



***OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY PATTERNS  
IN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE***

VOLUME VIII



# OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY PATTERNS IN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

VOLUME VIII | MAY 2019



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**A REPORT PRESENTED BY THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

Recommended citation for report: Harrison, C.K. and Bukstein, S. (2019). Occupational Mobility Patterns in the National Football League (Volume VIII).

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

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## **MESSAGE FROM TROY VINCENT, NFL EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF FOOTBALL OPERATIONS**

Since the first Diversity and Inclusion Coaching Mobility Report in 2013, it has been noted that the NFL has led the sports industry by intentionally hiring a diverse and inclusive workforce, as well as increasing opportunity for minority coaches. While improvement is evident, there must be an ongoing effort to break mobility barriers and establish a cultural norm of opportunity for all. The NFL recognizes these challenges and is committed to taking practical steps to ensure concrete results.

Clubs are encouraged to make a greater commitment to developing a talent pipeline that includes their younger coaches. For example, running back and wide receiver coaches being invited to participate in game planning sessions, and allowing younger coaches to call plays in the preseason or joint scrimmages. Fellowships and internships for entry-level minority coaches, scouts and front office personnel also are in development.

League events are now serving as networking opportunities to connect minority head coaches and position coaches with hiring personnel. Coaching staff selection for the East-West Shrine Game and the Senior Bowl will focus on up-and-coming minority coaches. An expanded Advisory Panel brings additional expertise in identifying prospective candidates from both the professional and collegiate ranks. The League also is proactively increasing candidate visibility by amplifying rising minority coaches through its various channels.

The Quarterback Coaching Summit will expose current college and professional quarterback coaches and offensive coordinators to game administration, offensive philosophy implementation, and quarterback development. There are also plans to launch a year-long NCAA-NFL Offensive Academy to develop coaches on the intricacies of offensive philosophy, planning, developing staff, leading, and interviewing for offensive positions.

In addition, the NFL is engaging in year-round development of prospects and opportunities by collaborating with HBCU leadership, the Fritz-Pollard Alliance, and the NFL Career Advisory Panel. Efforts are ongoing to identify and assist candidates with interview preparation, hiring and managing staff, internal and external communications, leadership development, and other essential skills.

The Occupational Mobility Report has provided insight on how our efforts are working, lending key information toward developing the strategies we employ to advance diversity and inclusion in our very unique workplace. Diversity is good business. Inclusion makes it work.

## MESSAGE FROM DR. C. KEITH HARRISON, LEAD INVESTIGATOR AND RESEARCHER

There are no final victories” is often the mantra of noted scholar and sociologist of sport Professor Emeritus Dr. Harry Edwards. The 2018-19 cycle of hiring and firing of NFL head coaches (especially coaches of color in particular) is fruitful for understanding that the more things change the more they stay the same. During the most recent hiring and firing cycle, several men of color were hired for head coach and coordinator opportunities.

The interesting thing to note is that “hiring trees” were traditionally tied to the “old school” coaches with many years of experience. In contemporary society, the 33-year-old head coach of the Los Angeles Rams, Sean McVay, has been deemed to have his own tree with less than three years head coaching experience. Coach McVay has been very successful his first two seasons, which includes making the playoffs twice and the Super Bowl runner-ups this past season. In fact, his success is tied to his skill-set as “quarterback guru” that can develop players at the position. This trend of head coaches with origins as creative offensive coordinators is so prevalent that we saw something perplexing to many occur in early 2019. The previous head coach of the Arizona Cardinals (Steve Wilks) was fired after one season and replaced with a former college coach who was fired by Texas Tech University with a 36-40 record and 1-2 record in bowl games.

Kliff Kingsbury was hired after briefly being hired by the University of Southern California as the football team’s offensive coordinator. I know Coach Kingsbury and really respect many things about him. One fact is that in 2017 Coach Kingsbury comprised the most African American assistant coaches at the FBS level, which says a great deal about his values of good coaches and incorporating diversity, equity, inclusion, and innovation in all that he does. However, the obvious must be stated—would a coach of color be fired from a collegiate level job and then hired by an NFL team as its new head coach? There is no data to support that this would occur, nor after five firings of head coaches of color by NFL teams were any of the men reshuffled as head coaches with other teams (some did get hired as assistant coaches and coordinators). The justification of Kingsbury being hired is he is part of the new trend that McVay has pioneered with his own tree now.

