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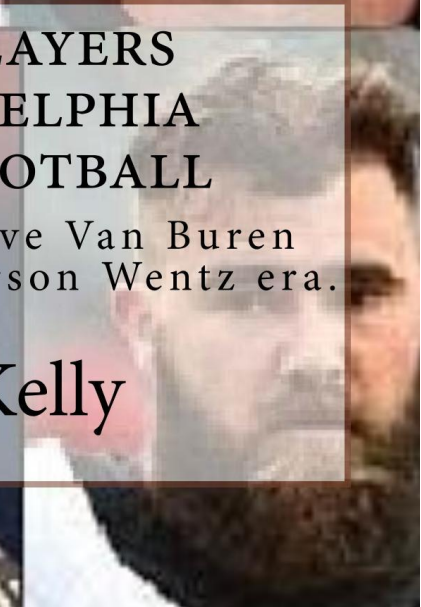
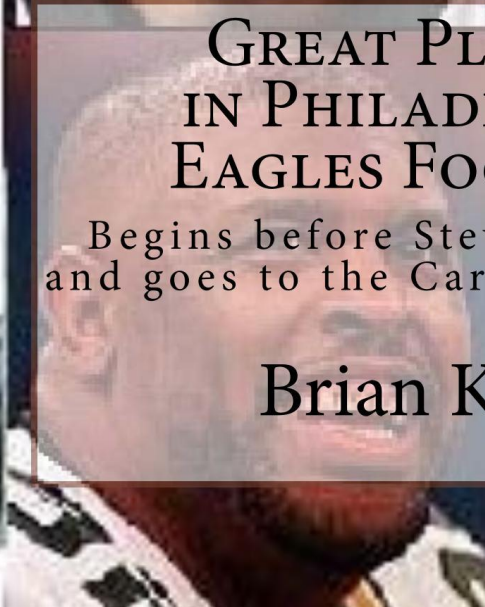
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PHILADELPHIA



GREAT PLAYERS IN PHILADELPHIA EAGLES FOOTBALL

Begins before Steve Van Buren
and goes to the Carson Wentz era.



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



#21 Chip Kelly



#17 Buddy Ryan



#18 Rick Kotite



#19 Ray Rhodes



#20 Andy Reid



#22 Doug Pederson



Great Players in Philadelphia Eagles Football

Begins before Steve Van Buren and goes to the Carson Wentz 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 about coaches missing from the bookshelves of those Eagles fans who do not have this book.

The book first tells the story about the Eagles as a new team in 1933, but there are a lot of other old-time stories such as when the predecessor team, the Yellow Jackets won the championship. Another great story is when the Eagles and Pittsburgh swapped teams and when the Steagles, a combined team of Eagles and Steelers competed in the NFL as a single unit. Though it took a while for the great players to emerge for the Eagles, they played hard from the very first game in 1933.

It seems like pro football has always been here but for those pros, players and coaches, trying to create a league out of nothing, there would have been nothing without their great work. And of course, this great book about the Eagles players 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, and all the way to the current potential immortal with lots of years left, #1 Doug Pederson, who tops the list of many pundits in just his second year at the helm. Great players from these coaching eras are examined in sequence.

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 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. When reviewing the record of particular coaches, the book often stops in time and talks about a particular great player such as Steve Van Buren, Pete Pihos, 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 Players in Philadelphia Eagles Football

Author:
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Publisher/ Editor,

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

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Published by: LETS GO PUBLISH!
Publisher & Editor: Brian P. Kelly
Mail Location: P.O. Box 621, Wilkes-Barre, PA
Email: info@letsgopublish.com
Web site: www.letsgopublish.com

Library of Congress Copyright Information Pending
Book Cover Design by Brian W. Kelly; Editing by Brian P. Kelly

ISBN Information: The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is a unique machine-readable identification number, which marks any book unmistakably. The ISBN is the clear standard in the book industry. 159 countries and territories are officially ISBN members. The Official ISBN For this book is on the outside cover:

978-1-947402-44-7

The price for this work is :

\$12.95 USD

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Release Date:

May 2018

**LETS
GO**

PUBLISH



Philadelphia Eagles Playing Seasons from 1933 to 2018

Total Games 1231

Total Wins 590

Total Losses 615

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	4 th	3-5-1
1934	Lud Wray,	x	East	T3 rd	4-7-0
1935	Lud Wray,	x	East	5 th	2-9-0
<u>1933-1935 Lud Wray final record (9-21-1)</u>					
1936	Bert Bell,	x	East	5 th	1-11-0
1937	Bert Bell,	x	East	5 th	2-8-1
1938	Bert Bell,	x	East	4 th	5-6-0
1939	Bert Bell,	x	East	T4 th	1-9-1
1940	Bert Bell,	x	East	5 th	1-10-0
<u>1936-1940 Bert Bell final record (10-44-2)</u>					
1941	Greasy Neale	x	East	4 th	2-8-1
1942	Greasy Neale	x	East	5 th	2-9-0
<i>1943 The Eagles & the Steelers aka The Steagles</i>					
1943	Greasy Neale	x	East	3 rd	5- 4- 1, —
1944	Greasy Neale	x	East	2 nd ,	7-1-2
1945	Greasy Neale	x	East	2 nd	7-3-0
1946	Greasy Neale	x	East	2 nd	6-5-0
1947	Greasy Neale	x	East	1 st	8-4-0
1948	Greasy Neale	x	East	1 st	9-2-1
1949	Greasy Neale	x	East	1 st	11-1-0
1950	Greasy Neale	American	x	T3 rd	6-6-0
<u>1941-1950 Greasy Neale final record (66-44-5)</u>					
1951	Bo McMillin	American	x	5 th	2-0-0
1951	Wayne Millner	American	x	5 th	2-8-0
<u>1951-1951 McMillin / Millner final record (4-8-0)</u>					
1952	Jim Trimble	American	x	T2 nd	7-5-0
1953	Jim Trimble	Eastern	x	2 nd	7-4-1
1954	Jim Trimble	Eastern	x	2 nd	7-4-1
1955	Jim Trimble	Eastern	x	T4 th	4-7-1
<u>1952-1955 Jim Trimble final record (25-20-3)</u>					
1956	Hugh Devore	Eastern,	x	6 th	3-8-1
1957	Hugh Devore	Eastern,	x	5 th	4-8-0
<u>1956-1957 High Devore final record (7-16-1)</u>					
1958	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	T5 th	2-9-1
1959	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	T2 nd	7-5-0
1960	Buck Shaw	Eastern	x	1 st	10-2-0
<u>1958-1960 Buck Shaw final record (20-16-1)</u>					
1961	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	2 nd	10-4-0
1962	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	7 th	3-10-1
1963	Nick Skorich	Eastern	x	7 th	2-10-2
<u>1961-1963 Nick Skorich final record (15-24-3)</u>					
1964	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	T3 rd	6-8-0
1965	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	T5 th	5-9-0
1966	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	x	T2 nd	9-5-0
1967	Joe Kuharich	Eastern	Capitl	2 nd	6-7-1
1968	Joe Kuharich,	Eastern	Capitl	4 th	2-12-0

