



2022 NFL DIVERSITY & INCLUSION REPORT
OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY PATTERNS

VOLUME XI | FEBRUARY 2022

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY PATTERNS

IN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR AND LEAD RESEARCHER

Dr. C. Keith Harrison

PROFESSOR & ASSOCIATE CHAIR / CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

SPORT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

RESEARCHER AND REPORT CO-AUTHOR

Scott Bukstein

ASSOCIATE INSTRUCTOR & DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

SPORT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



A REPORT PRESENTED BY THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

RESEARCH TEAM ACKNOWLEDGMENT: MICHAEL ONUCHOVSKY, SEAN GREENER, ANDRZEJ KARWACZYNSKI

This report is available online at <https://operations.nfl.com> and also at <http://www.coachingmobilityreport.com>



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STATEMENT FROM DR. C. KEITH HARRISON

Professors Leslie Houts Picca and Joe R. Feagin (2007) set the tone for this year's statement with this excerpt from their book *Two-faced Racism: Whites in the Backstage and Frontstage*: "The problem of 'race' in the contemporary world is substantially a problem of the white mind. In the United States case, at least two major interpretive frames have long contended in the white mind in regard to racial matters. A centuries-old equality-and-justice frame envisages a society in which equality and justice prevail. Yet, there is also a dominant white racial frame that has long motivated, sustained, and rationalized large-scale racial inequality and injustice" (p. vii). Often theory in the Ivory Tower (higher education) does not link up with practice. In this statement, my goal is to briefly synthesize how theories of racial discrimination are in alignment with the hiring practices of NFL teams with men of color and specifically African American males that are continually passed over for head coaching and other team leadership positions that they should have the opportunity to fail at just as much as succeed in the leadership position.

I am in no way saying that every team owner is racist against non-Whites when making the final decision to hire a head coach, coordinator or general manager in the NFL. So then, what am I saying based on the aforementioned quote? Two concepts from the scholars' narrative above are pertinent to the state of mobility hiring patterns in the NFL: backstage and frontstage racism. What does this mean in basic terms?

Frontstage racism exists when whites reveal how they, their acquaintances, and their relatives perceive racial performances differently in spaces or places with diverse and multiracial populations as compared with their racial performances in spaces or places where they are only with those who appear to be White (which is termed backstage). The backstage setting and social context is typically a private and comfortable place for Whites (Picca & Feagin, 2007). There are practical examples and application to the current NFL head coach, general manager and coordinator hiring situation. Racial performances with the Rooney Rule and interviews in general have seen a serious falloff in terms of the lack of non-White coaches getting hired over the last half decade or more. The concept of frontstage and backstage is at play ranging from what are perceived to be "sham interviews" to Jon Gruden's private emails that were revealed in 2021 with anti-inclusionary tones, lack of human respect and proactive discriminatory content with pointed hatred for various groups outside those in power positions.

This theme leads to the following conclusion for the 2022 mobility report: we can only get those in charge making the final decisions to see with different eyes if they only have altered hearts and gut feelings about what is perceived to be different from them in a way that impacts their comfort level. This includes the hiring process during interviews, meetings, meals and the cultural machine of life's interactions. The diverse candidate pool has exponentially expanded in recent years—it is now time for many team owners to expand their thinking and overall approach when it comes to making key football staff hiring decisions in order to ensure an equitable process and produce optimal results.

Stay tuned sports and football world—as Dr. Harry Edwards states: "There are no final victories."

STATEMENT FROM TROY VINGENT

Through the last decade of Diversity & Inclusion Mobility Reports, Dr. Harrison and his team have identified many areas for improvement and have tracked the NFL's progress in addressing deficits in minority mobility, and diverse and inclusive hiring practices. In response, the NFL has incrementally improved development of the pipeline, preparation of candidates, data collection, the interview process, and even incentives –everything possible to provide a level playing field, an equal opportunity, for people of color to access the hiring process on fair and equitable terms.

The very intentional policy modifications over the past two hiring cycles are having a positive result in breaking down barriers for primary and secondary football positions. Each year, policy changes are implemented, including Rooney Rule expansions, anti-tampering and specific job descriptions, data analysis, enhanced reporting and unbiased scientific statistical measuring. Yet, with all these efforts and more adjustments forthcoming, progress is rarely achieved at the head coaching position.

The NFL is committed to attaining a diverse and inclusive workforce of coaches and front office personnel. But the one missing component to reaching this goal is the ability to change the hearts of those who are in charge of hiring. In an effort to explain what we are dealing with, terms are often applied: backstage and frontstage racism, unconscious bias, prejudice, etc. These are in no way intended to offend the hiring decisionmakers, but rather to identify and lend context to what people of color and other minorities face during the hiring process. These descriptions are very real to those who are experiencing them even if those who are practicing them are unaware.

We, however, remain painfully aware of the work ahead. We must strive to create a workplace culture that doesn't require mandates to interview people of color and minorities, a culture guided by doing the right thing for the right reasons, not because of a policy. We must normalize fairness, inclusivity and opportunity as an extension and reflection of the game as it relates to everyone who ever played and to the diversity of fans throughout the world.

In 2003, the Rooney Rule was a necessary tool toward promoting fair and equitable hiring. In 2022, we are reimagining hiring practices. It is time to eliminate the double standard on hiring, retention, and rehiring. Long overdue is a level playing field on the solid ground of fairness where opportunity is not limited by who you don't know or what you look like.

Our efforts must be aimed at eliminating bias, promoting trust, developing skills and providing opportunity—essentially expanding the football meritocracy beyond those playing the game to coaching and front office positions. It's a culture change to reflect the true values of the game. It's a heart change to align the words people speak with their actions.

REPORT BACKGROUND

This empirical research report series began analyzing data on occupational mobility patterns of key NFL team leaders commencing with the start of the 2012 NFL regular season in order to develop actionable data-driven policy and best practices recommendations at both the league and team levels. The current Volume XI report supplements and complements the comprehensive annual internal league-developed “NFL Coaching Demographics” report. A primary goal of this multifaceted data-driven initiative is to provide real-time data combined with strategic recommendations to help produce measurable goals and improved results in future hiring cycles, especially concerning the persistence of disparate outcomes for leaders of color with respect to NFL general manager, head coach, and offensive coordinator roles. This independent report also aims to function as a core resource that supports an overall strategic, thoughtful, ambitious, and program-based blueprint for scalable improvements relating to career opportunities for coaches and other team leaders of color. Simply put, this Volume XI research report is a direct call to action to strengthen leaguewide processes, expand inclusive programming, shift the mindset of hiring managers, and increase accountability.

The findings within this report highlight the need to transition traction into action by inviting all league and team stakeholders to renew a commitment to more equitable hiring processes and resultant more diverse and inclusive coach and front office staffs. Data-driven policies, programs, and incentives can certainly create incremental progress/momentum and result in a meaningful paradigm and culture shift by facilitating heightened awareness and increased stakeholder engagement. However, a genuine commitment by all hiring managers to hire, develop, and promote leaders of color is absolutely critical to produce compelling, sustainable outcomes.

The current study on occupational mobility patterns expands existing research within the diversity, equity, and inclusion space via an extensive analysis related to whether racial and ethnic minorities face occupational access barriers prior to as well as after one or more stints as a head coach in the NFL. In addition, this research study examines occupational access barriers and mobility patterns with respect to NFL general managers, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and other primary NFL team position coaches—for example, quarterbacks coach, wide receivers coach, tight ends coach, running backs coach, offensive line coach, linebackers coach, defensive line coach and defensive backs (secondary) coach.

This pragmatic research study aims to address the following four research questions:

- 1** Do coaches and other leaders of color within the NFL face actual (and perceived) access barriers with respect to occupational mobility patterns?
- 2** What factors and variables impact and influence the occupational mobility patterns of coaches and other leaders of color within the NFL (for example, previous coaching/leadership experience and network-based connections)?
- 3** What are examples of innovative practical strategies with respect to improving career opportunities for coaches and other leaders of color within the NFL, as best practice models potentially shift from a “talent pipeline” focus to a “talent pathway” emphasis?
- 4** Should current NFL players be more actively involved in the decision-making process for new head coach hires—and, correspondingly, should NFL team owners be less involved in the hiring process for new head coaches?

The remainder of this research report shares data and then utilizes that data to support practical policy and hiring process related recommendations. Previous reports and policy reforms have produced gradual changes and noteworthy improvements. Nonetheless, deeper systemic overhauls and culture/mindset shifts continue to be vital to yield prolonged meaningful change in the hiring cycle results.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study analyzes data and attempts to decode media narratives regarding NFL head coach demographics, tenure/stint and occupational mobility patterns from the start of the 1963 NFL season to February 2022. This specific range of NFL seasons is utilized because 1963 serves as the first season during which the NFL began to track relevant data on head coach mobility patterns.

This research study also contains detailed data regarding NFL offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator, special teams coordinator and general manager demographics as well as overall tenure and mobility trends from the start of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) to kickoff at Super Bowl LVI (February 13, 2022). This specific date range is utilized because this independent NFL Diversity & Inclusion Research Report Series began analyzing data on occupational mobility patterns commencing with the start of the 2012 NFL regular season.

The present research study also highlights mobility patterns of head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators, special teams coordinators and general managers during the approximate one-year period from the day following Super Bowl LV (February 8, 2021) to kickoff at Super Bowl LVI (February 13, 2022) in order to provide a timely, precise snapshot of major mobility trends and themes.

A comprehensive database of descriptive data was developed to evaluate the career paths, organizational tenure and occupational mobility patterns of current NFL position coaches in conjunction with examining opportunities for these position coaches to earn promotions to coordinator or head coach positions. In addition, this research study integrates descriptive data from recent interconnected research conducted by the NFL related to occupational mobility and job success determinants of NFL head coaches and other primary football operations team leaders.

Researchers verified the number of vacancies filled and scrutinized the individual separations, trajectories and occupational patterns of NFL head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators, special teams coordinators and general managers based in part on data provided by the NFL along with publicly available data on recent coach, coordinator, and general manager hires. This research study focuses specifically on an analysis of access, opportunity and coaching mobility (that is, the number of individuals who have held head coach positions) instead of the total number of head coach vacancies from 1963 to February 2022—as a result, if an individual was a head coach for multiple NFL teams, this study counts that coach one time in the data set. This same precise analytical framework was also applied to the occupational mobility patterns of offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators, special teams coordinators and general managers from 1963 to February 2022. This research study also spotlights additional key head coach “pipeline positions” such as quarterbacks coach, linebackers coach and defensive backs (secondary) coach.

The next section of this research report presents the findings and results related to an extensive descriptive analysis on the occupational mobility patterns of more than 600 current and former NFL head coaches, general managers, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators, special teams coordinators and position coaches.

"The process is broken. We have exhausted ourselves with programs and initiatives . . . We don't have a resource issue. This is a willingness and heart issue. You can't force people, so we have to continue to educate and share with those in the hiring cycle."

Troy Vincent, NFL Executive Vice President of Football Operations

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The NFL archival team human resource database contains demographic data on current and former NFL head coaches starting with the 1963 regular season. From the start of the 1963 NFL season through kickoff at Super Bowl LVI (February 13, 2022), only 19 different African American men, four Latino American men, one Lebanese American individual, and one multiracial individual have served as head coaches in the NFL. As of February 2022, five head coaches of color led NFL teams as compared with 27 White NFL head coaches—the same exact totals as compared with the previous NFL season.

The findings of the current study indicate that, historically, NFL teams have been reluctant to hire a person of color for a head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator position after a person of color has previously served as a head coach in the NFL. Since the start of the 1963 NFL season, 118 White individuals have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a first NFL head coach opportunity, whereas only 21 men of color have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a first head coach opportunity. In addition, since the start of the 1963 NFL season, 27 White individuals have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a second NFL head coach opportunity, whereas only four men of color have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a second head coach opportunity.

Within this report, a specific emphasis is placed on the occupational mobility patterns of offensive coordinators and defensive coordinators because these two team coaching positions have historically functioned as the primary career pipelines for NFL head coach hires. For instance, findings in the current research study indicate that 37 of the 71 head coaches hired since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season were previously an offensive coordinator in the NFL for at least one full NFL season before earning a head coach opportunity. Twenty-one of the 71 head coaches hired since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season were previously a defensive coordinator in the NFL for at least one full NFL season before earning a head coach opportunity.

Between February 8, 2021 (day following Super Bowl LV) and February 13, 2022 (day of Super Bowl LVI), NFL teams hired a total of 47 head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators, special teams coordinators and general managers for open positions. White individuals were hired for 32 of these 47 available positions. Fifteen men of color were hired for these 47 recently filled positions (see Figure 1A). In other words, men of color were hired for approximately 32% of the recently filled head coach, offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator, special teams coordinator and general manager openings—a disappointing and somewhat concerning decrease from the 2020-2021 hiring cycle during which men of color were hired for 37% of the openings (19 out of 52 positions) yet nonetheless a noticeable increase from the 2019-2020 hiring cycle during which men of color were only hired for 19% of the openings (6 out of 32 positions). Figure 1B provides a snapshot of the three most recent annual hiring cycle results from February 2019 to February 2022 for head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators, special teams coordinators and general managers.

Between February 8, 2021 (day following Super Bowl LV) and February 13, 2022 (day of Super Bowl LVI), 13 of the 52 head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators, special teams coordinators and general managers who were fired, resigned, promoted, retired or otherwise “mutually parted ways” with an NFL team were men of color. Stated differently, from February 2021 to February 2022, the total number of men of color serving as head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators, special teams coordinators and general managers merely increased by two within the NFL—indicating a concerning decrease from the 2020-2021 hiring cycle during which the total number of men of color serving as head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers increased by 10, while closely mirroring the 2019-2020 hiring cycle during which the total number of men of color serving in these primary team leadership roles increased by only one coach of color.

