1959 season, at home, on Dec 13, the Cleveland Browns defeated the Eagles L (28–21) before 45,952. Notice how the attendance at pro games in the 1950's continued to increase game by game, thereby assuring pro football a long life in America.

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.

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 1961 NFL Draft and the 1961 AFL Draft were separate drafts, and players could end up being drafted by both leagues.

The NFL Draft of 20 rounds with 14 teams picking were separate drafts for college players and took place on December 27–28, 1960. The Eagles would pick last because of their 10–2 record in the 1960 season. This draft was also the first regular draft for the Dallas

Cowboys as they had participated only in the 1960 NFL Expansion Draft that year. The Cowboys held the worst record in the NFL the previous season, but selected second in this draft because of the entry of the Minnesota Vikings into the league.

The league would later hold an expansion draft for the Vikings' expansion franchise, and the Vikings were also awarded the first selection position in this draft.

The AFL draft was held on 2 dates 2 weeks apart at the end of the 1960 college season but before the bowl games. The first was a six-round draft held by phone. The second was held December 5 and 6, 1960 for rounds 7 through 30.

The Denver Broncos selected New Mexico State's Bob Gaiters as the overall first draft pick. The Philadelphia Eagles lost their first-round pick to the AFL for the second year. About half of the Eagles' 19 picks either signed with the AFL or remained in college to play their last year of eligibility.

With the addition of Dallas and Minnesota, the NFL teams would play 14 games this year.

In the season and home opener, on Sept 17, the Eagles defeated the Cleveland Browns W (27–20) before 60,671. On Sept 24, 1961, the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins W (14–7) before 50,108. In the first of several season spoilers, on Oct 1 at home, the St. Louis Cardinals barely beat the Eagles L (27–30) before 59,399. On Oct 8 at home for four in a row, the Eagles defeated the Pittsburgh Steelers W (21–16) before 60,671. Then, on Oct 15, at St. Louis, the Eagles beat the Cardinals before 20,262.

On Oct 22, 1961 at Dallas, the Eagles thumped the Cowboys W (43–7) before 25,000. At Washington, on Oct 29, the Eagles prevailed v the Redskins W (27–24) before 31,066. Then, on November 5, at home, the Eagles beat the Chicago Bears by two points W (16–14) before 60,671. At New York, on Nov 12, the Eagles were beaten by the Giants L (21–38) before 62,800. At Cleveland, on Nov 19, the Eagles went down for their third loss of the season 1 (24–45) before 68,399. If the Eagles had won their next four games, they would have tied for first.

At home on Nov 26, the Eagles beat the Dallas Cowboys W (35–13) before 60,127. Then, on Dec 3, at Pittsburgh, the Eagles beat the Steelers W 35–24 before 21,653. In the game that cost first place, on Dec 10, at home, the New York Giants beat the Eagles L (24–28) before 60,671. Eagle attendance was at its best. Then, on Dec 17, in the season finale, at Detroit, the Eagles beat the Lions by three W (27–24) before 44,231

1962 Nick Skorich # 9

The 1962 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their thirtieth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Nick Skorich in his second of three seasons as head coach. This Eagles team finished in seventh place t in the Eastern Conference with a losing record of 3-10-0. The Eagles had a terrible record and were nowhere close to making the playoffs this year. The Eagles got off to a slow start and it got worse.

On Sept 16, 1962 in the home and season opener, the St. Louis Cardinals defeated the Eagles L (27–21) before 60,671. On Sept 23, at home, the New York Giants Philadelphia L (13–29) before 60,671. At home again on Sept 30, 1962, the Eagles grabbed one of its three wins this season W (36-7) against the Cleveland Browns before 60,671. At Pittsburgh on October 6, the Eagles were defeated by the Steelers L (7–13) before 23,164. Then on October 14, at the Dallas Cowboys, the Eagles lost (19–41) before 18,645. Ironically as the Eagles attendance improved, their record seemed to be getting worse.

At home on Oct 21, the Washington Redskins beat the Eagles L (21–27) before 60,671 at Franklin Field. Then on Oct 28, the Eagles could not beat the newest team in the league and went down at Minnesota to the Vikings L 21–31 before 30,071. On Nov, at Cleveland, the Eagles played the Browns to a tie T (14–14) before 63,848. In one of the worst thrashings ever, Lombardis's Packers ruled Franklin Field on Nov 11, as Green Bay thumped a shutout at Philadelphia L (0–49) before 60,671. At New York on Nov 18, the Eagles went down again to the Giants L (14–19) before 62,705.

At home against the Dallas Cowboys, the Eagles pulled out a W, (28–14) before 58,070. At Washington on Dec 2, the Redskins lost to the Eagles W (37–14) before 32,229. Then on Dec 9, the Pittsburgh Steelers defeated the Philadelphia Eagles in a tight match L (17–26) before 60,671. Wrapping up a very poor season that might cost Skorich his job, on Dec 16, at St. Louis, the Cardinals beat the Eagles L (35–45) before 14,989

1963 Nick Skorich # 9

The 1963 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their thirty-first season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Nick Skorich in his third at last of three seasons as head coach. This Eagles team finished in seventh place in the Eastern Conference with a losing record of 2-12-2. 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

For Philadelphia fans, with all the support they were now showing, they would not tolerate losing seasons or worse yet, terrible records in non-winning seasons. Eagles fans go to games to win! Jerry Wolman know but Eagles fans did not know that new coach Joe Kuharich, a nice guy was not accustomed to winning. We will have to get through the season's games in Nick Skorich's last year before we can move in this book to Joe Kuharich's teams. I don't think we will be any more pleased over all.

On Sept 15, at the season and home opener for the Eagles, the 1963 Birds tied the Pittsburgh Steelers T (21–21) before 58,205. Then, on Sept 22, at home, the Eagles lost 2 of 2 to the St. Louis Cardinals L (24–28) before 60,671. At home again on Sept 29, the New York Giants overpowered the Eagles L 37–14 before 60,671. In a fourth home game in a row, on Oct 6, the Eagles won their first—this time over the Dallas Cowboys W (24–21) before 60,671. At Washington, on Oct 13, the Eagles won their second game in a row and last of the season v the Washington Redskins W (37–24) before 49,219 fans.

At Cleveland on Oct 20, the Browns overpowered the Eagles L (7–37) before a packed house of 75,174. At Chicago on Oct 27, the Bears beat the Eagles L (7–16) before 48,514. Then, on Nov 3, at home, Philadelphia lost to the Cleveland Browns L (17–23) before 60,671. On Nov 10, against the New York Giants, Philadelphia could not keep up L (12–42) before 62,936. Then, on Nov 17, at Dallas, the Cowboys managed to beat the Eagles in a fair fight L (20–27) before 23,694.

At home on Nov 24, the Eagles could not keep enough steam to beat the Washington Redskins L (10–13) before 60,671. At Pittsburgh on Dec 1, the Eagles played the Steelers to a tie T (20–20) before 16,721. Then on Dec 8, at St. Louis, the Cardinals wrecked the Eagles L (14–38) before 15,979. On Dec 15, the last game of the 1963 season, the Minnesota Vikings whooped the Eagles L (13–34) before 57,403 fans at home.

1964 Joe Kuharich # 10

The 1964 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their thirty-second season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Joe Kuharich in his first of five seasons as head coach. This Eagles team finished in third place in the Eastern Conference with a losing record of 6-8-0. The Eagles had a terrible record, yet they had four more wins than in 1963. But, they were nowhere close to making the playoffs again this year. Coach Kuharich's record was much better than the prior Skorich years. As time went by, the Eagles kept giving him one more chance.

Coach Kuharich was hired as Eagles' Head Coach after he left Notre Dames. At ND, his record was less than stellar and when job shopping in Philadelphia. His major accomplishment was historically that he was the Irish's only head coach that had a lifetime losing record, while coaching there. His record was 17–23 in 4 years.

New owner Jerry Wolman of the Eagles was a nice guy who had a lot of money. He wanted Philadelphia to do well but perhaps he interfered too much in operations to make his wish come true. In the

picture below, Kuharich looks at his contract and a cameraman and a reporter and he gives the A-OK signal. The picture reveals more than anybody knew at the time. The fans were apparently the last ones considered.



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.

Looking at the 1964 NFL Draft and the 1964 AFL Draft, they were 2 different drafts held by the respected leagues. The NFL Draft was held on December 2, 1963, and the AFL Draft was held on November 30, 1963.

NFL teams had rules that said they could draft any eligible player coming out of college, the AFL had territorial picks in the early rounds. These were players that lived in a certain area or went to college there. This could be why the Eagles 2nd round pick (16th pick), was the AFL's 1st pick in the draft.

Some players made arrangements with the AFL leaders that they would sign if a certain team drafted them. It is believed that this information was relayed to the AFL teams. Some of these players signed contracts as soon as their last college game was over on the field or in the parking lot. NFL terms were more rigid.

The NFL Draft this year was for 20 rounds with 14 teams picking. The Eagles had the second pick in those rounds. They ended up picking 18 players.

The best overall pick in the draft was Dave Parks, an End out of Texas Tech. The Eagles choose future Hall of Fame member Bob Brown, an offensive tackle out of Nebraska. There were 10 Hall of Fame members taken in this draft, 4 of them in the first round.

The Dallas Cowboys get 2 of them when they take a chance on Bob Hayes in the 7th round and Roger Staubach in the 10th round. Roger Staubach was not a freebie as he still had to serve a 4-year military obligation in the US Navy before he could play NFL football. They were the rules of the United States Naval Academy.

In the home and season opener for the Philadelphia Eagles in 1964, the 1September 13, 1964, the first year under former Notre Dame coach Joe Kuharich. The Eagles beat the Giants (38–7) before 60,671. In a tight match on Sept 20 at home, the San Francisco 49ers defeated the Eagles L (24–28) before 57,353. Then, on Sept 27, the Eagles went down again to the Cleveland Browns L (20–28) before 60,671. On Oct 4, at home, the Eagles beat the Pittsburgh Steelers W

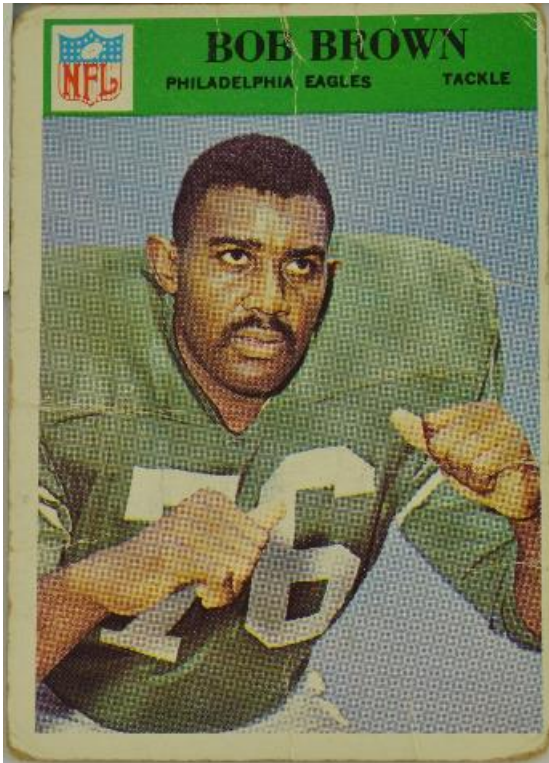
(21–7) before 59,354. Then, on Oct 11, at Washington, the Eagles lost to the Redskins L (20–35).

On Oct 18, at New York, the Eagles beat the Giants W (23–17) before 62,978. At Pittsburgh on Oct 25, the Eagles beat the Steelers W (34–10) before 38,393. At home on Nov 1, the Washington Redskins defeated the Eagles L (10–21) before 60,671. The Eagles then took off to the West Coast to meet Los Angeles. The Rams beat the Eagles that day L (10–20) before 53,994. On Nov 15 at Dallas, the Eagles beat the Cowboys W (17-14) before 55,972.

The Eagles then lost three of their last four games. The first was on Nov 22 at home against the St. Louis Cardinals L (13–38) The next was on Nov 29 at Cleveland where the Browns handed the Eagles a L (14-24) loss. The next loss was on Dec 13 at St. Louis in a two-point match to end the season against the Cardinals L (34-36) before 24, 636. In between the three losses, the Eagles managed to beat the Cowboys at home W (24-14) on Dec. 6 before 60, 671.

Top Eagles Players

Bob Brown like most of the top Eagles players of all time is a special guy on and off the field. But, his greatness was always immediately observable on the football field. Offensive lineman get few kudos but Bob Brown is the exception. He is on a number of best Eagles ever lists and he is in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Bob Brown is very much deserving of all of his honors.



Brown came to the Eagles as the second pick in the 1964 draft. I don't mean the second Eagles pick. He was the Eagles' first pick but in the whole draft of hundreds of players, he was number 2. Brown found much success during his five years with the Philadelphia Eagles. His play was so impressive, it earned him the nickname "The Boomer". Boomer made three Pro-Bowls with the Eagles in his five-year tenure.

The below writeup is from The Pro Football

Hall of Fame.

Though the words are highly complimentary of his achievements, a Bob Brown deserves more than just the two paragraphs of accolades above.

Bob Brown Quote: "Yes, football is a sport, but it is a business too...The only commodity I have is my body. I want to make it the best at its task. I want to be sure the people who come out to see me get their money's worth."

Voted college football's Lineman of the Year in 1963 by the Washington, D.C. Touchdown Club, Bob "The Boomer" Brown, an All-America guard at Nebraska, was drafted in the first round in 1964 by both the National Football League's Philadelphia Eagles and the Denver Broncos of the then-rival American Football League. Choosing the senior circuit, Brown began his impressive pro football career in the "City of Brotherly Love."

Brown, however, never demonstrated any “brotherly love” for opponents on a football field. He once described himself as being “about as subtle as a sixteen-pound sledgehammer.” Defensive linemen, who almost always came away with their ribs aching from the punishment he delivered, agreed.

Not known as one who would use finesse too often in his blocking technique, Brown’s philosophy was simple. “I beat on people from the opening kickoff. I want to see results in the fourth quarter,” he explained. “I don’t want them to have as much left. I want them to not be sure they want to keep coming. I try to take a toll on them.”

An aggressive blocker, the 6-4, 280-pound Brown used his size and strength to neutralize hard-charging pass rushers. He exploded off the ball and into the oncoming defensive player. As one coach explained, “to do what Brown does requires great quickness, great strength, and great self-confidence. Few men have such a combination of assets. Bob Brown does.”

Although a knee injury suffered in 1967 bothered him through much of the rest of his career, Brown continued to excel. He was named All-NFL seven of his 10 seasons with the Philadelphia Eagles (1964-68), Los Angeles Rams (1969-70), and Oakland Raiders (1971-73). Two of the three years he did not make the All-NFL team, he was named second-team All-NFL. Named the NFL/NFC offensive lineman of the year three times, Brown was also chosen to play in six Pro Bowls – three with the Eagles, two with the Rams, and one final time with the Raiders.

In 1969, after five consecutive all-league seasons with the Eagles, the behemoth lineman was traded to Los Angeles. That year the Rams offensive line set an NFL record for protecting the passer. “At his best, no one was better than big Bob Brown,” then-Rams’ coach and future Hall of Famer George Allen remarked. Former teammate and Hall of Fame lineman Ron Mix had equally high praise for Brown. “Everything about Brown is bigger than life – his size, his talent, his intelligence, his sensitivity,” he once offered. “He’s one of a kind.”

1965 Joe Kuharich # 10

The 1965 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their thirty-third season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Joe Kuharich in his second of five seasons as head coach. The owner was Jerry Wolman. This Eagles team finished in fifth place in the Eastern Conference with a losing record of 5-9-0. The Eagles had a terrible record with one less wins than in 1964. The Eagles began the season with a win against the St. Louis Cardinals that followed with a loss against the New York Giants. In the season, for every win they had, a loss followed. The Eagles lost four games in a row after winning against the Dallas Cowboys. Those chains of losses caused the team to fall into 5th place of the NFL Eastern Division, and cost them from entering the playoffs.

Both the 1965 NFL Draft and the 1965 AFL Draft both took place on Saturday, November 28, 1964. This happened to be the day of the Army-Navy game that was normally the last game of the college season before the bowl games fired up.

Though at the same time, the two draft sessions were separate from each other and some players were drafted by both leagues. The AFL was going strong at the time, and it wanted future big stars signed. It would do what it could to please them if they signed with the AFL.

Joe Namath signed with New York, where he wanted to live, and he was given a big salary at the time of \$427,000. As in earlier years some players had signed "AFL contracts." In other words, they signed with the league as soon as their last college game was over and when drafted by an AFL team the contract was transferred to the team. To help fight this "unfair piracy" the NFL moved the draft up to near the end of the college season.

A new kind of job was created, "baby sitter". Their job was to hang with the draft prospect and keep him away from the other leagues representative. The Eagles draft pick, Otis Taylor, for example, was held in a motel and had to "escape" from the NFL baby sitter. He later signed with the AFL for money and a "Red Thunderbird Convertible" that the AFL baby sitter was driving. Taylor noticed

how a lot of people stared at the car when they drove by, and he wanted one. Marketing to the players was a big deal.

The first player selected in the NFL draft was Tucker Frederickson, a back from Auburn. The NY Giants got the pick. The draft was marked by the failure of the NFL to sign Joe Namath (Cardinals), who signed with the American Football League's New York Jets. As we almost all know, Namath and the Jets went on to defeat the NFL's Colts for the World Championship after the 1968 season. The AFL was very, very successful.

In the home and season opener in 1965, which, by the way was the year I graduated from high school, on Sept 19, the Eagles got off to a great start by beating the St. Louis Cardinals W (34–27) before 54,260. On Sept 26, the Eagles lost by just two points against the New York Giants at home L (14–16) before 57,154. Then, on Oct 3, the Cleveland Browns outplayed the Eagles at Franklin Field and outscored the Eagles 2 to 1, L (17–35) before 60,759. Then, at Dallas on Oct 10, the Eagles their pound of flesh from the Cowboys W (35–24) before 56,249. On Oct 17, at New York, the Giants beat the Eagles by one TD L (27–35) before 62,815.

At home on Oct 24, the Pittsburgh Steelers defeated the Eagles L (14–20) before 56,515 fans. Then at Washington, on Oct 31, the Redskins beat the Eagles by just two points in a close match L (21–23) before 50,301. On Nov 7, 1965 at Cleveland, the Eagles were defeated by the Browns L (34–38) before 72,807. Next, at home, the beat the Washington Redskins W (21–14) before 60,444. Then, on Nov 21, at Baltimore, the Eagles lost another to the Colts L (24–34) before 60,238

On Nov 28, at home, the Eagles beat the St. Louis Cardinals W (28–24) before 28,706. Then, on December 5, at home, the Eagles lost a nail-biter to the Dallas Cowboys L (19–21) before 54,714. At Pittsburgh on Dec 12, the Eagles beat the Steelers W (47–13) before 22,002. Then, in the final game of the season, on Dec 19, the Detroit Lions beat the Eagles L (28–35) before 56,718.

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 2nd place and making the playoff bowl with a record of 9-5-0. They Lost NFL Playoff Bowl (vs. Colts) 14-20

The 1966 NFL draft was held on November 27, 1965, the last year in which the NFL and the AFL had separate drafts. As a result, many players selected by teams from both leagues would choose to play for the more established NFL, or in a rarer case, the AFL. The expansion Atlanta Falcons were awarded the first pick in the draft as well as the final pick in each of the first five rounds. The league also provided the Falcons with an expansion draft six weeks later, selecting players from existing NFL rosters.

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 2nd place in the NFL Capitol Division. They did not qualify for the playoffs.

In the season and home opener on Sept 17, 1967 the Eagles defeated the Washington Redskins W (35–24) before 60,709. On Sept 24, at home, the Baltimore Colts walloped the Philadelphia Eagles L (6-38) before 60,755. On Oct 1, at home, Philadelphia beat Pittsburgh W (34–24) before 60,335. At Atlanta, the Eagles overpowered the Falcons on Oct 8, W (38–7) before 53,868. Back at home, in Franklin Field, on Oct 15, the San Francisco 49ers nipped the Eagles by enough for the win. L (27-28) before 60,825.

On Oct 22 at St. Louis, the Cardinals defeated the Eagles L (14-48) before 46,562. At home, on October 29, the Eagles defeated the Dallas Cowboys W (21–14) before 60,740. Then, on Nov 5, at New Orleans, the Saints beat the Eagles L (24-31) 59,596. At Los Angeles on Nov 12, the Rams beat the Eagles L (17-33) before 57,628. At home, on Nov 19, Philadelphia beat New Orleans W (48–21) before 60,751.

At New York, on Nov 26, the Giants whipped the Eagles L (7-44) before 63,027. Then, on Dec 3, at Washington, the Eagles tied the Redskins T (35–35) before 50,451. On December 10, at Dallas, the Eagles were beaten by the Cowboys L (17-38) before 55,834. In the season finale, the Eagles found the grit and the muscle to defeat the Cleveland Browns on Dec 17 W (28–24) before 60,658 fans at home.

1968 Joe Kuharich # 10

The 1968 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their thirty-sixth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Joe Kuharich in his fifth and last season as head coach. The owner was Jerry Wolman. This Eagles team fell backwards this year after a nice 1966. They finished 2-12 and came in 4th place in the NFL Capitol Division. They did not qualify for the playoffs. This was Kuharich's worst season with the Eagles after just one winning season in five years.

The fans saw a bad year coming and seemed to think they would have some consolation if they were to O.J. Simpson in the Draft. This would only happen of course if the Eagles went winless. So, the fans who had little respect for the coach at this time, hoped to go winless to help the new coach the following year.

But, with the Eagles at 2-12, this put the Buffalo Bills with a 1-12-1 record in last place and so they got Simpson with the 1st Pick. The Eagles were clearly on target for a winless season at 0-11 until they won their twelfth game. They were the first team in the NFL proper to lose eleven consecutive games in one season since the 1936 season. Though they were part of the AFL, and not the NFL in 1962, the Oakland Raiders lost their first thirteen games that year.

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. 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."

In the season opener on Sept 15, at Green Bay, the Packers beat the Eagles L (13-30) before 50,861. This would be just the first of a string of eleven losses until game 12. It was played before 50,861. On Sept 22, the New York Giants rolled into Philadelphia and beat the hapless Eagles L (25-34) before 60,858. On Sept 29 at home, the Dallas Cowboys smothered the Eagles L (13-45) before 60,858. At Washington, on Oct 6, the Redskins had just enough to beat the Eagles L (14-17) before 50,816. Then, on Oct 13, at Dallas the Cowboys overpowered the Eagles L (14-34) before 72,083

On Oct 20, at home, the Chicago Bears beat the Eagles L (16-29) before 60,858. Then on Oct 27, 1968 at Pittsburgh, in a game with no touchdowns, the Steelers beat the Eagles L (3-6) before 26,908. Then, at home on Nov 3, the St. Louis Cardinals got the best of the Eagles L (17-45) before 59,208. At home again on November 10, the Washington Redskins kept the Eagles winless string going L (10-16) before 59,133. At New York on Nov 17, the Giants beat the Eagles by one point L (6-7) before 62,896.

On the day of Philadelphia's eleventh straight loss, before 62,338 on Nov 24 at Cleveland, the Browns pounded the Eagles L (13-47). At Detroit on Nov 28, the Eagles captured their first game of the season in their twelfth game against the W (12-0) before 47,909. On Dec 8, at home Philadelphia beat the New Orleans Saints W (29-17) before 57,128, for the second win of the season.

On Santa Snowball day on December 15, at home in the season closer, the Minnesota Vikings took away coach Kuharich's thoughts of ending his five years on a positive note L (17-24) before a less-than capacity crowd at Franklin Field of 54,530. The Eagles would play just two more seasons at Franklin Field before moving to Veterans Stadium for the next thirty plus years.

Chapter 16 Three Coaches From 1969 to 1975

Coach #11 Jerry Williams

Coach #12 Ed Khayat

Coach #13 Mike McCormack

Year	Coach	Conf	Div	Place	Record
1969	Jerry Williams.	Eastern	Capito	4th	4-9-1
1970	Jerry Williams	NFC	East	5th	3-10-1
1971	Jerry Williams	NFC	East	3rd	0-3-0
<u>1969- 1971 Jerry Williams final record (7-22-2)</u>					
1971	Ed Khayat	NFC	East	3rd	6-4-1
1972	Ed Khayat	NFC	East	5th	2-11-1
<u>1971-1972 Ed Khavat final record (8-15-2)</u>					
1973	M. McCormack	NFC	East	3rd	5-8-1
1974	M. McCormack	NFC	East	4th	7-7-0
1975	M. McCormack	NFC	East	5th	4-10-0, —
<u>1973-1975 Mike McCormack final record (16-25-1)</u>					

1969 Jerry Williams # 11

The 1969 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their thirty-seventh season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football.



Jerry Williams Eagles Coach

They were led by Jerry Williams in his first of three seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. This Eagles team improved over Kuharich's 2-12 season with two more wins. They finished 4-9-1 and came in 4th place again in the NFL Capitol Division. They did not qualify for the playoffs. Williams would last just one more season and part of a third as Jerry Williams did not deliver the wins as expected by the fans.

The Eagles wore both green (for road games) and white (for home games) helmets during the season. The new white helmets would become part of the Eagles' permanent uniform for the subsequent four seasons.