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

1969	Jerry Willms.	Eastern	Capitol	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
1979	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	2nd	11-5-0
1980	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	1st	12-4-0
1981	Dick Vermeil	NFC	East	2nd	10-6-0
1982	Dick Vermeil,	NFC	East	13th	3-6-0

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 Bruney final record (1-0-0)**

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
1989	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	2nd	11-5-0,
1990	Buddy Ryan	NFC	East	2nd	10-6-0

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
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
1996	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East,	2nd	10- 6- 0,
1997	Ray Rhodes	NFC	East	3rd	6-9-1
1998	Ray Rhodes,	NFC,	East	5 th	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,
2001	Andy Reid	NFC	East,	1st	11-5-0
2002	Andy Reid	NFC	East	1st	12-4-0,
2003	Andy Reid	NFC	East	1st	12-4-0
2004	Andy Reid	NFC	East	1st	13-3-0
2005	Andy Reid	NFC	East	4th	6-10-0
2006	Andy Reid	NFC	East	1st	10-6-0
2007	Andy Reid	NFC	East	4th	8-8-0
2008	Andy Reid	NFC	East	2nd	9-6-1
2009	Andy Reid	NFC	East	2nd	11-5-0
2010	Andy Reid	NFC	East	1st	10- 6-0
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
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	4th	7-9-0
2017	Doug Pederson	NFC,	East	1st	13-3-0

2016-2017 Doug Pederson interim record through 2017 season (20-12-0)

Eagles totals from 1933 to 2017

Total reg. season wins & losses thru Feb 4, 2018 **(568-594-26)-**

Total playoff wins & losses from 1933-2017 **(22-21)**

Total all games from 1933-2017 including playoffs **(590-615-26)**

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 158 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 160 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 players 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 players 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 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 Dick Vermeil, Doug Pederson and the 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:

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. Great quarterbacks dominated the Eagles scene in 2018. Doug Pederson was the former quarterback in charge of the show. Carson Wentz and Doug Pederson, after just a few games after the season began, changed a lot of minds. Nick Foles changed a lot of minds also when things looked the worst. Once Foles 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, and that he had the chutzpah to pull off a Lombardi Trophy.

Looking back in history as we do in this book, we find a ton of great players out of the hundreds that played for the Eagles from 1933 under the direction of one of 22 great coaches. Still, because of all the losses in early times, the on the list, yet the Eagles still have an overall losing record and they need about 25 wins in a row to break even. 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 coaches' season one-liner summaries at the beginning of the book and you will see what I mean.

The Eagles were very 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. They had great players and that's why they were always in the game. When they had great coaches, they were contenders.

The world changed for Philadelphia 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 We might ask what team could have had a winning season. Nobody would have asked if such a team could come back

from such adversity and win a Super Bowl. Yet, the Eagles did exactly that.

Who could have pulled off? Nobody but Doug Pederson's Eagles. 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, the pundits and the fans would believe that somehow Pederson would squeeze a win out of them. That's a positive feeling for sure. It's charisma. It is good Karma!

When it seemed everybody was hurt, Carson Wentz, the brightest light on the Eagles for most of this year, suffered a season-ending hit. Some think Wentz was so good for so long that if he were in the game that he could actually have powered up the lights in 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 few books about his favorite pro-team and the great players who toil week by week to bring big W's into the proper column.

The first book in this series of Great Moments, Coaches, and Players by Brian Kelly, highlighted the Great Moments in Philadelphia Eagles Football. The last book was about the great coaches and this book is about the great players in Philadelphia Eagles football. And there are many.

Any of the books can serve as one of the items that will be available to you all 52 weeks and in fact all 365 days of each year except in LEAP YEAR. Then, 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 that book and this book and the great moments book, they are yours forever unless, of course you give the book away to one of the many Eagles fans, who will be in awe of your new possession.

By the way, this book, Great Players in Philadelphia Eagles Football is the third in a three-book series. The first has been out for several

months and it is titled, Great Moments in Philadelphia Eagles Football, and the second of the series is titled, Great Coaches in Philadelphia Eagles football. With the completion of this book, the full set of three books are now available on the shelves of your favorite bookstores.

Reading this book about the great players, and in fact, all of the books in the series 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 players. There are some players that are not so great in every team's football history and the Philadelphia Eagles offer no excuses for that but the coaches guiding this team have always tried to get the most out of every player that wears the Eagles uniform. Your author shows the bad with the good to get the proper perspective for those great players, great coaches, and 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. Not all Eagles players have the names you remember the easiest. However, all teams from 1933 to the present, no matter who the coach was, who the players were, 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 about the Eagles first team with coach Lud Wray, this book goes all the way to Coach Doug Pederson in his second season, which by many standards was a miracle season. We are all looking forward to season #3 and after observing the re-baptism in Philadelphia of MVP Nick Foles, who knows what other great players Coach Doug Pederson will add to the roster.

This book is written for those of us who love Eagles football as played in many of the great venues over the years. After lightly discussing the origins of pro-football, the book first tells the story of the Yellow Jackets and their winning the National Championship. Soon we are all at the first Philadelphia Eagles Football Game in 1933 watching the new team doing its best to win.

The book then advances to the games, the victories and losses, and then 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, and of course the historical players that made all those great teams work so well.

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 and a whole slew of players that Andy Reid could only wish he had on his “almost” teams.

This book is all about the great players in Philadelphia Eagles Football. It touches every aspect of the historical and mythical Eagles Football Teams. It tells exhilarating stories as it explores the seasons of the 22 coaches and 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 an individual great player.

When we examine players, the list always begins with the immortal Dutchman, Norm Van Brocklin, and on and on with Tommy McDonald, Wilburt 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 add substantially to everybody’s 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 as a die-hard Eagles’ fan, I have been at a number of games with my dad, your author, 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 Coaches in Philadelphia Eagles Football will quickly appear at the top of Americas most enjoyable must-read books about sports. Enjoy!

Who is Author Brian Kelly?

Brian Kelly aka Brian W. Kelly, is one of the leading authors in America with this, his 161st 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 Kelly, author and
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 eleventh "Great Players" book and his third about a professional NFL team. Writing about the Philadelphia Eagles has been a special treat.

Chapter 1 Introduction to the Eagles

The Eagles celebrate 85th year of football



Everybody loves the Eagles!

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

This book about the Eagles' players over time 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 outline each season and each coach in Philadelphia Eagles Football History, and then we highlight the great players within that context.

No book can claim to be able to capture all the players. We do not try as we highlight those who are notably great in a stable of players who are all a cut above average.

If we made claims to do it all, it would have to be a never-ending story, but we sure try to do it right. The great coaches naturally include a lot of great people, that over time would make or break the Philadelphia Eagles. I am thankful to say that the Eagles are a real team and a team with a great past and a great future.

Even before we get into Eagles football, we briefly discuss 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 by themselves, while the Eagles football program has grown both in acceptance and popularity and success.