FIGURE 1A

OVERVIEW OF RECENT GENERAL MANAGER, HEAD COACH AND COORDINATOR HIRES

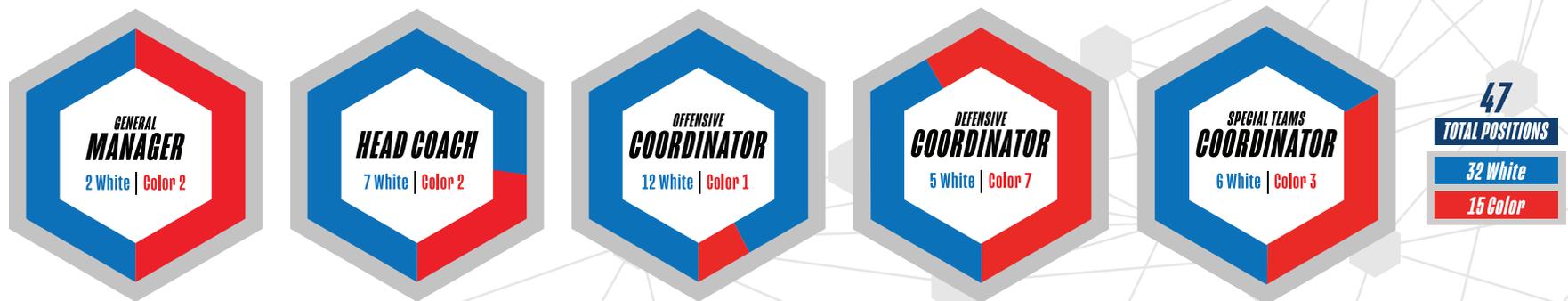


FIGURE 1B

THREE-YEAR HIRING CYCLE SUMMARY SPOTLIGHT (2019-2022)

YEAR	OPENINGS FILLED BY CANDIDATES OF COLOR	POSITIONS
2019-2020	19%	6 OF 32
2020-2021	37%	19 OF 52
2021-2022	32%	15 OF 47



TABLE 1

HEAD COACH MOBILITY PATTERNS (2021-2022)

<i>Team</i>	<i>Name of Former Head Coach</i>	<i>Race of Former Head Coach</i>	<i>Next Opportunity for Former Coach</i>	<i>Name of New Head Coach</i>	<i>Race of New Head Coach</i>	<i>Previous Position of New Head Coach</i>
Chicago Bears	Matt Nagy	White	Senior Assistant & Quarterbacks Coach, Kansas City Chiefs	Matt Eberflus	White	Defensive Coordinator, Indianapolis Colts
Denver Broncos	Vic Fangio	White		Nathaniel Hackett	White	Offensive Coordinator, Green Bay Packers
Houston Texans	David Culley	African American		Lovie Smith	African American	Associate Head Coach & Defensive Coordinator, Houston Texans
Jacksonville Jaguars	Urban Meyer	White		Doug Pederson	White	Head Coach, Philadelphia Eagles (2020)
Las Vegas Raiders	Jon Gruden	White		Josh McDaniels	White	Offensive Coordinator, New England Patriots
Miami Dolphins	Brian Flores	Afro Latino	Senior Defensive Assistant & Linebackers Coach, Pittsburgh Steelers	Mike McDaniel	Multipracial	Offensive Coordinator, San Francisco 49ers
Minnesota Vikings	Mike Zimmer	White		Kevin O'Connell	White	Offensive Coordinator, Los Angeles Rams
New Orleans Saints	Sean Payton	White		Dennis Allen	White	Defensive Coordinator, New Orleans Saints
New York Giants	Joe Judge	White	Offensive Assistant, New England Patriots	Brian Daboll	White	Offensive Coordinator, Buffalo Bills

As illustrated in Table 1, between February 8, 2021 (day following Super Bowl LV) and February 13, 2022 (day of Super Bowl LVI), NFL teams hired seven White head coaches. During that same time period, NFL teams hired two head coaches of color (Lovie Smith and Mike McDaniel). Mike McDaniel is a first-time NFL head coach and Lovie Smith is now serving as an NFL head coach for the third time after previously coaching the Chicago Bears (2004-2012) and Tampa Bay Buccaneers (2014-2015). In addition, between the start of the 2012 NFL season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LVI (February 13, 2022), NFL teams hired 58 White head coaches—82% of total head coach hires. During that same time period, NFL teams hired only 13 head coaches of color—18% of total head coach hires (see Figure 2).

82% total head coach hires
WHITE

2012 - 2022

total head coach hires
COACHES OF COLOR 18%

FIGURE 2

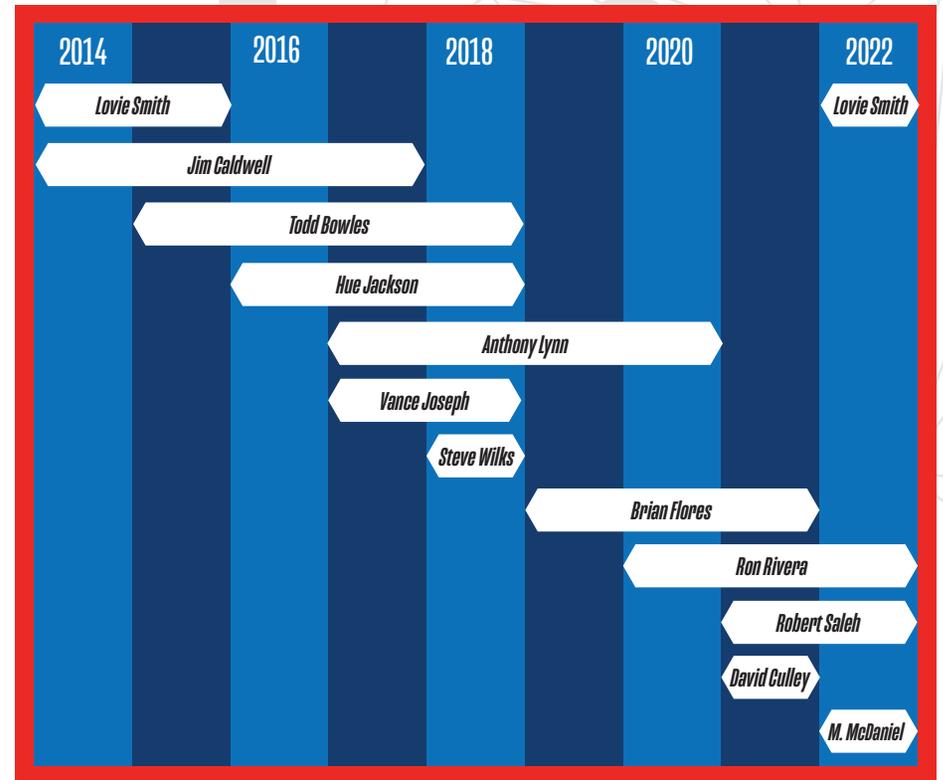
HEAD COACHES HIRED BETWEEN 2012-2022



Notably, only four of the head coaches of color hired since the start of the 2012 NFL season remain current NFL head coaches as of February 22, 2022 (Lovie Smith, Mike McDaniel, Ron Rivera and Robert Saleh)—Mike Tomlin has served as head coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers since 2007. David Culley served as head coach of the Houston Texans during the 2021 NFL season. Brian Flores served as head coach of the Miami Dolphins from 2019-2021. Anthony Lynn served as head coach of the Los Angeles Chargers from 2017-2020. Jim Caldwell served as head coach of the Detroit Lions from 2014-2017. Todd Bowles served as head coach of the New York Jets from 2015-2018. Hue Jackson served as head coach of the Cleveland Browns from 2016-2018. Vance Joseph served as head coach of the Denver Broncos from 2017-2018. Steve Wilks served as head coach of the Arizona Cardinals during the 2018 NFL season (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3

HEAD COACHES OF COLOR HIRED SINCE 2012



Nine current NFL head coaches have been hired since the day following Super Bowl LV (February 8, 2021). Five of these new head coaches are first-time NFL head coaches (Brian Daboll, Matt Eberflus, Nathaniel Hackett, Mike McDaniel and Kevin O'Connell). Three of these recently named head coaches are second-time NFL head coaches (Dennis Allen, Josh McDaniels and Doug Pederson). And Lovie Smith recently earned a third NFL head coaching opportunity. Twenty-two of the 32 current head coaches are serving as first-time NFL head coaches, eight are serving as second-time NFL head coaches, and two are working as NFL head coaches for the third time in their coaching careers (see Figure 4). All nine recently hired head coaches have prior NFL experience as either an offensive coordinator (six recently hired coaches) or defensive coordinator (three recently hired coaches). None of the nine recently hired head coaches has any prior NFL level experience as a special teams coordinator.

FIGURE 4

CURRENT HEAD COACH TENURE/STINTS (2022)

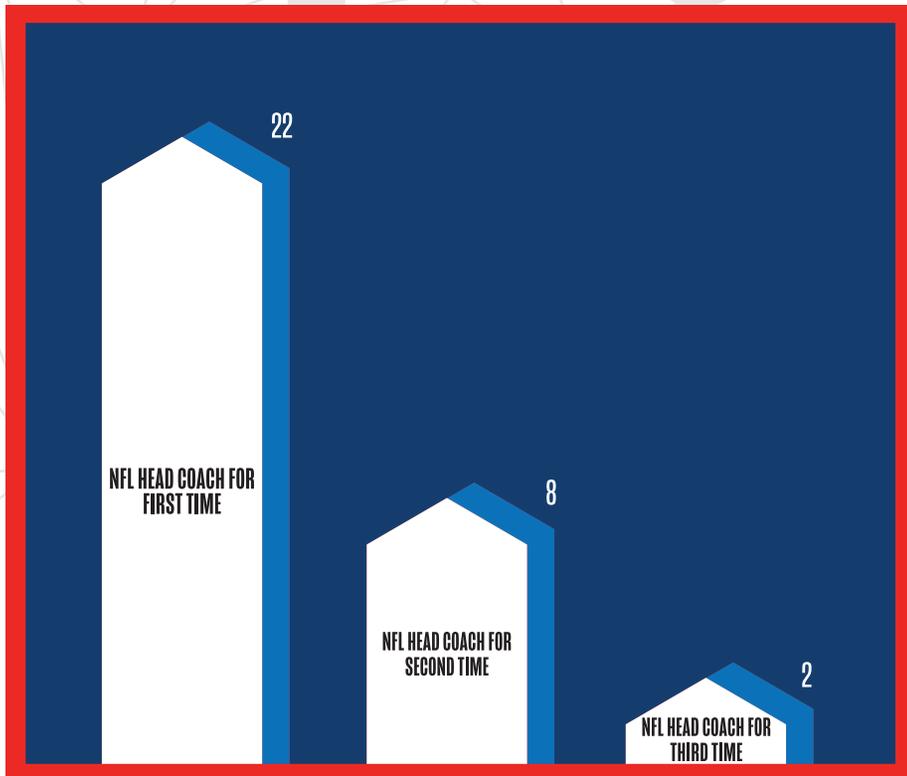


FIGURE 5

NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER FIRST HEAD COACH POSITION (1963-2022)

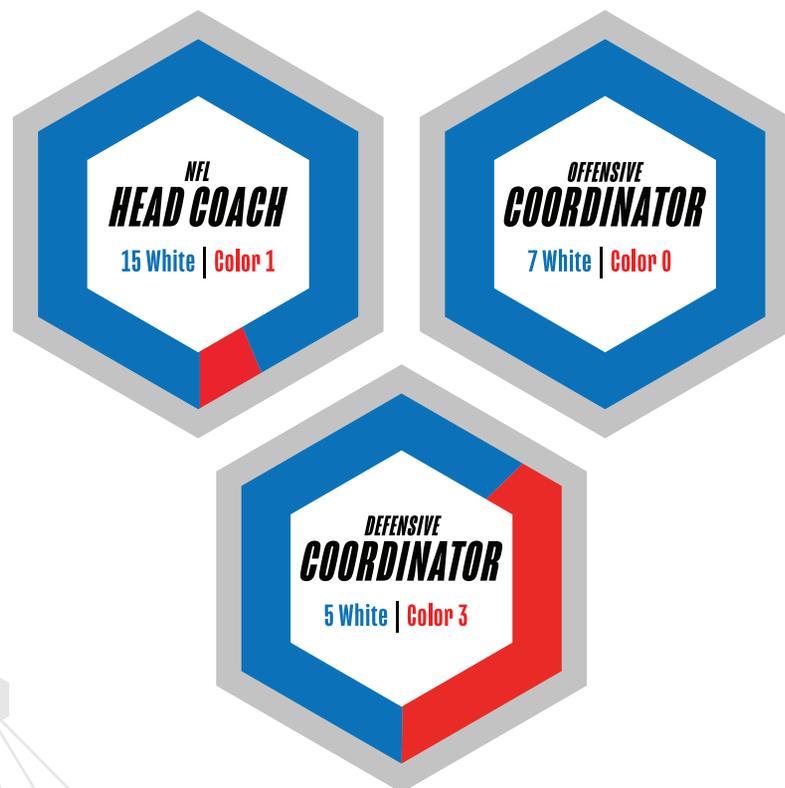


71 NFL HEAD COACHES HIRED SINCE 2012

37 NFL OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR EXPERIENCE

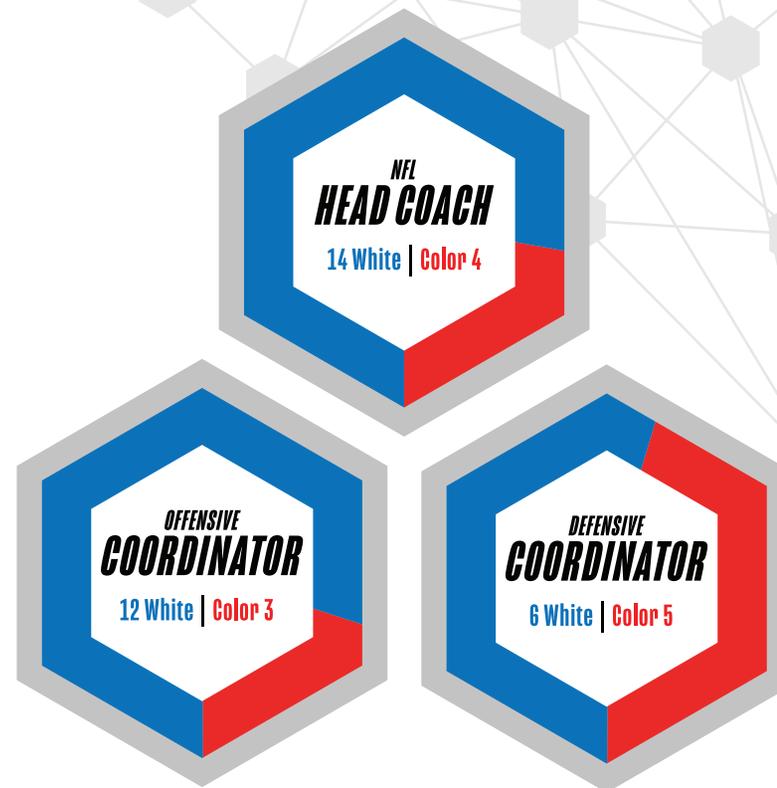
21 NFL DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR EXPERIENCE