The 1969 National Football League Draft occurred when I was a senior in college. It was part of the Common Draft, the third and final year in which the NFL and American Football League (AFL) held a joint draft of college players. The draft took place on January 28–29, 1969, finishing up a day before my birthday, which as a college senior permitted me to drink what had been the contraband at football games. Philadelphia would alternate with Atlanta in picking 2nd and 3rd in the 17 rounds of the draft.

O.J. Simpson graduated as the incumbent Heisman Trophy winner. He was an impressive running back from USC. The AFL's Buffalo

gained his services. As noted previously, the Eagles lost Simpson by being too good of a team. In the 14-game 1968 season the Eagles first win came in week 12 on Nov 18. They beat both the Lions and the Saints before losing their last game. By just a half-game, they lost the first pick to Buffalo.

The Atlanta Falcons (2–12) who would win a coin flip for the rights to the second pick in the draft, George Kunz was their pick. He had been an offensive tackle from Notre Dame. Future Hall of Famer "Mean" Joe Greene, defensive tackle from North Texas would go as a 4th pick, by the Pittsburgh Steelers (2–11–1). The Draft is always exciting in pro football. It's like restocking a liquor cabinet.

There were lots of losses like in the past for this Eagles season and they began right at the beginning in the home and season opener. On Sept 21, the Cleveland Browns won a one TD game L (20-27) before 60,658. The Pittsburgh Steelers were beaten by the Eagles in Game 2 on Sept 28, W (41–27) before 60,658. At home again on Oct 5, the Dallas Cowboys whooped the Eagles L (7–38) before 60,658. At Baltimore on October 13, the Colts beat the Eagles L (20-24) before 56,864. The next game was at Dallas where the Cowboys pounded the Eagles for the second time this season L (14–49) before 71,509.

The Eagles then managed to beat the New Orleans Saints on Oct 26, W (13–10) before 60,658. Ready to win every week, at New York, on Nov 2, the Giants were taken down by the Eagles in a close match W (23–20) before 62,912. At Washington on Nov 9, the Redskins tied the Eagles T (28–28) before 50,502. On Nov 16, at home, the LA Rams slid by the Eagles L (17–23) before 60,658. Then, at St. Louis, the Eagles beat the Cardinals W (30–34) before 45,512

At New Orleans on Nov 30, the Saints got the best of the Eagles L (17–26) before a fine crowd of 72,805. On Dec 7 at home, the Washington Redskins beat Philadelphia L (29–34) before 60,658. When the Atlanta Falcons came to Franklin Field in 1969, they beat the Eagles L (3–27) before 60,658. Then, wrapping up the season at San Francisco, the Eagles could not hang on and went down at the hands of the 49ers L (13–14) before 25,391. And so, it went in 1969.

1970 Jerry Williams # 11

The 1970 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their thirty-seventh season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Jerry Williams in his second of three seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. This Eagles team failed to improve over the prior year's 4-win season. They finished 3-10-1 and came in 5th place again in the NFC East. The new name for the division / conference combination.

The Eagles did not qualify for the playoffs. This would be Williams' last full season with the Eagles, but he would begin the 1971 season as head coach none-the-less. Wins were hard to come by during Williams' tenure. The team failed to qualify for the playoffs for the tenth consecutive season. It would take still a few more coaches to get back the right formula

In the season and home opener on Sept 20, 1970, the Dallas Cowboys delivered an initial blow that marked the rest of the season L (7-17) before 59,728. On Sept 27, at Chicago, the Bears had it all as they beat the Eagles L (16-20) before 53,463. Then, on October 4, my wedding anniversary, at home, the Washington Redskins convincingly beat the Eagles L (21-33) before 60,658. At New York, on Oct 11, consistently tough Giants squad took on and beat the Eagle sin a close match L (23-30) before 62,820. At home on Oct 18, the St. Louis Cardinals beat the Eagles by more than two TD's L (20-35) before 59,002.

At Green Bay on Oct 25, the Packers beat the Eagles L (17-30) before 48,022. On Nov 1 at Dallas, the Cowboys beat the Eagles L (17-21) before 55,736. At home on November 8, the Eagles beat the Miami Dolphins W (24-17) before 58,171. At home, the Atlanta Falcons tied the Eagles on Nov 15, T (13-13) before 55,425. Then, at home on Nov 23, the Eagles beat the New York Giants W (23-20) before 59,117.

At St. Louis on November 29, the Eagles were beaten by the Cardinals L (14-23) before 46,581. On Dec 6, at Baltimore, the Colts got the best of the Eagles L (10-29) before 60,240. At Washington on Dec 13, the Redskins overpowered the Eagles L (6-

24) before 50,415. Wrapping up the 1970 season at home, on Dec 20, the Eagles defeated the Pittsburgh Steelers W (30–20) before 55,252

1971 Jerry Williams # 11, (0-3-0)

1971 Ed Khayat #12, (6-4-1)

The 1971 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their thirty-ninth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Jerry Williams in his third of three seasons as head coach for the first three games (0-3-0) The owner was Leonard Tose. After the third game, Williams was replaced by Ed Khayat and he led the team to a 6-4-1 record.

With Khayat, this Eagles team improve over the prior year's 3-win season.by closing out with six wins in total. They finished 6-7-1 and came in 3rd place in the NFC East. Despite the improvement, the team failed to qualify for the playoffs for the eleventh consecutive season.



Coach Ed Khayat

The great wide receiver Harold Carmichael, a future Eagle's Pro-Bowler was picked in the seventh round of the draft and he enlivened every game in which he played. This year's home field was the brand-new Veterans Stadium in Philadelphia.

In the season opener at Cincinnati on Sept 19, 1971 at Cincinnati, the Bengals defeated the Eagles L (14–37) before 55,880. In the home opener, the second game of the 1971 season, in the inaugural game in Veterans Stadium, the Dallas Cowboys came in with a full head of steam on Sept 26 and destroyed Philadelphia's first Veterans' Stadium Party L (7-42). It was a lopsided game that made the Cowboys look great. In the third straight loss which prompted Williams' firing on Oct 3, at home, the Eagles were manhandled by the San Francisco 49ers L (3–31) before 65,358.

On Oct 10, at home, Ed Khayat's first game as head coach. Minnesota shut out Philadelphia L (0–13) before 65,358. Notice how the attendance is up by over 5,000 a game due to the capacity increase of the Vet over Franklin Field. At Oakland, on Oct 17, the Eagles were still losing every game and the Raiders kept the streak going L (10–34) before 54,615. The wins would begin to tickle in, but they were real for sure.

They began on Oct 24, when Philadelphia beat New York W (23–7) at home before 65,358. Then at home again on Oct 31, the Eagles squeaked by Denver W (17–16) before 65,358. The season slowed down when at Washington on Nov 7, the Redskins played the Eagles tough to a tie T (7–7) before 53,041. At Dallas, on Nov 14, the Eagles suffered their second last loss to the Cowboys L (7–20) before 60,178.

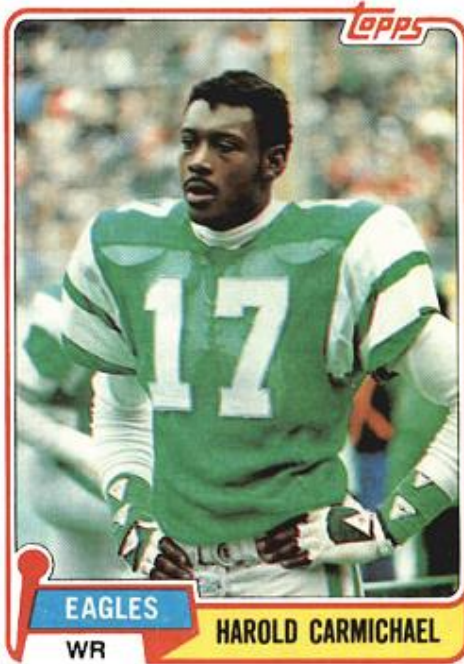
On Nov 21, the Eagles played well and beat the St. Louis Cardinals W (37–20) before 48,658. At home on Nov 28, the Washington Redskins inflicted the last loss of the season at home on the now feisty Eagles L (13–20) before 65,358. On Dec 5, at Detroit, the Eagles beat the Lions W (23–20) before 54,418. Then on Dec 12, at home, the Eagles beat the St. Louis Cardinals W (19–7) in a packed house of 65,358. Finishing up the season. At the vaunted, NY Giants, the Eagles prevailed on Dec 19 W (41–28) before 62,774

Top Eagles Players—Harold Carmichael

Carmichael, as in Harold, not Hoagie, the great singer, was about a year and a half after me on September 22, 1949 in Jacksonville, Florida, in the good ole USA. His full name is Lee Harold Carmichael. He can eat the same food as giraffe's as he is that tall at 6' 8" (aka 2.03 m).

Carmichael was a great wide receiver for the Philadelphia Eagles (1971-1983) and the Dallas Cowboys (1984). He retired after the 1984 season. He was great to watch. Carmichael holds the Birds' franchise records for receptions (589), receiving yards (8,978), and receiving touchdowns (79). Try out-jumping the great Harold Carmichael. Go ahead, just try.

Harold was selected to the Pro Bowl four times, following the 1973 season and then from 1978 thru the 1980 seasons.



Today, as a lover of Philadelphia football, he serves as the Director of player development for the Philadelphia Eagles, 1998-present. At 6' 8", those who count believe that Harold Carmichael is the tallest wide receiver in NFL history.

Carmichael's height was not his only asset. Besides his calm and calming demeanor, he was a great football player with great hands and great instincts. During his time in the NFL, Harold Carmichael changed the standard for how a wide receiver should be built. His 6'-

8" frame was unusual among wide receivers at the time, but now teams look for those tall receivers. He sure was tall.

Why is tall good? Harold Carmichael's size and thus his reach permitted him to catch balls well over the heads of opposing cornerbacks, and other defenders. This helped him cause serious damage down the field because in addition to being the guy with the only hands on the ball, he could actually catch the pigskin. He was a four-time Pro Bowl player, and he will go down as one of the Eagles' greatest wide receivers. I watched him often and he was a pleasure to behold on the gridiron.

1972 Ed Khayat #12

The 1972 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fortieth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Ed Khayat in his second of two seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. After a promising mid-season takeover in 1971, it was surprising for Ed Khayat to bring in just two wins in the 1972 season.

The Eagles failed to improve on their previous record of 6–7–1. They won only two games and failed to qualify for the playoffs for the twelfth consecutive season. Leonard Tose had yet to have a winning season. Was I this fault? Both of the Eagles' victories were not very convincing with one-point decisions on the road vs. supposedly weaker AFC teams. For example, 21-20 over the Kansas City Chiefs and 18-17 over the Houston Oilers. The meeting with the Chiefs was the last until 1992, and Kansas City did not come to play Philadelphia until 1998.

Following this disastrous season, the third with three wins or fewer since 1968, general manager Pete Retzlaff resigned, and coach Ed Khayat was fired by owner Leonard Tose. Pro football is for pros.

Being such a poor team for so long, the Eagles should have had good draft picks and should have been able to draft better players. The 1972 NFL Draft was held on February 1–2, 1972. It lasted 17 rounds and a total of 443 players were chosen

The Eagle chose several no-name players such as John Reaves a quarterback from the University of Florida with the 14th pick in the 1st round. They would have the pick 14th in all 17 rounds. They chose 17 players in this year's draft.

The number 1 overall pick went to the Buffalo Bills who chose Walt Patulski a Defensive end from Notre Dame. In the 2nd round with the 40th pick, the Atlanta Falcons took the 1971 Heisman Trophy winner Pat Sullivan, a Quarterback from Auburn University. The eagles winning woes were not yet over.

In the season opener on Sept 17, 1972 at Dallas, the Cowboys defeated the Eagles L (6–28) before 55,850. In the home opener on Sept 24, 1972, the Cleveland Browns beat the Eagles L (17–27) before 65,720. On Oct 2, at home, the New York Giants defeated the Philadelphia Eagles L (12–27) before 65,720. At Washington on Oct 8, the Redskins shut out the Eagles (0–14) before 53,039. Then, after a trip to the West Coast, the Eagles were slammed by the Los Angeles Rams L (3–34) before 65,720.

On Oct 22, at Kansas City, the Eagles beat the Chiefs by just one point. W (21–20) before 78,389. Then, on Oct 29, at New Orleans, the Saints overpowered the Eagles L (3–21) before 65,664. On Nov 5, at home, the Eagles tied the St. Louis Cardinals T (6–6) before 65,720. At Houston on Nov 12, the Eagles won their second game of the season by just one point against the Oilers W (18–17) before 34,175. At home on Nov 19, the Dallas Cowboys beat the Philadelphia Eagles L (7–28) before 65,720.

At New York on Nov 26, the Giants shellacked the Eagles L (10–62) before 62,586. On Dec 3, at home, the Washington Redskins powered through the Eagles L (7–23) before 65,720. On Dec 10, the Chicago Bears beat the Eagles at home L (12–21) before 65,720. In the season finale at St. Louis, on Dec 17, the Cardinals beat the Eagles by one L (23–24) before 34,872

1973 Mike McCormack #13

The 1973 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their forty-first season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football.



Coach Mike McCormack with team

The Eagles were led by Mike McCormack in his first of three seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. The Eagles improved on their previous record of 2–11–1. They won only five games (5-8-1), giving them seven straight losing seasons. Moreover, they failed to qualify for the playoffs for the thirteenth consecutive season.

In the home and season opener at the Vet, on Sept 16, 1973, the St. Louis Cardinals beat Philadelphia L (23–34) before 61,103. At New York on Sept 23, the Eagles made up for last season's walloping and tied the Giants at home T (23–23) before 62,289. What a difference a new coach makes but maybe not for long. At home, on Sept 30, the Washington Redskins defeated the Eagles L (7–28) before 64,147. At Buffalo at Oct 7, the Eagles lost by a point L (26–27) before 72,364. Then, on Oct 14, at St. Louis, the Eagles prevailed over the Cardinals W (27–24) before 44,400.

Then on Oct 21, at Minnesota, the Vikings pulled off a one-TD victory L (21–28) before 47,478. At home, on Oct 28, Philadelphia beat the Dallas Cowboys W (30–16) before 63,300. At home on Nov 4, the Eagles found the one point to beat the New England Patriots W (24–23) before 65,070. Atlanta came into the Vet on Veterans day

Nov 11, and the Falcons got the V, L (27-44) before 63,114. Off to Dallas on Nov 18, the Cowboys handed the Eagles a decisive loss L (10-31) before 59,375.

At home, on Nov 25, the Eagles beat the New York Giants W (20-16) before 63,086. Off to San Francisco to play the 49ers on Dec 2, the trip resulted in a loss for the Eagles L (28-38) before 51,155. At home on Dec 9, the Eagles beat the New York Jets W (24-23) before 34,621. The crowds were thinning. In the season closer at Washington on Dec 16, the Redskins prevailed L (20-38) before 49,484.

1974 Mike McCormack #13

The 1974 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their forty-second season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Mike McCormack in his second of three seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. The Eagles improved on their previous record of 5-8-1 by winning seven games and hitting 500 after a lot of losing seasons. They won seven games (7-7-0), breaking their seven straight losing season streak. Despite the improvement, they failed to qualify for the playoffs for the fourteenth consecutive season.

Trivia: After having worn white helmets for the previous four seasons, the Eagles switched back to green helmets in 1974. The team has worn green helmets since.

Opening up their season on Sept 15, 1974 at St. Louis, the Eagles could not manage a win against the Cardinals L (3-7) before 40,322. In the home opener on Sept 23, the Eagles quietly beat the Dallas Cowboys W (13-10) before 64,089. At the Vet again the next week, Sept 29, the Eagles defeated the Baltimore Colts W (30-10) before 64,205. At San Diego on Oct 6, the Eagles beat the Chargers W (13-7) before 36,124. When the New York Giants came to the Vet on Oct 13, the Eagles were ready and sent them home losers W (35-7) before 64,801

At Dallas on Oct 20, the Cowboys beat the Eagles L (24-31) before 43,586. At New Orleans on October 27, the Eagles lost to the Saints L (10-14) before 64,257. On Nov 3, at Pittsburgh, the Steelers shut out the Eagles L (0-27) before 47,996. At home, on Nov 10, the Washington Redskins beat Philadelphia by a TD L (20-27) before 65,947. At the Vet again on Nov 17, the St. Louis Cardinals grabbed a win from the Eagles L (3-13) before 61,982

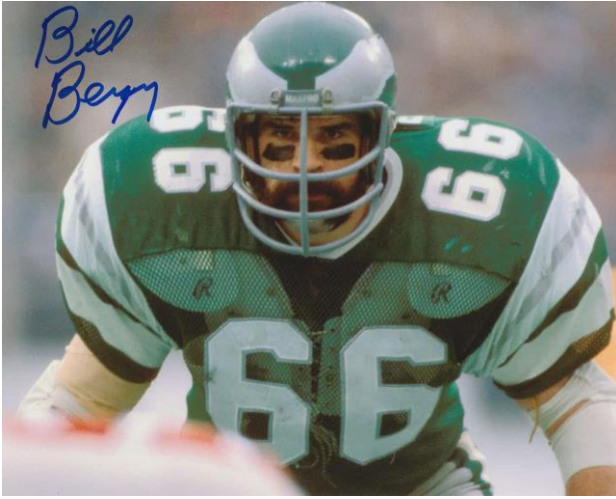
At Washington on Nov 24, the Eagles were beaten by the Redskins L (7-26) before 54,395. At home, on Dec 1 for the winter season. Philadelphia whipped the Green Bay Packers W (36-14) before a group of cold 42,030 fans. On Dec 8, at New York, the Eagles beat the Giants W (20-7) before 21,170. In the last game of the year, on Dec 15, the Eagles smiled at the Vet as they had beaten the Detroit Lions W (28-17) before 57,157

Top Eagles Players—Bill Bergey

No matter how great a player is in their position, it takes a great eye to catch somebody working on the line or in the defense to achieve football's greatest honors. Nobody knows them unless they appear on the morning talk shows and talk about who they pushed around the Sunday before. But, they do not. Bill Bergey is yet another member of the list of unknowns who simply were great at their position and helped get the ball back often enough that the offense had a chance to win the game.

Bergey, like a lot of Philly greats did not start his career in the Big City, but he definitely left his mark here. He was a middle linebacker's middle linebacker—a great tackler, and that is all need be said. In one season he scored 233 tackles and impressed everybody but the fans who did not read about how great he was.

He had a knack for intercepting the football, however, that made him what some pundits would call a “stud.” Over the course of his career for the Eagles, Bergey notched 18 interceptions, which was unheard of at the time. Even in today's NFL, that is pretty darn impressive for a linebacker. But, truth be known, I had never heard of him. What a shame on me.



Bergey played a key role in the Eagles' rise from oblivion, culminating in a Philly trip to Super Bowl XV (forty). With the Eagles, Bergey, a four-time All-Pro, set the NFL record for most interceptions by a linebacker and became the highest-paid defensive player

in the league with a four-year contract for \$1 million.

Bergey earned Eagles MVP status three times and he recorded 233 tackles in a single season with the Eagles. He was a popular player who was the foundation of the "Gang Green" defense that brought the Eagles back to the playoffs in 1978, 1979, and then right to the Super Bowl in 1980.

Bergey retired from professional football in 1981. He was inducted into the Eagles Roll of Honor in 1988. In 2012, the Professional Football Researchers Association named Bergey to PRFA Hall of Very Good Class of 2012. How about that for a great Eagle's player that you author, an avowed Eagles fanatic. Had never heard of.

Overtime Rules Now In effect 1974

The statistics show that in almost 71 percent of the NFL regular season games in 2016, the team trailing in the fourth quarter was within just one score of tying the game or taking the lead. Inevitably, with so many games so close, the odds are that some will end with a tie score at the end of regulation. So far, as of 2016, 560 regular season games have been decided in overtime. They otherwise would have been ties. Current rules give both teams opportunity to possess the ball at least once in OT unless the team that receives the overtime kickoff scores a touchdown on its first possession.

1975 Mike McCormack #13

The 1975 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their forty-third season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Mike McCormack in his third and last season as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. The Eagles could not even match previous mediocre record of 7-7-0 by winning three less games and not even breaking even percentage-wise.

They won four games (4-10), It was the team's 9th consecutive season without a winning record. The Eagles also missed the playoffs for a 15th consecutive season, a franchise record. Following the season, Mike McCormack was fired and replaced the following season by Dick Vermeil.-

In the season and home opener on September 21, 1975, the New York Giants defeated the Philadelphia Eagles L (14–23) at the Vet before 60,798 fans. At Chicago, on Sept 28, McCormack's Eagles lost a nail-biter to the Bear's L (13–15) before 48,071. At home, on Oct 5, Philadelphia beat Washington's Redskins W (26–10) before 64,397. At Miami on Oct 12, the Eagles took it on the chin from the Dolphins L (16–24) before 60,127. At St, Louis the following Sunday on Oct 19, the Cardinals beat the Eagles L (20–31) before 45,242

Then, on October 26, at home the Dallas Cowboys beat the Eagles L (17–20) before 64,889. On Nov3, at home, the LA Rams shellacked the Eagles L (3–42) before 64,601, Tightening the game up on Nov 9, but not enough at home, Philadelphia was beaten by the St. Louis Cardinals L (23–24) before 60,277. At New York, on Nov 16, the Eagles beat the Giants W (13–10) before 53,434. At Dallas a week later, the Cowboys kept the Eagles at bay and prevailed on Nov 23 L (17–27) before 57,893.

At home again on Nov 30, the Eagles managed to beat the San Francisco 49ers W (27–17) before 56,694. A week later, the Cincinnati Bengals beat the Eagles at home in a major shutout L (0–31) before 56,984. At Denver for Game #13 on Dec 14, the Broncos got the best of the Eagles L (10–25) before 36,860. At Washington, in the last game of the 1975 season, the Eagles played the best all year and took down the Redskins W (26–3) before 49,385

Chapter 17 Coach Dick Vermeil 1976 to 1982

Coach #14 Dick Vermeil

Year	Coach	Conf	Div	Place	Record
1976	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	4th	4-10-0
1977	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	4th	5-9-0
1978	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	2nd	9-7-0
	•	Lost Wild Card Playoffs (at Falcons) 13-14			
1979	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	2nd	11-5-0
	•	Won Wild Card Playoffs(Bears) 27-17			
	•	Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Buccaneers) 17-24			
1980	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	1st	12-4-0
	•	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	2nd	10-6-0
	•	Lost Wild Card Playoffs(Giants) 21-27			
1982	Dick Vermeil,	NFC	East	13th	3-6-0
	•	Players Strike			

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

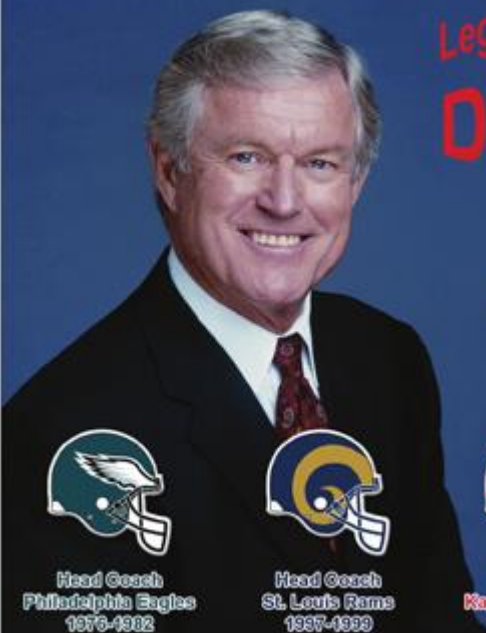
1976 Dick Vermeil #14


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Head Coach
Kansas City Chiefs
2001-2006



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

The 1976 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their forty-fourth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Dick Vermeil in his first of seven seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. Like the prior year under McCormack, 4-10 was the best Vermeil could deliver. But, his style offered promise to the lagging Eagles and they needed any glimmer of hope that could be had. Even the press was kind to Vermeil because like many fans, they felt something.

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. 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.

Like all NFL drafts, the 1976 version was very exciting. Teams could go from fourth place to first or last to half-way up the pack with the right draft picks

This annual player selection meeting was held on April 8-9, 1976. It lasted 17 rounds, with the expansion Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Seattle Seahawks making the first two selections. The expansion teams were also given a pair of extra picks at the end of each of rounds 2-5.

The Philadelphia Eagles would pick 9th in the 17 rounds. They still had to overcome the traded away draft picks of the Mike McCormack era. The draft began with first overall pick of Hall of Famer Lee Roy Selmon. He was a defensive end from Oklahoma. He went to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The Eagles had to wait until the fourth round to make a selection with the 111th pick. Vermeil was a miracle worker.

Interesting trivia Vincent Papale

Vincent Papale, was not big for an NFL guy but was above average in physical stature. He was 6-feet 2-inches (1.88 m) and 195 pounds (88.5 kg), and he was the biggest long shot to make the Eagles roster. At age 30, Papale was the oldest rookie in the history of the NFL to play without the benefit of college football experience (other than kickers). He went on to play wide receiver and special teams for the Eagles. With Philadelphia hosting the famous "Rocky scene," Papale earned the nickname "Rocky" (after the 1976 Sylvester Stallone movie and character) while playing with Philadelphia. He is the subject of the Disney movie *Invincible*, starring Mark Wahlberg. They say you'd like the movie!