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 highlighting the great players so that none of us are reading this book forever. There are 200+ pages in 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 laid out for your reading pleasure. Let's talk about some Eagles football moments and coaches now, before we close out the first chapter of this book highlighting the Great Players 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 past 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 got the NFL to grant a franchise as them as “owners” of the former Frankford Yellow Jackets. The deal was \$2,500 for the NFL but the duo also agreed to assume the \$11,000 in debt owed by the Yellow Jackets. And so, Pro football came to Philadelphia. Nothing in life worth having is easy!

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, great coach of the Eagles and Walt Kiesling of the Steelers were co-coaches and this team. It finished at 5-4-1. In addition to the 1943 season, Walt Kiesling also coached a team known as Card-Pit, a combo team from 1944 featuring a merged Steelers and Cardinals team.

Greasy 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 with Greasy Neale as the coach 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 were playoffs and there 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 also added the Dutchman, Norm Van Brocklin to the squad.

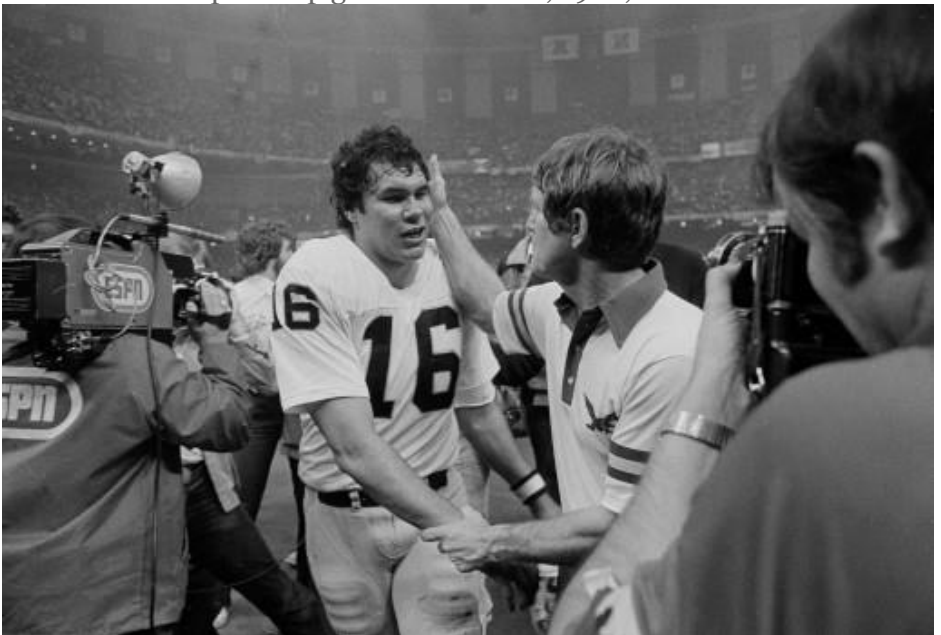
Quarterback Norm Van Brocklin, according to my father back when I began to watch football about 1958 after the family got our first Admiral Black/White TV, was the best quarterback alive. My dad pointed out that he had rivals such as Charley Conerly of the Giants and Johnny Unitas of the Colts but he was the best. 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.

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).



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



In the above picture on the prior page, you can see Oakland Raiders quarterback Jim Plunkett, left, accepting 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 they 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 fans began to get jittery about all of the talent Kelly was trading away. 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. I can remember the looks on members of my family as we were celebrating a Christmas Cookie Bake with the kids while the game was proceeding. You may recall that Wentz ran out of the pocket after realizing nobody was open on the play, and 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 that play.

Although Wentz reached the end zone by all accounts, the Eagles did not get the TD. It was called back because of a holding penalty. Wentz told nobody about his pain and he did not complain. He remained in the game for the rest 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 sewing up the victory. Wentz is one tough cookie and on this special cookie night. for the Kelly, Daniels, and Ginchetti families, the cookie dough was sweet for sure, with a proper amount of anise to help assure that close win.

Wentz was so good all year that when Foles stepped in, everyone automatically counted the Eagles out. I had seen him in action as an Eagle four years earlier so I knew he could play. Overall, the Eagles adjusted well, and Nick Foles was the perfect student and he mastered the Eagles game as well needed.

Nick Foles in his last stint with the Eagles was also an almost perfect master. The irony is that Foles was traded away by the Eagles just three years ago for his replacement. He was benched twice and then unwanted by the Rams. He was then a backup for a year with the Chiefs. In a twist of fate, Nick Foles returns to the Eagles team that he had taken to the playoffs four years prior and he becomes the Super Bowl MVP.

Foles has earned a lot of time for reflecting as he basks in what all objective pundits would call a masterful performance in Super Bowl LII. As he recalled his 2013 glory days from his last work with Philadelphia in the playoffs, he comes up with another great showing. On a particular Sunday four years prior, he threw four touchdown passes with no interceptions in an Eagles game that was closer-than-it-should-have-been—the 34-29 win over the Giants at MetLife Stadium. This season, he got his first start in 14 months and his first in an Eagles jersey in more than three years, Foles made Carson Wentz's season-ending injury a ~~little~~ lot easier to take.

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. Do you remember this pass? Yes, that’s Foles on the receiving end



It helps to know how Foles got the ball. The Eagles drew this play up in January and had not used it until the Super Bowl. The play had several parts: A shift to move Foles away from center Jason Kelce, a direct snap to running back Corey Clement, a handoff to tight end Trey Burton and subsequent pass back to the quarterback, who was running a route toward the back right corner of the end zone. You see the results above.

Chapter 2-A 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.

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 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.
'23 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 2-B 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 Wray 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 the 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 Nov 5, the Eagles grabbed their first win W (6-0) of the season in a game played at Redland Field in Cincinnati against the 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 3 First Coaches 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.

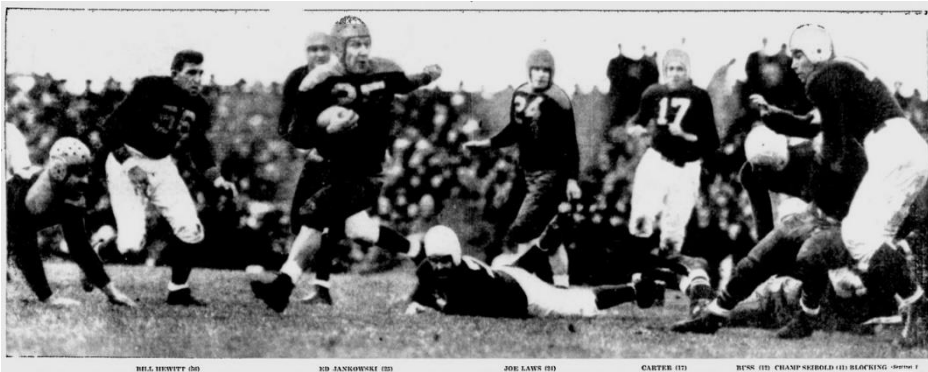
The Eagles would have the 1st pick in the draft. They used this pick to choose the runner-up for the Heisman Trophy, Sam Francis, a back out of Nebraska. He never played a game for the Eagles but he did play for the Chicago Bears

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



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.