As illustrated in Figure 5, after separating from a first head coach position, 11 different coaches of color (42% of the 26 NFL head coaches of color who transitioned from first-time NFL head coach opportunities) have earned a second head coach opportunity in the NFL since the start of the 1963 season. After separating from a first head coach position, 60 White individuals have received a second NFL head coach opportunity since the start of the 1963 season. As also illustrated in Figure 5, since the start of the 1963 NFL season, after separating from a first head coach position, 31 different White individuals have held NFL offensive coordinator positions, and 29 different White individuals have held NFL defensive coordinator positions. For instance, Ben McAdoo was recently named offensive coordinator of the Carolina Panthers after previously serving as head coach of the New York Giants from 2016-2017. Similarly, Gus Bradley recently earned a third consecutive opportunity to serve as an NFL defensive coordinator (hired by the Indianapolis Colts) after previously working as head coach of the Jacksonville Jaguars from 2013-2016. Correspondingly, since the start of the 1963 NFL season, after separating from a first head coach position, four former NFL head coaches of color (Tom Fears, Jim Caldwell, Hue Jackson and Anthony Lynn) have held an NFL offensive coordinator position, and six former NFL head coaches of color (Raheem Morris, Romeo Crennel, Leslie Frazier, Todd Bowles, Vance Joseph and Steve Wilks) have been subsequently hired as NFL defensive coordinators. During the most recent 2022 hiring cycle, no former NFL head coaches of color were hired as offensive or defensive coordinators.

FIGURE 6**NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER SECOND HEAD COACH POSITION (1963-2022)**

As illustrated in Figure 6, after separating from a second NFL head coach position, only one coach of color, Lovie Smith, has earned a third opportunity to serve as the head coach of an NFL team. Fifteen White coaches have received a third opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. In addition, two White coaches (Bill Parcells and Marty Schottenheimer) earned a fourth opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. Conversely, not a single person of color has earned a fourth opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team.

As also depicted in Figure 6, after separating from a second head coach position, seven White individuals have received the opportunity to serve as an NFL offensive coordinator (as compared with zero men of color). Figure 6 also illustrates that, after separating from a second head coach position, five White individuals have received the opportunity to serve as an NFL defensive coordinator (as compared with three men of color). During the most recent 2022 hiring cycle, Lovie Smith was the only coach of color that earned an NFL head coach or coordinator opportunity following two prior stints as an NFL head coach.

FIGURE 7**NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER FIRST HEAD COACH POSITION (2012-2022)**

As illustrated in Figure 7, between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LVI (February 13, 2022), 14 White individuals and four men of color received a second head coach opportunity after “separating” (that is, being fired or promoted, resigning, retiring or otherwise mutually parting ways) from a first head coach position during this time period. Lovie Smith, John Fox, Mike Mularkey and Jon Gruden are the only four coaches who received a third NFL head coach opportunity during this same timeframe. During this same time period between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LVI (February 13, 2022), 12 White individuals and three African American individuals received an opportunity to be an NFL offensive coordinator after separating from a first head coach position. Also, during this same time period of approximately 10 years, six White individuals and five African American individuals received an opportunity to be an NFL defensive coordinator after separating from a first NFL head coach position.

Only ten NFL teams have hired two or more African American, Latino American, Lebanese American and/or multiracial head coaches from 1963-2022 (excluding interim head coaches from the analysis). For example, in February 2022, Mike McDaniel became the second non-interim head coach of color hired by the Miami Dolphins (after the team parted ways with another head coach of color, Brian Flores). Likewise, in February 2022, Lovie Smith became the second non-interim head coach of color hired by the Houston Texans (after the team parted ways with another head coach of color, David Culley).

Based in part on NFL internal research data, since the start of the 2008 NFL season, 27 different individuals have served as interim head coaches (that is, these individuals were head coaches for part of an NFL season). Nine of the 27 interim head coaches have been men of color (with Romeo Crennel and Perry Fewell twice serving as interim NFL head coaches since 2008). Five of the nine interim NFL head coaches eventually earned a head coach opportunity with either the same or a different NFL team. Mike Singletary, Leslie Frazier and Romeo Crennel represent the only three men of color who earned the head coach position with their same team after serving as interim head coach for part of the immediately prior season. Likewise, since the start of the 2008 NFL season, Anthony Lynn is the only coach of color to earn a head coach position with a different NFL team after serving as an interim head coach for part of the immediately prior season. Relatedly, in January 2015, Todd Bowles became the sole African American leader named to a head coach position since the start of the 2008 NFL season after previously serving as an interim head coach with a different NFL team earlier in his career—Bowles served as interim head coach for three games with the Miami Dolphins during the 2011 NFL season.

During the 2021 NFL regular season, the combined record of all seven first-season head coaches was 39-79-1. Only two teams led by first-season head coaches (Los Angeles Chargers and Philadelphia Eagles) had winning records with only the Eagles making the playoffs. Urban Meyer was fired during his first season as head coach of the Jacksonville Jaguars and David Culley was fired following one season coaching the Houston Texans. Hiring managers (head coach talent evaluators) are encouraged to be patient during the first few seasons with a new head coach so long as the head coach has established a culture in which players feel respected and empowered and feel that the coaching staff is helping all players develop and compete with consistent compelling effort each game. Conversely, in situations like that in Jacksonville where a head coach has not created a culture of professionalism and inclusive excellence, hiring managers should not be reluctant to make swift changes—that said, proper due diligence on the front end of the hiring process for head coaches could reduce the number of future avoidable situations akin to the one that unfolded during the 2021 NFL season with Urban Meyer and the Jaguars.

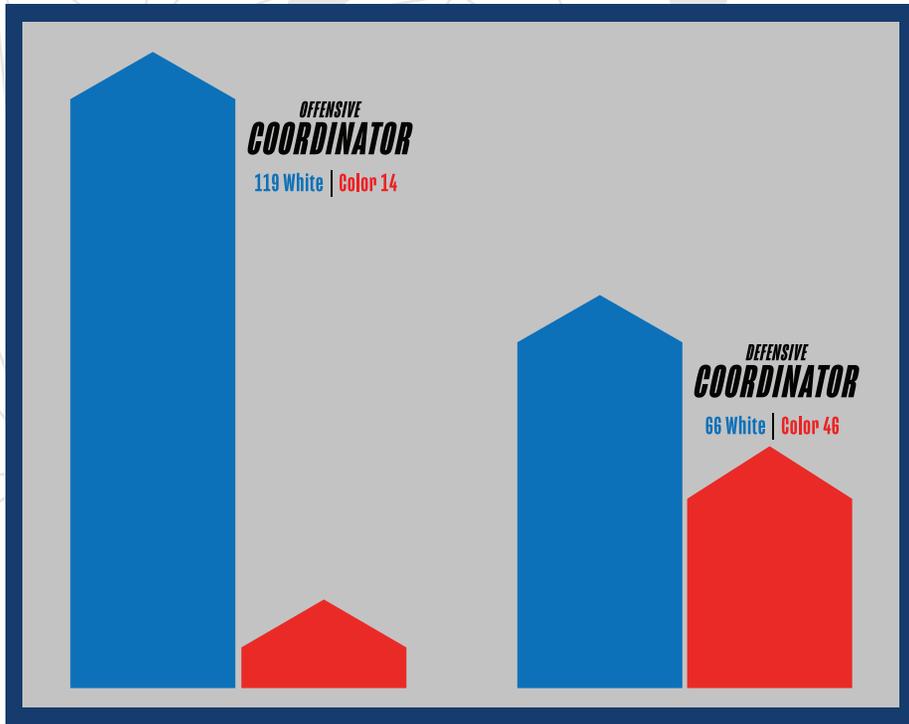


TABLE 2
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2021-2022)

<i>Team</i>	<i>Name of Former Offensive Coordinator</i>	<i>Race of Former Offensive Coordinator</i>	<i>Next Opportunity for Former Offensive Coordinator</i>	<i>Name of New Offensive Coordinator</i>	<i>Race of New Offensive Coordinator</i>	<i>Previous Position of New Offensive Coordinator</i>
Buffalo Bills	Brian Daboll	White	Head Coach, New York Giants	Ken Dorsey	White	Passing Game Coordinator & Quarterbacks Coach, Buffalo Bills
Carolina Panthers	Joe Brady	White	Quarterbacks Coach, Buffalo Bills	Ben McAdoo	White	Consultant, Dallas Cowboys
Chicago Bears	Bill Lazor	White		Luke Getsy	White	Passing Game Coordinator & Quarterbacks Coach, Green Bay Packers
Denver Broncos	Pat Shurmur	White		Justin Outten	White	Tight Ends Coach, Green Bay Packers
Detroit Lions	Anthony Lynn	African American	Assistant Head Coach, San Francisco 49ers	Ben Johnson	White	Tight Ends Coach, Detroit Lions
Green Bay Packers	Nathaniel Hackett	White	Head Coach, Denver Broncos	Adam Stenavich	White	Run Game Coordinator & Offensive Line Coach, Green Bay Packers
Houston Texans	Tim Kelly	White	Passing Game Coordinator, Tennessee Titans	Pep Hamilton	African American	Passing Game Coordinator & Quarterbacks Coach, Houston Texans
Jacksonville Jaguars	Darrell Bevell	White	Quarterbacks Coach, Miami Dolphins	Press Taylor	White	Senior Offensive Assistant, Indianapolis Colts
Las Vegas Raiders	Greg Olson	White	Offensive Assistant, Los Angeles Rams	Mick Lombardi	White	Wide Receivers Coach, New England Patriots
Los Angeles Rams	Kevin O'Connell	White	Head Coach, Minnesota Vikings	Liam Coen	White	Offensive Coordinator & Quarterbacks Coach, University of Kentucky (NCAA)
Miami Dolphins	Eric Studesville	African American	Associate Head Coach & Running Backs Coach, Miami Dolphins	Frank Smith	White	Run Game Coordinator & Offensive Line Coach, Los Angeles Chargers
	George Godsey	White	Tight Ends Coach, Baltimore Ravens			
Minnesota Vikings	Klint Kubiak	White	Passing Game Coordinator & Quarterbacks Coach, Denver Broncos	Wes Phillips	White	Passing Game Coordinator & Tight Ends Coach, Los Angeles Rams
New England Patriots	Josh McDaniels	White	Head Coach, Las Vegas Raiders			
New York Giants	Jason Garrett	White		Mike Kafka	White	Passing Game Coordinator & Quarterbacks Coach, Kansas City Chiefs
San Francisco 49ers	Mike McDaniel	Multiracial	Head Coach, Miami Dolphins			

TABLE 3
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2021-2022)

<i>Team</i>	<i>Name of Former Defensive Coordinator</i>	<i>Race of Former Defensive Coordinator</i>	<i>Next Opportunity for Former Defensive Coordinator</i>	<i>Name of New Defensive Coordinator</i>	<i>Race of New Defensive Coordinator</i>	<i>Previous Position of New Defensive Coordinator</i>
Baltimore Ravens	Don Martindale	White	Defensive Coordinator, New York Giants	Mike Macdonald	White	Defensive Coordinator, University of Michigan (NCAA)
Chicago Bears	Sean Desai	Indian American	Associate Head Coach, Seattle Seahawks	Alan Williams	African American	Safeties Coach, Indianapolis Colts
Denver Broncos	Ed Donatell	White	Defensive Coordinator, Minnesota Vikings	Ejiro Evero	African American	Passing Game Coordinator & Secondary Coach, Los Angeles Rams
Houston Texans	Lovie Smith	African American	Head Coach, Houston Texans			
Indianapolis Colts	Matt Eberflus	White	Head Coach, Chicago Bears	Gus Bradley	White	Defensive Coordinator, Las Vegas Raiders
Jacksonville Jaguars	Joe Cullen	White	Defensive Line Coach, Kansas City Chiefs	Mike Caldwell	African American	Inside Linebackers Coach, Tampa Bay Buccaneers
Las Vegas Raiders	Gus Bradley	White	Defensive Coordinator, Indianapolis Colts	Patrick Graham	African American	Assistant Head Coach & Defensive Coordinator, New York Giants
Minnesota Vikings	Andre Patterson	African American	Defensive Line Coach, New York Giants	Ed Donatell	White	Defensive Coordinator, Denver Broncos
	Adam Zimmer	White				
New Orleans Saints	Dennis Allen	White	Head Coach, New Orleans Saints	Ryan Nielsen	White	Assistant Head Coach & Defensive Line Coach, New Orleans Saints
				Kris Richard	African American	Defensive Backs Coach, New Orleans Saints
New York Giants	Patrick Graham	African American	Defensive Coordinator, Las Vegas Raiders	Don Martindale	White	Defensive Coordinator, Baltimore Ravens
Pittsburgh Steelers	Keith Butler	White		Teryl Austin	African American	Senior Defensive Assistant & Secondary Coach, Pittsburgh Steelers
Seattle Seahawks	Ken Norton Jr.	African American	Linebackers Coach, UCLA (NCAA)	Clint Hurtt	African American	Assistant Head Coach & Defensive Line Coach, Seattle Seahawks

FIGURE 8**OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS HIRED BETWEEN 2012-2022**

As Table 2 and Table 3 illustrate, between February 8, 2021 (day following Super Bowl LV) and February 13, 2022 (day of Super Bowl LVI), NFL teams hired 12 White offensive coordinators and only one offensive coordinator of color—as of February 22, 2022, the San Francisco 49ers and New England Patriots had not yet filled vacant offensive coordinator openings. During the same approximate one-year time period, NFL teams hired five White defensive coordinators and seven defensive coordinators of color. Between the start of the 2012 NFL season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LVI (February 13, 2022), NFL teams hired 119 White offensive coordinators and 14 offensive coordinators of color. During this same approximate 10-year time period, NFL teams hired 66 White defensive coordinators and 46 defensive coordinators of color (see Figure 8).