In the season opener on September 12, 1976 at Dallas, the Eagles did not have enough even with Vermeil to beat the Cowboys and went down L (7–27 before 54,052. In the home opener on Sept 19, seeking some respect, the Eagles beat the New York Giants W (20–7) at the Vet behind a great crowd of 66,005. The Redskins came in to beat the Eagles on Sept 27, and they did. Washington took no excuses from Philadelphia and walked away with the win L (17–30 before 66,005. At Atlanta, the Eagles coach was pushing for a W and he got it by a squeak against the Falcons W (14–13) before 45,535. At St. Louis on Oct 10, the Cardinals hustled the Eagles and beat them on the field L (14–33) before 44,933

On Oct 17, at Green Bay, the Eagles lost to the Packers L (13–28) before 55,398. At home on Oct 7, Minnesota beat Philadelphia L (12–31 before 56,233. At NY on Oct 31, the Eagles beat the Giants W (10–0) before 68,690. Then, on Nov 7, at home, the Eagles lost to

the St. Louis Cardinals L (14–17) at the Vet before 65,505. On Nov 14, at Cleveland, the Browns held the Eagles to a FG, defeating the Birds L (3–24) before 62,120

At home on Nov 21, the Oakland Raiders beat the Eagles L (7-26) before 65,990. At Washington on Nov 28, the Redskins shut out the Eagles L (0–24) before 54,292. On Dec 5, at home, the Dallas Cowboys beat the Eagles L (7-26) before 55,072. In the final game of the 1976 season, the Eagles were victorious against the Seattle Seahawks at home W (27–10) before 37,949

1977 Dick Vermeil #14

The 1977 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their forty-fifth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Dick Vermeil in his second of seven seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. The Eagles were adjusting to a new coach and this would be another adjusting year. The Birds won one game more than in 1976. Despite the improvement, the team failed to qualify for the playoffs for the seventeenth consecutive season. The Eagles picked up future Eagles star Wilbert Montgomery in this year's draft.

In the season and home opener, the Birds took on the expansion team Tampa Bay Buccaneers on September 18, 1977 and beat the Bucs W (13–3) at the Vet before 63,132. At Los Angeles a week later on Sept 25, the Eagles were shut out by the Rams L (0–20) before 46,031. At Detroit on Oct 2, the Lions beat the Eagles L (13–17) before 57,236. At NY in week 4 on Oct 9, the Eagles won their second game of the season against the Giants W (28–10) before 48,824. Then on Oct 16, 1977 at home, the St. Louis Cardinals beat the Eagles in a close game L (17–21) before 60,535.

On Oct 23 at home, the Dallas Cowboys beat the Eagles L (10–16) before 65,507. At Washington on Oct 30, the Redskins beat the Eagles L (17–23) before 55,031. At home on Nov 6, the Eagles beat the New Orleans Saints W (28–7) before 53,482. On Nov 13, at home the Washington Redskins beat the Eagles by a Field Goal L (14–17) before 60,702. Note how the Eagles losses were by fewer

points under Vermeil. On Nov 20, at St. Louis, the Cardinals beat the Birds L (16–21) before 48,768

On Nov 27, at New England's Foxboro Stadium, the Patriots beat the Eagles L (6–14) before 57,893. At Dallas on Dec 4, the Cowboys beat the Eagles by 10, L (14–24) before 60,289. At home on Dec 11, the Eagles beat the Giants W (17–14) before 47,731. In the season finale at home on Dec 18, Philadelphia shut out the New York Jets W 27–0, before 19,241, thereby ending Vermeil's second season on a positive note.

Top Eagles Players



With 6538 yards. for years Wilbert Montgomery was the Eagles' all-time leading rusher.

He has since however been passed by LeSean McCoy at 6792.

Montgomery played during the 14-game NFL seasons as well as a strike-shortened 1982 season.

Wilbert Montgomery proved invaluable during much of his stay in Philly. Montgomery was equally gifted catching passes as well. He finished his career in Philadelphia with about 2,500 receiving yards. A solid runner and receiver for sure, Montgomery should definitely be in the Hall of Fame.

Wilbert joined Philadelphia after being drafted in the sixth round of the 1977 NFL Draft. He wore # 31 in his career with the Eagles, playing eight seasons and shattering almost all of the Eagles' rushing records and leading the club in rushing six times.

Montgomery concluded his NFL career with the Detroit Lions in 1985, when at the time he held seven Philadelphia rushing records, including career attempts (1,465), rushing yards (6,538, broken by LeSean McCoy in 2014), attempts in a season (338 in 1979), rushing yards in a season (1,512 in 1979, since broken by LeSean McCoy in 2013), career 100-yard rushing games (26), 100-yard rushing games in a season (8 in 1981), and touchdowns in a game (4).

In 1979, Montgomery led the NFL with 2,012 all-purpose yards (rushing, receiving, returns). Over his NFL career, this versatile back accumulated 6,789 yards rushing, 2,502 receiving, 814 kickoff return yards, 57 touchdowns (45 rushing, 12 receiving, 1 kickoff return), and two Pro Bowl invitations (1978–79). He was quite a player and deserves Hall of Fame recognition.

1978 Dick Vermeil #14

The 1977 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.

The 1978 NFL Draft The draft was held May 2–3, 1978. The league also held a supplemental draft after the regular draft and before the regular season. The draft was 12 rounds long with a total of 334 players selected.

The Eagles, because of previous trades made, had to wait until the 3rd round for their first pick. They would only have 7 picks and of these 7 players selected, 5 made the team and played during the season. With the 66th pick the Eagles as their first pick in the draft the Philadelphia Eagles selected Reggie Wilkes a Linebacker out of Georgia Tech.

The number 1 overall pick in the draft was taken by the Houston Oilers who selected the 1977 Heisman Trophy winner, Earl Campbell a Running Back out of the University of Texas Future Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee, in 2006, Warren Moon, a Quarterback from University of Washington, went undrafted. He is also in the Canadian Football League's Hall of Fame. It is amazing how all those sunny minds in the NFL missed out initially on a guy named Moon.

On August 5, in the pre-season, the NFL played its first game in Mexico City. The New Orleans Saints beat the Philadelphia Eagles by a score of 14–7. The 1978 season would be the first in which the teams each played sixteen games

In the season and home opener, on September 3, 1978 the Sunday before Labor Day, the Los Angeles Rams won by two points over the Eagles L (14–16) at the Vet before 64,721. At Washington, on Sept 10, the Redskins beat the Eagles by five, L (30–35) before 54,380. At New Orleans on Sept 17, the Eagles beat the Saints W (24–17) before 49,242. Then, on Sept 24 at home, the Eagles defeated the Miami Dolphins W (17–3) at the Vet before 62,998.

At Baltimore, on Oct 1, the Eagles beat the Colts W (17–14) before 50,314. At New England, on Oct 8, the Patriots beat the Eagles L (14–24 before 61,016. Then at home, on Oct 15, Philadelphia beat the Washington Redskins W (17–10) before 65,722. On Oct 22, at home, Dallas beat Philadelphia L (7–14) before 60,525.

On Oct 29, at home, the St Louis Cardinals defeated Philadelphia L (10–16) at the Vet before 62,989. On Nov 5, at home the Eagles defeated the Green Bay Packers W (10–3) before 64,214. Then, on Nov 12, the Eagles defeated the New York Jets W (17–9) before 60,249. 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

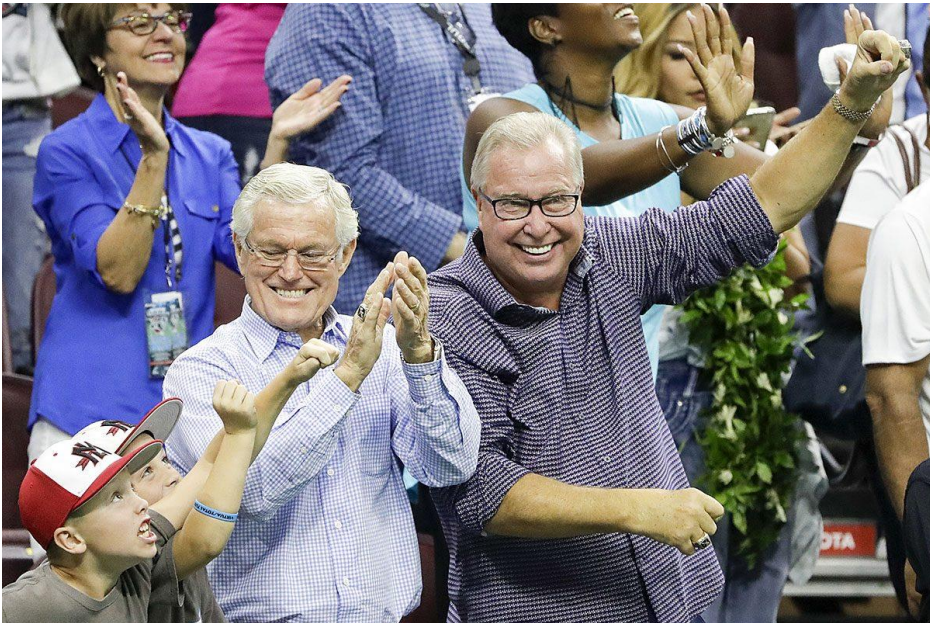
The 1978 Playoffs

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.

As was typical, the teams with the better records did not get as many shots at drafting players. After having gone 9-7 in the 1978 season and making the playoffs, the Eagles found themselves having to follow rule 3 of the draft – "Teams that made the playoffs are then ordered by which round of the playoffs they are eliminated" – meaning four teams with a record the same or better than the Eagles would pick in front of them. The Eagles were similarly punished in the 1979 Draft.

It was held May 3-4, 1979 in New York City. It would last 12 rounds. Philadelphia got the 19th to the 21st picks in the 12 rounds. They had finally overcome the traded-away draft picks of the Mike McCormack era. This year, they finally got to pick in the first-round pick and they got some other low-round draft picks. They would use these and build up their team as 7 of the 10 draft picks made the team for several years to come.

The draft began with first overall pick of Tom Cousineau, linebacker from Ohio State, by the Buffalo Bills. With the number 7 pick the New York Giants selected Phil Simms, a quarterback from Morehead State. The crowd, made up of mostly New York fans, voiced their displeasure of his selection.

The Eagles were very pleased to get Tony Franklin, a kicker from Texas A & M. Franklin in the draft. Franklin was best known for his “barefoot” kicking style

In the season and home opener, Philadelphia defeated New York on September 2, 1979 W (23–17) before 67,366 at Veterans Stadium. The capacity had recently been increased to 71,384. At home on Sept 10, the Atlanta Falcons beat the Eagle L (10–14) before 66,935. At New Orleans on Sept 16, the Eagles beat the Saints W (26–14) before 54,212. At New York on Sept 23, the Eagles beat the Giants W (17–13) before 74,265.

At home on Sept 30, the Eagles defeated the Then, Pittsburgh Steelers W (17–14) before 70,352. On Oct 7, the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins W (28–17) before 69,142. Then, on Oct 14, at St. Louis, the Eagles beat the Cardinals W (24–20) before 48,367. The Eagles then went on a three-game losing streak. At Washington on Oct 21, the Redskins defeated the Eagles L (7–17) before 54,442

At Cincinnati on Oct 28, the Bengals pounded the Eagles in a big loss L (13–37) before 42,036. At home, on Nov 4, 1979 Cleveland Browns L 24–19 69,019 At Dallas on Nov 12, the Eagles beat the Cowboys W (31–21) before 62,417. Then, at home on Nov 18, Philadelphia defeated the St. Louis Cardinals W (16–13) before 70,235.

At Green Bay on Nov 25, the Eagles Beat the Packers W (21–10) before 50,023. At home, on Dec 2, the Eagles defeated the Detroit Lions W (44–7) before 66,128. On Dec 8, at home, the Dallas Cowboys beat the Philadelphia Eagles L (17–24) before 71,434. At Houston, on Dec 16, in the final game of the season, the Eagles beat the Oilers W (26–20) before 49,407

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 stopped Eagles rushing play--1979 NFC 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.

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 2nd 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 be 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.

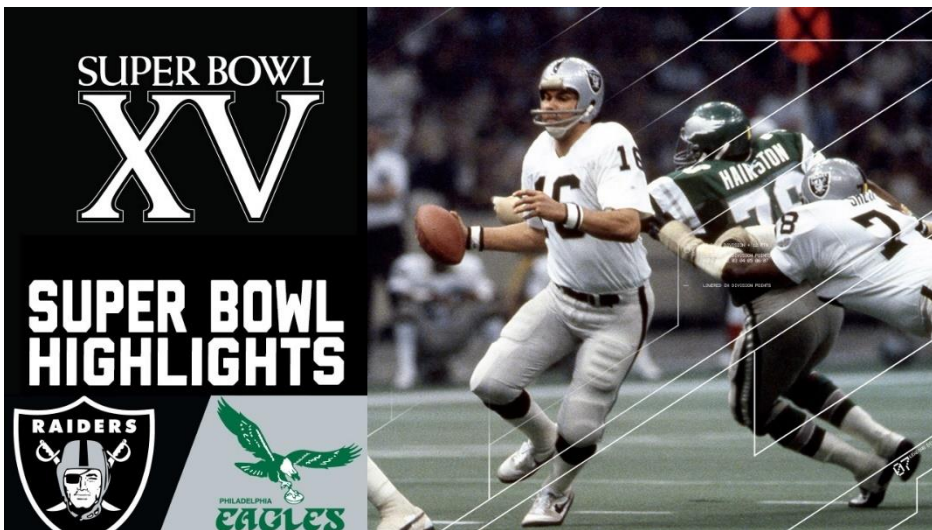
Montgomery finished with more all-purpose yards (208) than the entire Cowboys offense. This was the first time Dallas had ever allowed an opposing player to rush for over 100 yards in team postseason history. This would be the Eagles' last playoff victory until the 1992 season. Super Bowl XV began a 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. They 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. They were led by Dick Vermeil in his sixth 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 their performances. The Birds had just missed out on the Super Bowl and there were many looking for a repeat performance in 1981.

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 2nd 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.

To go from losing seasons to losing in the playoffs was a great tribute to Dick Vermeil but once the taste of victory is in a fan's blood, nothing but winning matters. Dick Vermeil ultimately was a victim of the love of his fans as much as he was a victim of not always being a winner.

Let's talk a bit about this phenomenon before we show the results of the 1981

In summary, this 1981 team record bought the Eagles an appearance in the postseason for the fourth straight season (first time in franchise history the Eagles had made the postseason four straight times). The team was coming off a Super Bowl appearance though a loss to the Oakland Raiders just the previous season.

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.

The Eagle's season opened at home on Sept 12, 1982 Washington Redskins and lost a squeaker L (34-37) before 68,885. In the last game before the strike, on Sept 19, at Cleveland, the Eagles had regained their composure and beat the Browns W (24-21) before 78,830. From September 19 through November 20, there was no Eagles football. Many fans were ready to throw in the towel on pro-football by the time the season resumed on November 21. The Eagles for one reason or another never really came back to form in

On Nov 21, the Eagles were off their game but not by much as they were beaten at home by the Cincinnati Bengals L (14-18) before 65,172. Home attendance was down by about 6,000 fans and it stayed that way 'til the end of the season. On Nov 28, 1982 at Washington, the Redskins beat the Eagles L (9-13) before 48,313. At home, on Dec 5, the St. Louis Cardinals prevailed v the Eagles L (20-23) before 63,622. The margin of loss was not high, but they were losses nonetheless. The Eagles had lost the edge.

On Dec at New York, the Giants were victorious L (7–23). This was the biggest loss margin of the year. On Dec 9, at home the Eagles finally won a post-strike game at home on Dec 19. They got the best of the Houston Oilers W (35–14) before a light crowd of 44,119. The season was extended two weeks to get in more games. On the day after Christmas, Dec 26, at Dallas, the Eagles beat the Cowboys W (24–20) before 46,199. 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 18 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	4th	5-10-0
1984	Marion Campbell	NFC	East	5th	6-9-1
1985	Marion Campbell	NFC	East	4th	7-9-0
1985	Fred Bruney	NFC	East	4th	1-0-0 (wk16)
<u>1983-1985 Marion Campbell final record (17-29-1)</u>					
<u>1985-1985 Fred Bruney final record (1-0-0)</u>					

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



Coach Marion Campbell with Eagles Players

1983 Marion Campbell #15

The 1983 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fifty-first season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Marion Campbell in his first of three

seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. The Eagles had played great football under Dick Vermeil and the fans expected it to continue. But, it would not be OK with this coach. eat performances The play of the Philadelphia Eagles this year resulted in a losing season.

The Eagles followed up their record of 3–6 during the strike-shortened 1982 season with another losing campaign. They failed to qualify for the playoffs for the second straight season. The Eagles started off strong, winning four of their first six games. But then they caught a losing fever which persisted 'til the end of the season as they won just one more game. Despite the disappointing season, wide receiver Mike Quick established himself as a new star with 1,409 receiving yards.

In the season opening game on September 3, 1983 at San Francisco, the Marion Campbell Eagles got off to a fine start with a win against the 49ers W (22–17) before 55,775. At home, on Sept 11, the Washington Redskins beat the Eagles L (13–23) before 69,542. On Sept 18, at Denver, the Eagles defeated the Broncos W (13–10) before 74,202. At home on Sept 25, the St. Louis Cardinals beat Philadelphia L (11–14) before 64,465.

At Atlanta on Oct 2, the Eagles beat the Falcons W (28–24) before 50,621. At New York, on Oct 9, the Eagles defeated the Giants W (17–13) before 73,291. None of the Eagle wins were substantial, yet nobody really was expecting a losing streak of seven games coming up. At Dallas on Oct 16. The Cowboys outpowered the Eagles L (7–3) before 63,070. On Oct 23, at home, the Chicago Bears barely took down the Eagles L (6–7) before 45,263.

On Oct 30, at home, Baltimore Colts beat the Eagles by one point L (21–22) before 59,150. At home again on Nov 6, the Dallas Cowboys won by one TD (L 20–27) before 71,236. On Nov 13, at Chicago, the Bears beat the Eagles by a FG L (14–17 before 47,524. Then, on Nov, the nemesis New York Giants shut-out the Eagles L (0–23) before 57,977, at the Vet.

On Nov 27, at Washington, the Redskins dropped the Eagles L (24–28) before. The Eagles last win of the season came on Dec 14 way across the country as they defeated the Los Angeles Rams W (13–9)

before 32,867. On Dec 11 at home, the New Orleans Saints beat the Eagles by a FG in a close match L (17–20) before 45,182. Then, on Dec 18, at St. Louis, the Cardinals thumped Philadelphia in the season closer L (7–31) before a scant crowd of 21,902. Fans like good games played by good teams.

1984 Marion Campbell #15

The 1984 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fifty-second season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Marion Campbell in his second of three seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. Missing the fine tutelage of Dick Vermeil, the Eagles had begun to falter and losing seasons were about to become a constant reality. The Eagles would improve after this year's 6-9-1 record by winning one more game in Campbell's last season.

Though Philadelphia improved upon their previous record of 5–11, winning six games, it was nothing to write home about. The team failed to qualify for the playoffs for the third straight season and there would be more to come. There was an outside chance that Philadelphia might make the playoffs, but those hopes were gone after a November 25 injury at St. Louis when starting and star quarterback Ron Jaworski suffered a broken leg and missed the remainder of the season.

It was the most serious injury the "Polish Rifle" ever suffered in his long career. Joe Pisarcik, from Northeastern PA's Hanover Township, who had come over from the Giants took for the final three-(1-2) could not impact the negative destiny of the 1984 squad.

The season began with tough luck and ended with tough luck. The first stroke of bad luck was going to New York for the season opener and finding a stubborn, NY Giants team willing to do whatever it took to keep its 1-point lead to defeat the Eagles L (27–28) before 71,520. Somehow, the Eagles overcame that close loss and then in the home opener, pulled off an amazing two-point win against the Minnesota Vikings on Sept 9, W (19–17), before a less than stellar attendance of 55,942. The next bad luck would come mostly from bad playing beginning with a trip to Dallas on Sept 16 in which the

Cowboys beat the Birds L (17–23) before 64,521. Then the Eagles were whooped by San Francisco at home L (9–21) before 62,771.

Finishing the three-game losing streak, on Sept 30, 1984 at Washington, the Eagles suffered a shutout L (0–20) before 53,064. The Eagles would then stage a comeback for three games beginning at Buffalo on Oct 7, W (27–17) before 37,555. Then, on Oct 14, at home the Birds beat the Indianapolis Colts W (16–7) before 50,277. At home again, the Eagles beat the Giants on Oct 21, W (24–10) before 64,677

On Oct 28, at the Vet, tough times were coming again as the St. Louis Cardinals overpowered the Eagles L (14–34) before 54,310. At Detroit on Nov 4, the Eagles tied the Lions T (23–23) before 59,141. At Miami on Nov 11, the Dolphins grabbed another one-point game from the Eagles L (23–24) before 70,227. Then, on Nov 18, at home, the Washington Redskins were defeated by Philadelphia W (16–10). The Eagles still actually had a chance to make the playoffs with some solid play.

On November 25, after taking it on the chin on Oct 28 at St. Louis, the Eagles were headed for a victory until there was 14 minutes left in the last quarter. With Philadelphia up by two points, the Cardinals got a field goal and with Jaworski out with a broken leg, the game was over in another one-pointer L (16–17) before 39,858.

After reserve QB Joe Pisarcik on Dec 2 at home could not overcome the Cowboys (L (10–26), 66,322, he led the Birds to a win over the New England Patriots on Dec 9 at home, W (27–17) before 41,581. Not that they were playoff contenders in the end but Pisarcik and company could not overwhelm the Falcons at Atlanta on Dec 16, and so, in the season finale, the Birds ended their season in last place with a loss (10–26) before 15,582

1985 Marion Campbell #15

1985 Fred Bruney #16

The 1985 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fifty-third season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Marion Campbell in his last of three seasons as head coach. The owner was Norman Braman. This year's

7-9 record brought the Eagles a fourth place NFC East finish. The team failed to qualify for the playoffs for the fourth straight season.

Nonetheless Philadelphia was in the mix all year long to earn a wild-card berth with a 6–5 record by late November. However, the candle of hope was blown out by the strong wind caused by a four-game losing streak. The final streak of the season foiled their playoff hopes.

It also cost head coach Marion Campbell his job before the season finale at Minnesota. The Eagles took out their frustration by not permitting Campbell to finish the season. They brought in interim coach Fred Bruney, and the Eagles pulled off a 37–35 miracle victory at the Metrodome to finish the season on an up note.

Two bright spots emerged at the quarterback position as Ron Jaworski returned from the broken leg suffered at the end of the 1984 season, and performed well enough (3,450 passing yards, 17 touchdowns) to be considered for comeback player of the year, though no award was given out.

Additionally, the Bird's second-round draft pick Randall Cunningham made his debut on September 22 at Washington and earned his first career victory at RFK Stadium. In terms of season game highlights, on November 10, at Veterans Stadium, Jaworski combined with wide receiver Mike Quick for a club-record 99-yard touchdown pass in overtime to beat the Atlanta Falcons, 23–17.

In another poor season start under coach Marion Campbell, on Sept 8, 1985, at New York, the Giants shut out the Eagles L (0–21) 76,141. On September 15, in the home opener, the LA Rams got the best of the Eagles L (6–17) before 60,920. On Sept 22, at Washington, the Eagles defeated the Redskins W (19–6) before 53,748. In the final game of September, on the 29th, the New York Giants beat the Eagles in OT, L (10–16) before 66,696.

At New Orleans on Oct 6, the Saints beat Philadelphia in a two-point match (l (21-23) before 56,364. On Oct 13, the Eagles beat the St. Louis Cardinals at the Vet, W (30–7) before 48,186. Then, on Oct 20 at home, the Eagled defeated the Dallas Cowboys W (16–14)

before 70,114. At home on Oct 27, Philadelphia defeated Buffalo W (21–17) before 60,987.

On Nov 3 at San Francisco the 49ers beat the Eagles L (13–24) before 58,383. Then, at home on Nov 10, 1985 Philadelphia beat Atlanta W (23–17) in OT) before 63,694. On Nov 17 at St. Louis, Philadelphia prevailed W (24–14) before 39,032. Then, on Nov 24, at Dallas, the Cowboys beat the Eagles convincingly L (17–34) before.

On Dec 1, at home, Minnesota beat Philadelphia L (23–28) before 54,688. At home on Dec the Washington Redskins beat the Eagles L (12–17) before 60,737. On Dec 15, at San Diego, the Chargers beat the Eagles L (14–20) before 45,569. In the final game of the year, with a new coach, Fred Bruney, on Dec 22, the Eagles defeated the Minnesota Vikings, W (37–35) 49,722

Top Eagles Players—Randall Cunningham

Randall Cunningham was clearly one of the great ones. Some would say there is no denying that Cunningham was one of the best players to ever put on an Eagles uniform.



He was a Rambler and a Scrambler, a very mobile quarterback. Some might say he could Out-McNabb a McNabb. His quick feet gave him a great means of escaping sacks as well as an uncanny rushing ability to give the Eagles yardage on planned plays and busted plays. These were some of the major reasons why Cunningham earned Pro Bowl selections three times as an Eagle.

We can say that he was a hint of things to come in Philadelphia, as the team would later go on to bring on such great rambler and scramblers as Donovan McNabb and Michael Vick. They both can be categorized as mobile quarterbacks.

Randall Cunningham played college football at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He quite a football player and was selected in the second round of the 1985 NFL Draft by the Philadelphia Eagles, with whom he remained for eleven years through the 1995 season.