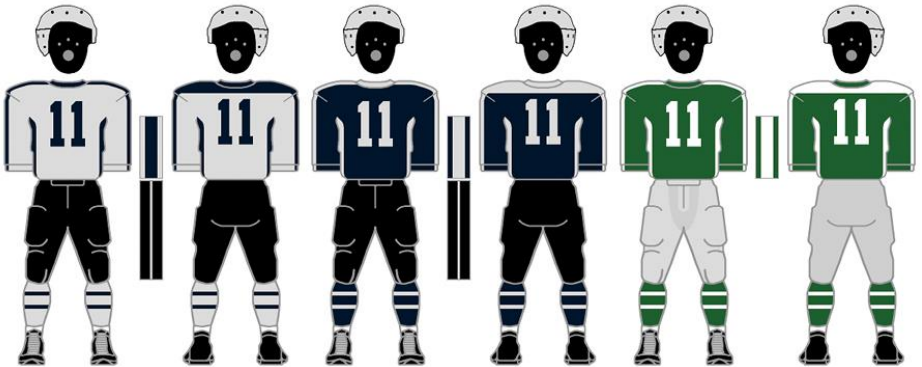
Bert Bell was very likeable but after such poor seasons, even his friends were hoping he would figure out how the Eagles could win a few games.

Chapter 4 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	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
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 eventually 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 he 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

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

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 by 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 rings, don't lose your head. Stay calm and listen to the instructions of the warden. Don't panic. Remember that you are safe as long as you stay calm. If you are in a public place, stay where you are until told to do so. If you are in your home, stay in your room. If you are in a public place, stay where you are until told to do so.



2. STAY HOME

The safest place to be is at home. If you can, stay at home. If you must go to work, stay in your office. If you are in a public place, stay where you are until told to do so. If you are in your home, stay in your room. If you are in a public place, stay where you are until told to do so.



3. PUT OUT LIGHTS

When an alarm rings, turn off all lights. If you are in a public place, turn off all lights. If you are in your home, turn off all lights. If you are in a public place, turn off all lights. If you are in your home, turn off all 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.”

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.

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

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

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!

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!

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.

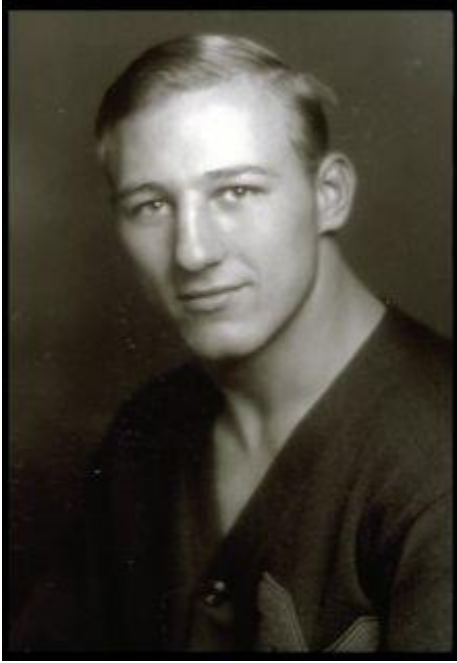
Nonetheless, for the NFL's own reasons, Wistert is not enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He sure should be.

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.

Chapter 5 Four Coaches From 1951 to 1957 Era

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 High 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.

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.

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 choose 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.

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.

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?

1956 Hugh Devore Coach # 7

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

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



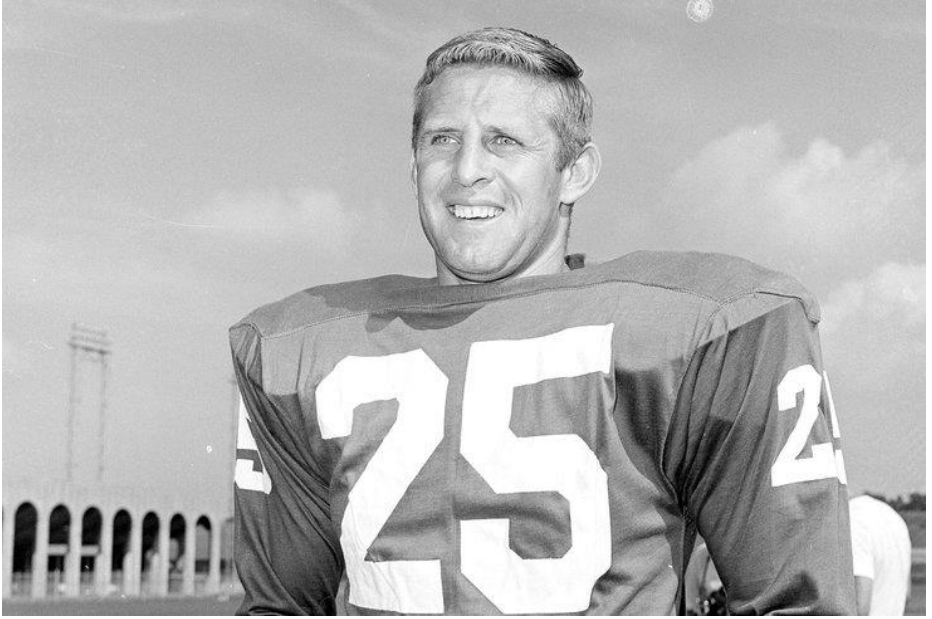
1957 Hugh Devore Coach # 7

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

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 6 Three Coaches From 1958 to 1968 Era

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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won NFL Championship v (Packers) 17-13 • Norm Van Brocklin (MVP) • Buck Shaw (Coach of Year), 				
<u>1958-1960 Buck Shaw final record (20-16-1)</u>					
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
<u>1961-1963 Nick Skorich final record (15-24-3)</u>					
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	Capitol	4th	2-12-0
<u>1964-1968 Joe Kuharich final record (28-41-1)</u>					



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.

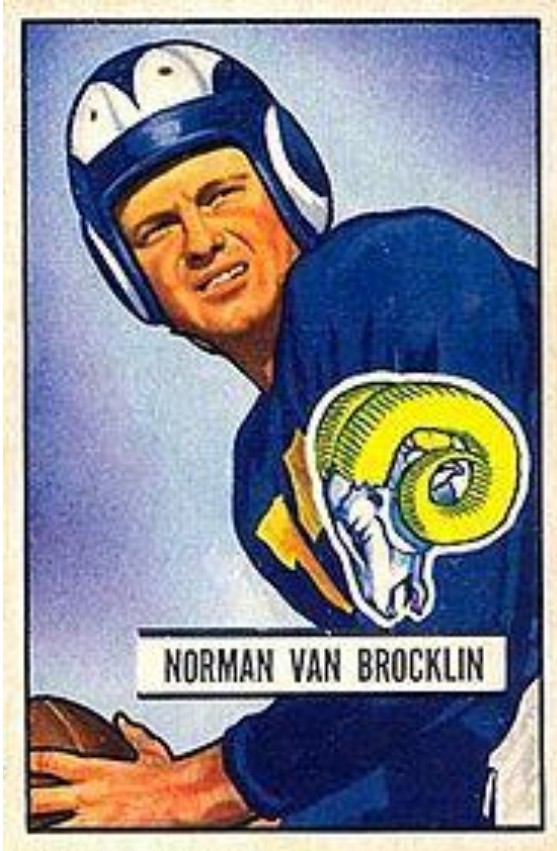
Great Eagles Players—Norm Van Brocklin

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 Lunsford 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.