So is there a light at the end of the tunnel with occupational mobility? Yes! Coach Flores, the former star defensive coordinator of the New England Patriots who helped New England win the Super Bowl in 2019, held the “guru” Coach McVay and his powerful offense to three points in the Super Bowl. The Miami Dolphins hired Coach Flores as their head coach for the upcoming season, which he has the opportunity to contribute to the trend that McVay has started. Can Flores and his ethnic representation as a younger man of color start a trend with his superior skills as a defensive coordinator and now head coach? Only time will tell.

# REPORT BACKGROUND

In 1963, the National Football League (NFL) began tracking data on the occupational mobility patterns of head coaches. From January 1963 to February 2019, only 18 different African American men and four Latino men have served as head coaches in the NFL. As of February 2019, four head coaches of color led NFL teams as compared with 28 White NFL head coaches.

Previous empirical and other data-driven studies on NFL coaches and other key team leaders have generally focused on the effectiveness of the Rooney Rule (for example, analyzing the hiring process and proposing new strategies to increase the number of head coaches of color) as well as comparing the win/loss records of head coaches (for example, determining whether coaches of color are provided with a truly meaningful opportunity to turn around a team with a losing record) (see Cochran & Mehri, 2002; Madden & Ruther, 2011; Thornton, 2009).

This NFL Diversity & Inclusion research report series began analyzing data on occupational mobility patterns commencing with the start of the 2012 NFL regular season in order to develop actionable data-driven policy and best practices recommendations. The current study on occupational mobility patterns expands and complements existing research within this space via an extensive analysis related to whether ethnic minorities face occupational access barriers 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.

The current empirical research study aims to address the following three 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?***
- 3. What are examples of innovative practical strategies with respect to improving career opportunities for coaches and other leaders of color within the NFL?***

Based on the findings of the current study, the NFL and teams within the league must continue to focus on retention, career progression, continued access and “life after being a head coach” in addition to the central goal of the Rooney Rule related to initial entry/access for ethnic minorities.<sup>1</sup> 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. For example, since the start of the 1963 NFL season, 112 White individuals have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a first NFL head coach opportunity, whereas only 18 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

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that mere technical compliance with Rooney Rule requirements does not guarantee that men of color are truly provided with a meaningful opportunity to compete for open general manager and head coach positions.

the start of the 1963 NFL season, 24 White individuals have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a second NFL head coach opportunity, whereas only three men of color have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a second head coach opportunity.

Nonetheless, the hiring of Lovie Smith and Jim Caldwell as “second opportunity” NFL head coaches in 2014 along with the hiring of Hue Jackson as a “second opportunity” NFL head coach in January 2016 serve as indicators of improvement and hope.<sup>2</sup> As of February 2019, ten out of the 22 total NFL head coaches of color from 1963-2019 have earned a second opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. 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. For example, seven of the 16 recently hired offensive coordinators have previously served as an NFL offensive coordinator; in addition, seven of the ten recently hired defensive coordinators have previously served as an NFL defensive coordinator. This “reshuffling effect” reduces the number of opportunities for new candidates to break into the head coach pipeline.

The following review of literature section provides an overview of relevant empirical research on occupational mobility patterns in the sport business industry. Social capital theory, particularistic mobility thesis, minority vulnerability thesis, and performance-reward bias constructs provide a foundational theoretical framework for the current research study. One of the primary objectives of this research report is to apply existing empirical research to the findings of the current study in order to create awareness and accelerate transparency with the ultimate aspiration of reducing the degree of racial bias and other biases embedded within the hiring process (see Pope et al., 2018).

**““ Since the start of the 1963 NFL season, 112 White individuals have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a first NFL head coach opportunity, whereas only 18 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, 24 White individuals have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a second NFL head coach opportunity, whereas only three men of color have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a second head coach opportunity. ””**

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<sup>2</sup> In March 2016, Lovie Smith became the first former NFL head coach of color to be named a head coach of a college football team in the Football Bowl Subdivision when he accepted the head football coach position at the University of Illinois.



# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## *Performance-Reward Bias*

Rider et al. (2016) researched racial disparity in NFL leadership positions and examined how “performance-reward bias” (for example, lesser rewards for equivalent performance) generates a racial disparity in leadership by suppressing the rate at which minorities—relative to equally-performing whites—are promoted to positions considered a prerequisite for organizational leadership. These scholars found that performance-reward bias was prevalent in lower level positions (for example, position coaches). For instance, coaches of color were initially hired into positions with inferior promotion prospects and then subsequently “stacked” into positions with similarly inferior promotion probabilities. As explained by Rider et al. (2016), performance-reward bias “is a specific within-job mechanism that generates differential returns to position for equivalent performance in the same position . . . performance-reward bias implies that even when racial minorities are allocated to relatively promising positions, they are less likely to continue ascending the corporate hierarchy as white, equivalently-performing position-holders” (pp. 2, 9). Stated differently, in order to earn equally positive subjective evaluations of performance, “racial minorities must invest more in personal relationships, education, and the accumulation of work experience before their promotion prospects become equivalent to those of white employees” (p. 13).

This empirical research study by Rider et al. (2016) suggests “pipeline programs designed to increase diversity in leadership by increasing diversity in lower level positions are undermined by performance-reward bias” (p. 6). For example, performance-reward bias in key lower-level positions such as quarterbacks coach, linebackers coach, and defensive backs (secondary) coach results in access barriers for men of color with respect to the inability of attaining key leadership positions such as offensive coordinator and defensive coordinator. Rider et al. (2016) found “clear evidence of a racial disparity in promotion prospects for NFL assistant coaches

that have persisted for over two decades despite a high-profile intervention designed to advance the candidacies of minority candidates” (p. 36). Findings from this study and parallel recent empirical research studies suggest that “racial stereotypes continue to be influential in football culture and leadership” (Siler, 2018).<sup>3</sup>

## *Particularistic Mobility Thesis and Minority Vulnerability Thesis*

Day (2015) investigated the effects of job-level, task-based segregation on racial differences in college football coaching promotions. Day (2015) examined the connection between occupational attainment of college coaches and the particularistic mobility thesis. The particularistic mobility thesis can be defined as “the predominant theoretical explanation for racial/ethnic differences in both authority attainment and promotions in the labor market, particularly in high-status professions” (p. 3). As explained by Day (2015), “According to the particularistic mobility thesis, performance indicators in high-level positions are inherently vague and uncertain, and the characteristics that upper management looks for when considering promotions such as loyalty, leadership potential, trustworthiness, and achievement orientation are not easily measured and quantified. This mobility report opens promotion decisions to ‘particularistic manipulation,’ or the subjective (mis) perceptions of upper level managers” (p. 3). Day (2015) applied the particularistic mobility thesis to examine race-based occupational mobility differences that result from “subjective aspects of work, such as upper level managers’ (mis)perceptions, stereotypes, and biased evaluations of workers’ managerial abilities” (p. 25).

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<sup>3</sup> As explained by Kay et al. (2009), NFL leadership candidates of color “will have to do more than simply overcome the obstacles inherent in how the current social system is structured; they will also have to alter how people think it should be structured” (p. 421-22).

Day (2015) further explained that, as a result of these (mis) perceptions of key decision makers, “minority workers follow a more circumscribed pathway to high-level positions where they are limited to formal channels of mobility based on their objective experience, credentials and skills. White workers, on the other hand, not only have access to formal channels of mobility but also benefit from the subjective and sometimes biased assessments of their skills and abilities” (pp. 3-4). Day (2015) suggested that candidates of color experience “restricted access to jobs, occupations, and economic sectors that offer the opportunity to develop requisite human capital, social network contacts, and display the particularistic criteria necessary for promotion into high-status jobs and occupations has been implicated in divergent mobility outcomes for White and Black workers” (p. 2). Day concluded that, “if coaches are hired into executive positions based on their perceived intangible traits (for example, loyalty, leadership abilities, and work effort), in addition to their real or perceived professional experience and technical expertise, the particularistic manipulation of these traits and skills will likely lead to more numerous and less constricted promotion opportunities for White coaches than for Black coaches” (p. 25).