He then announced his retirement from football, but returned after a year away from the game to join the Minnesota Vikings. In 1998, Cunningham enjoyed the strongest season of his career and helped the Vikings set the NFL record for most points in a regular season at the time, although the team would be upset in the NFC Championship Game.

Cunningham would be released by the Vikings following the 1999 season after failing to match his success during the previous year. In his final two seasons, he played for the Dallas Cowboys and the Baltimore Ravens for one year each, primarily as a backup. Upon retiring for a second and final time, Cunningham became an ordained Protestant minister and a coach at Silverado High School.

Out of college, Cunningham was also sought by the USFL's Tampa Bay Bandits that same year. Eagles owner Norman Braman would not negotiate if he accepted offers from the Bandits. The issue ended when the USFL did not make it.

As a rookie, Randall played every now and then as a backup to veteran Ron Jaworski. Eagles' fans loved his uncanny scrambling ability, though he completed just 34 percent of his passes and threw just one touchdown against eight interceptions.

In 1986, coach Buddy Ryan designated 35-year-old Ron Jaworski the starter, but he would take him out with the fleet-footed Cunningham in third-and-long situations where the youngster's scrambling would presumably put the defense on its heels. After a hand injury to Jaws in week 10, Cunningham would be the new starter.

Cunningham was made the Eagles' starting QB for good for the 1987 season. He is said to have reached "elite" status during the 1988 season, as he was elected by league players as the NFC starting quarterback for the AFC-NFC Pro Bowl (the first black quarterback to ever be elected a starter). That same year, he combined with fellow Eagle Pro Bowler Reggie White to lead the Eagles to the NFC Eastern Division Championship.

In the 1988 Divisional Playoffs, Cunningham threw 54 passes for 407 yards during the "Fog Bowl" 20–12 loss against the Chicago Bears, both of which remain playoff franchise records. Unfortunately, he also shares the franchise record with 3 interceptions in that same game. In the subsequent Pro Bowl a few weeks later, Cunningham was named game MVP as the NFC defeated the AFC, 28–3.

In 1989, on October 2 Cunningham also set the regular season franchise record with 62 pass attempts (now shared with Nick Foles), also against the Chicago Bears. He had been an all-conference quarterback and punter while at UNLV, and unleashed a 91-yard punt against the Giants on December 3, the longest in Eagles history (and the fourth-longest ever).

Cunningham had 20 punts during his career, with an average of 44.7 yards per punt. He clearly had another job if he chose to move from the QB slot.

There was a 1990 game against Buffalo in which Cunningham was throwing from his own end zone. He was just about to be sacked by Bruce Smith from his blind side. Somehow, the tricky QB knew enough to duck to avoid the sack and then threw a 60 yarder to wide receiver Fred Barnett, resulting in a miracle 95-yard touchdown.

Cunningham was at his best this year in his running role. He gained 942 yards, which is the 3rd most ever for any NFL quarterback. It was the tenth best rushing average in the whole league. He averaged 8.0 yards per rush, the most ever by an Eagle of any position with 100 attempts on the season, and third most in NFL history. What a player.

In 1991, Cunningham's season came to an abrupt end when he was unable to avoid a tackle by Bryce Paup of the Green Bay Packers. He tore his ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) in the first game of the season. He was o-u-t for the season. Cunningham would return to the Eagles completely healed the following season, and he was on the mark again, leading the team to its first playoff victory in 12 years.

However, it was evident that the injury he suffered took away a lot of his wily speed and unfettered athleticism. The 1993 and 1994 seasons would be riddled by a series of nagging injuries. Moreover, the Eagles were making a transition to the West Coast Offense. This eventually led to Randall being benched in favor of veteran Rodney Peete. Feeling as if the fans and organization did not fully appreciate his contributions to the team's success, as well as being unhappy with his role as a back-up, Cunningham retired from football after the 1995 season. He would play again but not for the Eagles.

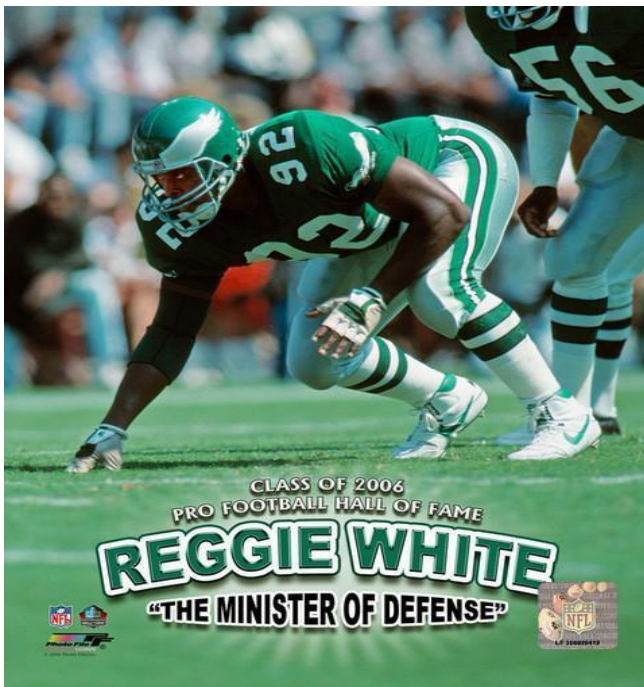
He retired from Philadelphia with the third most rushing yards in Eagles history, with 4,482, behind Hall of Famer Steve Van Buren and Wilbert Montgomery, although since then he has since fallen to sixth after Duce Staley, Brian Westbrook, and LeSean McCoy all rushed for more yards than him.

When he left, he was second only to Ron Jaworski in passing yards, with 22,877, though both were later surpassed by Donovan McNabb. He still holds the Eagles record with 6.62 yards per rush attempt, 422 sacks taken, and 6.5 yards per pass attempt in playoff games. Randall Cunningham was a fine football player and one of the Eagles' best.

Top Eagles Players—Reggie White

I would not be the first person to say that Reggie White isn't just one of the best Eagles to play the game, he is one of the best players to ever play in the NFL. Simply put, the man was all man. .

After being a first-round pick in the 1985 Supplemental Draft by the Eagles, White record 11 sacks as a rookie and never looked back. In fact, 11 sacks that year was the lowest season total he ever posted as an Eagle. As an ordained minister, White earned the nickname "Minister of Defense". The nickname fit perfectly.



Reggie White in my opinion is fully worthy of the title "Greatest Eagle of All Time." The only Eagle equal to Reggie stayed his whole career and that was Chuck Bednarik. Reggie may not have finished his career in Philly (thanks, shall we say front office that must have been asleep), but White undoubtedly made

a mark in the City of Brotherly Love that will never be erased.

He was A two-time NFL Defensive Player of the Year. Reggie White played a total of 15 years with Philadelphia, Green Bay and Carolina. He retired in 2000 as the NFL's all-time leader in sacks with 198. The mark has since been passed by Bruce Smith.

A member of the NFL's 75th anniversary team, White was elected to the Pro Bowl a record 13 straight times from 1986-98. He was the NFL's Defensive Player of the Year in 1987 and 1998.

After eight years as an integral piece in Philadelphia's "Gang Green Defense," White signed as a free agent with Green Bay in 1993 for \$17 million over four years, huge for that era. His signing, along with a trade for quarterback Brett Favre, brought a measure of respectability back to the franchise and he was the first major black player to sign with the Packers as a free agent.

White helped lead the Packers to consecutive Super Bowl appearances, including a win over New England in 1997, when he set a Super Bowl record with three sacks.

White was 39 when he finished his NFL career with Carolina, leaving the game with 198 sacks. That was actually White's third retirement.

"I will always miss the locker room and the guys, but I know God's will for me to move on to other challenges because it's not in me like it used to be," White said at the time.

Remarkably durable, White missed only one game in his last 12 seasons and started all but three games during that span.

On the day after Christmas, the morning of December 26, 2004, Reggie White was rushed from his home in Cornelius, North Carolina, to a nearby hospital in Huntersville, North Carolina, where he was pronounced dead. White had succumbed to cardiac arrhythmia. He was way too young at 43 years of age.

1986 Buddy Ryan #17

The 1986 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fifty-fourth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Buddy Ryan in his first of five seasons as head coach. The owner was Norman Braman. This year's 5-11-1 record brought the Eagles a fourth place NFC East finish. The team failed to qualify for the playoffs for the fourth straight season. How does a team once OT rules are in effect come out of a game with a tie?



Here's how. The game was tied and in OT and still no team could score, though they had their chances in the OT period. The Cardinals' Eric Schubert missed three field goals, two in overtime, the last with five seconds left. Philadelphia's Paul McFadden missed two field goals, one in the extra period. How many chances do kickers need?

Schubert, who replaced injured John Lee, missed his first field goal, a 31-yarder, with 4:39 left in the third quarter and the score was 3-3 at the time. "It was a high snap," he said. Schubert also had a 40-yarder blocked by Eagles defensive end Reggie White 4:05 into overtime. "The snap was low," he said.

On the 37-yard miss with five seconds remaining, Schubert said, "It might have been tipped, but when I hit it, I thought I was about three yards inside the upright, just not a good feeling." That's why there were still ties in 1986.

In 1986, Philadelphia got itself a new coach, Buddy Ryan. Those around back in those days may recall the controversial "Bounty Bowl" that got Buddy Ryan a lot of bad press. There are a lot of other coaches in the league that got their fill of Buddy Ryan. Just one memorable quote: When asked about his relationship with Mike Ditka when we worked for him at Chicago, Ryan enjoyed saying "We hardly ever spoke. I'd just put the game plan on his secretary's

desk and she'd put it on his desk. Not that he understood much of it."

The Eagles did not improve upon their previous record of seven wins. They got just five victories and of course they got a tie after OT expired in the Cardinals game. It was the fifth consecutive season in which the team failed to qualify for the playoffs. Ryan had been the defensive coordinator of the 1985 Chicago Bears, the team that won the Super Bowl in 1985. Ryan eventually showed he could get more out of the Eagles than they had been giving Campbell.

The QB role was split between 35-year-old veteran Ron Jaworski (who started nine games in this, his final season with the team) and second-year quarterback Randall Cunningham. Veteran quarterback Matt Cavanaugh also started two games.

The Eagles were not on the mark in passing this year, winding up with the third-fewest passing yards in the league (2,540), and the fewest yards-per-attempt (4.1). Jaws was no longer getting the job done.

When things are not good sometimes circumstances make them look even worse. The Eagles had some records for example they would prefer to bequeath to any other team. For example, they gave up a record number of sacks (a still-standing NFL-record of 104) and they were also tops on yardage allowed on sacks (708). No other team in football history had ever given up more than 78 sacks or 554 yards on quarterback sacks.

To put "bad" in perspective, Philadelphia gave up three-or-more sacks in every single game of the 1986 season, the only team in NFL history to do so. It helps to remember that Buddy Ryan buttered his bread for years by being great of the D side of the ball. He'd need to tighten up the O-line if he were going to last.

There were a few season highlights but there were not many. For example, on the road, on October 5, the Birds barreled into Fulton County Stadium intent on whipping the previously-undefeated Atlanta Falcons. The Eagles shut out the Falcons 16-0. Then, the stole another unexpected win in a comeback 33-27 OT win against

the Raiders at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum on November 30. This was the first Eagles' win over the Raiders since the 1980 season and first-ever victory on the road against the Oakland/LA version of the Raiders.

The Eagles had some good luck in the Draft this year picking up three players who became stars and mainstays of the Eagles' team. Keith Byars, Seth Joyner, and Clyde Simmons became Eagles franchise players in 1986.

Beginning the season away at Washington on September 7, 1986, Buddy Ryan's Eagles were pounded by the Redskins L (14–41) before. At Chicago, on Sept 14, the Bears beat the Eagles L (10–13) before 65,130. At the home opener on Sept 21, the Denver Broncos whooped the Eagles L (7–33) before 63,839. At the Vet again on Sept 28, the Los Angeles Rams beat the Eagles giving the Birds their fourth loss in a row. After four weeks, Buddy Ryan had not won a game for Philadelphia fans.

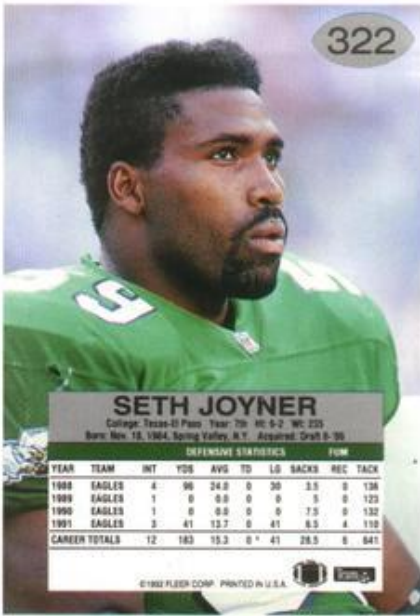
On Oct 5, at Atlanta, the Eagles beat the Falcons W (16–0) before 57,104. At New York, on Oct 12, the Giants pummeled the Eagles L (3–35), before 74,221. At the Vet on Oct 19, the Dallas Cowboys picked off the Eagles L (14–17) before 68,572. Then, on Oct 26, at home, Philadelphia beat the San Diego Chargers W (23–7) for the second win of the season.

Then, on Nov 2, 1986 at St. Louis, the Cardinals won the match L (10–13) before 33,051. At home on Nov 9, the New York Giants beat the Eagles by a FG L (14–17) before 60,601. On Nov 16, at home, the Detroit Lions prevailed over the Eagles L (11–13) before 54,568. At Seattle, on Nov 23, the Seahawks beat the Birds L (20–24) before 55,786.

At Los Angeles on Nov 30, Philadelphia beat the Raiders W (33–27) before 53,338. On Dec 7, at the Vet, the St Louis Cardinals tied the Eagles after OT expired with no scoring T (10–10) before 50,148. At Dallas, on December 14, the Eagles beat the Cowboys by two points W (23–21) before 46,117. In the season finale at the Vet, on Dec 21, the Washington Redskins were victorious L (14–21) before 61,816

Top Eagles Players—Seth Joyner

Seth Joyner was the type of linebacker that the Eagles could use anytime but the Birds did not know it at first. Joyner was drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles in the eighth round (208th overall) of the 1986 NFL Draft.



As good a player as Joyner was during his long career, the Eagles had second thoughts on him. The Birds cut Joyner in training camp, but they re-signed him later in the season. He is definitely one of the good ones

He was a sure tackler, and when he was asked to cover the middle of the field he did a great job. He played for the Eagles from (1986 to 1993), and he wasn't done. He put time in with Arizona and Green Bay before he called it quits after 1997.

His versatility got him a spot on the Pro Bowl roster during the 1991, 1993 and 1994 seasons. Some see his biggest accomplishment, as when he became one of only 11 members of the 20/20 club. This honor is given only to those defenders who are credited with 20 sacks and 20 interceptions in their careers.

Joyner's unique combination of strength and quickness allowed him to excel in all defensive statistical categories and was the reason for his great honors. Joyner was tough, and he loved playing for the Eagles. In one particular Monday Night Football game in 1991 against the Houston Oilers, Joyner, played with a 102-degree fever. Despite the handicap, his superior will, pushed him to record eight solo tackles, two forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and two

sacks. Can you imagine the night he would have had if his temp was 98.6?

Top Eagles Players—Clyde Simmons

Clyde Simmons joined the Eagles in 1986 and his durability and



strength helped him through eight great seasons with Philadelphia.

At a time of his life when many pro football players call it quits, he then spent and then another seven seasons with Arizona, Jacksonville, Cincinnati, &

Chicago. He retired after the 2000 season. Simmons was huge, fast, and strong. Simmons is best known for leading NFL with 19 sacks in. As a pro. He finished his career 11th in the all-time on the NFL sack list, with 121.5. It was dangerous to be a QB when Simmons was on the field. He was selected to the Pro Bowl in 1989, 1991 and 1992. He had some great moments in his football career including an interception for a touchdown against Jim Kelly and the Buffalo Bills in the 1996 NFL Playoffs.

Despite being a part of a dominating Eagle defense, Clyde Simmons was still able to stand out from the pack. He was that good. He became a well-known head hunter as he continuously found his way to the quarterback. His game dominance was put on full display during the already mentioned 1992 season, when he led the league with 19 sacks. He also was an aggressive tackler, making him one of the best overall defensive ends during his career in the late 80's and early 90's. He is one of the top Eagle players of all time.

1987 Buddy Ryan #17

The 1987 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their fifty-fifth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Buddy Ryan in his second of five seasons as head coach. The owner was Norman Braman. This year's 7-8 record brought the Eagles a second place NFC East finish. The team failed to qualify for the playoffs for the fifth straight season.

The second strike in six seasons interrupted the schedule and one game was canceled and others were played with replacement players. Regardless of who was playing, the Eagles improved upon their previous output of 5-10-1, going 7-8. However, three of those losses came during the three-game stretch during the strike when teams were staffed primarily with replacement players who crossed the picket lines to suit up. The regular players were very unkind to the replacements who were looking to star in the NFL. They called them "scabs."

Defensive lineman Reggie despite the major issues in the season had a breakout season, establishing a new NFL record by exploding for 21 sacks in the only 12 games in which he played. .

When the strike was settled, the first game was played on Oct 25 at Veterans Stadium. Eagles head coach Buddy Ryan called for the infamous "fake spike" in the final seconds with the Eagles leading the Dallas Cowboys by 10 points. The fake eventually led to another late touchdown, which was a payback for Cowboys head coach Tom Landry running up the score with starters who crossed the picket line to play two weeks earlier at Texas Stadium. One week later, Philadelphia won its final road game against the Cardinals at the old Busch Stadium, before the franchise moved to Phoenix for the 1988 season, becoming the Arizona Cardinals.

The Eagles played their season opener at Washington on Sept 13, where the Redskins prevailed L (24-34) before. The home opener for the Eagles at Veterans Stadium was on Sept 20, 1987 as the Eagles defeated the New Orleans Saints W (27-17) before 57,485. The Sept 27, 1987 game at San Francisco's 49ers was canceled due to the strike. On Oct, at home, the Eagles were battered by the Chicago Bears L (3-35). On Oct 11 at Dallas, the Cowboys, using franchise

players hammered the Eagles using replacement players L (22–41) before 40,622.

On Oct 18, at Green Bay, the Eagles lost to the Packers L (10–16) before 35,842. At home on 6 Oct 25, the Eagles whipped the Dallas Cowboys W (37–20) before 61,630. On November 1, at St. Louis, the Eagles nailed the Cardinals W (28–23) before 24,586. On Nov 8, at home, the Eagles nipped the Washington Redskins W (31–27) before 63,609.

At home, on Nov 15, the New York Giants defeated the Birds, L (17–20) before 66,172. At home on Nov 22, the St. Louis Cardinals beat the Eagles L (19–31) before 55,592. At New England on Nov 29, the Eagles barely got enough to beat the Patriots W (31–34) before 54,198. At New York, on Dec. 6, the Giants beat the Eagles L (20–23) before 65,874.

Then, on Dec 13, at home, the Eagles were beaten by the Dolphins L (19–28) before 63,841. On Dec 20, 1987 at New York, the Jets went down at the hands of the Eagles W (38–27) before 30,572. In the final game of the 1987 season, the Eagles defeated the Buffalo Bills on Dec 27 W (17–7) before 57,547.

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 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.

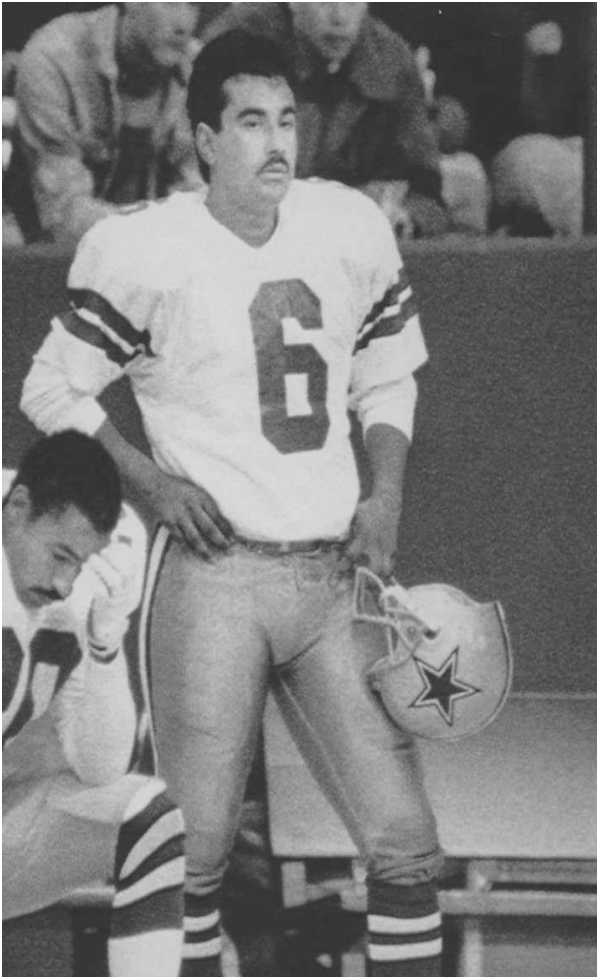
Randall Cunningham took all the snaps this year as he enjoyed the second of back-to-back breakout seasons. His great year began with his leading the Eagles to a 42-37 comeback victory at RFK Stadium v the Redskins on Sept 17, right after signing a contract extension.

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 and 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 19 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	3rd	10-6-0
1992	Rich Kotite	NFC	East	2nd	11-5-0
	• Won Wild Card Playoffs (at Saints)				36-20
	• Lost Divisional Playoffs (at Cowboys)				10-34
1993	Rich Kotite	NFC	East	3rd	8-8-0
1994	Rich Kotite,	NFC,	East	4th	7-9-0
1991-1994 Rich Kotite final record (37-29-0)					
1995	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East,	2nd	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,	2nd	10- 6- 0,
	• Lost Wild Card Playoff s (at 49ers)				0-14
1997	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East	3rd	6-9-1
1998	Ray Rhodes,	NFC,	East	5th	3-13-0
1995-1998 Ray Rhodes final record (30-36-1)					



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

Despite their 10–6 record and finishing with the top-ranked defense in the NFL, the Eagles did not make the playoffs. Besides that, the injury bug was back in Philadelphia. For example, during Week 1, quarterback Randall Cunningham was lost for the season with a knee injury.

Statistics site Football Outsiders ranked the 1991 Eagles as the greatest defensive team in their ranking's history. "The 1991 Eagles completely lap the field in terms of defensive DVOA. Only the 2002 Bucs had a better pass defense, and only the 2000 Ravens had a better run defense, and the Eagles were much more balanced than either of those teams.

"It's crazy to imagine how few points the Eagles might have given up if they were playing with a halfway-decent offense instead of losing Randall Cunningham to a torn ACL in the first game of the season. The Eagles were stuck depending on an over-the-hill Jim McMahon for 11 starts, plus Jeff Kemp for two and Brad Goebel for two. McMahon actually wasn't half bad ... but the other two quarterbacks were awful, especially Goebel who had no touchdowns with six interceptions. And the running game was dreadful, with 3.1 yards per carry as a team.

"Still, the Eagles were fifth in the league in points allowed, and first in yards allowed by nearly 400 yards – and the team that was second in yards allowed is also on that top-ten defenses list, the 1991 New Orleans Saints. The Eagles allowed 3.9 yards per play, where no other team allowed fewer than 4.5. As bad as their running game was, their run defense was even better, allowing 3.0 yards per carry.

“Three-fourths of the starting defensive line was All-Pro (Reggie White, Jerome Brown, and Clyde Simmons). Linebacker Seth Joyner and cornerback Eric Allen made the Pro Bowl as well.”

On January 8, 1991, team owner Norman Braman opted not to renew the contract of Buddy Ryan, the Eagles' head coach since 1986. On the same day, Braman promoted then-offensive coordinator Rich Kotite, making him the 18th head coach in club history.

The Eagles opened with a 3–1 mark, their best start since 1981, despite having lost Cunningham for the year due to a knee injury suffered at Green Bay thanks to a hit from Bryce Paup on opening day. After coming on to lead the Eagles to their solid start, backup QB Jim McMahon was also injured in Game 5, a shutout loss to the Redskins. The Eagles had a winless October.

With McMahon sidelined, the Birds offense would stall completely, including a stretch of 11 straight quarters without scoring a touchdown, culminating into a four-game skid. By mid-season, Philadelphia had used five different quarterbacks, including rookie Brad Goebel, Pat Ryan and Jeff Kemp in eight games and seen its record sink to 3–5.

In Week 10 saw McMahon came back to the line-up for a Monday night, 30–7 victory over the defending Super Bowl Champion New York Giants at Veterans Stadium. However, the following week at Municipal Stadium would be a little closer. The Eagles did win the match 32–30 but Philadelphia spotted Cleveland a 23–0 lead early in the second quarter, before staging a comeback behind a battered McMahon (passing for 341 yards and three touchdowns).

Before the game, as the folklore goes, McMahon's elbow was so swollen, his roommate Ron Heller had to tie his pony tail for him. He then told his lineman he wouldn't be able to play. But Birds trainer Otho Davis had other plans knowing how vital McMahon was to the team at that point. He put together a concoction he called "Grandma's Goop" on the elbow and McMahon was able to go.

These two wins brought the season back from collapse to vitality. The Birds would continue this surge right into contention for a

playoff berth with a six-game winning streak (the club's longest since the start of '81). This upped their record to 9–5.