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 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.

Great Eagles Games—11/20/1960 v Giants

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. Didingler 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 burlled 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, Sybank 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.

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

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 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.

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.

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.



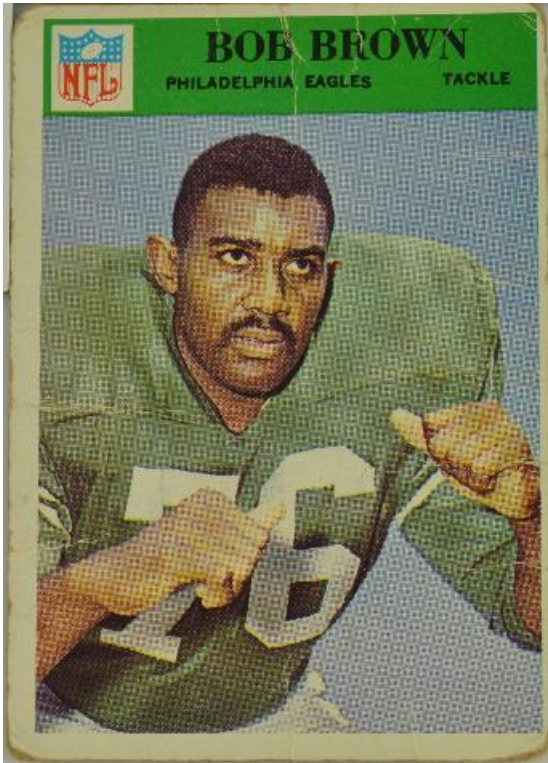
Eagles coach Joe Kuharich, treasurer & VP Ed Snider, & owner Jerry Wolman

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.

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 linemen 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.

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

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.

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."

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.

Chapter 7 Three Coaches From 1969 to 1975 Era

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 Khayat 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.

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

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.

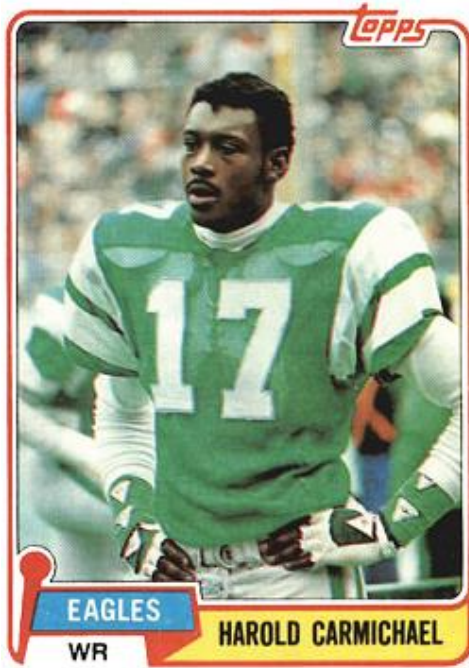
Top Eagles Players—Harold Carmichael

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.

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.

1974 Mike McCormack #13

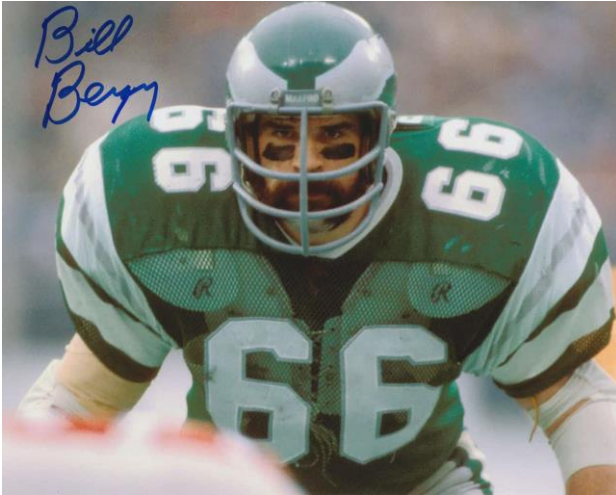
The 1974 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their forty-second season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Mike McCormack in his second of three seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. The Eagles improved on their previous record of 5-8-1 by 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.

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...

Chapter 8 Coach Dick Vermeil Era 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)

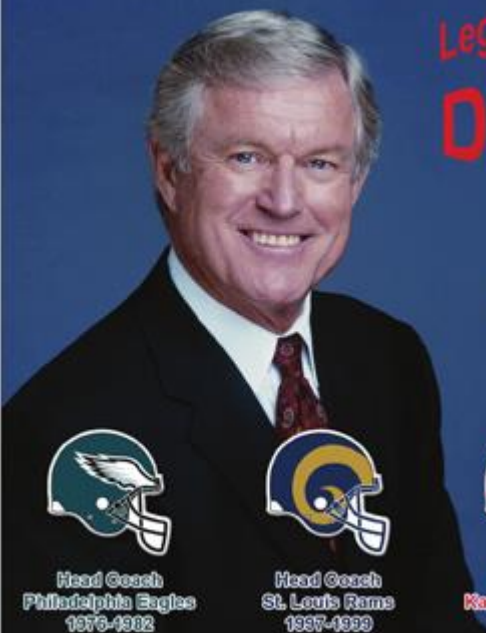
1976 Dick Vermeil #14


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Head Coach
Philadelphia Eagles
1976-1982



Head Coach
St. Louis Rams
1987-1993



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!

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.

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 wand 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.

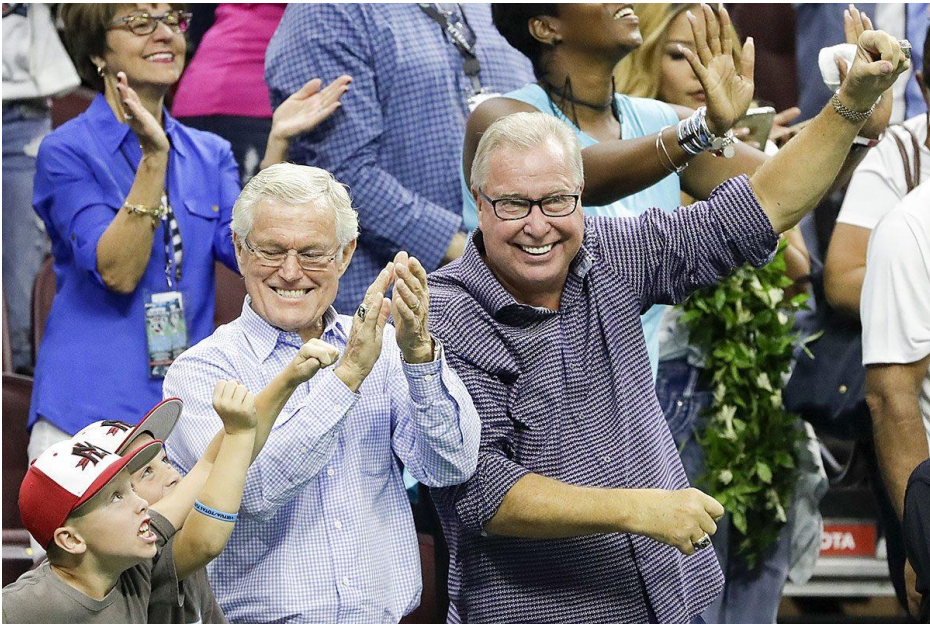
The 1978 Playoffs

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. The had moved just 12

yards and were faced with a 3rd and 10 . Bartkowski came through again with a deep toss to Francis again.