In a similar recent empirical research study that investigated racial differences in occupational mobility patterns of college football coaches, Day (2018) found that, “congruent with the particularistic mobility thesis, black coaches were less likely than white coaches to traverse mobile career patterns and, congruent with the minority vulnerability thesis, were more likely to become stuck in stagnant career trajectories characterized by low-level positions that presumably make them more vulnerable to dismissal and downward mobility” such as being demoted/reassigned from defensive coordinator to linebackers coach (p. 11).<sup>4</sup> Day (2018) also examined the impact of rushed/hurried hiring decisions—according to the particularistic mobility and minority vulnerability theses, the “quick, secret, and informal processes are expected to produce better outcomes for white coaches and worse outcomes for black coaches” (p. 12).<sup>5</sup>

4 The minority vulnerability thesis posits that “African Americans experience different rates of promotion, are less likely to attain authoritative positions within work organizations, and are more likely to experience downward mobility in high status occupations” (Day, 2018, p. 2).

## ***Unconscious Bias and Social Capital***

Scholars have previously examined how unconscious bias and aversive racism impact occupational mobility (for example, see Bridgeman, 2008; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998; and Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). Because these processes and biases are “subtle and operate largely by default” (Wang, 2006, p. 16), company decision-makers (e.g., general managers of NFL teams) are prone to categorize and stereotype with respect to a candidate’s qualifications for a specific opportunity without any intent or conscious awareness. As explained by Bridgeman (2008), “many people who do not consider themselves to be racist or sexist and who generally may want to have a diverse working environment may still select people for participation in ways that are biased and discriminatory” (p. 267). Collins (2007) examined the impact of the Rooney Rule and the importance of “social capital.” Collins suggested, “due in large part to unconscious bias; these networks tend to reinforce traditional power structures by limiting hiring practices and/or business transactions to other elites or acquaintances within the network . . . Since it is unconscious, this bias is neither cognitive nor intentional . . . unconscious bias influences head coaching selections through the internalization of stereotypes regarding African Americans’ intellectual inferiority and the establishment and maintenance of ‘old boy’ networks” (pp. 875, 876).<sup>6</sup>

Social capital can be defined as “the goodwill that is engendered by the fabric of social relations and that can be mobilized to facilitate action” (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 17). Social capital influences career success (see Gabbay & Zuckerman, 1998) and creates a richer pool of recruits for companies (see Fernandez, Castilla, & Moore, 2000).

5 In another recent empirical study assessing the particularistic mobility thesis, Wilson et al. (2018) concluded that, “African Americans, relative to Whites, have low rates of mobility and are restricted to relying on a circumscribed and formal mobility route that is structured by a traditional range of stratification-based causal factors, i.e., background socio-economic status, human capital and job/labor market characteristics . . . a racialized glass ceiling in mobility prospects emerges across destinations based on two criteria—income and supervisory authority.”

6 Art Rooney II, president of the Pittsburgh Steelers, offered the following narrative in February 2019: “We have to judge our progress on the results. It’s like looking at your team. You are what your record says you are. I’m not going to sit here and accuse anyone of racism, but the facts are what they are. We have to look at the opportunities that were given to minorities this latest round and see what can be done about it.”

Day and McDonald (2010) analyzed the “differential processes by which social capital influences occupational attainment of whites and racial minorities” with respect to collegiate football coaches; these scholars found that people of color often lack the social capital resources (i.e., resources embedded in networks) needed to facilitate occupational advancement (p. 140). Day and McDonald (2010) found that same race contacts and strong ties are positively associated with the number of promotions received by White coaches; however, those same ties were found to be the least effective for African American coaches because “a diverse set of weak-tied network resources offer the greatest opportunities for promotion among black coaches . . . access to higher status contacts also appears to be a more important predictor of mobility among black coaches than among white coaches” (p. 140).

This reality is significant as Sagas and Cunningham (2005) explained that the “lack of same-race ties among Black coaches thus can be detrimental to the development and success of Black coaches” (p. 791). In a similar empirical research study, Cunningham and Sagas (2005) analyzed the notion of access discrimination with respect to coaching positions in college athletics. These scholars found that, based on the predominance of same-race hiring practices, personnel decisions in college athletics are often influenced by “who you know who is racially similar” (p. 157).