Eleven of the 13 offensive coordinators hired between February 8, 2021 (day following Super Bowl LV) and February 13, 2022 (day of Super Bowl LVI) are currently holding an NFL offensive coordinator position for the first time, and two of the 13 offensive coordinators hired during this time period are serving as an NFL offensive coordinator for the second time (Pep Hamilton and Ben McAdoo) (see Figure 9).

FIGURE 9**EXPERIENCE OF RECENTLY HIRED OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS**

Divergent from trends in previous annual hiring cycles, none of the offensive coordinators hired between February 8, 2021 (day following Super Bowl LV) and February 13, 2022 (day of Super Bowl LVI) served as the head coach of a different NFL team immediately before being named offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Also contrary to trends from previous annual hiring cycles, none of the offensive coordinators hired during this same time period held the offensive coordinator position with a different NFL team immediately before being named offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Four of the recently hired offensive coordinators held the quarterbacks coach position with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Three of the recently hired offensive coordinators held the tight ends coach position with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Three of the recently hired offensive coordinators also served as passing game coordinators with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. And two of the recently hired offensive coordinators also served as run game coordinators with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) offensive coordinator of their current NFL team.

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR PATHWAYS

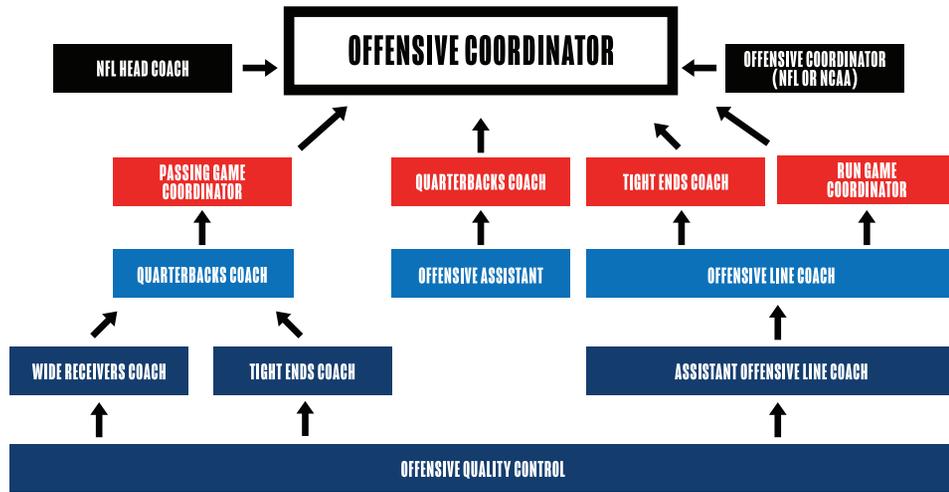


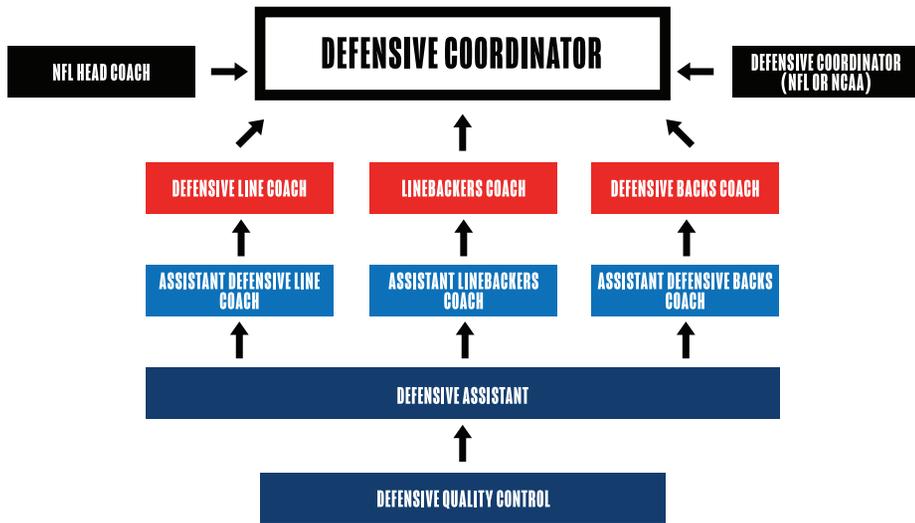
FIGURE 10

EXPERIENCE OF RECENTLY HIRED DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS

White	Color
2	3
0	2
1	2
2	0

Five of the twelve defensive coordinators hired between February 8, 2021 (day following Super Bowl LV) and February 13, 2022 (day of Super Bowl LVI) are currently holding an NFL defensive coordinator position for the first time. Two of the twelve defensive coordinators hired during this time period are serving as an NFL defensive coordinator for the second time. Three of the twelve recently hired defensive coordinators are serving as NFL defensive coordinators for the third time. And two of the twelve recently hired defensive coordinators are working as an NFL defensive coordinator for the fourth time in their coaching career (see Figure 10).

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR PATHWAYS



Unlike the typical mobility trend observed in recent previous annual hiring cycles, none of the twelve defensive coordinators hired between February 8, 2021 (day following Super Bowl LV) and February 13, 2022 (day of Super Bowl LVI) served as the head coach of a different NFL team immediately before being named defensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Four of the twelve defensive coordinators hired during this same time period held the defensive NFL team – again, this reshuffling of defensive coordinators limits opportunities for new talent to enter this key head coach pipeline position. Four of the twelve recently hired defensive coordinators served as defensive back (secondary) coaches with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) defensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Two of the twelve recently hired defensive coordinators served as the assistant head coach / defensive line coach of their current team before receiving an internal promotion. The remaining two recently hired defensive coordinators served in the following positions immediately before earning their current defensive coordinator position: NFL inside linebackers coach and NCAA defensive coordinator.

As illustrated in Figure 11 and Figure 12, between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LVI (February 13, 2022), 45 White individuals have received a second opportunity to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team. During this same time period, only 16 men of color received a similar “second-chance” opportunity to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator. In addition, during this same approximate 10-year time period, 63 White individuals received a “third or greater chance” to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team, whereas only 13 men of color received a similar “third or greater chance” to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator.

FIGURE 11

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2012-2022)

White		Color
53	First-Time Offensive Coordinator	4
28	Second-Time Offensive Coordinator	3
38	Third-Time or Greater Offensive Coordinator	2

FIGURE 12

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2012-2022)

<i>White</i>		<i>Color</i>
24	<i>First-Time Defensive Coordinator</i>	22
17	<i>Second-Time Defensive Coordinator</i>	13
25	<i>Third-Time or Greater Defensive Coordinator</i>	11



"Equitable access to career opportunities is essential. A primary challenge for candidates of color is breaking into the head coach pipeline, as many head coaches, coordinators and key position coaches continue to get 'reshuffled,' thereby preventing new talent from entering the candidate pipeline. This 'reshuffling effect' reduces the number of opportunities for new talent/candidates to break into the head coach pipeline. The reshuffling effect disappointingly continues to be a major trend."

Dr. C. Keith Harrison

TABLE 4
SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2021-2022)

<i>Team</i>	<i>Name of Former Special Teams Coordinator</i>	<i>Race of Former Special Teams Coordinator</i>	<i>Next Opportunity for Former Special Teams Coordinator</i>	<i>Name of New Special Teams Coordinator</i>	<i>Race of New Special Teams Coordinator</i>	<i>Previous Position of New Special Teams Coordinator</i>
Buffalo Bills	Heath Farwell	White	Special Teams Coordinator, Jacksonville Jaguars	Matthew Smiley	White	Assistant Special Teams Coach, Buffalo Bills
Carolina Panthers	Chase Blackburn	White		Chris Tabor	White	Special Teams Coordinator, Chicago Bears
Chicago Bears	Chris Tabor	White	Special Teams Coordinator, Carolina Panthers	Richard Hightower	African American	Special Teams Coordinator, San Francisco 49ers
Denver Broncos	Tom McMahon	White	Special Teams Coordinator, Las Vegas Raiders	Dwayne Stukes	African American	Assistant Special Teams Coach, Los Angeles Rams
Green Bay Packers	Maurice Drayton	African American		Rich Bisaccia	White	Interim Head Coach & Special Teams Coordinator, Las Vegas Raiders
Jacksonville Jaguars	Nick Sorensen	White	Defensive Assistant, San Francisco 49ers	Heath Farwell	White	Special Teams Coordinator, Buffalo Bills
Las Vegas Raiders	Rich Bisaccia	White	Special Teams Coordinator, Green Bay Packers	Tom McMahon	White	Special Teams Coordinator, Denver Broncos
Los Angeles Chargers	Derius Swinton II	African American		Ryan Ficken	White	Special Teams Coordinator, Minnesota Vikings
Minnesota Vikings	Ryan Ficken	White	Special Teams Coordinator, Los Angeles Chargers	Matt Daniels	African American	Assistant Special Teams Coach, Dallas Cowboys
San Francisco 49ers	Richard Hightower	African American	Special Teams Coordinator, Chicago Bears			

As Table 4 illustrates, between February 8, 2021 (day following Super Bowl LV) and February 13, 2022 (day of Super Bowl LVI), NFL teams replaced seven White special teams coordinators and three African American special teams coordinators. During this same approximate one-year time period, six White special teams coordinators were hired and three African American special teams coordinators were hired. As of February 22, 2022, the San Francisco 49ers had not officially named a new special teams coordinator. It is important to note that, during the most recent 2022 hiring cycle, six special teams coordinators made lateral transitions with respect to accepting a special teams coordinator position with a different NFL team—this “reshuffling effect” limits opportunities for new talent to enter the broader head coach pipeline within this emerging key team leadership pathway position. Each of the eight current NFL special teams coordinators of color has been in such position for four or fewer prior seasons—the assistant special teams coordinator position has functioned as the core requisite primary mobility pipeline for all current special teams coordinators of color.

TABLE 5

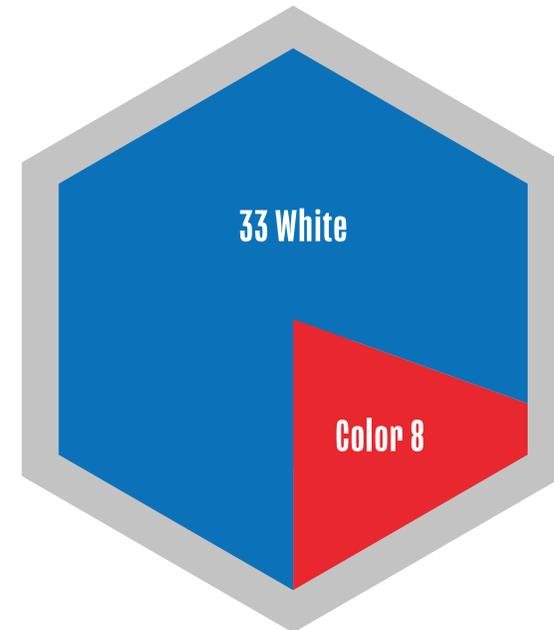
GENERAL MANAGER MOBILITY PATTERNS (2021-2022)

<i>Team</i>	<i>Name of Former General Manager</i>	<i>Race of Former General Manager</i>	<i>Name of New General Manager</i>	<i>Race of New General Manager</i>	<i>Previous Position of New General Manager</i>
Chicago Bears	Ryan Pace	White	Ryan Poles	African American	Executive Director of Player Personnel, Kansas City Chiefs
Las Vegas Raiders	Mike Mayock	White	Dave Ziegler	White	Director of Player Personnel, New England Patriots
Minnesota Vikings	Rick Spielman	White	Kwesi Adofo-Mensah	African American	Vice President of Football Operations, Cleveland Browns
New York Giants	Dave Gettleman	White	Joe Schoen	White	Assistant General Manager, Buffalo Bills

As Table 5 illustrates, between February 8, 2021 (day following Super Bowl LV) and February 13, 2022 (day of Super Bowl LVI), NFL teams replaced four White general managers and zero general managers of color. During this same approximate one-year time period, two White general managers were hired and two African American general managers were hired. Between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and kickoff at Super Bowl LVI (February 13, 2022), NFL teams have hired 41 general managers—33 of the 41 general managers hired during this time frame have been White football operations team leaders—less than 20% of NFL general managers hired since the start of the 2012 NFL season have been men of color (see Figure 13). Nonetheless, recent general manager hiring trends from February 2019 to February 2022 indicate progress—specifically, six of the 12 total general managers hired during the most recent three annual hiring cycles have been general managers of color.