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

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

1979 Dick Vermeil #14

The 1979 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their forty-seventh season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Dick Vermeil in his fourth of seven seasons as head coach. The owner was Leonard Tose. The Eagles were playing great football under Dick Vermeil and the fans were enjoying the performances. The Birds won two more games than in 1978. At 11-5-0, with this improvement, the team qualified for the second time in a row for the playoffs. And, so, at the end of the season, they Birds won the Wildcard Playoff over the Bears W (27–17) but then they lost the NFC Divisional Round against the Buccaneers L(17–24).

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

Wild Card Playoffs—Bears 17 v Eagles 27

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. The Eagles put this one in the win column.

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 as the Bucs beat the Eagles 24 to 17.

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.

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 prevailed.

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.

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.

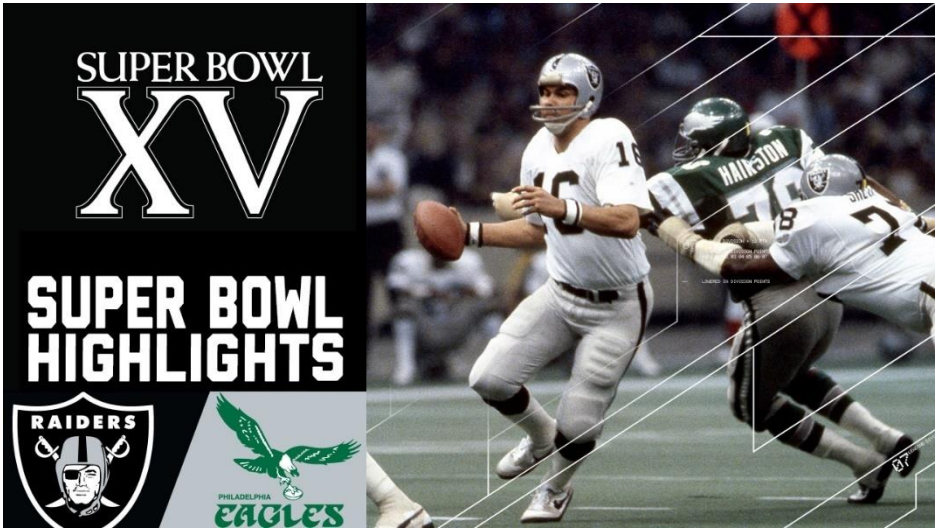
However, against the Eagles defense, they could only manage 206 yards and score a single touchdown. They also fumbled five times, losing three of them. It was a great day for Eagles fans.

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 Kreple 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.

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.

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.

Chapter 9 Coaches Marion Campbell & Buddy Ryan Era, 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)

1983-1985 Marion Campbell final record (17-29-1)

1985-1985 Fred Bruney final record (1-0-0)

Year	Coach	Conf	Div	Place	Record
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)



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.

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.

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 Joe 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.

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. In his rookie season, 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.

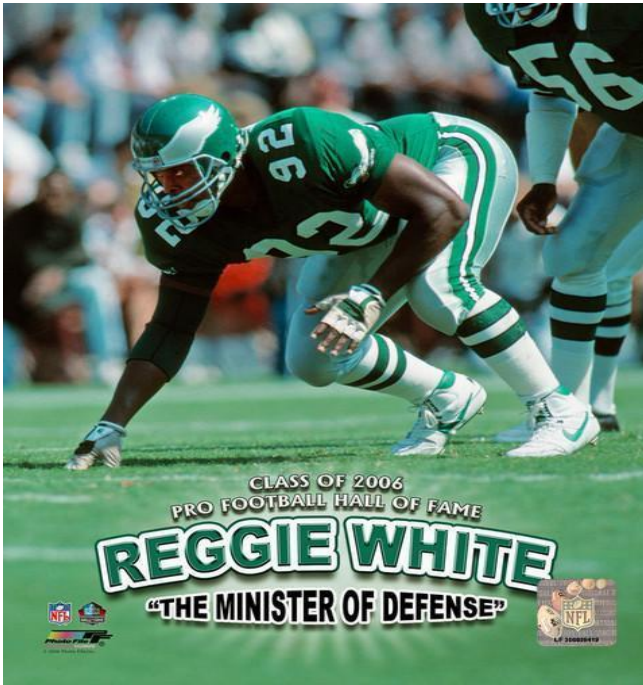
He retired from Philadelphia with the third most rushing yards in Eagles history, with 4,482, behind Hall of Famer Steve Van Buren and Wilbert Montgomery, although since then he has since fallen to sixth after Duce Staley, Brian Westbrook, and LeSean McCoy all rushed for more yards than him.

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.

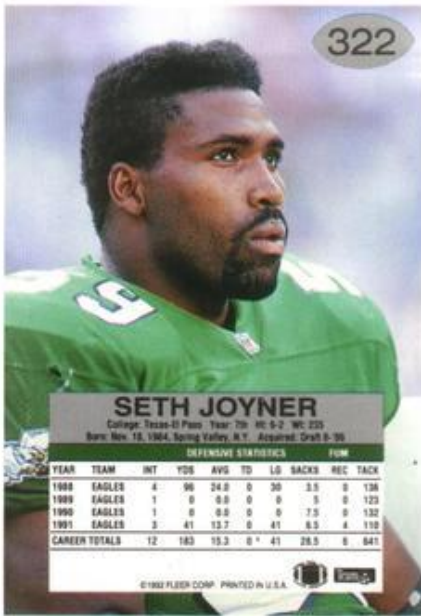
To put "bad" in perspective, Philadelphia gave up three-or-more sacks in every single game of the 1986 season, the only team in NFL history to do so. It helps to remember that Buddy Ryan buttered his bread for years by being great of the D side of the ball. He'd need to tighten up the O-line if he were 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.

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 1the 994 seasons. Some see his biggest accomplishment, as when he became one if 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 at 11th 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 White, 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.

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.