Kilduff et al. (2016) recently extended the social network research literature with an empirical investigation related to the career mobility impact of aspiring NFL head coach candidates (i.e., “acolytes”)<sup>7</sup> developing “advantageous connections” with high-reputation industry leaders (e.g., NFL head coaches such as Bill Belichick and Mike Tomlin). These scholars investigated the occupational mobility patterns of 1,298 NFL head coaches and position coaches from 1980-2010 in order to determine the long-term significance of initially beneficial workplace ties between acolytes and high-reputation leaders. Kilduff et al. (2016) concluded that “affiliation with a successful leader can facilitate or damage career progress, even in an industry in which quantitative indicators of performance are routinely used to assess outcomes” (p. 371). Kilduff et al. (2016) observed that “high-reputation social connections can be considered not just as signals of underlying quality” but also as “lenses that

potentially distort individuals’ qualities both beneficially (in terms of enhancing the value of prior performance) and detrimentally (in terms of ex post settling up)” (pp. 369-70). One of the primary practical implications of the research study was as follows: “The results concerning NFL promotions indicate an industry system in which social connections, rather than just skills and abilities, enable people to move into positions such as head coach” (p. 370).

Seebruck and Savage (2013) examined how an assistant coach’s race and the race of his supervisor (the head coach) interact to affect occupational mobility. Seebruck and Savage (2013) found that African American collegiate basketball assistant coaches working under African American head coaches (“black homophily”) were significantly disadvantaged with respect to the probability of earning a head coaching position; results indicated that while homophily (same race connection) is neither advantageous nor disadvantageous for White job candidates, it is disadvantageous for African American job candidates. As explained by Seebruck and Savage (2013), “this racially based disadvantage makes it difficult for minority job candidates to break through the glass ceiling and has real-world financial implications . . . effort should be directed at ensuring that white coaches continue to hire and sponsor capable minority assistant coaches” (pp. 75, 98).

In another recent empirical study within the sports context, Pope, Price, and Wolfers (2018) analyzed the behavior of National Basketball Association (NBA) referees in order to examine the potential impact of racial bias with respect to the number of fouls called on players by referees. The findings of this research study suggest that publicity and awareness providing “evidence of racial bias was enough to bring about meaningful change . . . simply making individuals more aware of their own bias leads them to have decreased prejudice . . . incentives, pressure, and transparency can change racial biases” (pp. 4991-4992). As explained by Pope et al. (2018), “while social and legal changes have eliminated many institutionalized forms of racial discrimination, the same policy tools may have less leverage against the implicit racial stereotypes that underpin in-group favoritism” (p. 4988).

<sup>7</sup> An “acolyte” can be defined as someone who has experience working on the same management team as one or more high-reputation leaders (see Kilduff et al., 2016).

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study investigated data regarding NFL head coach demographics, tenure and occupational mobility patterns from 1963-2019. This specific range of years is utilized because 1963 serves as the first year during which the NFL began to track relevant data on head coach mobility patterns. Based on the NFL archival human resource database on head coaches, these data were analyzed to determine occupational mobility patterns. Interim head coaches were not included in the data set with respect to determining the total number of people who have held head coach positions in the NFL from 1963-2019. This study also contains data regarding NFL offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator, and general manager demographics as well as tenure and mobility patterns from the start of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012)<sup>8</sup> to kickoff at Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019). This study also highlights mobility patterns of head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers during the approximate one-year period from the day following Super Bowl LII (February 5, 2018) to kickoff at Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019). Specific emphasis is placed on the occupational mobility patterns of offensive coordinators and defensive coordinators because these two positions have historically functioned as the primary occupational pipelines for NFL head coach hires.<sup>9</sup> This study also spotlights additional key head coach “pipeline positions” such as quarterbacks coach, linebackers coach and defensive backs (secondary) coach.

A comprehensive database of descriptive data was also developed to analyze 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 study integrates descriptive data from recent relevant research

conducted by the NFL related to occupational mobility and job success determinants of NFL head coaches.