Their most significant win of the run was a 13–6 Monday night victory against the Oilers in Houston on December 2. It was later dubbed the "House of Pain" game for the Eagles' defense punished Warren Moon and his receiving corps en-route to the big victory.

How is this for a quote: "In '91, I broke five ribs off my sternum in New York and bruised my heart. I could've punctured it, but it just bruised." -Jim McMahon, 2014. The season ending rib injury to McMahon in Week 15 (a 19–14 win against the Giants) made way for a devastating loss at home to Dallas the following week in Week 16. The loss ended Philadelphia's playoff hopes.

However, the season was highlighted by a 10–6 record, allowing the Eagles to join the 49ers as the only NFL clubs to post 10-or-more wins in each of the last four seasons. Both teams missed the postseason in '91 despite having won 10 games.

As noted previously, Philadelphia's defense finished the season ranked first in the NFL in fewest passing yards, rushing yards, and total yards allowed. As such, the Eagles became only the fifth club in NFL history and the first since 1975 to accomplish this rare triple.

The D was the best ever. Five members represented the Eagles in the Pro Bowl – DEs Reggie White and Clyde Simmons, DT Jerome Brown, and LB Seth Joyner were selected as starters while CB Eric Allen also made the NFC squad. The selection of White, Simmons, and Brown marked only the sixth time in NFL history that three defensive linemen from one team were elected to the Pro Bowl. They were that good. Can you imagine what a consistent QB could have done this year.

In addition, the Eagles' defense led the NFL in sacks and fumble recoveries and tied for the league lead in takeaways. The Eagles' 48 defensive takeaways in 1991 is tied for the most in the NFL in the 1990s.

In the season opener on Sept 1, 1991 at Green Bay, Jim McMahon led the Eagles over the Packers for the victory W (20–3) before 58,991. On Sept 8, at home. The Eagles lost to the Phoenix

Cardinals L (10–26) before 63,818. At Dallas on Sept 15, the Eagles threw a shutout W (24–0) before 62,656. Then, on Sept 22, at home, the Eagles beat Pittsburgh W (23–14) before 65,511.

On Sept 30, the losing season began at Washington when McMahon was sidelined for four weeks. The Redskins shutout the no-offense eagles L (0–23) before 55,198. At Tampa Bay, the Bucs won by one point over the Eagles on Oct 6, L (13–14) before 41,219. At home on Oct 13, the Eagles lost to the New Orleans Saints L (6–13) before 64,224, at the Vet. Then came the Bye Week followed by Oct 27 at home as the Birds were knocked off by the San Francisco 49ers L (7–23) before 65,796.

The six-game win streak began on Monday Night with a mostly well Jim McMahon back at the controls. On November 4, at home, the Eagles whipped the NY Giants W (30–7) before 65,816. At Cleveland on Nov, the Eagles beat the Browns, W (32–30) before 72,086. Then, on Nov 17, the Eagles beat the Cincinnati Bengals W (17–10) before 63,189. At Phoenix on Nov 24, the Eagles beat the Cardinals, W (34–14) before 37,307.

On Dec 2, at Houston, the Birds beat the Oilers W (13–6) before 62,141. Then, at New York, on Dec 9, the Eagles beat the first place Giants again W (19–14) before 76,099. At home, on Dec 15, the Eagles lost to the Dallas Cowboys L (13–25) before 65,854 at the Vet. In the season closer, the Eagles grabbed a win on Dec 22, at Washington from the Redskins W (24–22) before 58,988. At 10-6, the Eagles (6 losses) were in third place behind the #1 Redskins (2 losses) and the #2 Cowboys (5 losses). Now, you can see how important the home loss of Dec 15 v Dallas actually was. It kept the Eagles from 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.

Philadelphia did not improve upon their previous season record of 11-5, winning only eight games and as noted, they failed to qualify for the playoffs for only the second time in six seasons. Ten of their sixteen games were decided by a touchdown or less. Football is a game of inches and a lot of luck. The team was without future hall of fame defensive end Reggie White, who had signed a free agency contract with the Green Bay Packers.

The downturn this year could be directly related to the twin losses of QB Randall Cunningham (broken leg) and WR Fred Barnett (ACL tear). These season-ending injuries occurred in a 35-30 win against the New York Jets on October 3. Though the Eagles won their first

four, following that game, lost six straight to fall out of playoff contention.

Bubby Brister the backup QB was only able to do so much in a starting role, but the club rallied to win their final three games, including their first road win in San Francisco in 10 years.

One notable feat by an opponent came on Halloween in Philadelphia, was when Dallas Cowboys running back Emmitt Smith waded his way to 237 yards and one touchdown at a soggy Veterans Stadium in a 23–10 Dallas victory

In the home and season opener on Sept 5, the Eagles beat the Phoenix Cardinals W (23–17) before 59,831 at Veterans Stadium. On Sept 12, at Green Bay, the Eagles beat the Packers W (20–17) before 59,061. At home on Sept 19, the Eagles defeated the Washington Redskins W (34–31) before 65,435. The next week was the first of two byes for the season. Then, on Oct 3, 1993 at New York, the Eagles beat the Jets W (35–30) before 72,593. After this game, Randall Cunningham and Fred Barmett were out for the season. Bubby Brixter was the replacement QB.

At home, on Oct 10, the Eagles lost to the Chicago Bears L (6–17) before 63,601. At NY on Oct 17, the Eagles lost to the Giants L (10–21) before 76,050. On Oct 24, was bye week #2. At the Vet on Oct 31, the Eagles lost to the Dallas Cowboys L (10–23) before 61,912/ At Phoenix, on Nov 7, the Eagles lost to the Cardinals L (3–16) before 41,634.

At home on Nov 14, the Eagles lost to the Miami Dolphins L (14–19) before 64,213. On Nov 21, at home, the Eagles lost to the NY Giants L (3–7) before 62,928. At Washington on Nov 28, the Eagles beat the Redskins W (17–14) before 46,663. Then, at Dallas on Dec 6, Philadelphia lost to the Cowboys L (17–23) before 64,521.

At home on Dec 12, the Eagles lost to the Buffalo Bills L (7–10) before 60,769. At Indianapolis on Dec 19, the Eagles defeated the Colts W (20–10) before 44,952. On the day after Christmas, Dec 26, Boxers Day in Canada, Philadelphia defeated the New Orleans Saints W (37–26) before 50,085. At San Francisco on Jan 3, in the

season finale, the Eagles defeated the San Francisco 49ers W (37–34) before 61,653.

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.

In the season opener on Sept 4, 1994 at New York, the Eagles lost to the Giants L (23–28) before 76,130, At home on Sept 12, in the home opener, the Eagles beat the Chicago Bears W (30–22) before

64,890. At home on Sept 18, Philadelphia defeated the Green Bay Packers W (13–7) before 63,922, On Sept 25, Bye. At San Francisco on Oct 2, 1994, the Eagles thumped the to-be Super Bowl champion 49ers W (40–8) before 64,843.

At home, on Oct 9, the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins W (21–17) before 63,947. At Dallas, on Oct 16, the Eagles lost to the Cowboys L (13–24) before 64,703. At home on Oct 24, the Eagles beat the Houston Oilers W (21–6) before 65,233. On Oct 30, at Washington, the Eagles beat the Redskins W (31–29) before 53,530.

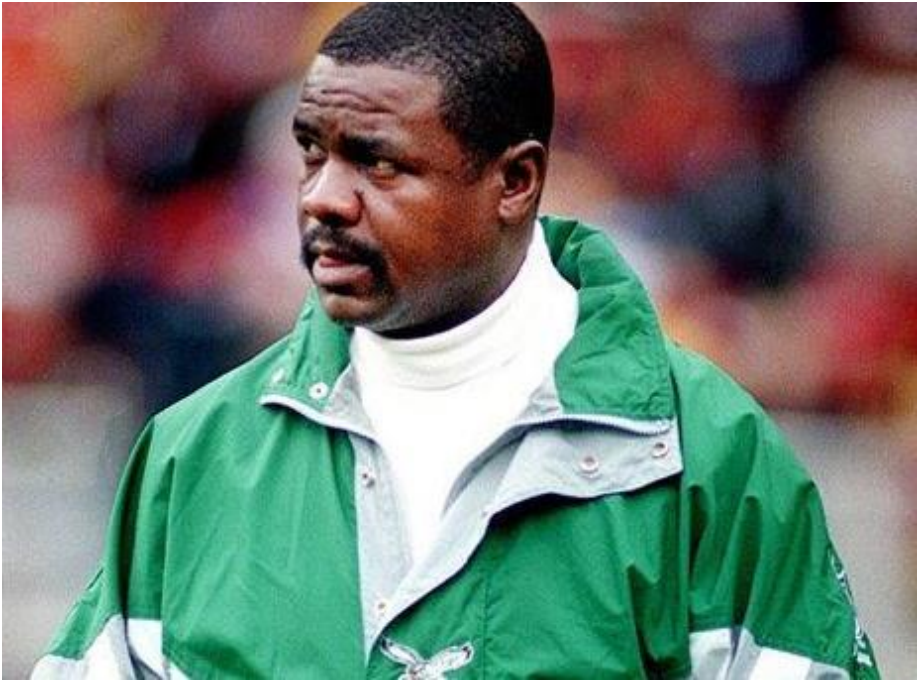
At home, on Nov 6, the Eagles beat the Arizona Cardinals W (17–7) before. All games from this point on were losses:

Game #	Date	Team,	Score	Fans
11	Nov 13	Cleveland Browns	L 26–7	65,233
12	Nov 20	at Arizona Cardinals	L 12–6	62,779
13	Nov 27	at Atlanta Falcons	L 28–21	60,008
14	Dec 4	Dallas Cowboys	L 31–19	65,974
15	Dec 11	at Pittsburgh Steelers	L 14–	55,474
16	Dec 18	New York Giants	L 16–13	64,540
17	Dec 24	at Cincinnati Bengals	L 33–30	39,923

Looking at all those losses in a row, though some games were close, it is understandable that Rich Kotite was replaced.

1995 Ray Rhodes #19

The 1995 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-third season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Ray Rhodes in his first of four seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. This year's 10-6 record brought the Eagles a second-place finish in the NFC East. The team made the playoffs and won a wild-card berth game. However, the Eagles lost in the Division Championship game.



It wasn't an optimistic start. Ricky Watters had signed as a free agent from the Super Bowl champion San Francisco 49ers. He had a great shot at catching a nice pass over the middle in the Birds' season-opening 21–6 home loss to Tampa Bay. He did not seem to try. Following the contest, when asked why he didn't commit to catching the ball and taking a hit, he replied "For who? For what?"

Many fans did not know of the interview or Watters, who was at Philly for just three years, would have been gone sooner. He made a big mistake. "I don't want to go there, and people still think, 'For who, for what?' I really loved playing there. I felt like wherever I went people were coming up to me, and everyone acted and they treated me like their native son. And I think that, that's what I am. And I love that feeling," he said. Watch what you say and watch what you think Ricky?.

In week four of the 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 Rhoads'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 Eagles 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.

Top Eagles Players—Troy Vincent

Not all Eagles begin their careers with Philadelphia. Troy Vincent, one of the best cornerbacks in the NFL ever, got his pro career start as a member of the Miami Dolphins. Nonetheless, he will be remembered for his play as a Philadelphia Eagle.



For example, it was only after Vincent signed with the Birds that he went to the Pro Bowl, which he did five consecutive times from 1999 to 2003.

They say that Troy Vincent was an All-Pro on and off the field for the Philadelphia Eagles. He was a true representative of all the good football has to offer the world. He is still in the game but off the field. He serves as the Executive Vice President of Football Operations for the NFL.

During his player years, which ended less than a year ago, Vincent received plenty of accolades since he was one of the most dominant NFL cornerbacks of all time. For example, Troy Vincent earned the Lifetime of Inspiration Award given during the NFL Super Bowl Gospel Celebration in 2017 along with being named as one of the NFL's Most Important People by USA Today. Think about that. What a fine man.

Vincent was also the recipient of the John Wooten Executive Leadership Award and the Jim Mandich Courage and Commitment Award for his stance on domestic abuse. He also earned the Call to Men Award for Institutional Change for fighting to prevent violence against women.

Besides being an outstanding individual after his career, Troy Vincent was a standout for the Eagles in his eight great seasons. He was the first major defensive free agent to sign with the Eagles, leaving the Miami Dolphins after the 1995 season to come to Philadelphia.

The Eagles All-Pro Cornerback made an impact in his first season, intercepting Dallas Cowboys quarterback Troy Aikman in the end zone and lateraling the ball to James Willis for a 104-yard touchdown—the longest interception return in Eagles' history. You may recall that the Eagles won that game 31-21 to improve to 7-2 in that year.

Vincent had three interceptions in each of his first two seasons with the Eagles. He led the NFL with seven interceptions in 1999, when he earned the first of five consecutive Pro Bowl selections.

Under the immortal Eagles defensive coordinator Jim Johnson, Vincent was arguably one of the top-five cornerbacks in football. Vincent earned All-Pro honors from 2000 to 2002 (first team in 2002) while having 20 of his 47 career interceptions from 1999 to 2003.

The Eagles had the NFL's best secondary with Vincent, Bobby Taylor, and Brian Dawkins leading the way. Each member of this trio earned an All-Pro selection in the early 2000s as Philadelphia emerged into an NFL powerhouse, going 46-18 under Andy Reid, with three NFC East titles and three NFC Championship Game appearances from 2000 to 2003.

Troy Vincent finished his career fourth in Eagles history with 32 interceptions. He also had 518 tackles and 10 forced fumbles in eight seasons with the Eagles. He was always a busy guy.

After the Eagles permitted him to leave in free agency, he was not done. He played more seasons with the Buffalo Bills and Washington Redskins., finishing a 16-year career with 890 tackles, 47 interceptions, and 14 forced fumbles.

His 28 pass deflections in 2001 is still believed to be an Eagles record. He's also a proud member of the Eagles 75th Anniversary Team.


Top Eagles Players—Eric Allen

Eric Andre Allen was born on Nv 22, 1965 in San Diego, CA. At just 5'10", he was a phenomenally gifted cornerback for the Philadelphia Eagles from 1988 to 1994

Allen was selected to the Pro Bowl six times, after the 1989 and 1991 thru 1995 seasons. In 1993, he tied an NFL record by returning four interceptions for touchdowns. Eric Allen's 33 interceptions as a Philadelphia Eagle are tied with Bill Bradley for the franchise record. After retiring from the NFL, Allen became a football commentator for ESPN.

He was a proud member of the suffocating "Gang Green" Eagles' defense of the early 90's, Allen was a key contributor for the team. He earned his way to five Pro Bowl selections during his seven years as an Eagle and had a knack for finding the football. During his days as an Eagle, Allan registered 34 interceptions. His habit of making big plays at crucial times will always be remembered.

ERIC ALLEN • CB • 21



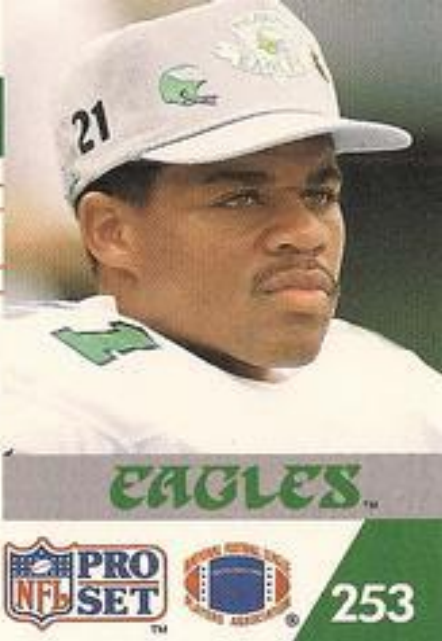
Born: San Diego
Birthdate: 11/22/65
Ht: 5-10 **Wt:** 188

College: Arizona State
NFL Exp: 4th year
Drafted: 2nd round '83



YEAR	TEAM	TCKL	SACKS	FLUM		INTERCEPTIONS	
				REC	NO	YDS	TD
1988	Philadelphia	65	0	0	5	76	0
1989	Philadelphia	48	0	0	8	38	0
1990	Philadelphia	65	0	1	3	37	1
TOTALS		178	0	1	16	151	1

Excellent in man-for-man coverage...Interception total (3) in 1990 was lowest of career, primarily because teams had tendency to throw away from his side... Returned 1 interception for 35-yard touchdown against Dallas to help secure home-field advantage in wild-card playoff game...Earned first Pro Bowl selection after impressive second year in 1989...Led NFC and finished second in NFL with 8 interceptions in 1989...Started every game played since rookie year...Four-year starter at Arizona State.

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EAGLES™



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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

The 1996 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-fourth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Ray Rhodes in his second of four seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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."

The 1996 season was the first season in which the Eagles showed their new midnight green, white, and black look, with new helmet designs and the logo and end zone font as well.

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)

Top Eagles Players—Brian Dawkins

Brian Dawkins is one of the newest members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He was drafted in the second round of the 1996 NFL Draft. To get the gist of how important Dawkins was to the Eagles in his day, pundits would casually refer to him as “a man amongst boys during his time in Philly.”

Brian Dawkins made his presence known all over the field. He was everywhere. It is fitting that he wears No. 20, because he also

belongs to the 20/20 Club as one of the few players in the history of the NFL to post both 20 sacks and 20 interceptions.

Statistics are not what made Dawkins great. He was just a superior player. Some say he was a one man wrecking crew out on the field, often making big plays and adding bone-crushing tackles that would change the momentum of a game in favor of the Eagles.

Then there was his heart. Dawkins played with a fire and passion that was hard to come by. The Eagles were important. The game was important and winning for the Eagles was important. He was the soul of the Eagles' defense, and when he signed with the Denver Broncos, it was a blow that both the team and the fan base has not yet recovered from. To this day, his presence continues to be missed though everybody knows the Eagles are so good now, they were able to win the past Super Bowl even without the services of this great hero, Brian Dawkins.

From the NFL Hall Of Fame

Philadelphia Eagles legend Brian Dawkins was recently named to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. When elected, he became the 26th defensive back enshrined into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. This was the second time in Hall of Fame history to have back-to-back classes to feature a pure safety.

The Philadelphia Eagles selected Dawkins out of Clemson in the second round, 61st overall, of the 1996 NFL Draft. Over the next 16 seasons, Dawkins exuded excellence on the field as he quickly became one of the most accomplished safeties in the league.

Dawkins started 13 of the 14 games he played in during his rookie season as he became a vital member of the Eagles defense. In his first professional season, he earned 74 tackles (53 solo), three interceptions, one sack, two fumble recoveries and one forced fumble. He went on to lead Philadelphia in interceptions the following two years (1997-98) and earned a team tackle title in 2002.

From 2001-04, Dawkins led the Eagles defensive that was vital to four NFC championship game appearances. The Eagles fell short each year until 2004 when they blazed through the playoffs and beat the Atlanta Falcons 27-10 in the NFC championship. Philadelphia then faced the New England Patriots in Super Bowl XXXIX as Dawkins made his only Super Bowl appearance.



After 13 seasons with the Eagles and five team Defensive MVP Awards, Dawkins was signed by Denver as an unrestricted free agent shortly after the conclusion of the 2008 season. Dawkins still holds several Eagles team records, including being tied for the most career interceptions (34).

His success continued in Denver. Dawkins posted remarkable stats on the field and he also received the Denver Broncos Ed Block Courage Award in 2009.

In all, Dawkins played 224 career games with the Eagles (1996-2008) and the Broncos (2009-2011). He amassed a total of 1,131 tackles (895 solo), intercepted 37 passes which he returned for 513 yards and two touchdowns, recorded 26 sacks, and made 19 fumble recoveries.

A nine-time Pro Bowler, Dawkins was named All-Pro and All-NFC five times. In addition to being named to the NFL's All-Decade Team of the 2000s, Dawkins is a member of the Eagles

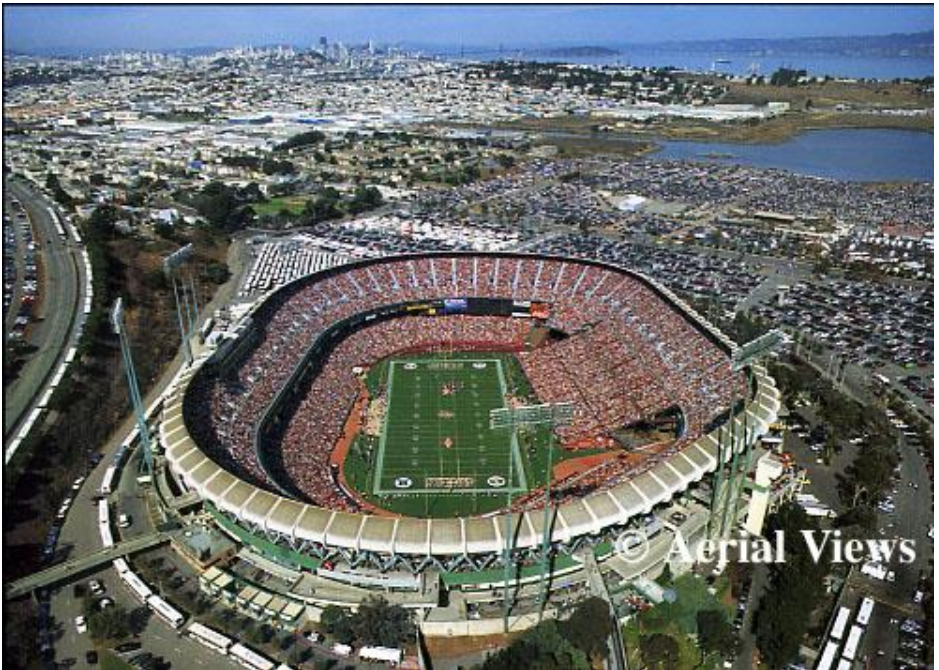
75th Anniversary Team and the Exclusive NFL Defensive Club (players with at least 35 career interceptions and 20 career sacks).

After hanging up his cleats, Dawkins joined ESPN as an analyst. He then headed back to the Eagles as a scout intern and was quickly promoted to Football Operations Executive, focusing on player development.

Great Eagles don't like being too far from the nest.

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 Ray Rhodes #19

The 1997 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-fifth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Ray Rhodes in his third of four seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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. Eagles fans were continually thinking that their coaches could not make it to the big games and win them. This season, the Eagles fans such as myself longed for the days when we could make the playoffs. This was a poor year.

As I read some analyses of this season in doing team research, I found subtle ways in which the pundits and sportscasters described the poor showing of the Eagles this year. In one particular analysis, that has roots in Wikipedia, the writer chose not to use the word highlights to describe brief moments of the season. Instead, he or she used the term Lowlights. Amusing but annoying nonetheless for as disappointed Eagles fan. One such set of sentences include the following:

“Lowlights of the '97 campaign include a disheartening one-point loss at Dallas in Week 3, where starter Ty Detmer led the Birds on a potential game-winning drive late in regulation, only to see holder Tommy Hutton botch the hold on what would have been the deciding field goal from ex-Cowboys kicker Chris Boniol.”

There were others as this year gave some fruitful example. In Week 7, for example, the Eagles could not even beat the newest team in the league, the Jacksonville Jaguars. The new teams were most often easy pickens.

So, the Eagles went ahead and lost their first-ever game against the three-season-old Jacksonville Jaguars. Then, as if they could not be embarrassed, on Nov 10, in a Monday Night Football 24–12 home loss against San Francisco, a fan was spotted firing a flare gun in the upper deck. I did not get this at first myself, but it signaled the fans were calling for help.

Time marched on and so six days later, at Memorial Stadium, the Eagles and Ravens engaged in a 10–10 tie at me when there was plenty of time for there to be no ties if teams could only score three points. This was the Bird's first deadlock since 1986 against the Cardinals.

One of very few bright spots during this year came on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Rookie QB Bobby Hoying stepped in under center and threw for a career-high 313 yards and four touchdowns in a 44–42 win against the Cincinnati Bengals. How about those apples?

The 1997 campaign was notable in that it ended a 13-year radio partnership between broadcasters Merrill Reese and former Eagle Stan Walters on 94 WIP. Mike Quick became the color commentator the following season.

Let's take a very quick look at a season most Eagles fans would like to forget.

In the season opener at New York on Aug 31, 1997, the Eagles lost to the Giants L (17–31) before 77,344. At home, the Eagles got a one-point win in their home opener W (10–9) before 66,803. At Dallas on Sept 15, the Cowboys pulled a one-point special on the Eagles, prevailing L (20–21) before 63,942. Week 4 was a bye, In week 5 of the season on Sept 28, at Minnesota, the Eagles lost to the Vikings L (19–28) before 55,149.

At home, on Oct 5, 1997 Philadelphia beat the Washington Redskins W (24–10) before 67,008. At Jacksonville in a game that was a sure thing, the Eagles lost it on Oct 12, 1997 at Jacksonville Jaguars L (21–38) before 69,150. The game was not close. Then, at home, against the Arizona Cardinals, on Oct 19, the Eagles

prevailed W (13–10) 66,860. At home, v the Dallas Cowboys on Oct 26, the Eagles hogged the victory by one-point W (13–12) before 67,106.

At Arizona, on Nov 2, the Cardinals defeated the Eagles L (21–31) before 39,549. At home on Nov 10, 1997 the Eagles lost to the San Francisco 49ers L (12–24) before 67,133. On Nov 16, 1997 at the Baltimore Ravens, the Eagles played to a tie T (10–10) before 63,546. At home v the Pittsburgh Steelers, on Nov 23, the Eagles got the win W (23–20) before 67,166.