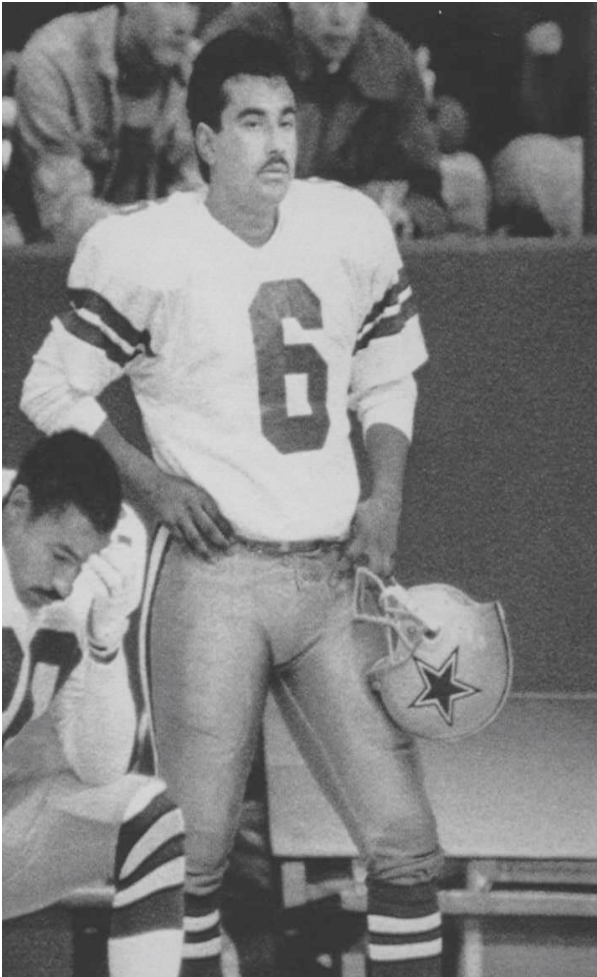
1989 Buddy Ryan #17

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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 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

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. Washington won 20-6 and that was that.

Chapter 10 Coaches Rich Kotite, & Ray Rhodes Era 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
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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,
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<u>1995-1998 Ray Rhodes final record (30-36-1)</u>					



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.

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.

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

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.

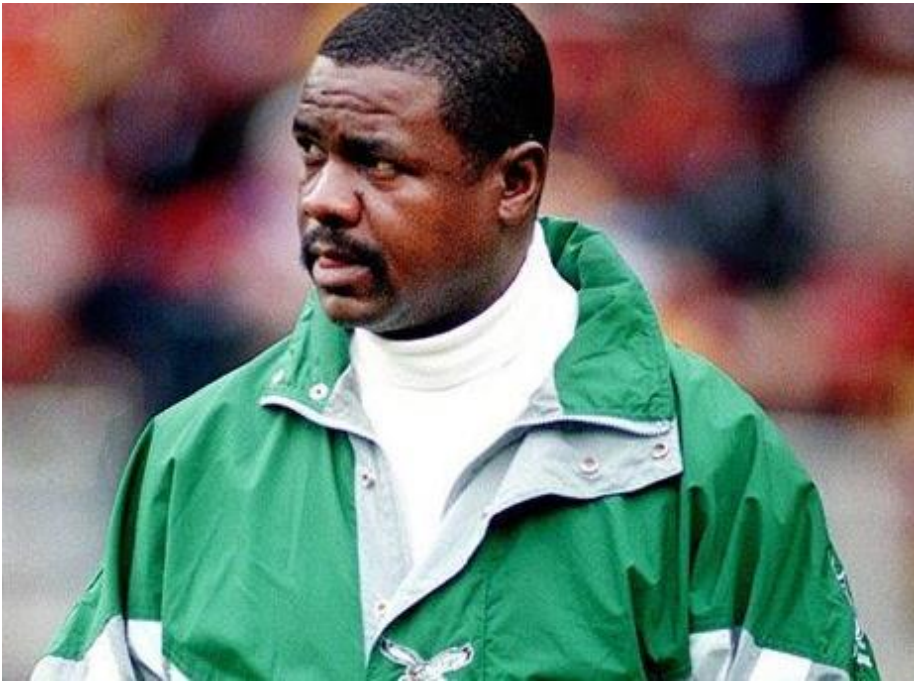
If it could have been worse it would have been or so it seemed as the low point of the collapse came on Christmas Eve at Cincinnati, when the 2-13 Bengals scored six points in the final seconds thanks in part to the recovery of a fumbled kick return – to steal a win.

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.

Looking at so many 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 Rhode’s Eagles in his first year, but a loss at Chicago in the season finale on Christmas Eve torpedoed any hopes of winning the NFC East crown. It was the final season with the Eagles for quarterback Randall Cunningham, who retired from the Eagles following the season before he joined the Vikings for the 1997 season.

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 '88



YEAR	TEAM	FUM			INTERCEPTIONS		
		TCKL	SACKS	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.

Official Photo and Stat Card of the NFL.
 ©1991 National Football League.







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1995 Wild Card Game

In December 1995, the Eagles pounded the Lions in the Wild Card Playoffs W (58-37). Ray Rhodes was happy and had lots to smile about with the win but then again he had to play again the following week.

The Divisional Playoff Game

On January 7, 1996, the Wild Card game no longer mattered as Dallas beat the Eagles in the NFC: Divisional Playoff game---as Dallas Cowboys 30, Philadelphia Eagles 11. The Eagles again were o-u-t.

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.”

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. The Eagles lost to San Fran 14-0.

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.

1998 Ray Rhodes #19

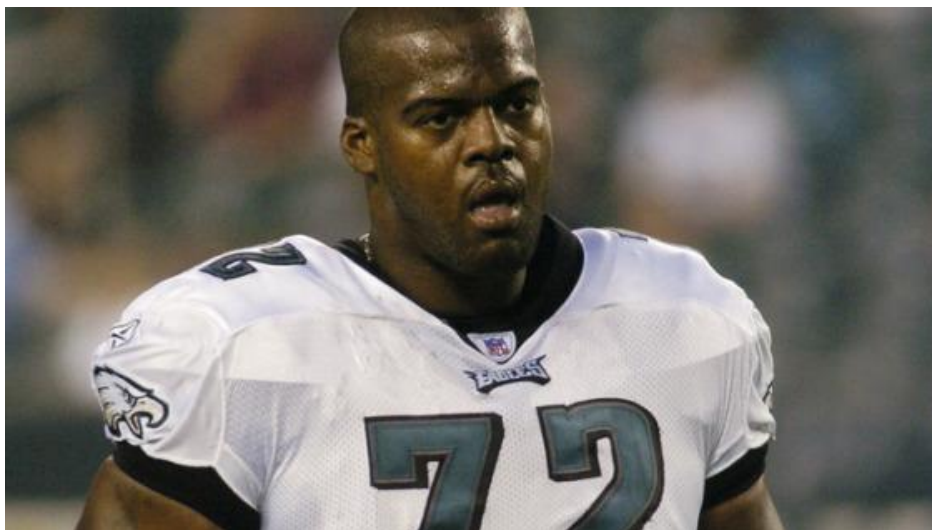
The 1998 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their sixty-sixth season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Ray Rhodes in his last of four seasons as

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.

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 11 Coach Andy Reid Era 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
<u>1999-2012 Andy Reid final record (140-102-1)</u>					



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.