FIGURE 13

RACE OF NFL GENERAL MANAGERS HIRED BETWEEN 2012-2022



NFL General Managers and Head Coaches of Color: 30-Season Data Snapshot (1993 - 2022)

During the 30-season period from 1993-2022, NFL teams have hired/employed 393 individuals as general managers and head coaches. Only 15% (59/393) of these general managers and head coaches were men of color. Similarly, although the tenures/stints of white and racially diverse general managers and head coaches are somewhat comparable and encouraging, a clear ongoing occupational mobility barrier exists with respect to leaders of color earning the actual initial opportunity to serve as an NFL head coach or general manager.

The Cleveland Browns have hired/employed five head coaches and general managers of color since the 1993 NFL season, and the Minnesota Vikings and Detroit Lions have each hired/employed four head coaches and general managers of color since 1993. Conversely, the Dallas Cowboys, Los Angeles Rams, New Orleans Saints and Tennessee Titans have not hired/employed a single general manager or head coach of color since 1993.

The Cleveland Browns are the only NFL team that have hired/employed three different general managers of color since 1993—during this same time period, 15 NFL teams have not hired/employed a single general manager of color.

The New York Jets and Tampa Bay Buccaneers are the only two NFL teams that have hired/employed three different head coaches of color since 1993—during this same time period, 10 NFL teams have not hired/employed a single head coach of color. During the most recent hiring cycle in January/February 2022, the Miami Dolphins and Houston Texans hired head coaches of color after parting ways with a head coach of color—the Indianapolis Colts are the only other team that has hired/employed head coaches of color back-to-back since 1993.

Only five NFL teams have employed a general manager and head coach of color at the same time since 1993 (Arizona Cardinals, Cleveland Browns, Detroit Lions, Miami Dolphins, and Washington Commanders).

Total Team Hires and Average Tenure

	Total Hires	Average Tenure
General Manager of Color	24	6.1 seasons
White General Manager	141	6.5 seasons
Head Coach of Color	35	4.9 seasons
White Head Coach	193	5.2 seasons

Coaches of Color Hired Per Team

Number of Head Coaches of Color	Number of NFL Teams
0	10
1	11
2	9
3	2

General Managers Hired Per Team

Number of General Managers of Color	Number of NFL Teams
0	15
1	11
2	5
3	1

DATA ANALYSIS AND INSIGHTS

The Enduring “Reshuffling Effect”—Limiting the Leadership Talent Pipeline and Restricting Occupational Mobility Pathways for Prospective First-Time NFL Head Coaches

Equitable access to career opportunities is essential. A primary challenge for candidates of color is breaking into the head coach pipeline, as many head coaches and key position coaches continue to get “reshuffled,” thereby preventing new talent from entering the candidate pipeline. This “reshuffling effect” reduces the number of opportunities for new candidates to break into the head coach pipeline. The reshuffling effect disappointingly continues to be a major trend/theme within recent annual occupational mobility report research studies.

Four of the nine recently hired head coaches have prior NFL head coaching experience. Likewise, two of the 13 recently hired offensive coordinators previously served at least one prior stint as an NFL offensive coordinator for one or more full NFL seasons. In addition, seven of the twelve recently hired defensive coordinators have previously served as an NFL defensive coordinator. Relatedly, seven of the nine recently hired special teams coordinators have previously served as an NFL special teams coordinator (see Figure 14).

Findings in the current research study also indicate 37 out of the 71 head coaches hired since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season were previously an offensive coordinator in the NFL for one or more full NFL seasons before earning a head coach opportunity. Twenty-one of the 71 head coaches hired since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season were previously a defensive coordinator in the NFL before earning a head coach opportunity. As a result, 58 of 71 (equal to 82%) head coaches hired since the start of the 2012 NFL were previously an NFL level offensive or defensive coordinator (see Figure 15).

FIGURE 14

RECENTLY HIRED HEAD COACHES AND COORDINATORS IN SECOND OR GREATER STINT AT SAME POSITION

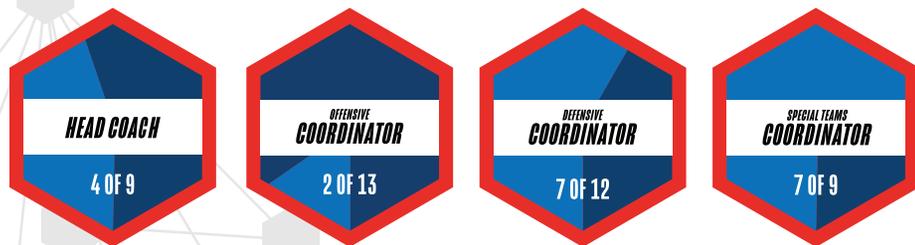


FIGURE 15

PREVIOUS NFL OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR EXPERIENCE BEFORE BECOMING NFL HEAD COACH (2012-2022)



These findings indicate that, since the start of the 2012 NFL season, the offensive coordinator position has functioned as the central primary pipeline for aspiring first-time NFL head coaches, whereas defensive coordinator can be viewed as the second core primary pipeline for prospective first-time NFL head coaches. From the start of the 2002 NFL season through February 2022, NFL teams hired a total of 216 head coaches—56 of the head coach hires served as NFL defensive coordinators in the immediately prior season (including 11 coaches of color), 57 of the head coach hires served as NFL offensive coordinators in the immediately prior season (including 4 coaches of color), and 33 of the head coach hires served as NFL head coaches in the immediately prior season (including 6 coaches of color). It is important to note that Doug Pederson, recently hired head coach of the Jacksonville Jaguars, took a year off from coaching in the NFL after parting ways with the Philadelphia Eagles following the 2020 NFL season. This combined mobility data regarding common coaching mobility pathways underscores the importance of men of color earning an opportunity to serve as an NFL offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator, as these two leadership positions function as viable springboards to NFL head coach opportunities in addition to previously serving as an NFL head coach. NFL coordinator experience is often viewed as essential with respect to NFL head coach prospects—especially for candidates of color. However, a primary occupational mobility access barrier for coaches of color exists at the offensive coordinator position (see Figure 16).

FIGURE 16

PRIMARY HEAD COACH PATHWAYS (2002-2022)

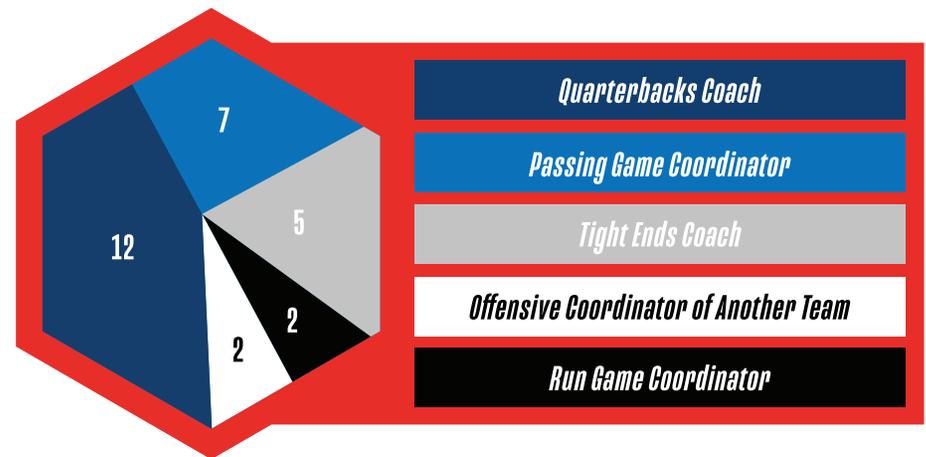
Number of Hired Head Coaches Who Served as NFL

White		Color
27	Head Coach in Immediately Prior Season	6
53	Offensive Coordinator in Immediately Prior Season	4
45	Defensive Coordinator in Immediately Prior Season	11
216 Total Head Coaches Hired from 2002-2022		

Twelve of the 29 current offensive coordinators of NFL teams held the quarterbacks coach position with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) offensive coordinator of their current NFL team—as of February 22, 2022, the Arizona Cardinals, New England Patriots and San Francisco 49ers did not have a specifically designated offensive coordinator. Seven of the 29 current offensive coordinators of NFL teams served as passing game coordinators with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Five of the 29 current offensive coordinators of NFL teams served as tight ends coaches with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Two of the 29 current offensive coordinators of NFL teams served as offensive coordinators of another NFL team immediately prior to being named offensive coordinator of their current team—for comparison purposes, a year ago (in February 2021), seven of the 32 then-current offensive coordinators worked as offensive coordinators of a different NFL team immediately prior to earning a subsequent NFL offensive coordinator opportunity. The remaining current NFL offensive coordinators served in the following positions immediately before being named to their current offensive coordinator position: offensive line coach (prior position of two current offensive coordinators), run game coordinator (prior position of two current offensive coordinators), running backs coach (prior position of one current offensive coordinator), wide receivers coach (prior position of one current offensive coordinator), senior offensive assistant (prior position of one current offensive coordinator), assistant head coach (prior position of one current offensive coordinator), team consultant (prior position of one current offensive coordinator), and college level offensive coordinator (prior position of one current offensive coordinator). Divergent from data trends in recent annual hiring cycles, none of the 29 current offensive coordinators of NFL teams served as head coaches of another NFL team immediately prior to being named offensive coordinator of their current team (see Figure 17).

FIGURE 17

MOBILITY PATHWAYS FOR CURRENT NFL OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS



Notably, 11 of the 29 current NFL offensive coordinators earned internal promotions with their current team from coaching positions such as quarterbacks coach, tight ends coach, running backs coach, run game coordinator and passing game coordinator. It is also important to note that several current NFL offensive coordinators previously held dual position coach roles such as “passing game coordinator and quarterbacks coach” or “run game coordinator and offensive line coach.”

The vast majority of men of color serving as offensive position coaches oversee running backs (30 current men of color serving as NFL running backs coaches as of February 22, 2022) or wide receivers (20 men of color currently serving as NFL wide receivers coaches as of February 22, 2022), whereas only three African American coaches (Charles London, Ronald Curry, and Brian Johnson) currently hold the quarterbacks coach position, which functions as a primary pipeline to become an offensive coordinator—it is important to note that Pep Hamilton (one of the four quarterbacks coaches of color during the 2021-2022 NFL season) was internally promoted to offensive coordinator of the Houston Texans in February 2022. In addition, as of February 22, 2022, two men of color served as offensive line coaches and seven men of color served as tight ends coaches for NFL teams (see Figure 18).

Nineteen of the 29 current NFL offensive coordinators have prior experience as quarterbacks coaches at the NFL level. Nine current offensive coordinators have prior experience as NFL tight ends coaches. Eight current offensive coordinators have prior experience as NFL wide receivers coaches. Three current offensive coordinators have prior experience as NFL offensive line coaches. And two current offensive coordinators have prior experience as NFL running backs coaches (see Figure 19A).

FIGURE 18

MEN OF COLOR IN NFL OFFENSIVE POSITION COACH ROLES

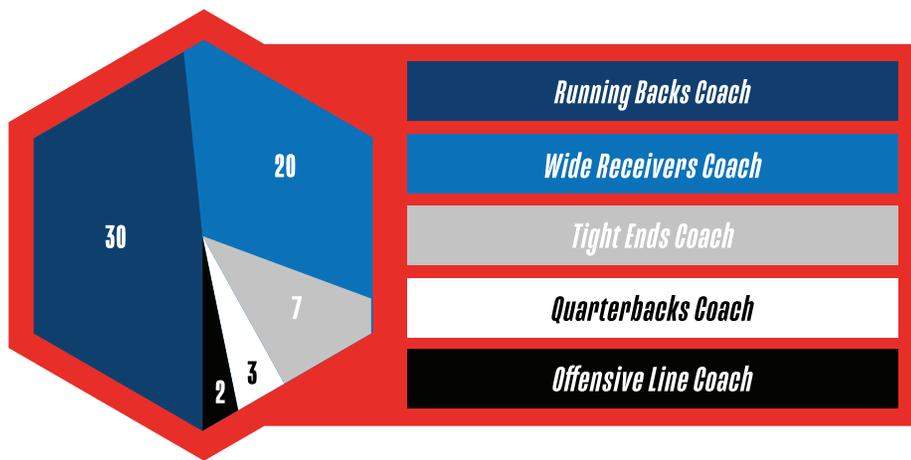
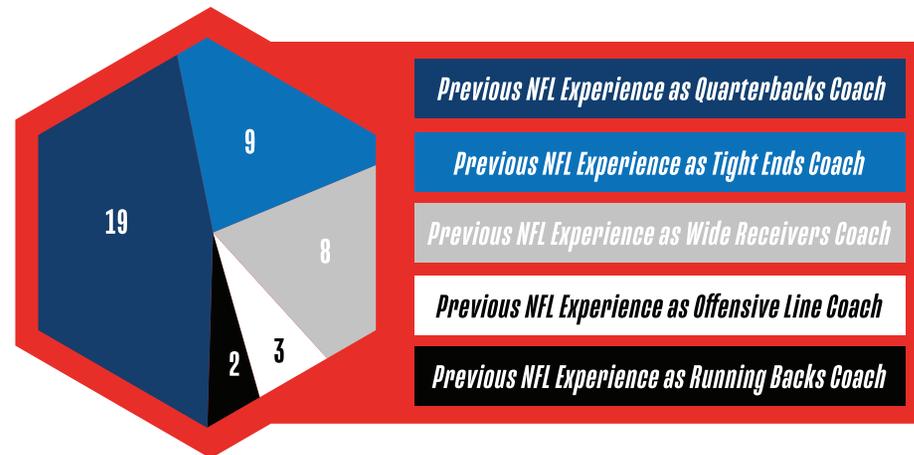


FIGURE 19A

PREVIOUS CAREER POSITION(S) OF CURRENT OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS



From the start of the 2002 NFL season through February 2022, NFL teams hired a total of 373 offensive coordinators—109 of the hired offensive coordinators served as NFL quarterbacks coaches in the prior season (including 10 coaches of color), 67 of the hired offensive coordinators worked as an NFL offensive coordinator of a different team in the prior season (including 7 coaches of color), 35 of the hired offensive coordinators served as NFL wide receivers coaches in the prior season (including 9 coaches of color), 29 of the hired offensive coordinators served as an NFL head coach in the prior season (including one former head coach of color—Anthony Lynn), and 27 of the hired offensive coordinators served as an NFL running backs coach or run game coordinator in the prior season (including 16 coaches of color) (see Figure 19B).