As the season was getting into the cold weather, at home on Nov 30, the Eagles just got by the Cincinnati Bengals W (44–42) before 66,623. The NY Giants came into the Vet like the meant it and they left with a win on Dec 7 L (21–31) before 67,084. At Atlanta on Dec 14, the Falcons beat the Eagles L (17–20) before 42,866. Wrapping up the 1997 season, on Dec 21, at Washington, the Redskins won a hard fought match with the Eagles L (32–35) before 75,939

1998 Ray Rhodes #19

The 1998 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-sixth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Ray Rhodes in his last of four seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. This year's 3-13 record brought the Eagles no accolades in a poor last place finish in the NFC East

Philadelphia did not improve from their poor output of 6–9–1. They won only three games. This was their worst record since 1972 and one of only two seasons since then, until 2012 they have won fewer than five games. Head coach Ray Rhodes, whose four years took him from star to goat, was fired at end of season, finishing his four-year tenure with a record of 29–34–1.

My wife would describe the 1998 Eagles as “bad, bad, bad.” Their measly 161 points-scored (10.06 per game) is tied for the third-lowest total in a 16-game schedule. None of the three quarterbacks had even peaks of brilliance. Bobby Hoying, Koy Detmer, and Rodney

Peete—each won one game, and they threw for only seven total touchdowns combined. It was a season worth forgetting.

The first five games of the Season were losses beginning on Sept 6 at home v the Seattle Seahawks L(0–38). On Sept 13, at the Atlanta Falcons L (12-17). On Sept 20, at the Arizona Cardinals L (3–17). Then on Sept 27, at home v the Kansas City Chiefs, L (21–24) and finally on Oct 4, at the Denver Broncos L (16–41).

On Oct 11, in the sixth game of the year, Philadelphia finally won a game at home against the Washington Redskins W (17–12). Losing again on Oct 18, against the San Diego Chargers, the score was L (10-13). On Oct 25, there was a bye week.

On Nov 2, at home against the Dallas Cowboys L (34–0). On Nov 8, 1998, the Eagles scored a win, W (10–9). Then on Nov 15, at Washington Redskins the Eagles lost again L (3–28). On Nov 22 at New York, the Giants beat the Eagles L (0–20). Then on Nov 29, at Green Bay, the Packers beat the Birds L (16-24).

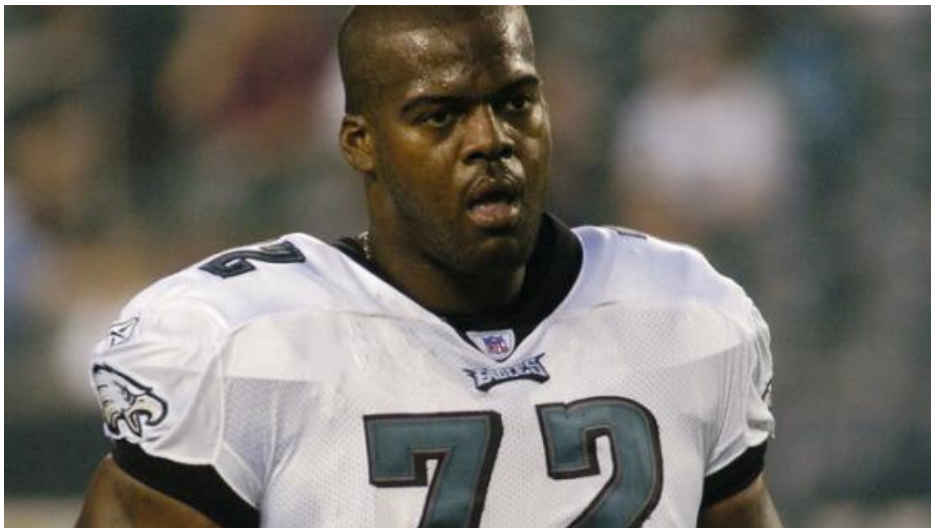
With just four games left, the Eagles won the first and lost the last three. On Dec 3, v the St. Louis Rams, the Eagles won W (17–14) On Dec 13, the Arizona Cardinals beat the Eagles L (17–20). Then, on Dec 20, at Dallas, the Eagles lost to the Cowboys L (9–13). After all the presents were given, the Eagles could not muster one more for the fans and lost on Dec 27 v New York’s Giants in the last game of a long season, L (10–20).

As a light commentary, if you think it is hard experiencing or reading about such a poor season. Let me assure you, it is not fun writing about it. We can all take solace in knowing that Doug Pederson’s boys brought us the Super Bowl this year. In a season such as the one just covered, this is a needed reminder. Thank you.

Top Eagles Players—Tra Thomas

William “Tra” Thomas, born in deLand Florida, was well sought after in the 1998 NFL draft. He was the eleventh overall pick in the 1998 NFL Draft, Thomas quickly emerged as one of the best offensive linemen in the game. He made three Pro Bowls as an Eagle

as he and Jon Runyan enjoyed making short-work of opposing pass-rushers. It was always a treat for fans to watch Thomas as he man-handled defensive linemen on a weekly basis. He is one of the best O-men, ever!



Tra Thomas

It helps to repeat that Thomas was not drafted by the Eagles in the eleventh round. He was picked eleventh overall in 1998 NFL Draft After a successful College Career at Florida State. He is ranked at # 29 of the Top-75 players in Florida State history. Not bad for playing just one year.

Thomas only started for one year at Florida State in 1997, but that one year was exceptional. He was named a 2nd team All-American by the Associated Press and was awarded the Jacob's Blocking Trophy given to the ACC's best offensive lineman. He was named to the Pro Bowl in 2001, 2002, and 2004. He was also named to the All-Pro team in 2002.

He played for the Eagles from 1998–2008, starting 165 of 166 games at left offensive tackle. He made three Pro Bowls with the Eagles. He retired from football in 2009.

Chapter 20 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
1999-2012 Andy Reid final record (140-102-1)					



Coach Andy Reid from the sidelines—One heck of a record.

1999 Andy Reid #20

The 1999 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-seventh season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his first of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. This year's 5-11 record and last place finish in the NFL East brought Andy Reid's Eagles no accolades in a poor last place finish in the NFC East. But, still great things were expected next year.

Philadelphia did improve from their poor output of 3-13-0. The Eagles hired Andy Reid away from the Green Bay Packers to be their new head coach prior to the start of the season. In the 1999 NFL Draft, the team drafted quarterback Donovan McNabb with the second overall pick.

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.

Donovan McNabb was drafted second overall by the Eagles in the 1999 NFL Draft. He was a great pick I watched him scramble for years at Syracuse. McNabb saw his first NFL regular season action in the second half against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in a 19–5 home loss on September 19. He made his first career start at home against Washington on November 14, completing eight of 21 passes for 60 yards in a 35–28 win.

In his early days in the NFL, he often trusted his feet more than his arm. He also had nine carries for 49 rushing yards and led the team to a pair of successful two-point conversions (1 rush and 1 pass).

With that win, McNabb became the first Eagles rookie QB to win his first NFL start since Mike Boryla (December 1, 1974, vs. Green Bay) and the first Eagle QB to win his first start since Ty Detmer (October 13, 1996, at NYG). Things were shaping up but nothing good happens overnight.

McNabb threw the first TD pass of his career (6 yards to tight end Chad Lewis) vs. Indianapolis in a 44–17 home loss on November 21. He then went on to start six of the Eagles' final seven contests. He did miss the December 19 home game against New England, a 24–9 victory, due to injury. Donovan McNabb became the first Philadelphia Eagles rookie to start in the quarterback position since Brad Goebel on October 13, 1991, and the first Eagles rookie draft pick to start since John Reaves in 1972. McNabb would go on to have a great career.

1999 would not be a typical Andy Reid great year, but it was a much better year than Ray Rhodes last year running the Eagles show.

In the home and season opener before 64,113, on September 12, 1999 the Arizona Cardinals beat Reid's Eagles by just one point L (24–25). The Eagles then lost again at home on Sept 19 to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers L (5–19) before 64,285. At Buffalo on Sept 26, the Bills overpowered the Eagles L (0–26) before 70,872. At New York, on Oct 3, in another one-point match, the Eagles lost their fourth in a row to the Giants (15–16) before 73,274.

The Eagles first win came at home at the Vet on Oct 10, 1999 as the Birds found enough muscle to beat the Dallas Cowboys W (13–10). Before 66,669 fans. At Chicago on Oct 17, the Eagles beat the Bears W 20–16 before 66,944. At Miami on Oct 24, 1999, the Dolphins defeated the Eagles L (13–16) before 73,975. At home on Oct 31, the Eagles lost to the New York Giants L (17–23) before 66,481.

On Nov 7, at Carolina, the Panthers thumped the Eagles L (7–33) before 62,569. At home, on Nov 14, the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins W (35–28) before 66,591 at the Vet. . On Nov 21, at home, the Indianapolis Colts outgunned the Eagles L (17–44) before 65,521 The Washington Redskins beat the Eagles on Nov 28, L (17–20) before 74,741.

At Arizona, the Cardinals squeaked out a victory over the Eagles on Dec 5, L (17–21) before 46,550, in a close match. At Dallas, on Dec 12, the Cowboys defeated the Eagles L (10–20) before 64,086. Back at home on Dec 19, with the season winding down, the Eagles found some strength and beat the New England Patriots W (24–9) before 65,475. On Dec 26, the Eagles got a late season bye. On January 2, 2000, Philadelphia beat the St. Louis Rams at home W 38–31 before 60,700. In the next season, Andy Reid makes a winning team again out of the Eagles.

Top Eagles Players—Donovan McNabb

Donovan Jamal McNabb was born on November 25, 1976, in Chicago, Illinois. (Click [here](#) for a complete listing of today's sports birthdays.) His parents, Sam and Wilma, already had a four-year-old son, Sean. Donovan was their second and last child.



Tired of making the best of a bad situation, Sam and Wilma looked for a safer place to live. As soon as they could afford it, the McNabbs moved some 30 minutes south, to the suburb of Dolton. The McNabbs were the first black family on the block. Once the neighbors got to know the McNabbs, the disruption was over and life in Dolton returned to something like normal. Donovan made a lot of friends in town. In school he became the class clown.

Donovan attended Chicago's Mount Carmel High School—an all-boys Catholic school—in the fall of 1990. It was famous for Notre Dame greats Frank Leahy and Terry Brennan recruiting as many as they could.

McNabb had grown into his body by ninth grade, and like older brother Sean, Donovan was a standout in both football and basketball. His biggest impression was made on the football field. He was a strong-armed quarterback with the open-field moves of a halfback. This was McNabb right from the beginning. Mt. Carmel averaged 35.3 points a game during Donovan's first year at the helm, the second highest mark in the school history.

With college recruiters watching his every move, McNabb turned in a brilliant senior season for Mt. Carmel. Though it appeared his ticket to Nebraska was punched, he surprised everyone by announcing that he had accepted a scholarship to Syracuse.

At the time, I was going to at least one Syracuse football game a year against a Pennsylvania team – PSU, or Pitt. McNabb was as good as it gets, and his scrambling and designed runs were tough to defend. Donovan's first year was spent as a redshirt

When the 1995 season opened, the Orangemen were on the rise. Although they did not figure to challenge for supremacy in the Big East, they had an outside shot at a bowl bid—if just one of Coach Pasqualoni's three young passers produced. McNabb looked to beat out both Kevin Johnson and Keith Downing. McNabb got the call, but he struggled through the first three quarters. In the final period, however, everything fell into place, as the red shirt freshman pulled together three scoring drives for a 20-9 victory.

After a second season on the bench with the basketball team, Donovan was happy to return to football. There were holes to plug here and there, but the offense was not among Pasqualoni's worries. In fact, Donovan's emergence as a superstar enabled the coach to shift backup quarterback Kevin Johnson to wideout, where he used his speed and smarts to become an outstanding receiver.

In his last year at Syracuse after a great career, Donovan was named Big East Player of the Year for an unprecedented third year in a row.

Heading into the 1999 NFL draft, Donovan was part of a class of quarterbacks being compared to the 1983 collegiate crop that produced John Elway, Dan Marino and several other impact passers. What talent evaluators loved about Donovan was his strong arm and superior athletic ability. The term used most often to describe him was “playmaker.” Some saw a little bit of Brett Favre in him. Yet, the Eagles “brain trust” were not too keen on McNabb for a number of non-racist reasons.



McNabb ready to strike

Andy Reid, who had left Green Bay to coach the Eagles, was a disciple of Bill Walsh's West Coast offense. Reid had coached Favre and Steve Young and knew a special player when he saw one. Donovan reminded him of both signal-callers—not only physically, but also in terms of demeanor. When NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue announced the Eagles' pick of Donovan in New York, boos could be heard all the back in the City of Brotherly Love. The 23-year-old laughed off the harsh reaction.

At a reception in his honor at the Ritz-Carlton in Philadelphia, Donovan won over fans with his easy charm and playful sense of humor. Mayor Rendell, a politician to the very end, was on hand to present the rookie with a gift from the people of his city. Without missing a beat, Donovan gave the mayor a jersey with his #5 on the back ... and Williams's #34 on the front.

The Eagles were coming off a disastrous 3-13 campaign. Ray Rhodes, once the league's most promising new coach, had left the franchise in shambles.

Although the Eagles did much better than Rhodes misery train from 1998, they had just two wins after their first nine games. With

Dough Pederson (today's Eagle's coach) unable to do the job at quarterback, Reid named Donovan as his starter for a November contest against the Redskins. His numbers for the game were modest, but anyone with eyes could see how dramatically different the team's tempo was with him under center. The Eagles defeated Washington, 35-28, making Donovan McNabb the first Eagles rookie to win his first NFL start since Mike Boryla in 1971.

McNabb got to start five more games down the stretch, notching victories over the New England Patriots and St. Louis Rams, who were on their way to a Super Bowl win. He was at his most dangerous when flushed out of the pocket, turning plays upfield when other rookies might have thrown stupid passes or been tackled for big losses. Donovan ended his rookie campaign with 948 yards passing and eight touchdowns and added another 313 yards rushing on 6.7 yards per carry. Though the Eagles again limped home with the NFL's worst offense, there was reason for optimism. Andy Reid was the coach for year 2 and it would be a good year with McNabb.

The Eagles added young players and a lot of muscle to the roster in the offseason. In the first round of the draft, the Eagles grabbed Corey Simon, the cat-quick defensive lineman from Florida State, and then gave Donovan another outside target by tabbing receiver Todd Pinkston in the second round. The team also signed right tackle big Jon John Runyan from the AFC champion Tennessee Titans to shore up the offensive line.

The Eagles went 11-5 and posted their first postseason victory since 1995. The defense never stopped attacking. As for McNabb, he was the town's new superhero.

After their second trip to the NFC Championship Game—and their second lost—the Eagles looked for 2003 to be their year. They bolstered the lineup with several key free agents, including fullback Jon Ritchie and linebacker Nate Wayne. In the draft, Philly was fortunate to steal tight end L.J. Smith out of Rutgers.



McNabb on the prowl

After a brutal start in 2003, Philadelphia began to turn things around in late September—though Donovan was still struggling keeping passes from being intercepted. Reid had taught his team to win ugly, and five victories in November upped the club's record to 9-3. Suddenly, in the topsy-turvy NFC, the Eagles were in position to secure homefield advantage throughout the playoffs ... in their new stadium, Lincoln Financial Field. Donovan was also looking good. Over the campaign's final two months, he tossed 13 touchdowns against only four interceptions.

The Eagles beat Green Bay 20-17 in the first playoff game. Then, they prepared for Carolina. The Carolina Panthers were surging at the time. Unfortunately, Philadelphia laid an egg, losing 14-3. The Eagles' playoff campaign ended with an NFC Championship Game defeat, yet again. The offense was completely stymied, particularly Donovan McNabb, who had little time in the pocket and was forced into several crucial errors. In the second half, he suffered separated rib cartilage on a late hit by Mike Rucker. He tried to play despite the pain but couldn't continue. Koy Detmer took his place and was equally ineffective.

The Eagles won all but one game 'til the end of the year in 2004. At 13-3, as the final record, the Eagles held homefield advantage in the

playoffs, but questions remained whether they could flourish without Owens, who had been injured.

Donovan answered the doubters in Philly's playoff opener against the Vikings. Playing a nearly flawless game, he completed 21 of 33 passes for 286 yards and two touchdowns. His favorite target was Mitchell, who stepped up with five key receptions, including a touchdown. On defense, the Eagles kept Daunte Culpepper and Randy Moss in check. The result was a 27-14 victory and another trip to the NFC Championship Game.

Michael Vick and the Falcons visited Lincoln Financial Field with the conference title on the line. The weather seemed to cooperate with the Eagles. The day was cold and windy, and the turf was frozen. The Philly defense again showed its championship colors, shutting down the vaunted Atlanta running game and confusing Vick with different looks in the secondary. On the other side of the ball, Donovan did everything asked of him. Orchestrating a more conservative game plan, he threw two touchdowns and led his team to a convincing 27-10 victory.

For Super Bowl XXXIX, everyone turned their attention toward Terrell Owens. Despite warnings from team doctors, he vowed he would play. Donovan and the rest of the Eagles didn't mind the media coverage devoted to the receiver. It allowed them to focus more intently on their opponent, the Patriots, who were gunning for their third NFL title in four years.

With New England's penchant for mistake-free football in big games, the pressure was on Donovan to play just as smart. He came out on Philly's first possession looking for Owens, who made good on his promise and was ready to go. Neither team could mount a drive early, and they traded punts. Midway through the first quarter, however, Donovan committed the first crucial error of the night, floating an ill-advised pass to Westbrook in the red zone. Safety Rodney Harrison picked off the wobbler, and the Eagles missed a golden scoring opportunity.

The turnover set the tone for the rest of the contest. Donovan was brilliant at times, but downright sloppy at others. He threw two

more interceptions and managed the clock poorly in the fourth quarter with the Eagles trailing by 10. A late scoring strike to Greg Lewis cut the deficit to a field goal, but Philly got no closer and lost 24-21.



While some teammates claimed Donovan was deathly ill for a good part of the game, he offered no excuses afterward. His stats looked good enough—357 yards and three TDs through the air—but his turnovers killed two drives. He also missed several open receivers for potential huge gainers.

The 2006 campaign ended in similar fashion for him. In a November game against Tennessee, Donovan tore the ACL in his right knee. He needed surgery immediately, and doctors said his rehabilitation might take a full year.

Donovan McNabb's tenure in Philadelphia had its ups and downs. But he weathered every bit of criticism he received—both fair and unwarranted—and his career numbers with the Eagles, including 194 touchdown passes and an 86.5 QB rating, speak to his consistency and commitment to winning. Donovan did everything asked of him, except win a Super Bowl. He hoped when traded to write that final chapter with the Redskins. But, that did not happen.

McNabb was embattled from his arrival. Though he never reacted publicly, it seemed to me that he internalized a lot and when big things were expected, he was at his worse. He threw an awful lot of balls into the ground several feet before the receivers. When it was a tense game, he seemed tense. Every now and then, he would break out of his funk and say, what the heck and then he would be fine. He might have done better with a different fan base, I am not sure. He seemed to be less accurate the stronger he got, and the less Philly would let him run.

Top Eagles Players—David Akers

David Akers began his career with Washington in 1998. He was quickly snagged by Andy Reid for the 1999 season.

Nobody can deny David Akers his place on an Eagles To Players list. After all, he is the team's all-time leader in points scored. And it isn't even close.

Whether it was his sheer mighty foot in kickoffs or in field goals (63 yards) or his accuracy in extra points (563/570 98.8%) and field goals (386/477 80.9%), Akers was always at the top of his game. With 1,329 points over the span of his career in Philadelphia and 1716 overall, Akers has scored 442 more points than his closest Eagles competitor. Andy Reid chose to trade Mr. Akers after the 2010 season but he still kept at his trade at San Francisco and Detroit for three more years (48 more games). Akers left quite a legacy in Philadelphia.

2000 Andy Reid #20

The 2000 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-eighth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his second of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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



Akers—top Eagles scorer

2000 Andy Reid #20

The 2000 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-eighth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his second of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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.

As an aside, being of Irish descent, I learned a few weeks ago that there is an Andy Reid-type drink with pickle juice available at Cris-Nics Pub in Wilkes-Barre, PA. It is called a pickleback. The Pickleback is a very interesting whiskey shot and a drink you have to experience for yourself. It's incredibly simple—a shot of Jameson (Irish Whiskey) chased by a shot of pickle juice—and it is, without a doubt, one of the most popular shots ordered in bars around the world.

Andy Reid would be able to talk about his love of pickle juice. He would probably order his shots a bit differently than most. He would have two shots of pickle juice – hold the Jameson. At CrisNics in Wilkes-Barre, a very nice Irish Pub, Andy would not need to worry about the two Jamesons going wasted.

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.

In the season opener on September 3, 2000 at Dallas Cowboys the Eagles dominated W (41–14) 62,872. In the home opener on Sept 10, the Eagles fell to the New York Giants L (18–33) before 65,530. In the lowest scoring game of the 2000 NFL season, the Eagles could not muster up the four points to pull out a victory against the Green Bay Packers. On Sept 17, the Eagles lost L (3-6) before 59,869. At New Orleans on Sept 24, the Eagles beat the Saints W (21–7) before 64,900.

At home on Oct 1, the Eagles whooped the Atlanta Falcons W (38–10) before 65,424. In a three-point match, on Oct 8, at home, the Washington Redskins defeated the Eagles L (14–17) before 4 65,491. At Arizona on Oct 15, the Eagles beat the Cardinals W (33–14) before 38,293. At home, on Oct 22, the Eagles barely beat the Chicago Bears W (13–9) before 65,553.

At New York, on Oct 29, before 78,087 fans, the Giants defeated the Eagles L (7–24) before 78,087 On Nov 5, at home, the Eagles beat the Dallas Cowboys W (16–13) before 65,636. At Pittsburgh, on Nov 12, the Eagles defeated the Steelers W (26–23) before 56,702. At home, on Nov 19, Philadelphia thumped Arizona W (34–9) before 65,356.

At Washington on Nov 26, the Eagles got the best of the Redskins W (23–20) before a packed house of 83,284. On December 3, the Eagles lost to the Tennessee Titans L (13–15) at home before 65,639. At Cleveland Browns on Dec 10, the Eagles triumphed W (35–24) before 72,318. In the season finale on Dec 24, at home against Cincinnati's Bengals, the Eagles prevailed W (16–7) before 64,902

Top Eagles Players—Jon Runyan

Jon Runyan is a mountain of a man. He was drafted by the Houston Oilers in the fourth round of the 1996 NFL Draft and he joined the Philadelphia Eagles in 2000. He finished his pro football career with the San Diego Chargers.

Well in time to suit up for the 2000 season Andy Reid signed Runyan to a six-year, \$30 million contract on February 14, 2000 as an unrestricted free agent. Runyan was selected to the Pro Bowl in

2002. After serving well in his six-year contract, on March 24, 2006, the Eagles announced that Runyan had re-signed with the team with a three-year contract.



#69 John Runyan – John Madden’s Favorite

For leverage some say, Runyan had visited with the New York Jets on March 21, prior to re-signing with the Eagles. He played for the Eagles until after he had microsurgery for a knee injury in January 2009. One month later, Runyan's contract expired with the team. He was last seen with the Eagles when he worked out with the team on September, but he failed to sign a contract. He was later signed by the San Diego Chargers, playing in just five games before he turned in his spikes.

Before I tell you about his career, there is a piece of trivia about Jon Runyan that I must share. It describes well, my first take on this huge man when I first met him when he ran for office in 2010. I was running for the US Senate at the time and he was running for Congress. I had to look to make sure that my hand was still attached to my arm after the handshake.

Here is the trivia: A 2008 poll revealed that getting blocked by Runyan on a screen pass was one of the scariest things in the NFL. Runyan clocked in at 6'7 and 330 pounds but having met him with a suit-on, not a green uniform, I would have guessed 6'10" 380 pounds. He looked to me like a one-man mountain, though in a world of all one-man-mountain's I suspect he would not stand out.

Runyan held the remarkable streak for an offensive lineman of having started 190 consecutive regular season games. This was the second longest streak among active NFL players in 2008. He has also started in all 18 playoff games his teams have appeared in during this streak.

On November 2, 2010, Jon Runyan defeated John Adler 50%–47% for New Jersey's 3rd congressional district. At the time, he was the fourth NFL player to be elected to Congress, after Jack Kemp, Steve Largent, and Heath Shuler. Runyan was reelected in 2012, and decided against another shot at U.S. Representative in 2014. He now runs his own business and enjoys being an Uber Driver – not for the money.

The Jon Runyan we all know and who my dad liked watching him play for the Eagles, and who John Madden often called out as one of his favorite players to watch originally made a name for himself as a dominant offensive lineman. He was anything but a politician on the gridiron. He helped anchor an offensive line that routinely was among the best in the league, and he was a leader for the team throughout his entire tenure as an Eagle.

But perhaps most noteworthy about Runyan is that he was one of the dirtiest players in the game. Opposing defenses would constantly whine and complain about his style of play, but perhaps his less than savory style was what made him one of the best.

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.