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.

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.



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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 Top 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.

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.

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. Reid had the Eagles moving on...

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. The Giants beat the Eagles 20-10.

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.

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 great punter, 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. The Eagles won 31-9.

Divisional Playoffs v Bears Jan 19, 2002 **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. The Eagles beat the Bears 33-19.

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 came back and put the game seemingly out of reach and won 29-24.

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 could not 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

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 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.

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.

2003 – 2004 Playoffs

The suspicions all came back when the playoffs came, as the Eagles found themselves needing another miracle to survive the Green Bay Packers on a 4th and 26. Unfortunately, good, consistent play wins

games and depending on miracles is an iffy strategy. They got their miracle but the magic had run out by the next week as the team dropped a 14–3 decision to the Carolina Panthers at Lincoln Financial Field in the NFC Championship Game. Another season ended short for the top winner in the NFL. The suspicions were daunting.

It was a great season by any other standard than that of a wary Philadelphia fan. There were always these little omens making everything not quite 100% right. Duce Staley had been a preseason holdout, so Andy Reid was ready with other running backs. One might call it a running back committee solution with Staley, Westbrook, and Correll Buckhalter. They all rushed well for a combined 1,613 yards and 20 touchdowns and to foes in the NFL they became a "The Three-Headed Monster."

The Eagles rushing attack, which also benefited from 355 rushing yard and three touchdowns by quarterback Donovan McNabb, carried the offense, which featured a weak receiving corps that did not record a touchdown until Week 9. There were calls early in the season to replace McNabb with backup A. J. Feeley, but McNabb would get back his rhythm and eventually enjoy a fine season.

The defense had its share of early injuries to defensive backs Bobby Taylor and Brian Dawkins. But, they wound up surrendering the seventh-fewest points in the league. Cornerback Troy Vincent, in his final season as an Eagle, was elected to the Pro Bowl. The weakness in the defense would be in stopping the run, something the team struggled with even at the height of their nine-game winning streak.

The 2003 – 2004 Playoffs

Division Eagles 20 v Packers 17

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 20-17 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. Nonetheless the Eagles pulled it out.

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.

2004 Andy Reid #20

The 2004 Philadelphia Eagles football team competed in their seventy-second season of Professional National Football League (NFL) football. They were led by Andy Reid in his sixth of fourteen seasons as head coach. Jeffrey Lurie was the owner. This year's 13-3 record was the best ever for the Eagles and it bettered the stellar 12-4 back-to-back performances of the Birds in 2002 and 2003. The had first place locked as they won their first thirteen games in a row and then sat around waiting for the season to end of some fans seemed to think.

The Eagles should have won it all. Fans such as I believed they should have continued trying to win after they had locked up first place and home field advantage. The decision to lay down for three games sure seemed to take the edge off a team that was steamrolling one opponent after another until they got a huge break in the action. When the real Eagles finally came back, it was like pre-season again. The Birds were too rested and too complacent. They had lost their

fire. For some, it is why Andy Reid had some problems even when the Eagles record was outstanding.

There is no denying that the Eagles had been one of the most successful teams in the league after the Andy Reid and Donovan McNabb era began in 1999, making it to the playoffs for four straight seasons and to the NFC Championship Game in 2001, 2002, and 2003. However, the team could not reach the Super Bowl, despite being favored in the final two NFC title games. This was quite disconcerting to Eagles' fans.

In the offseason, this already championship-level team was reinforced on both sides of the ball by the free agent additions of wide receiver Terrell Owens, defensive end Jevon Kearse, and middle linebacker Jeremiah Trotter, their third round draft pick in 1998.

The Eagles had far and away the best team in the NFC and proved that right from the start. Possessing a high-powered offense which featured McNabb, Owens, and Brian Westbrook, as well as a bruising defense led by Pro Bowlers Trotter, Brian Dawkins, Lito Sheppard, and Michael Lewis, they steamrolled opponents on the way to a 13–1 start to the season. After resting starters for the final two games, the 13–3 Eagles soared past the Minnesota Vikings and the Atlanta Falcons in the playoffs, earning a trip to Super Bowl XXXIX in Jacksonville against the defending champion New England Patriots.

The Super Bowl game was hard fought, but the Eagles fell short at 24–21, ending their magical season one score short of the ultimate goal. This season was considered the franchise's most successful until their Super Bowl LII-winning 2017 season.

There are a number of the suspicious who think that the Eagles had lost just enough of an edge from sitting its starters for the last two games that it could not get a few more points against New England to take home the prize. Having a 15-1 record was a prize in itself that was given up for no prize at all. Just saying.

Divisional Championship

In the Divisional, Championship, the Eagles were heavy favorites as Minnesota had eeked in with an 8-8 record. The Vikings had lost four of their final five, but they had defeated the Packers in the Wild Card round. On January 16, the Eagles won 27-14 Off to the NFC Championship.

NFC Championship:

Atlanta Falcons 10 Philadelphia Eagles 27

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.

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.

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 23-20 on a 38-yard field goal by David Akers on the last play of the game.

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. They lost 27-24.

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.

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?

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.

NFC Wild Card: Eagles at Minnesota Vikings

This game was played at the at Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome,

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 Eagles won 26-14.



DeSean Jackson on the move v the Giants

NFC Championship: Eagles at Arizona Cardinals



Action at the Scrimmage Line Eagles v Cardinals NFC Championship

The Eagles lost 25-32

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.

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.

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 Eagles lost big time to the Cowboys 34-14.



Vick struggling in the pass game

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 Dungy, found his way into the Eagles lineup. When Kolb was injured, he was ready to go and did surprisingly well. Vick started in 11 of 16 games (Kolb started in Weeks 4–6 when he was injured, as well as week 17 with Vick and the starters resting for the playoffs.)

With Vick at QB, the Eagles set franchise records, including a 59–28 win in Washington. Despite the losses of McNabb and Westbrook, Football Outsiders calculates that the 2010 Eagles had the third-best rushing attack of any single-season team from 1993–2010.

Individuals Eagles were honored for their performance by making the Pro Bowl. These included: QB Michael Vick, WR DeSean Jackson, OT Jason Peters, CB Asante Samuel, and K David Akers

NFC Wild Card: Eagles v Green Bay Packers

On a 30 degree sunny day, before 69,144 fans, at 4:30 PM on January 9, 2010, at Lincoln Financial Field, in Philadelphia, the Green Bay Packers defeated the Philadelphia Eagles 21-16 in the NFC Wild Card Tournament. The Packers went on to win the Super Bowl.



Michael Vick on a run v Packers in playoffs

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.

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.

Chapter 12 Coach Chip Kelly Era 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.

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.

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)

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.

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 many 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.

Chapter 13 Coach Doug Pederson Era 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

- Won Divisional Playoffs(Falcons) 15–10
- Won NFC Championship(Vikings) 38–7
- Won Super Bowl LII (vs. Patriots) 41–33
- Nick Foles (SB MVP)

2016-2017 Doug Pederson record through 2017 season (20-12-0)



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.

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...

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.

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