FIGURE 19B

**NFL OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR PATHWAYS
2002-2022 (20-YEAR SUMMARY DATA)**

Coaching Role in Season Prior to Earning Offensive Coordinator Opportunity

White		Color
99	Quarterbacks Coach	10
60	Offensive Coordinator of Another NFL Team	7
26	Wide Receivers Coach	9
28	Head Coach of Another NFL Team	1
11	Running Backs Coach / Run Game Coordinator	16

373 Total Offensive Coordinators Hired from 2002-2022

The 20-year summary data on common pathways to becoming an NFL offensive coordinator once again illustrates the troubling reshuffling effect for a central primary head coach pipeline position. For example, 96 of the 373 offensive coordinators hired by NFL teams from the start of the 2002 NFL season through February 2022 (approximately 26% of total offensive coordinator hires) previously worked as either an NFL head coach or an NFL offensive coordinator of another team immediately before earning a subsequent NFL offensive coordinator opportunity—only 8 of these 96 former NFL offensive coordinators and head coaches have been men of color, which indicates that White individuals represent nearly 92% of the former NFL head coaches and/or former NFL offensive coordinators who have been reshuffled into a subsequent offensive coordinator opportunity.

Overall, recent occupational mobility patterns for NFL defensive coordinators show more potential and promise for men of color to break into this key head coach pipeline position. Eleven of the 31 current NFL defensive coordinators held the defensive backs (secondary) coach position with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) defensive coordinator of their current NFL team—as of February 22, 2022, the Houston Texans and New England Patriots did not officially have a separately designated defensive coordinator on the football operations staff. It is important to note that several of these current defensive coordinators previously held positions with multiple titles such as “assistant head coach and secondary coach.” Seven of the 31 current defensive coordinators served as defensive coordinators of another NFL team immediately prior to being named defensive coordinator of their current team. Five of the 31 current NFL defensive coordinators held the linebackers coach position with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) defensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Four of the 31 current defensive coordinators of NFL teams served as head coaches of another NFL team as their most recent full-time position in the NFL prior to being named defensive coordinator of their current team. Three of the 31 current NFL defensive coordinators held the defensive passing game coordinator position with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) defensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Two of the 31 current NFL defensive coordinators held the defensive line coach position with either a different NFL team or their current NFL team immediately before being hired as (or promoted to) defensive coordinator of their current NFL team. And two of the 31 current NFL defensive coordinators worked as NCAA level defensive coordinators before earning their current NFL defensive coordinator position (see Figure 20). It is important to note that five current NFL defensive coordinators held the dual role/title of “assistant head coach” and one current NFL defensive coordinator held the dual role/title of “senior defensive assistant” in their immediately prior positions before earning their current NFL defensive coordinator opportunity. Also, seven of the 31 current NFL defensive coordinators earned internal promotions with their current team from coaching positions such as defensive line coach and linebackers coach.

FIGURE 20

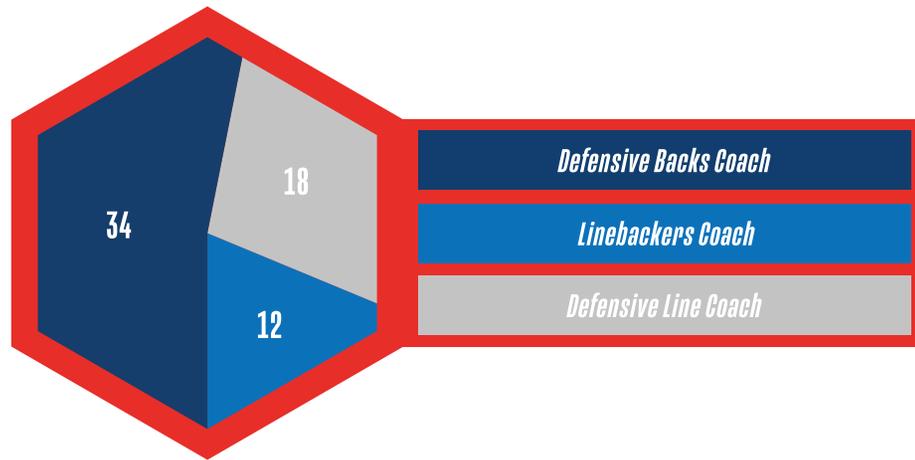
MOBILITY PATHWAYS FOR CURRENT NFL DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS



The majority of men of color serving as defensive position coaches oversee defensive backs (34 current men of color serving as NFL defensive backs coaches as of February 22, 2022— representing approximately 74% of all defensive backs coaches). In addition, as of February 22, 2022, 18 men of color served as NFL defensive line coaches and 12 men of color served as linebackers coaches (see Figure 21). The defensive backs (secondary), defensive line and linebackers coach positions presently function as three of the more viable occupational mobility pathways for coaches of color in the NFL who aspire to earn defensive coordinator and/or head coach opportunities.

FIGURE 21

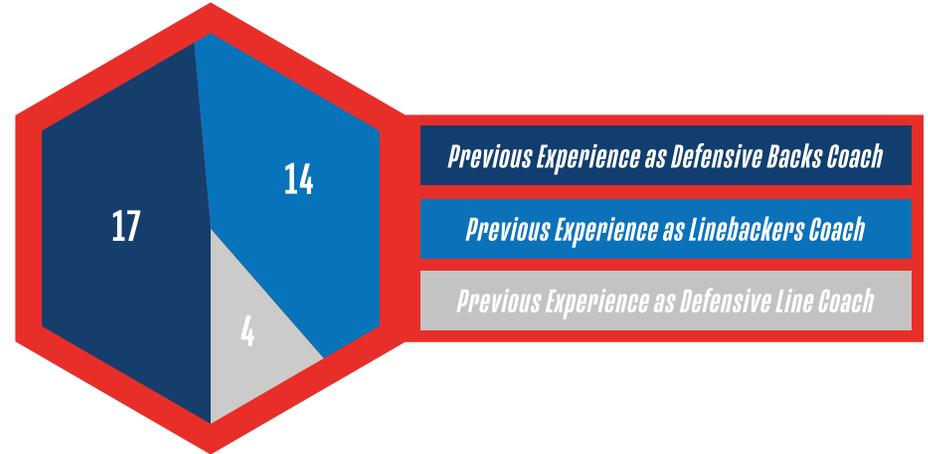
MEN OF COLOR IN CURRENT NFL DEFENSIVE POSITION COACH ROLES



Seventeen of the 31 current NFL defensive coordinators have prior NFL experience as defensive back (secondary) coaches. Fourteen of the 31 current NFL defensive coordinators have prior experience as linebackers coaches at the NFL level. And four current defensive coordinators have prior NFL experience as defensive line coaches (see Figure 22A). Again, this data demonstrates key viable mobility pathways for men of color with respect to earning a defensive coordinator position within the NFL. In addition to developing talent (that is, creating a talent pipeline for hiring decision-makers to consider), it is essential to identify and monitor the main occupational mobility pathways with respect to men of color eventually earning a head coach opportunity.

FIGURE 22A

PREVIOUS CAREER POSITION(S) OF CURRENT DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS



From the start of the 2002 NFL season through February 2022, NFL teams hired a total of 335 defensive coordinators—84 of the hired defensive coordinators served as NFL linebackers coaches in the prior season (including 14 coaches of color), 82 of the hired defensive coordinators worked as an NFL defensive coordinator of a different team in the prior season (including 23 coaches of color), 68 of the hired defensive coordinators served as NFL defensive backs (secondary) coaches in the prior season (including 35 coaches of color), and 30 of the hired defensive coordinators served as an NFL head coach in the prior season (including 7 coaches of color). This 20-year snapshot data on common pathways to becoming an NFL defensive coordinator indicates that former NFL head coaches and defensive coordinators of color have earned more subsequent opportunities to serve as NFL defensive coordinators (as compared with the more limited mobility pathways of coaches of color far less frequently earning an NFL offensive coordinator position after serving as an NFL head coach or offensive coordinator) (see Figure 22B).

FIGURE 22B**NFL DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR PATHWAYS
2002-2022 (20-YEAR SUMMARY DATA)****Coaching Role in Season Prior to Earning Defensive Coordinator Opportunity****335** Total Defensive Coordinators Hired from 2002-2022

The reshuffling effect—and, as a result, restricting the pipeline and pathway for prospective first-time NFL head coaches—remains evident for defensive coordinator hires. For example, 112 of the 335 defensive coordinators hired by NFL teams from the start of the 2002 NFL season through February 2022 (33% of total defensive coordinator hires) previously worked as either an NFL head coach or an NFL defensive coordinator of another team immediately before earning a subsequent NFL defensive coordinator opportunity—only 30 of these 112 former NFL defensive coordinators and head coaches have been men of color, which indicates that White coaches represent more than 73% of the former NFL head coaches and defensive coordinators who have been reshuffled into a subsequent NFL defensive coordinator opportunity.

Six of the nine head coaches hired between February 8, 2021 (day following Super Bowl LV) and February 13, 2022 (day of Super Bowl LVI) have extensive offensive coaching backgrounds including at least one season of NFL offensive coordinator experience (Brian Daboll, Nathaniel Hackett, Mike McDaniel, Josh McDaniels, Doug Pederson and Kevin O’Connell). Similarly, three of the nine recently hired head coaches have extensive defensive coaching backgrounds including multiple seasons of NFL defensive coordinator experience (Dennis Allen, Matt Eberflus and Lovie Smith).

For comparison purposes, two out of the seven head coaches hired between February 3, 2020 (day following Super Bowl LIV) and February 7, 2021 (day of Super Bowl LV) had extensive offensive coaching backgrounds (including NFL offensive coordinator experience) (Nick Sirianni and Arthur Smith), and another two of the head coaches hired during this time period had extensive defensive coaching backgrounds (including NFL defensive coordinator experience) (Robert Saleh and Brandon Staley) before earning this first NFL head coach opportunity. Dan Campbell, David Culley and Urban Meyer had not previously served as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator at the NFL level before earning their first NFL head coach opportunity.

Similarly, two out of the five head coaches hired between February 4, 2019 (day following Super Bowl LIII) and February 2, 2020 (day of Super Bowl LIV) had extensive offensive coaching backgrounds (including NFL offensive coordinator experience) (Mike McCarthy and Kevin Stefanski), as compared with only one head coach hired during this time period with an extensive defensive coaching background (including NFL defensive coordinator experience) (Ron Rivera). Matt Rhule and Joe Judge both had offensive and defensive position coach experience at the college and NFL levels; however, neither of these two current NFL head coaches previously served as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator at the NFL level prior to earning their current NFL head coach position.

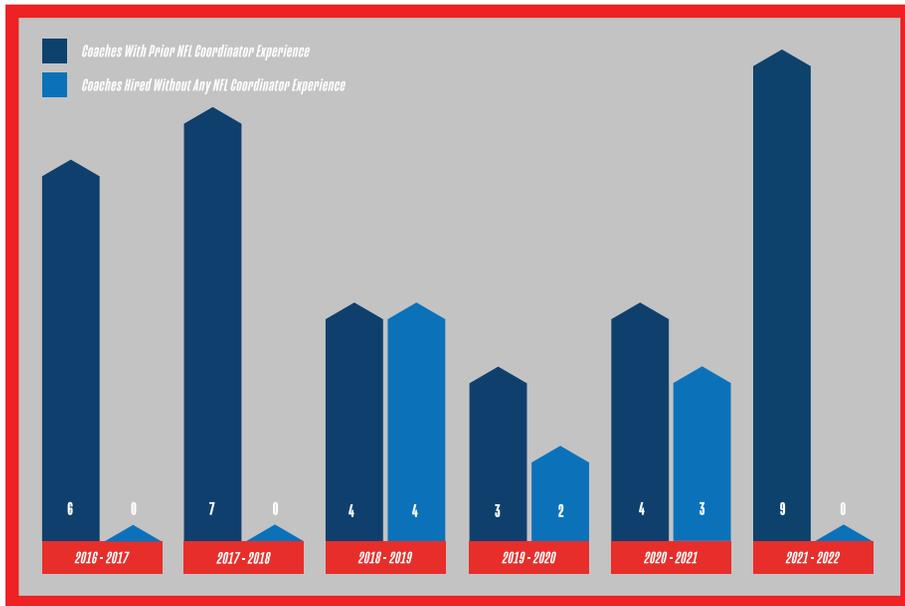
Additionally, six of the eight head coaches hired between February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) and February 3, 2019 (day of Super Bowl LIII) had offensive coaching backgrounds (including NFL offensive coordinator experience) as compared with only two coaches with a defensive coaching background (including NFL defensive coordinator experience); notably—similar to Matt Rhule and Joe Judge—four of these eight NFL head coaches (Brian Flores, Kliff Kingsbury, Freddie Kitchens and Zac Taylor) did not previously officially serve as an NFL level coordinator for at least one NFL season. It is important to note that, while Brian Flores’ official title with the New England Patriots was “linebackers coach,” Flores was responsible for defensive play-calling for the New England Patriots during the 2018 NFL season. In addition, Zac Taylor and Freddie Kitchens each had experience serving as interim offensive coordinators in the NFL for part of one or more seasons before earning their first NFL head coach opportunity—Taylor was also the offensive coordinator for one season at the University of Cincinnati. Kliff Kingsbury had no prior NFL level coaching experience before being hired as head coach of the Arizona Cardinals.