On September 9, 2001 the Eagles hosted the St. Louis Rams in the Veteran's Stadium home opener and their NFL season opener. The Eagles lost to the Rams L (17-20) before 66,243. On Sept 23, the Eagles beat the Seattle Seahawks at home W (27-3) before 62,826 At home on Sept 30, Philadelphia overpowered Dallas W 40-18 before 66,621. On Oct 7, at home the Arizona Cardinals beat the Eagles by just one point L (29-21) before 66,360. Week 5 was a bye

In week 6 of the 2001 season, at New York on Monday Night, Oct 22, the Eagles defeated the Giants W (10-9) before 78,821. On Oct 28, at home, the Oakland Raiders defeated the Eagles L (10-20) before 65,342. At Arizona on Nov 4, 2001, the Eagles beat the Cardinals W (21-7) before 33,430.

Then, at home on Nov 11, the Eagles pounded the Minnesota Vikings W (48-17) before 65,638. At Dallas, on Nov 18, 2001, the Eagles bombed the Cowboys W (36-3) before 63,204. At home on Nov 25, the Eagles lost to the Washington Redskins L (3-13) before 65,666. At Kansas City on Nov 29, the Eagles defeated the Chiefs W (23-10) before 77,087. On Dec 9, at home, the Eagles beat the San Diego Chargers W (24-14) before 65,438.

At Washington on Dec 16, the Eagles beat the 2001 at Redskins W (20-6) before 84,036. At San Francisco, on Dec 23, the 49ers beat the Eagles L (3-13) before 68,124. On Dec 30, the day before New Year's Eve, , the Eagles got by the New York Giants W (24-2) before 65,885. On Jan 6, in the 2002 at Tampa Bay Buccaneers W 17-13 65,541

Top Eagles Players—Sheldon Brown



Eagles Sheldon Brown getting a pick

Joining the Eagles in 2002, Brown was a big difference maker as CB for Andy Reid's Eagles. He was a great all-around cornerback. He could cover with the best of them and he also knew how to deliver punishing blows that helped jar the ball loose on many occasions. Many fans remember the hit he laid on New Orleans Saints' running back Reggie Bush during the 2006 Divisional Playoff Game. It has been classified as "simply brutal."

There are other players which may have better stats, but Brown, ole # 24, always brought a mix of passion and toughness to the game that was easily recognizable as unique. Brown snagged 26 interceptions and scored four touchdowns running back his interceptions. His longest interception was 83 yards. Quite a career.

Brian Westbrook was essentially the focal point of the Philadelphia Eagles' offense for most of his career. He was a talented runner, whose yards per carry never fell below a four ypc average in a season. Westbrook added a number of dimensions to the Eagles team.

Top Eagles Players—Brian Westbrook



Brian Westbrook has the ball

Some say he redefined the position. He is one of the best pass-catching running backs the NFL has ever produced. He was also a seen, and he was a nightmare to stop when returning the football. His best talent was his versatility. For example, the Eagles could line him up anywhere on the field and he would find a way to make a play.

Westbrook was a third-round draft pick out of Villanova in 2002. He finished his career first in the team record books in scrimmage yards with 9,785, second in yards rushing with 5,995 (he's now third) and third in total touchdowns with 68.

Brian Westbrook made a name for himself in 2003 with his fourth-quarter punt return which has been dubbed by the pundits as the "Miracle of the Meadowlands." Westbrook returned the punt for a badly needed touchdown. The TD sparked the Eagles to the top seed in the NFC playoffs. By 2006, Westbrook was the NFC's best all-purpose back. From 2006-07, Westbrook led the conference with 4,020 yards from scrimmage including a league-best and a then-franchise-record 2,104 in 2007.

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 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 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 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 past 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.

On Oct 6, at Jacksonville, the Jaguars barely beat the visiting Eagles L (25–28) before 65,005. At home on Oct 20, the Eagles handily beat the Tampa Bay Buccaneers—future Super Bowl Victors—the team that would keep the Eagles from the NFC Championship this year -- W 20–10 before 65,523. On Oct 28, the Eagles beat the New York Giants W (17–3) at home before 65,791. On Nov 3, at Chicago, the Eagles got by the Bears W (19–13) before 54,049.

On Nov 10, at home, Philadelphia lost to the Indianapolis Colts L (13–35) before 65,660. At home again on Nov 17, to face the Arizona Cardinals, the Eagles dominated W (38–14) before 64,990. At San Francisco, on Nov 25, the Eagles toppled the 49ers, W (38–

17) before 67,919. On Dec 1, at home, the Eagles beat the St. Louis Rams in a close match W (10–3) before 65,552.

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

The 2003 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventy-first season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his fifth of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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 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.

Games of the Season

In the season and home opener and the first game in Lincoln Financial Field (the Link) on September 8, 2003, after having lost to Tampa Bay in their last game of 2002 in the playoffs, they suffered a similar fate as the Buccaneers shut out the Eagles and ruined opening day L (0–17) before 67,772. On Sept 14, the New England Patriots buzzed right through the Eagles L (10–31) before 67,624 at the Linc. At Buffalo, on Sept 28, after a bye week, the Eagles got back a little bit of their moxie as they beat the Bills W (23–13) before 73,305. The Eagles managed to get their first win at the Linc on Oct 5, at home v the Washington Redskins W (27–25) before 67,792.

Then, at Dallas in Week 6, on October 12, the Eagles lost again, this time to the Cowboys, L (23–21) before 63,648. At New York, in week 7 on Oct 19, the Birds pulled off some magic and beat the Giants W (14–10) before 78,883. The Eagles finally had reached 500. They would win eight more in a row beginning with the New York Jets on Oct 26, W (24–17) at home at the Linc before 67,853. On Nov 2, at the Atlanta Falcons W (23–16) before 70,064.

At Green Bay on Nov 10, it was the Packers W (17–14) before 70,29. At home on Nov 16, it was the New York Giants W (28–10)

before. Then, on Nov 23, at home, it was the New Orleans Saints W (33–20) 67,802. In the last game of November, Nov 30, at Carolina, the Eagles beat the Panthers W (25–16) before 72,977

On Dec 7, at home, the Eagles beat up the Dallas Cowboys W (36–10) before 69,773. At Miami on Dec 15, the Birds defeated the Dolphins W (34–27) 73,780. In a tough OT battle on Dec 21, the Eagles could not pull it out against San Francisco's 49ers L (28–31) before 67,866. In the last game of a fine regular season – the best record in the NFL, on Dec 27 the Eagles played at Washington and thumped the Redskins W (31–7) before 76,766

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.

On September 12, 2004 in the season and home opener at the Linc, the Eagles beat the New York Giants W 31–17 before 67,532. On Sept 20, the Eagles beat the Minnesota Vikings at the Linc, W (27–16) before 67,676. At Detroit on Sept 26, the Eagles beat the Lions W (30–13) before 62,472. On Oct 3, at Chicago, the Eagles beat the Bears W (19–9) before 61,894.

After a bye in week 5, on October 17, the Eagles whooped the Carolina Panthers W (30–8) before 67,707. On Oct 24, at Cleveland, the Birds beat the Browns in OT W (34–31) before 73,394. On Oct 31 at home, the Eagles beat the Baltimore Ravens W (15–10) before 67,715. In the one unintentional loss of the season, on Nov 7, at Pittsburgh, the Steelers overpowered the Eagles L (3–27) before 64,975.

On Nov 15, at Dallas, the Eagles recovered after the Pittsburgh loss and shellacked the Cowboys W (49–21) before 64,190. On Nov 21, at home, the Eagles beat the Washington Redskins W (28–6) before 67,720. At New York, on Nov 28, the Eagles defeated the Giants W (27–6) before 78,830. At home on Dec 5, the Eagles pounded the Green Bay Packers W (47–17) before 67,723.

On Dec 12, at Washington, the Redskins lost to the Eagles W (17–14) before a huge crowd of 90,089. On Dec 19 at home, the Eagles beat the Dallas Cowboys W (12–7) before 67,723. The next two games were played with the starters resting. On Dec 27, 2004, at St. Louis, the Rams beat the Eagles L (7–20). On January 2, 2005, one of two teams that beat the New England Patriots this season, the Cincinnati Bengals embarrassed the Eagles L (10–38) and sent them into the playoffs having lost their season finale before 67,074 at the Linc.

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 4th 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

Eagles Greatest Games

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. 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.

2005 Andy Reid #20

The 2005 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventy-third season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his seventh of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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.

The Eagles somehow always have blamed injuries when their record slips. This year, they blamed injuries and a new phenomenon called the "Terrell Owens Saga. These combined to wreak havoc upon the Eagles' chances in their season after a great Super Bowl season.

After having made the playoffs since 2000 and winning the prior four NFC East crowns, the Eagles stuttered this year just to win six games along with ten losses. In 2004, the Eagles had swept its division rivals, but they became the first team to reverse that feat in its next season, going 0–6 against the NFC East in 2005. It was

pathetic. It verified suspicions, and fans were wondering about Andy's fate, but he survived; and he came back.

After the Super Bowl, a bright future was in front of the team, but the onset of the "Owens controversy" in the summer began to cloud that outlook with negativity. The Eagles got out to a 3–1 record, but there were omens of trouble from the start. Contract disputes with Owens and Brian Westbrook created ugly distractions, and the team was criticized for not replacing departed defensive linemen Derrick Burgess and Corey Simon.

Around the middle of the season, the injuries began to take their toll. Quarterback Donovan McNabb, running back Brian Westbrook, wide receiver Todd Pinkston, offensive tackle Tra Thomas, defensive lineman Jerome McDougle, center Hank Fraley, cornerback Lito Sheppard, and running back Correll Buckhalter were all at some point lost for the season. To make matters worse, kicker David Akers and punter Dirk Johnson were also battling injuries and also missed time during the year.

The "Owens situation" boiled to a head in early November, with the team essentially suspending the outspoken receiver for the rest of the season. He was simply bad for the team. The rash of injuries, meanwhile, revealed a disturbing lack of depth on the team, especially in the quarterback position and defensive line. Depth is an upper management issue as well as one for the head coach. I don't recall Andy Reid complaining publicly.

The Eagles had an OK start but they blew eight of their final ten games, led at quarterback by the athletic, but not too talented, Mike McMahon.

In the seven games Owens did play, he caught six touchdowns with 763 receiving yards. Rookie Reggie Brown showed promise after Owens' suspension, grabbing four touchdowns, as did rookie running back Ryan Moats, who had three late-season touchdowns.

The team's two Pro Bowlers came from the defense – middle linebacker Jeremiah Trotter and safety Brian Dawkins. However, for the most part, the Eagles' pass defense suffered due to a poor pass rush from missing people at key positions.

Eagles fans were glad when the season ended.

On September 12, 2005 in the season opener in Georgia Stadium, the Eagles were defeated by the Atlanta Falcons L (10-14) before 70,806. On Sept 18 in the home opener, the Eagles ripped through the San Francisco 49ers W (42-3) before 67,727 at the Linc. On Sept 25, at home, the Eagles beat the Oakland Raiders W (23-20) before 67,735. At KC, on Oct 2, 2005, the Eagles beat the Kansas City Chiefs W (37-31) before 78,742.

At home on October 9, at Texas Stadium, the Dallas Cowboys pummeled the Eagles L (10-33) before 63,199. At home on 7 Oct 23, the Eagles defeated the Chargers W (20-17) before 67,747. At Denver, on Oct 30, the Broncos shellacked the Eagles L (21-49) before 76,530. At Washington on Nov 6, the Redskins beat the Eagles L (10-17) before 90,298.

On Nov 14, at home, the Dallas Cowboys beat the Eagles L (20-21) before 67,739. At New York, on Nov 20, the Giants beat the Eagles L (17-27) before 78,626. At home on Nov 27, the Eagles beat the Green Bay Packers W (19-14) before 67,665. At home on December 5, at home, the Seattle Seahawks overwhelmed the Eagles L (0-42) before 67,637.

At home on Dec 11, in OT the New York Giants defeated the Philadelphia Eagles before 67,443, L (23-26). On Dec 18, at St. Louis, the Eagles beat the Rams W (17-16) before 65,382. On Christmas Eve at Arizona, the Cardinals beat the Eagles L (21-27) before 44,723. In the final game of the season at home, the Washington Redskins beat the Eagles before 67,700

Top Eagles Players—Trent Cole

If this were just a year or so ago, Trent Cole would still be an active player, but he retired Dec 22, 2017 after a year on injured reserves. The man who wore #58 as an eagle has routinely topped Pro Football Focus' list of the best defensive ends who at the time were still playing NFL football.



The Philadelphia Eagles celebrate the tenure of
TRENT COLE
 one of the greatest defensive players in franchise history.

- 10 Seasons**
- Two-Time Pro Bowl Selection**
- 155 Regular Season Games**
9th In Franchise History
- Only 4 Games Missed Due To Injury**
- 85.5 Sacks**
2nd In Franchise History
- 50 Quarterbacks Sacked**
Eli Manning Was Sacked Most (9 Times)
- 4 Double-Digit Sack Seasons**
2nd In Franchise History
- 20 Multi-Sack Games**
3rd In Franchise History
- 19 Forced Fumbles**
3rd In Franchise History

Trent Cole among them all is unique even though he is not the fastest or the strongest. He simply has one of the best motors in the game. He never quit on any play. His sack numbers have already spoken about how valuable he was as a pass-rusher, it was his exceptional defense against the run that made him one of the best in pro football.

Cole was sick in College and had a hard time making it to the the Senior Bowl. He had been a two-time All-Conference USA defensive end. His draft position dropped along with his weight as he fought his illnesses. Nonetheless, he was chosen by Philadelphia in the fifth round as the 146th overall selection. It was a great selection indeed.

“It didn’t matter who I was going to, it was just great to have the opportunity to start somewhere in the NFL. And getting picked by

the Philadelphia Eagles, I was ecstatic,” says Cole, who estimates he lost 35 pounds from his illnesses. “Going through the process of the draft, anybody who has been in the NFL and had the opportunity to get drafted knows the feeling on that day, just the nervousness. Your life is going to change that day. You don’t know what’s going to happen.

“You think you’re going to go on the first day and then you go on the second day because different things were supposed to happen. Some people didn’t get who they wanted, and things change. You’re nervous, but at the same time, when you get drafted it was like, ‘Oh, man, this is awesome. I’m getting the opportunity to go play in the National Football League.’ As a kid, I was the type of guy that didn’t really watch football and now here I am. I’m playing football for the Philadelphia Eagles. It’s crazy.”

Trent Cole became a regular fixture on the Eagles line at defensive end about mid-way through his rookie season. He earned two trips to the Pro Bowl and the solid reputation of playing with seemingly limitless heart and energy on every play. His relentless work ethic was widely respected by players, coaches, and fans alike.

“When I’m lining up against somebody, I’m not worried about him, I’m in competition with myself. I’m not in competition with an opponent,” says Cole. “I remember when Chip Kelly (became the Eagles’ head coach in 2013) saying something like, ‘We won the war, but we have to win the battle.’ And when he said that, I already had that mentality and it kind of brought me back to where I come from and coming into the league and playing football, in general.

“I was always a tougher guy from grade school, all the way through high school to college to the NFL. I competed against myself. I was going to see how far I could take myself. I wanted to be successful as much as I can and there was no limit to how much I could be successful. That was just something that was instilled in me.

“That’s how I thought. Every day’s a new day. Every game’s a new game. If I did good this game, OK, I’m going to outdo what I did this game going into the next game and try to outdo that performance.”

Trent Cole would play 10 seasons for the Eagles from 2005-14, eight at defensive end and two at outside linebacker, and record 85.5 sacks, good for second most in franchise history behind Pro Football Hall of Fame defensive end Reggie White. He also had one interception, a pick-six in 2006 off the hand of New York Giants quarterback Eli Manning. Cole returned that opportunity 19 yards for a touchdown.

2006 Andy Reid #20

The 2006 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventy-fourth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his eighth of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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.

The Eagles had a productive 2006 Draft, where they used their first pick on Florida State defensive tackle Brodrick Bunkley. Then they used their next pick (acquired from the Tennessee Titans) on Southern California offensive tackle Winston Justice. The rest of their picks included California Polytechnic State defensive end Chris Gocong, Georgia guard Max Jean-Gilles, Michigan wide receiver Jason Avant, Colorado wide receiver Jeremy Bloom, Tennessee linebacker Omar Gaither, and Southern California defensive tackle LaJuan Ramsey.

There was a bad taste for the Eagles at summer training camp. The prior season was demoralizing. Quarterback Donovan McNabb,

returned from his sports hernia injury and he announced that he thought the team was capable of reaching the Super Bowl again. Nonetheless, the national pundits saw it much differently, picking the Eagles to finish last in the highly competitive NFC East.

Correll Buckhalter was finally well after two years on injured reserve and the team added depth to both the offensive and the defensive lines. At the end of training camp, the Eagles cut two long-standing players from the team.

There was criticism since the Eagles had not filled the spot in which wide receiver Terrell Owens played. However, before the regular season began, the Eagles corrected that by trading for Donté Stallworth from the New Orleans Saints for linebacker Mark Simoneau and a conditional fourth-round draft pick in 2007. After such a poor 2005, nobody knew what to expect.

In the season opener on September 10, 2006 at Houston, the Eagles defeated the Texans W (24–10) before 70,180. On Sept 17, at home, the Giants beat the Eagles in OT L (24–30) before 69,241. Then, on Sept 24, at San Francisco, the Eagles defeated the 49ers W (38–24) before 68,166. At home v the Green Bay Packers on Oct 2, the Eagles rolled over the Packers W (31–9) before 69,222.

On Oct 8, the Eagles defeated the Dallas Cowboys W (38–24) at the Linc before 69,268. At New Orleans on Oct 15, the Saints squeaked out a three-point win v the Eagles L (24–27) before 68,262. On Oct 22, at Tampa Bay, the Bucs beat Philadelphia L (21–23) before 65,808. Then on October 29, at home, the Eagles lost to the Jacksonville Jaguars L (6–13) before 69,249 The next week, # 9 was a bye

In week 10, on Nov 12, at home, the Eagles whooped the Washington Redskins W (27–3) 69,143. At home on Nov 19, the Tennessee Titans got the best of Philadelphia L (13–31) before 69,232. At Indianapolis on Nov 26, the Colts pounded the Eagles L (21–45) before 57,296. At home on Dec 4, the Eagles beat the Carolina Panthers in a close match W (27–24) before 69,068.

At Washington on Dec 10, the Eagles barely beat the Redskins W (21–19) before 84,164. At New York on Dec 17, the Eagles whipped

the Giants W (36–22) before 78,657. On Christmas Day, at Dallas, the Eagles defeated the Cowboys W (23–7) before 62,839. In the season closer at home, on Dec 31, the Eagles defeated the Atlanta Falcons W (24–17) before 69,341, giving the Eagles a positive push towards the playoffs.

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 Burress 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 2007 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventy-fifth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his ninth of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. This year's 8-8 record was very disappointing after 10-6 the prior year. The Eagles finished in fourth place and did not qualify for the playoffs.

Even Andy Reid cannot make all losses go away. This story we tell below will be the precursor to Andy's ninth year under the Philadelphia microscope. God bless him for putting up with us as he is a fine man. My nephew, who has a marketing business was invited into the Reid box one game that he was at the Linc. My nephew had a number of seats for his business and he took the family down a few times in a big limmo to the Vet and then to the Linc.

My nephew was impressed with the Reid bunker at the Linc but not impressed with the libations. We won't go any further. My dad had a WC Fields notion about strong drink that I carried through life: "Never trust a man that doesn't drink." I always trusted that Andy Reid wanted what I wanted with the Eagles. However, he did not drink and sometimes he did not show enough fire. 'Nuff said. He still is one heck of a coach!

As noted in the 2007 intro, this Philadelphia Eagles season marked the 75th anniversary of the Eagles franchise. The team compiled an unimpressive 8-8 record and a last-place finish in the NFC East.

The Eagles began poorly but as we have seen they had a propensity to rally and they did in a road game over the Washington Redskins after their poor beginning. Following that they got a win at home against the Miami Dolphins. McNabb had become injury prone. His forte was never passing accuracy, as a big fast man, his prowess was his ability to claw out yardage when nobody else could get it. But, his fragility was unexpected.

In the win over Miami, McNabb went down with another November injury, the fourth time in six seasons that had occurred. The next three games, all against winning clubs, would prove to be

the crux of the season for Philadelphia. Backup A. J. Feeley almost pulled off a big upset of the New England Patriots, who would finish the regular season 16–0, but the Eagles surrendered a fourth quarter lead. Think about the word, suspicion.

As good as the Eagles began games and seasons, there was never even an implied guarantee they would finish well. Our Eagles under Andy Reid would again lose second half leads to the Seattle Seahawks and their rival and eventual world champion New York Giants. One without a suspicious nature would not even ask but I ask, “what kept happening that could have been avoided?”

The losses in 2007 wiped out any chances of making the playoffs. The team finished the season with three straight wins, including a 10–6 win over the Cowboys, who were 12–1 entering the game. Somehow, Reid could lead the team to comebacks when there were no expectations but if the team got off to a good start, there were no guarantees. I don’t know how to explain it. I just do not know.

Despite missing two games in 2007, McNabb still threw for a whopping 3324 yards, 19 touchdowns, and seven interceptions. Westbrook had one of the top seasons of any running back in the league, rushing for 1333 yards and seven touchdowns, and catching 90 passes for 771 yards and 5 touchdowns.

New acquisition Kevin Curtis led the team with 1110 receiving yards and six touchdown receptions (half of them coming against Detroit). Third-year receiver Reggie Brown had a slow start, but finished with 780 receiving yards. On defense, Trent Cole's 12.5 sacks earned him a Pro Bowl spot and second-year linebacker Omar Gaither led the team with 103 tackles. As a unit, the defense came up with several important goal-line stands throughout the season. So, why again were the Eagles thwarted?

In the season opener for Philadelphia on September 9, 2007 at Green Bay, the Packers won the tough game L (13–16). On Sept 17, 2007 the Washington Redskins spoiled the Eagles home opener L (12–20). Then, at home, on Sept 23, the Eagles shellacked the Detroit Lions W (56–21). In the fourth game of the 2007 season. At New

York, the Eagles could not make a win happen and bit the Giant's dust L (3–16). The fifth week was a bye.

On Oct 14, 2007 at New York, the Eagles defeated the Jets W (16–9). Then at home on Oct 21, the Eagles were beaten in a close game by the Chicago Bears L (16–19). At Minnesota on Oct 28, the Eagles got another win W (23-6). At home on Nov 4, the Dallas Cowboys wumped the Eagles L (17–38).

At Washington on Nov 11, the Redskins were beaten by the Eagles W (33–25). At home again, the Eagles pounded Miami in a low-scoring match W (17–7). Then at New England, the Eagles put on a great show but lost despite the effort on Nov 25, L (28-31). At home on December 2, the Seattle Seahawks won the match against the Eagles L (24–28).

At home on Dec 9, the Giants has a tough time with the Eagles but won regardless L (13–16) at Dallas, on Dec 16, the Eagles beat the Cowboys W (10–6). In the cold season, the Eagles got a warm date on Dec 23, at New Orleans. The Eagles showed its appreciation for playing in warm weather by overpowering the Saints W (38–23). Back to cold country on Dec, the Eagles invited Buffalo to another cold spot besides Buffalo in the USA, at the Philadelphia Linc and they beat the Bills in the final game of the 2007 season W (17–9)

2008 Andy Reid #20

The 2008 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventy-sixth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his tenth of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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*.

Andy Reid and company were always preparing for a better year. Long before preseason, the Eagles were bolstering their lineup. They signed cornerback Asante Samuel from New England Patriots in February when his contract became available. He inked six-year, \$57 million contract, as the top player in the free agency pool.

The Eagles also signed defensive end Chris Clemons, and gave him a sizable signing bonus. Unfortunately, Clemons struggled with injuries in the preseason, and barely made the team. Defensive lineman Jevon Kearse returned to the Tennessee Titans and Takeo Spikes was released, with a young corps of linebackers ready to replace him.

The Eagles traded away draft picks this year so they could have two first round choices in 2009. Additionally, Brian Westbrook had contract problems which were not resolved until the Eagles forked over a three-year, \$21 million extension. Philadelphia needed to address its weak receiving corps. They were unsuccessful in acquiring a big name receiver, and things got worse when then #1 receiver Kevin Curtis went down with a sports hernia in preseason, while #2 receiver Reggie Brown was nursing a sore hamstring. No moves were made to fix the problem, and many experts considered the Eagles too weak at the position to go deep into the playoffs.

However, 5'10 second round draft pick DeSean Jackson was about ready to make the pundits regret that forecast. He had a great preseason and was named as a Week 1 starter for the Eagles at receiver. QB Donovan McNabb also had a strong preseason, and finally looked fully recovered from his 2006 knee surgery. Special teams were also rebuilt and looked good in the preseason. Draft picks Jackson and Quintin Demps each returned a punt and a kick respectively for touchdowns in an exhibition win over the Patriots.

On the offensive side, for the most part, things looked really good. Westbrook was in his prime while a rebuilt McNabb was ready to let them have it. However, even with Jackson, the receiving corps still looked feeble, and the offensive line had a big question mark. Aging tackles Jon Runyan and Tra Thomas still anchored the O unit. And Shawn Andrews did not get playing time until the mid-pre-season.

The defense was jam packed with talent featuring the deepest secondary in the NFL with Samuel, Brown, Sheppard, and veteran safety Brian Dawkins. The linebackers looked young and quick, and Trent Cole was ready to be the clear star on the defensive line. The key improvement from 2007 was in the special teams, which had been a consistent weakness the previous season.

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).

At home on Oct 5, Washington defeated Philadelphia L (17–23). At San Francisco on Oct 12, the Eagles defeated the 49ers W (40–26) Week 7 was a bye. In week 8, at home on Oct 26, 2008 the Eagles dominated the Atlanta Falcons W (27–14). At Seattle on Nov 2, the Eagles subdued the Seahawks W (26–7).

On Nov 9, at home, the Eagles lost to the NY Giants L (31–36). Then at Cincinnati on Nov 16, the Bengals and Eagles played to a tie T (13–13). On Nov 23, at Baltimore, the Ravens smothered the Eagles L (7–36) . At home v the Arizona Cardinals on Nov 8, the Eagles humbled the Cardinals W (48–20)

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

The 2009 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventy-seventh season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his eleventh of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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.

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. After losing twice to the Cowboys in the Regular Season the Eagles did not compete well against them in the Wild Card game and were defeated 14-34.

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)

At Oakland on Oct 18 the Raiders defeated the Eagles L (9–13) On Oct 26 (Monday) at Washington the Eagles beat the Redskins W 27–17. On Nov 1 at home, the Eagles overpowered the Giants (40–17). At home on Nov 8 the Dallas Cowboys defeated the Eagles L (16–20)

Then on Nov 15, at San Diego, the Chargers got the best of the Eagles L (23–31). The next week at Chicago, , the Eagles won W (24–20). Washington lost to Philadelphia on Nov 29 , W (27-24) Washington Redskins W 27–24 . 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 6th 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. Andy Reid had three years left.

2010 Andy Reid #20

The 2010 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventy-eighth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his twelfth of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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 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

In the season and home opener at the Linc, on September 12, 2010, the Green Bay Packers spoiled the start for the Eagles L(20–27). At Detroit on Sept 19, the Eagles beat the Lions W (35–32). On Sept 26, at Jacksonville, Philadelphia overpowered the Jaguars W (28–3) At home on Oct 3 the Redskins beat the Eagles L (12–17).

At San Francisco, on Oct 10, the Eagles beat the 49ers W(27–24) At home, on October 17, Philadelphia defeated Atlanta W (31–17) On Oct 24 at Tennessee the Titans outplayed the Eagles L (19–37). On Week 8, the Eagles drew a bye. On Nov 7 at home , the Eagles managed to beat the Colts in a tight match W (26–24)

On Nov 15, at Washington, in a shootout, The Eagles destroyed the Redskins W (59–28). On Nov 21, at home, the Eagles beat the New York Giants W (27–17). Then, on Nov 28 at Chicago, the Eagles were edged out by the Bears L 26–31. At home, the Eagles neutralized the Houston Texans on Dec 2 W (34–24).

At Dallas on Dec 12, the Eagles nosed out the Cowboys W (30-27) in a shootout W (30–27). At New York, the Eagles beat the Giants W (38–31) At home on Dec 28, the Minnesota Vikings defeated the

Birds L (14–24). Wrapping up the season on January 2, 2011, the Dallas Cowboys squeaked out a win L (13–14) over the Eagles. Though he had two seasons to go with the Eagles, this would be the last winning season for Andy Reid.

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

The 2011 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventy-ninth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his thirteenth of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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.

They were hoping for a miracle playoff berth, but at 8–8, they were 1 win short of being equal to the divisional winners and eventual Super Bowl champions, the New York Giants. They swept the Dallas Cowboys and Washington Redskins for the first time since 2006 and 2009, respectively but like they still did not make it to the big dance.

On September 11, 2011, in the season opener at St. Louis, the Rams were completely skunked by the Eagles W (31–13). At Atlanta on Sept 18. The Falcons nosed out the Eagles L (31-35). At home on Sept 25, the Giants slammed the Eagles L (16–29) On Oct 2, in a one-point battle, the San Francisco 49ers defeated the Eagles L (23–24)

On Oct 9 at Buffalo, the Bills got the better of the Eagles L (24–31). At Washington on Oct 16, the Eagles defeated the Washington Redskins W (20–13). Week seven was a bye. Week 8, the Eagles slugged the Dallas Cowboys at home on Oct 30, W (34–7). On Nov 7, the Chicago Bears beat the Eagles L (24–30)

The Arizona Cardinals beat the Eagles on Nov 13 at home L (17–21). Then, on Nov 20 at New York, the Eagles defeated the Giants W (17–10). At home on Nov 27, the New England Patriots smothered the Eagles L (20–38). At Seattle on Dec 1, The Seahawks pounded the Eagles L (14–31).

At Miami on December 11 at the Eagles belted the Dolphins W (26–10). Then on Dec 18, the Eagles pummeled the New York Jets W (45–19). At Dallas on Dec 24, the Eagles smashed the Cowboys W (20–7) On January 1, 2012, in the season finale, Philadelphia lambasted Washington W (34–10) to end the season on a positive note.

2012 Andy Reid #20

The 2012 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their eightieth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his last of fourteen mostly excellent seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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.

The Eagles had an uncanny knack of picking the Super Bowl winner, but it was never them. It was the fourth consecutive season, that the team, which the Eagles played in their home opener, went on to win the Super Bowl. This year, after toying with their draft selections for a bit, the Eagles selected defensive tackle Fletcher Cox. Even Cox could not put Humpty Dumpty together again.

In the season opener, on Sept 9 at Cleveland, the Browns were beaten by one point by and Eagles team that had won their fifth in a row, counting pre-season. W (17-16). The Eagles picked up #6 in a row on September v the Baltimore Ravens at the Linc in the home opener W (24-23). At Arizona, on Sept 23, the Eagles sustained their first loss of the season against the Cardinals at Arizona L (6-27). Winning again on Sept 30 at home v the New York Giants, it was a close game for the Eagles W (19-17).

Count off eight losses in a row quickly so it does not make you think of how It could have been lots better. Start with Oct 7 at Pittsburgh Steelers L (14-16). This was followed by Oct14 at home v Detroit's Lions L (23-26) in OT. Then, Oct 28 Atlanta L (17-30), Nov 5, at New Orleans L(13-28), Nov 11, Dallas at home L (23-38); Nov 18 at Washington's Redskins L (6-31) Nov 26 at home v Carolina's Panthers L (22-30). Dec 2 at Dallas L (33-38)

Then came the rare 2012 Philadelphia win at Tampa Bay on Dec 9 W (23-21). The Eagles then lost three in a row first on Dec 13 to the Cincinnati Bengals in a walloping, L (13-34). Next a L (20-27) drubbing on Dec 23, from the Washington Redskin. In just one more game, the Pain for Eagles fans and players and coaches and management would be over after the season closer on Dec 30, December 30 at New York in a hammering from the Giants L (7-42). The very next day, And Reid was released from his burden.

Andy Reid out at Philadelphia

I wrote this epitaph on Andy Reid's days as coach of the Eagles for a book that I had written several years ago. I include it here with a 2020 hindsight update because it fits in with the full Andy Reid story. Andy Reid's fourteen years at the helm in Philadelphia gave me a lot of time to know him and a lot of time to know what he brought to Philadelphia football and what he brought to the Philadelphia Eagles' many fans.

First of all Reid turned around a failing team . The Eagles were going no place fast with coach Ray Rhodes. Reid came from a winning tradition at Green Bay. Like many great coaches, however, such as the Chief's own Hank Stram, the fan base and management team, after lots of winning, were not happy with just winning. They wanted the big prize—the NFL Championship which in 2012 was known as a Super Bowl victory. Near the end of that disappointment, the Eagles actually stopped winning.

Reid had some major issues in his fourteen years trying to bring in a Super Bowl Victory. Along the way there were many Eagles' victories. For example, After 3 straight NFC Championship losses, in Reid's early Philly years, the team beat the Falcons 27–10 and made it to Super Bowl XXXIX but then fell to the New England Patriots 24–21.

From 1999 to 2012, few could argue with Andy Reid's great final record (140-102-1). His poorer seasons were near the end. For example, in the 2009 season, Reid failed to win a first-round post-season game for the first time in his career, with his 11–5 Eagles being eliminated by the 1st place Dallas Cowboys 34–14 in the wild-card round. In the 2011 season, Reid led the Eagles to an 8–8 season with no appearance in the postseason. Check out his 14-year history above.

In the 2012 season, Andy Reid's team really struggled to a 4–12 record, the worst of his head coaching tenure. It was surreal for fans. It was also the first time the Eagles missed the postseason in consecutive years under Reid. On December 31, 2012, Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie announced that Reid's contract would not be renewed,

During this one poor season, there was a rare 2012 Philadelphia win at Tampa Bay on Dec 9 W (23–21). The Eagles then lost three in a row first on Dec 13 to the Cincinnati Bengals in a walloping, L (13–34). Next a L (20–27) drubbing on Dec 23, from the Washington Redskins. In just one more game, the pain for Eagles fans and players and coaches and management would be over after the season closer on Dec 30, December 30 when the Giants delivered a real hammering. L (7–42). The very next day, Andy Reid was released from his burden with Philadelphia.

Andy Reid, a man who makes teams better then...

The postscript on Andy Reid is that he made the two teams he coached play better than most coaches could have. He made the Eagles successful and then he made The Kansas City Chiefs successful. Of course after all the success, when the Eagles had a really bad year, he was fired after fourteen years of service at Philadelphia. The Chiefs are still successful, but for a while, they had a lot of similar symptoms like the Eagles had in the pre-post Reid years.

Andy Reid is a smart man and he knows the power of a narrative once it attaches. In my analytical moments, not knowing Reid personally, I sometimes wonder whether he cares what people think as long as he gets to conceive of new and creative ways to play football? Maybe? I wonder if winning has ever been all-consuming to Andy Reid. I do not know what makes him tick. Maybe he actually loves the idea of being the conductor of an orchestra in which nobody keeps score but the conductor.



The whole NFL respects Andy Reid's strategic offensive mind. However, there is this haunting idea still out there that he can't win the big one. I have got to believe that Andy would like to shake that notion. I wonder.

In the six seasons before he was fired from Philadelphia and he became coach of the Chiefs, the Chiefs were playing poorly. They were terrible. They won only 29 total games in six years, and made just one playoff appearance. The pre-Reid Chiefs had four seasons in which they won just four games or fewer. Anybody who could coach well in the pros, should have been able to rescue them but their last two coaches could not. Who actually got the turnaround done? It was Andy Reid! And he turned the KC team around immediately. There was no delay.

The Chiefs were 2-14 in 2012, while Andy Reid was putting in his last year at Philadelphia. Poof! Just one year later, with Andy Reid on the sidelines, without a customary two or three years wait for his system to be installed, the Chiefs were 11-5. We both know that all the magic of that great season was because of one man—Andy Reid. He is a great coach. The Chiefs gained 2nd place in the AFC West and they made the playoffs. Then, again in the Wild Card match

against the Colts, they found defeat again in a 45-44 loss. Still no Super Bowl but a great year nonetheless.

Under Reid, the Chiefs have been above .500 all seven seasons with the Eagles ex-coach. They made the playoffs five times and won consecutive AFC West titles for the first time in franchise history. Before the Super Bowl year, however, there was a little grumbling but not like in Philadelphia. Some newly inspired Chief's fans began to think they might be able to do better than flounder in oblivion at playoff time. Some noticed that the Chiefs have not found much playoff success, winning just once before recently in the postseason. The Eagles fans had this same suspicion for quite a while.

The pundits say Andy Reid had a long history of inexplicable and bewildering time-management gaffes—and his penchant for early postseason exits was well understood by the Eagles and Eagles fans. His records were so good, however, good ole Andy was always deserving of another chance until at Philadelphia he had two bad seasons in a row and the last was one of the Eagles worst seasons ever.

Reid's reputation had become one of head-scratching postseason coaching decisions and it seemed well-earned. The first example what comes to mind is the lazy, meandering 13-play touchdown drive for Reid's Eagles late in Super Bowl XXXIX. Sure, it cut the Patriots' lead down to three points with under two minutes left, but it took up nearly four minutes of precious fourth-quarter time and it left the team with little room to accomplish the desired result of a comeback attempt and ultimately, a win.

Reid had similar issues with the Chiefs, yet he coached mostly well just like with the Eagles. There is a well-documented January 2016 Chief's finish that you may recall. This comeback attempt took 16-plays to drive 80-yards and it gave the Patriots a divisional round victory over the Chiefs. This huge drive once again pulled Reid's team to within one score late in the game while simultaneously giving the Chiefs no time to actually win the contest.

There are plenty of other examples to throw in, but his teams' perennial lack of urgency and inability to finish in big games—not his ability to design and deploy fun, creative offensive schemes and

winning strategies—hade become Reid’s calling card. Say it ain’t so Joe. Andy is so likeable. But as a team fan I suffered myself wondering what was going on. That was until Patrick Mahommes and Andy Reid brought home the big one in 2020.

Give credit where due, however, would the Chiefs have ever made the playoffs without Andy Reid? I can think of few coaches who could have masterminded a winning team structure and could inject creativity into the play calling. Andy Reid always got his teams so close to the big dance that they could smell the pizza inside. But...

In January 2018, the recognized maladies surfaced once again in the playoff game against the Tennessee Titans as the Chief’s offense, which started strong and dominated the first half with 264 yards of offense and 16 first downs should not have been overtaken by anybody’s comeback but...

For Reid, the odds of shedding his playoff-choker reputation may have been insurmountable but he overcame them and got his big win. He is no longer the poster child of “close but no cigar.” We knew that the great Andy Reid’s mind could win and he did.

Chapter 21 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	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
<u>2013-2015 Chip Kelly final record (26-22-0)</u>					



Coach Chip Kelly on the Eagles' sidelines

2013 Chip Kelly #21

The 2013 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their eighty-first season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Chip Kelly in his first of three seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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 became 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.

By the way it was no more than two years ago that I joked with my neighbors, after having written well over sixty books, that I was going to turn my attention to sports books because I had the name. I predicted a successful book called *Great Moments in Notre Dame Football*, and I told my neighbors I would drop the W (Wart) from my full name and go with Brian Kelly so that there might be some confusion about coach Brian Kelly having written my book about Notre Dame's great moments.

I was kidding at the time as I had no plans for such a book.

Eventually, I decided to take a shot at writing such a book. And I did. It is in its second edition and it is hosted within the Notre Dame Bookstore itself on the campus Of ND in Notre Dame, IN.

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 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 in 2018, 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.

In Chip Kelly's first season opener on September 9 at Washington, the Eagles beat the Redskins W (33–27) At home on Sept 15, San Diego nosed out Philadelphia L (30–33) At home on Sept 19, Kansas City defeated Philadelphia L (16–26). Then, on Sept 29 at Denver, the Broncos scorched the Eagles L (20–52).

At New York on Oct 6 the Eagles checkmated the Giants W (36–21). At Tampa Bay on Oct 13, the Eagles belted the Buccaneers W (31–20) On Oct 20, at home, the Cowboys gave the Eagles a smack on the chin L (3–17). At home on Oct 27, the New York Giants beat the Philadelphia Eagles L 7–15

At Oakland on Nov 3, the Eagles trounced the Raiders W (49–20). At Green Bay on Nov 10, the Eagles socked the Packers W (27–13). On Nov 17, at home, the Eagles whacked the Washington Redskins W (24–16) On Nov 24, the Eagles drew a bye. On Dec 1, at home, the Eagles got by the Arizona Cardinals W (24–21)

At home on Dec 8, the Eagles defeated the Detroit Lions W (34–20) At Minnesota on Dec 15, the Vikings hammered the Eagles L (30–48). At home, on Dec 22, the Eagles crushed the Chicago Bears W 54–11.

In the season closer at Dallas, on December 29, Chip Kelly's Eagles wrapped up the season by edging out the Cowboys W (24-22). This game would end when Kyle Orton threw an interception late in the fourth quarter. With the win, the Eagles improved to 10-6 and sealed NFC East Championship and 3rd seed in the playoffs. They would also be the third team in a row to defeat the Cowboys in the last game of the regular season (Sunday Night Football: Week 17, Dec 22).

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

The 2014 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their eighty-second season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Chip Kelly in his second of three seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. Last year 10-6 was good enough for the playoffs. 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.

On September 7, 2014, in the home and season opener, the Eagles defeated the Jacksonville Jaguars W 34–17. At Indianapolis, on Sept 15, the Eagles edged out the Colts W (30–27). At home on Sept 21, the Eagles got by the Washington Redskins W (37–34). At San Francisco on Sept 28 at San Francisco, the 49ers beat the Eagles L (21–26

At home on October 5, the Eagles whipped the St. Louis Rams W (34–28). On Oct 12, at home, Philadelphia shut out the New York Giants W (27–0). Week 7 was a bye. On week 8 at Arizona, the Cardinals defeated the Eagles L (20-24) on Nov 2, at Houston, the Eagles defeated the Texans W (31–21) Nick Foles was out at this point for the rest of the year.

On Nov 10, the Eagles buried the Carolina Panthers W (45–21). Then, on Nov 16 at Green Bay, the Packers smothered the Eagles L (20–53). On Nov 23, the Eagles beat the Tennessee Titans W (43–24). At Dallas on Nov 27, the Eagles spanked the Cowboys W 33–10.

At home on Dec 7 the Seattle Seahawks defeated the Philadelphia Eagles L (14–24) At home on Dec 14, the Dallas Cowboys won the NFC East Championship with this win over the Eagles L (27–38). In this nail-biter on Dec 20 at Washington, the Redskins took the Eagles out of playoff contention L (24–27). In the closing game of the 2014 season, the Eagles came back from a miserable season to finish with a win on Dec 28 against the New York Giants W (34–26). There would be no playoffs to get upset with in 2014. The season simply ended.

Top Eagles Players--Darren Sproles

Darren Lee Sproles was born June 20, 1983. Sproles played his college football at Kansas State, where he is the all-time leading rusher. He was drafted by the San Diego Chargers in the fourth

round of the 2005 NFL Draft. He is a Philadelphia Eagles fan favorite because he never runs out of energy or heart.

Sproles was named as a kick returner on the Chargers 50th Anniversary Team. That is a big honor. He joined the New Orleans Saints in free agency status before the 2011 season, and he went on to break the NFL record for most single-season all-purpose yardage the same year, with 2,696 yards. During that season, he set career highs with 603 yards rushing (6.9 yards per carry) and 710 yards receiving and a combined total of 9 touchdowns.



Sproles is the first player in NFL history with 2,200+ all-purpose yards in 4 different seasons (2008–2011). He is currently ranked 8th in career all-purpose yards in NFL history. He is fun to watch and tough to play against.

On March 13, 2014, Sproles was acquired by the Philadelphia Eagles in exchange for a 2014 5th-round draft pick. The Saints knew what they had lost. Drew Brees lamented his moving on and is quoted after the trade: "You only see a Darren Sproles type of player come around once in your career."

Philadelphia fans have come to enjoy and appreciate Darren Sproles play on the gridiron. He is just wild. At 5'6," and 190 pounds, Sproles is as quick as a dart on the field and he can seemingly slip out of any tackle. He is very popular with Eagles fans who felt his loss in 2017.



<<< Charlie Tolar

Though many may not know of whom he reminds me, I will tell you, as some of you may remember this great player.

One of the most popular figures in the early days of the AFL, in the 1960's, was a different kind of 5-6, player who weighed 20 pounds more than Darren Sproles. He was just as well-loved by the fans for tmany of the same reasons.

This 210-pounder (same height but 20 pounds heavier than Sproles), ran fast like Sproles, but he was like a bull through the center of the line. He played for the Houston Oilers.

Charlie Tolar had dozens of

nicknames, including "the Human Bowling Ball" There were no pins left standing when Charlie ran through the smallest of gaps. Look at the muscles in this Mighty Might's legs.

In his first regular season game with the Eagles, against the Jacksonville Jaguars, Darren Sproles had 11 carries for a total of 71 yards and had 1 rushing touchdown (49 yards, which was the longest run of his career). He won offensive player of the week in Week 2 against the Indianapolis Colts, rushing for 26 yards and a touchdown on 4 carries and catching 7 receptions for 152 yards, 2 of which were over 50 yards.

In 2015, the versatile Sproles was given his largest workload since the 2009 season in a Week 13 game against the 10-1 New England Patriots. He got to play because Chip Kelly's DeMarco Murray and Mathews were hurt. Sproles had 15 carries for 66 yards, 4 catches for 34 yards, and 5 punt returns for 115 yards and a touchdown in the 35-28 upset win.

Sproles followed it up with a solid game against the Bills, with 7 carries for 41 yards and a touchdown in the 23-20 win. He finished the regular season with 3 rushing touchdowns, 1 receiving touchdown, and 2 punt return touchdowns, leading the NFL for the second consecutive year.

Sproles was selected to his second straight Pro Bowl, and was named First Team All-Pro, his second straight year as an All-Pro and his first first team selection On July 29, 2016, Sproles signed a one-year \$4.5 million contract extension with the Eagles through 2017.

Sproles was an immediate weapon out of the backfield, catching 10 passes for 160 yards and a touchdown in the first three games of the 2017 season. On September 25, 2017, the bad news was revealed. Darren Sproles suffered a broken arm and a torn ACL in a game against the New York Giants in Week 3. He was officially placed on injured reserve that day, prematurely ending his season.

In three games, he rushed 15 times for 61 yards with seven receptions for 73 yards. It was tough not having Sproles on the field,

Nonetheless, the Eagles went on to win Super Bowl LII. After the season ended, Sproles stated his interest to return to the Eagles for one more season. We all love Darren Sproles and want him back. Heck, if we could get another Charlie Tolar, that too would be great.

2015 Chip Kelly #21

The 2015 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their eighty-third season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Chip Kelly in his last of three seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. 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 left in free agency. 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.

In the season opener at Atlanta on September 14, 2015, the Atlanta Falcons nosed out the Philadelphia Eagles at the Georgia Dome L (24–26). At home on Sept 20 , the Dallas Cowboys defeated the Eagles L (10–20). At the New York Jets in Met Life Stadium on Sept 27 the Eagles prevailed for their first win of the season W (24–17) After all the toying around with the team, the fans were frothing. At Washington, on Oct 4 , the Redskins edged out the Eagles L (20–23).

At home against New Orleans on Oct 11, the Eagles drubbed the Saints W (39–17). Then, on Oct 25 at home, Philadelphia whacked the New York Giants W (27–7). At Carolina on Oct 25, the Panthers beat the Eagles L (16–27). In the 8th week, the Eagles had their bye. . On Nov 8, at Dallas the Cowboys were beaten by the Eagles in OT W (33–27).

At home on Nov 15, Miami pulled off a one-point win against the Eagles L (19–20). On Nov 22 Tampa Bay's Buccaneers whipped the Philadelphia Eagles L (17–45). At Detroit on Nov 26, the Eagles were overpowered by the Lions L (14–45) At New England on Dec 6, the Eagles defeated the Patriots W (35–28)

At home on Dec 13, the Eagles won against the Buffalo Bills W (23–20) The Arizona Cardinals came to the Linc on Dec 20 and smothered the Eagles (17–40). On the day after Christmas, Canadian Boxer Day, the Washington Redskins took back all the Eagles presents and got the best of Philadelphia L (24–38). In the season finale, the Eagles came back to win on January 3, 2016 at New York against the Giants W (35–30)

Chapter 22 Coach Doug Pederson From 2016...

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 th	7-9-0
2017	Doug Pederson	NFC,	East	1 st	13-3-0
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won Divisional Playoffs(Falcons) 15–10 • Won NFC Championship(Vikings) 38–7 • Won Super Bowl LII (vs. Patriots) 41–33 • Nick Foles (SB MVP)
<u>2016-2017 Doug Pederson record through 2017 season (20-12-0)</u>					



Coach Pederson & the Eagles Super Bowl Champions

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 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. 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 2018. Thank you, Doug Pederson.

The 2016 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their eighty-fourth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Doug Pederson in his first year as head coach of the Eagles. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. The team

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.

Great Eagles Coaches—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 2nd 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...

Regular Season Games 2016

In the home and season opener, on September 11, 2016, Philadelphia defeated the Cleveland Browns W (29–10). At Chicago on Sept 19, the Eagles belted the Bears W (29–14). Then, at home on Sept 25, Philadelphia hammered Pittsburgh W (34–3) for a 3-0 start before the bye week. On Oct 9 at Detroit, the Eagles suffered their first loss by one point against the Lions L (23–24)

In a one TD game on Oct 16 at Washington, the Redskins prevailed L (20–27). At home, on Oct 23, the Eagles came back from their two-game spell and beat the Minnesota Vikings W (21–10). At Dallas, on Oct 30, the Cowboys beat the Eagles in OT L (23–29).

At New York on Nov 6, the Giants edged out the Eagles L (23–28). On Nov 13, Philadelphia defeated Atlanta W (24–15). Then, on Nov 20 at Seattle, the Seahawks smothered the Eagles L (15–26). At home v Green Bay, the Packers rolled over the Eagles on Nov 28, L (13–27) At Cincinnati on Dec 4, the Bengals slammed the Eagles L (14–32) .

At home, on Dec 11, the Washington Redskins defeated the Philadelphia Eagles L (22–27). At Baltimore on Dec 18, in a one-point match, the Ravens bested the Eagles L (26–27) The New York Giants were defeated by the Eagles on Dec 22 W (24–19) On New Year Day, 2017, the Eagles slugged the Dallas Cowboys W (27–13) to wrap up the 2016 season. The next season there would be a whole lot of winning going on for the Eagles.

Top Eagle Players—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's 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 incompleteness, 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.

Top Eagle Players—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)

2017–18 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 Kelly: (amazon.com, & Kindle)

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Brian has written 153 books in total. Other books can be found at amazon.com/author/brianwkelly