In addition, all seven of the head coaches hired between the day following Super Bowl LI (February 6, 2017) and kickoff at Super Bowl LII (February 4, 2018) had previous NFL level coordinator experience (four as offensive coordinators and three as defensive coordinators).

Finally, all six head coaches hired during the approximate one-year period from the day following Super Bowl 50 (February 8, 2016) to kickoff at Super Bowl LI (February 5, 2017) had prior NFL coordinator experience (four as offensive coordinators and two as defensive coordinators) (see Figure 23).

FIGURE 23

NFL HEAD COACH MOBILITY PATTERNS (2016-2022)



Recent combined research by the authors of this report and the NFL league office reveals that 33 out of 109 NFL head coaches hired from the start of the 2006 NFL season to February 2022 were former NFL head coaches. Six of these 33 “second or greater opportunity” head coaches hired during this same time period were men of color such as Lovie Smith (see Figure 24). Similarly, since the start of the 1963 NFL season, 11 coaches of color (44% of the 25 different head coaches of color from 1963-2022) have received a second head coach opportunity in the NFL—with Lovie Smith recently becoming the first coach of color to earn a third NFL head coaching opportunity. These findings demonstrate that to be hired as a head coach in the NFL, sometimes the perceived most valuable career background is previous experience as an NFL head coach. Overall findings in this research study once again reveal a troubling “reshuffling effect” in which recently “separated” (that is, promoted, fired, resigned, retired or otherwise parted ways) head coaches, offensive coordinators and defensive coordinators immediately received a new coaching opportunity in a key “head coach pipeline position” such as quarterbacks coach and defensive line coach, thereby limiting the overall number of opportunities for prospective first-time NFL head coaches.

FIGURE 24

RACE OF “SECOND OR GREATER OPPORTUNITY” NFL HEAD COACHES HIRED BETWEEN 2006-2022



Findings in this research report also indicate a prevalence of the reshuffling effect with respect to the same individuals repeatedly hired for NFL team coordinator positions, which prevents new talent from entering key head coach pipelines. For example, between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LVI (February 13, 2022), 108 White individuals have received at least a second opportunity to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team. Only 29 men of color have received a similar “second or greater” opportunity during the same time period. Notably, 24 of these 29 “second or greater chances” have been for men of color hired as defensive coordinators with only five men of color receiving a “second or greater chance” to serve as an NFL offensive coordinator (see Figure 25).

FIGURE 25

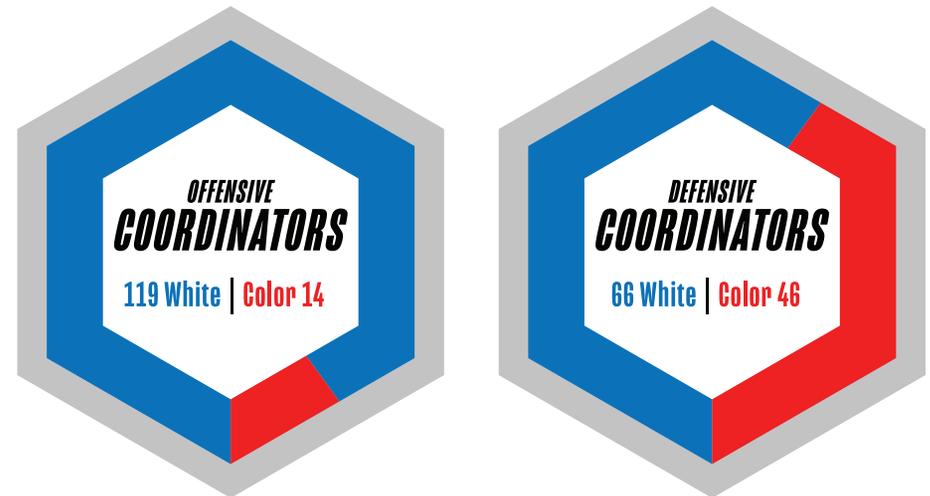
RACE OF "SECOND OR GREATER OPPORTUNITY" NFL OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS HIRED BETWEEN 2012-2022



While it is somewhat encouraging that 41% of the defensive coordinators hired (46 out of 112) since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season are coordinators of color, only 11% (14 out of 133) of the offensive coordinators hired during this same time period have been coordinators of color (see Figure 26). In addition, although it is likewise encouraging that Pep Hamilton, Patrick Graham, Teryl Austin, Alan Williams and Kris Richard each recently earned another opportunity to serve as an NFL offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator in the most recent hiring cycle, the hiring of these “second chance or greater” coordinators nonetheless prevents new prospects of color from entering the head coach talent pipeline and overall core upward football coaching career mobility pathways.

FIGURE 26

RACE OF NFL OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS HIRED BETWEEN 2012-2022



Overall, findings within the current research study support the need for a continued emphasis by both NFL league and team personnel on further developing programming for position coaches of color in order to create a more robust pathway to offensive and defensive coordinator opportunities. The data in this report also indicates that inherent contradictions exist within the common pipelines to becoming an NFL coordinator or head coach. Stated differently, some of the coordinators and head coaches hired during the most recent two annual hiring cycles (2020-2022) “skipped a step” in terms of earning a coordinator or head coach opportunity without the typical prerequisite NFL level experience—this underscores the importance of social capital, personal branding, attribution bias and other variables not based on actual career experience during the team leader selection process.

Coordinator Tenure—Constant Turnover Negatively Impacts Opportunity for Coordinators of Color to Prove Themselves

This research study also analyzed the tenure/stint (that is, length of time in current positions) of all current offensive coordinators and defensive coordinators. High position turnover rates have been prevalent at the NFL coordinator level in recent years. For instance, NFL teams have made 90 total changes at the offensive coordinator position during the previous seven NFL seasons. Similarly, NFL teams have made 73 total changes at the defensive coordinator position during the previous seven NFL seasons. This extremely high turnover rate in key team leadership roles is not ideal from a player development or career trajectory and sustainability perspective. Additional patience and more realistic expectations by those who hire and fire offensive and defensive coordinators remains critical to both creating and sustaining eventual head coaching opportunities for men of color—it is imperative to develop programming and strategies to expand the length of tenure (“opportunity to prove themselves”) for offensive and defensive coordinators of color. Leadership stability and continuity are essential for creating true culture pivots.

For current NFL offensive coordinators, the average length of time is only 1.4 seasons in the current position. Twenty-three current NFL offensive coordinators have been in their current position for two NFL seasons or fewer. More specifically, 13 offensive coordinators will be entering their first season in such position during the upcoming 2022 NFL season, eight offensive coordinators will be starting their second NFL season in their current offensive coordinator position, and two offensive coordinators will be starting their third NFL season in their current offensive coordinator position. Four NFL offensive coordinators have been in their current position for three prior NFL seasons and will be starting their fourth season as offensive coordinator. Only two NFL offensive coordinators have been in their current position for four or more prior NFL seasons (Eric Bieniemy and Pete Carmichael) (see Figure 27).

The data is comparable for the stint/tenure of current NFL defensive coordinators; the average length of time is approximately 1.1 seasons in the current position. Twenty-six current NFL defensive coordinators have been in their current position for two or fewer NFL seasons. More specifically, 12 defensive coordinators will be entering their first season in such position during the upcoming 2022 NFL season, ten defensive coordinators will be starting their second NFL season in their current defensive coordinator position, and four defensive coordinators will be starting their third NFL season in their current defensive coordinator position. Four NFL defensive coordinators have been in their current position for three prior NFL seasons and will be starting their fourth season as defensive coordinator. And only one NFL defensive coordinator (Leslie Frazier) has been in his current position for four or more prior NFL seasons (see Figure 28). Six NFL teams made changes at both the offensive coordinator and defensive coordinator positions during the most recent hiring cycle (2021-2022), as compared with seven NFL teams making changes at both the offensive coordinator and defensive coordinator positions during the preceding hiring cycle (2020-2021).

FIGURE 27

**NFL OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR TENURE IN CURRENT POSITION
(AT START OF 2022 NFL SEASON)**

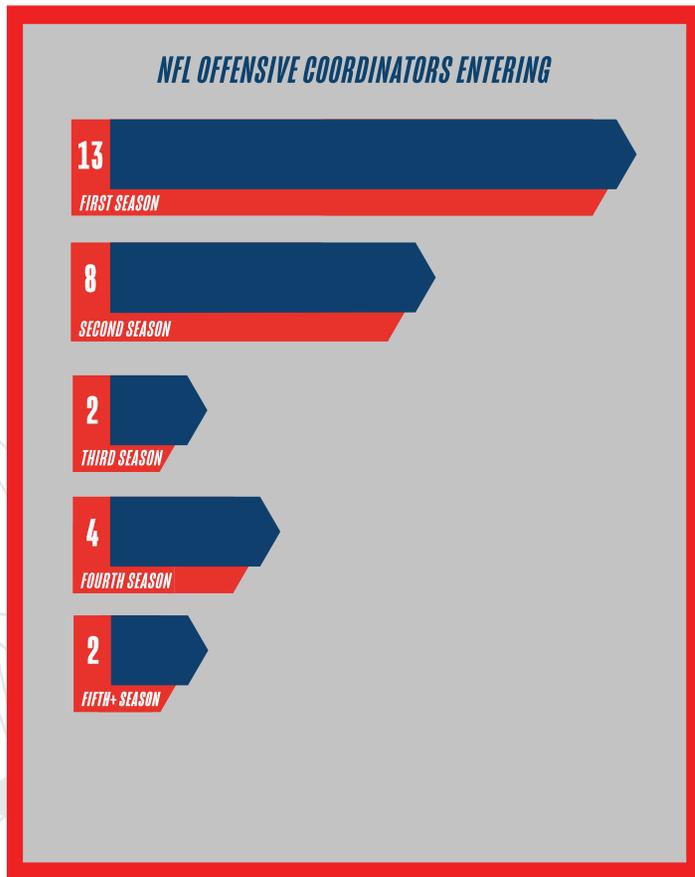
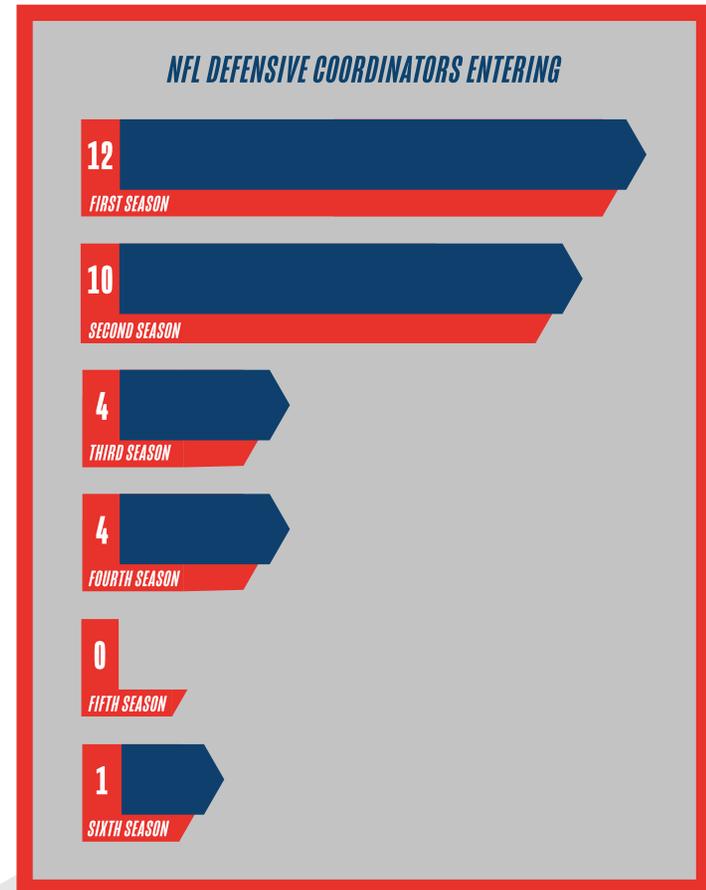


FIGURE 28

**NFL DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR TENURE IN CURRENT POSITION
(AT START OF 2022 NFL SEASON)**



The average tenure/stint in the current position for the four men of color in NFL offensive coordinator positions is 2 seasons. Only one African American offensive coordinator (Pep Hamilton) was recently hired or promoted internally, as compared with three offensive coordinators of color hired during the preceding annual hiring cycle (2020-2021). Eric Bieniemy will be starting his fifth NFL season as offensive coordinator of the Kansas City Chiefs, Byron Leftwich will be entering his fourth season as offensive coordinator of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Marcus Brady will be entering his second season as offensive coordinator of the Indianapolis Colts (see Figure 29).

The average tenure/stint in the current position for the 15 current men of color in defensive coordinator positions is 1.1 seasons—no current defensive coordinator of color has served in their current defensive coordinator position for more than five prior NFL seasons. Seven defensive coordinators of color will be starting their first NFL season in their current defensive coordinator position, four defensive coordinators of color will be starting their second NFL season in their current defensive coordinator position, one defensive coordinator of color will be entering his third NFL season in their current defensive coordinator position, two defensive coordinators of color will be starting their fourth NFL season in their current defensive coordinator position and one defensive coordinator of color will be entering a sixth NFL season in his current defensive coordinator position (see Figure 30).

FIGURE 29

NFL TENURE FOR OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS OF COLOR IN CURRENT POSITION (AT START OF 2022 NFL SEASON)

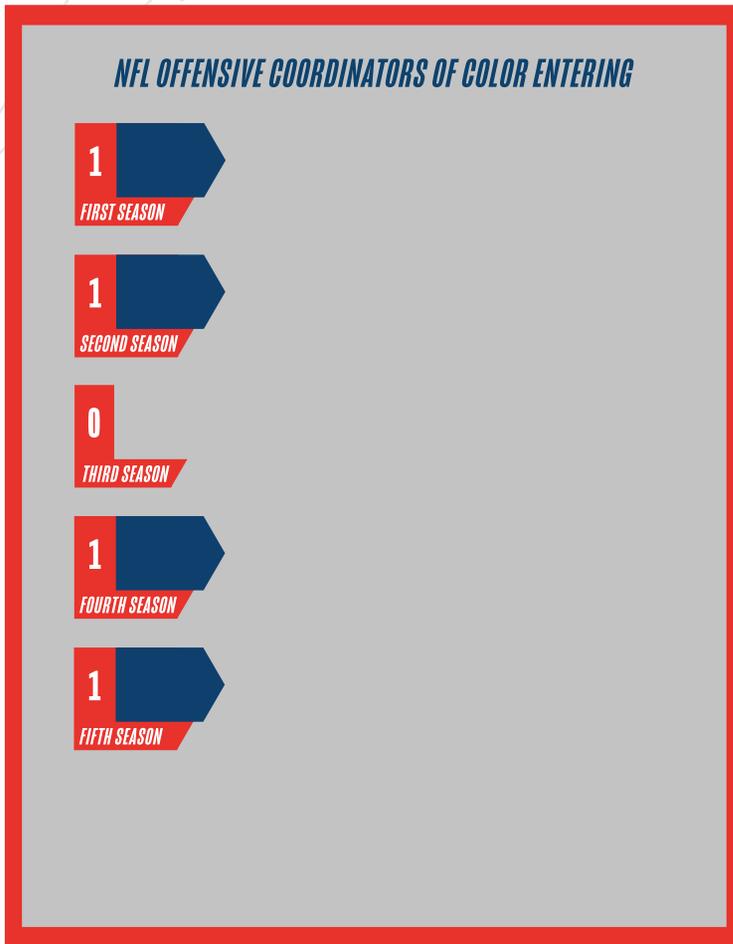
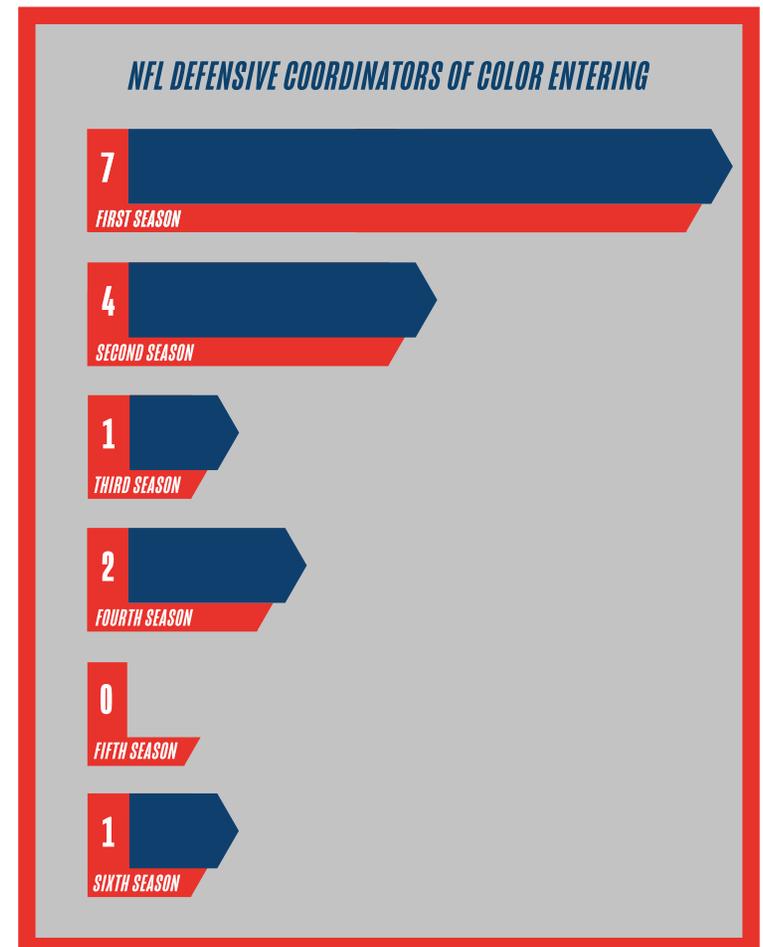


FIGURE 30

NFL TENURE FOR DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS OF COLOR IN CURRENT POSITION (AT START OF 2022 NFL SEASON)



PRACTICAL PROPOSALS AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous editions of this annual occupational mobility report, more than 35 policy and programmatic proposals have been developed and proposed—numerous of which have been embraced, implemented and/or adapted by the NFL league office. Nonetheless, each hiring cycle seems to reinforce the reality that no matter how many innovative and practical data-driven policies and initiatives are created, sustainable change will not occur until the hearts and minds/perspectives of those making the hiring decisions shift and the resultant selection process for head coaches, coordinators and general managers truly becomes more merit-based and as close to bias-free as possible.

The overall Rooney Rule scope continues to expand and evolve. The aspirational goal is for all NFL teams to transition from a rules compliance and compensatory draft pick incentivization perspective to a hiring and talent development mindset that truly values equity, fairness, inclusivity, culture, trust, and merit. A permanent change in hiring cultures is absolutely critical in addition to the fluctuating gradual incremental improvements concerning the percentage of coaches and other team leaders of color hired each season. In the words of NFL Executive Vice President of Football Operations Troy Vincent, “We should be creating a workplace culture that doesn’t require mandates to interview people of color and minorities . . . Teams should be doing the right thing for the right reasons, not because there is a policy . . . It’s not about percentages. It’s about intentionally normalizing fairness, inclusivity and opportunity as an extension of football for all.”

Based on the cumulative outcomes of the most recent head coach, coordinator and general manager hiring cycle combined with the troubling Urban Meyer head coach hiring and firing situation in Jacksonville, this research report revamps and reiterates two primary practical proposals and strategic recommendations from previous reports that largely focus on the overall importance of due diligence, player involvement/input, transparency, and compelling consistent evaluative criteria along with measurable goals during the hiring process.

Encouraging Player Involvement During Head Coach Interview Process

In December 2021, the Jacksonville Jaguars fired head coach Urban Meyer during his first season coaching the team. Based on publicly available information, it appears that Shad Khan (team owner of the Jaguars) functioned as the key decision maker in terms of the ostensibly rushed process of hiring Urban Meyer. Shortly after hiring Meyer, Khan commented to the media, “this time I got it right.” It turns out that Khan did not get that hiring decision right—at all. Trevor Lawrence, starting quarterback for the Jaguars, acknowledged that he would like to play “some role” and have direct input in the search and selection process for the next head coach. Lawrence’s perspective is both understandable and rational. It is essential for NFL head coaches to be able to authentically connect with and relate to players in addition to earning the trust and respect of players. Coaching qualities such as compassion, relatability, and mutual respect are essential to establishing and maintaining an inclusive and empowering team culture.

Accordingly, it is suggested that the NFL develop a formalized process to involve select players on each hiring team during the head coach interview and subsequent selection process. For example, in addition to team owners and other front office executives such as a general manager (or similar team leader such as the executive vice president of football operations) and/or team president and/or general counsel being involved in the decision-making process concerning the hiring of a new head coach, four players on each team hiring a new head coach would be a part of all conversations and interviews concerning new head coach hiring decisions. It is recommended that at least two of the four head coach interview player representatives on each team be players of color. These team player representatives for the head coach hiring process could either be the four players that serve as the representative and co-alternates on the NFLPA board of player representatives or, conversely, all players on a particular team with a head coach vacancy could participate in a separate voting process to select interview process player representatives immediately prior to the commencement of the head coach selection process (for instance, such a vote would have taken place prior to the Jaguars creating a list of head coach prospects after Urban Meyer was terminated and with two weeks remaining in the regular season).

Engaging select players during the head coach interview process would further ensure that the players’ perspective and input is both heard and valued. Involving players in the interview process would in no way diminish or adversely impact the role of the team owner or other football operations and business operations executives during the head coach selection process—rather, engaging players would provide additional insight and intel from the perspective of a key constituent (the players themselves). Player interview representatives and team owners could participate in league-developed immersive training programs on how to identify coaching talent and what variables should be prioritized during the hiring process.

Improving Interview Transparency and Developing Key Candidate Evaluative Criteria

The NFL could consider making the head coach hiring process even more transparent via the development of a consistent set of candidate evaluation guidelines. Key components might include the following checklist with subjective and objective factors that each decision-maker on hiring teams would rank and assess: (1) level of trust in candidate to effectively coach team; (2) perceived leadership ability of candidate; (3) candidate's previous win/loss record and overall coaching success; (4) candidate's career experience including NFL level coordinator and position coach experience; (5) relationships with decision-makers at the team with which the candidate is interviewing; (6) how the coach was referred to the team; (7) a comparison to other candidates previously interviewed by the team for the position; and (8) the impact of virtual interviews as compared with in-person interviews with respect to prospects earning the position.

Improving a process usually results in improving corresponding outcomes—outcomes that reflect equitable competition for open positions. League executives and/or independent consultants could analyze key performance factors/indicators of coaches (for example, overall performance of offense and overall performance of players at position coached such as linebackers) to further determine whether coaching performance or other variables drive the reshuffling effect. Currently, the evaluative criteria utilized by hiring decision-makers seems to consistently shift each hiring cycle with respect to what prior coaching experience, leadership attributes and other non-cognitive variables are deemed essential for new head coach and other team leadership hires. The NFL could also create more detailed guidelines on specific variables that should be valued and evaluated by teams during the general manager, head coach and coordinator hiring process so that candidates fully understand the criteria by which they will be evaluated. Teams might be more likely to adhere to a checklist of objective assessment criteria instead of relying on intuition, social capital connectivity and other non-performance based evaluative criteria. In addition, systematic interview feedback could help the league, teams and external advocacy groups better prepare prospective head coach candidates for future interviews so men of color like Eric Bieniemy would be better able to understand how all seven teams with open head coach positions in early 2021 requested to interview him but none of them ultimately offered him the head coach position.

The NFL is encouraged to further examine the conversations and all other communications and correspondence that take place between hiring managers (for example, team owners, general managers, and team presidents of business operations), “interview influencers” and job candidates in addition to the current required interview list disclosures. Investigating this type of discourse beyond the formal interview process could shed unique and enlightening insight into the many intangible and difficult to quantify variables that result in candidates securing general manager, head coach and coordinator positions. In particular, it is essential to gain more insight into the actual head coach interview process from the perspective of both the hiring managers (for example, team owners) and interviewees (for example, head coach candidates). One recommendation is to require all head coach interviews to be recorded via video for quality control, consistency and analysis purposes as a supplement to the current excellent league approach of seeking input from candidates not selected for head coach opportunities along with candid feedback team representatives. The NFL could then effectively and efficiently identify interview trends and themes and make data-driven strategic decisions based on coding of the interview data. It would also be helpful to learn more about how much weight teams place on head coach interviews as compared with the candidates' body of work and overall experience.

Hurried hiring processes typically do not produce optimal outcomes. The hiring process for team leaders still needs to evolve, as does the thought process and evaluative criteria of many hiring managers. In addition to increasing the number of qualified candidates of color who interview for each open coordinator, head coach and general manager position, it is imperative to ensure that these qualified candidates are perceived as being “qualified” by the individuals who make the hiring decisions. A candidate's job prospects will be impacted by intangible factors such as trust and perceived competence in addition to tangible factors such as actual performance in past coaching or coordinator position(s).

All league and team stakeholders must remain committed to long-term sustainable collaborative outcomes to further improve diversity, equity and inclusion at all levels. Team owners remain in the most compelling position to help accelerate the pace of change and ensure that the commitment to diversity and inclusion remains a priority in future hiring cycles. Equitable access to career opportunities is essential. It is imperative to educate, enlighten, encourage, and empower team owners and other key decision makers in order to shift personal perspectives, perceptions, preferences, priorities and processes.

"While I acknowledge that we have not seen progress in the ranks of head coaches, we have seen marked improvement in the hiring of women and minorities in other key leadership roles such as coordinator positions, general manager positions, and front office positions both in and out of football operations. I believe this progress has been made as a result of the implementation of many of the enhanced policies that were recently adopted."

Art Rooney II, Pittsburgh Steelers Team President