Researchers verified the number of vacancies filled and individual separations, trajectories and occupational patterns of NFL head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers based on data provided by the NFL. For example, if an individual was a head coach for multiple NFL teams, this study counts that coach one time in the data set because this study focuses on an analysis of access, opportunity and coaching mobility (i.e., the number of individuals who have held head coach positions) instead of the total number of head coach vacancies from 1963-2019. This analytical framework was also applied to the occupational mobility patterns of offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers from 2012-2019.

The next section of this report presents the findings and results related to an extensive descriptive analysis on the occupational mobility patterns of more than 400 current and former NFL head coaches, general managers, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators, and position coaches.

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<sup>8</sup> This NFL Diversity & Inclusion research report series began analyzing data on occupational mobility patterns commencing with the start of the 2012 NFL regular season.

<sup>9</sup> Findings in the current research study demonstrate that 27 out of the 50 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. Fifteen of the 50 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.

# FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Between February 5, 2018 (the day following Super Bowl LII) and February 3, 2019 (day of Super Bowl LIII), NFL teams hired a total of 36 head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators, and general managers for open positions. White individuals were hired for 30 of these 36 available positions. Only six different men of color were hired for these 36 recently filled positions. In addition, during this same time period 12 of the 36 head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive 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, as of February 2019, six fewer men of color served as NFL head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers as compared with the number of men of color serving in these leadership positions as of February 2018.

Tables 1–4 and Figures 1–5 provide a summary overview of key findings and results of the research study. The remainder of this section expands on the quantitative findings highlighted in Tables 1–4 and Figures 1–5.

***“ Only six different men of color were hired for these 36 recently filled positions. In addition, during this same time period 12 of the 36 head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers who were fired, resigned, promoted, retired or otherwise “mutually parted ways” with an NFL team were men of color. ”***

# Head Coach Career Pipelines and Multiple Head Coach Opportunities

Table 1: Head Coach Mobility Patterns (2018-2019)

| <b>Team</b>          | <b>Former Head Coach</b> | <b>Race of Former Head Coach</b> | <b>Next Opportunity for Former Head Coach</b>        | <b>Name of New Head Coach</b> | <b>Race of New Head Coach</b> | <b>Previous Position of New Head Coach</b>                    |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Arizona Cardinals    | Steve Wilks              | African American                 | Defensive Coordinator, Cleveland Browns              | Kliff Kingsbury               | White                         | Head Coach, Texas Tech University*                            |
| Cincinnati Bengals   | Marvin Lewis             | African American                 | Game and Studio Analyst, Turner Sports               | Zac Taylor                    | White                         | Quarterbacks Coach, Los Angeles Rams                          |
| Cleveland Browns     | Hue Jackson              | African American                 | Special Assistant to Head Coach, Cincinnati Bengals% | Freddie Kitchens              | White                         | Running Backs Coach & Associate Head Coach, Cleveland Browns+ |
| Denver Broncos       | Vance Joseph             | African American                 | Defensive Coordinator, Arizona Cardinals             | Vic Fangio                    | White                         | Defensive Coordinator, Chicago Bears                          |
| Green Bay Packers    | Mike McCarthy            | White                            | [no new position]^                                   | Matt LaFleur                  | White                         | Offensive Coordinator, Tennessee Titans                       |
| Miami Dolphins       | Adam Gase                | White                            | Head Coach, New York Jets                            | Brian Flores                  | Honduran American             | Linebackers Coach, New England Patriots#                      |
| New York Jets        | Todd Bowles              | African American                 | Defensive Coordinator, Tampa Bay Buccaneers          | Adam Gase                     | White                         | Head Coach, Miami Dolphins                                    |
| Tampa Bay Buccaneers | Dirk Koetter             | White                            | Offensive Coordinator, Atlanta Falcons               | Bruce Arians                  | White                         | Head Coach, Arizona Cardinals (2013-2017)                     |

Date range for data: February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) to February 3, 2019 (date of Super Bowl LIII)

\*Note: Kliff Kingsbury also briefly served as offensive coordinator at the University of Southern California (USC) from December 2018 to January 2019.

%Note: Hue Jackson served in this position of special assistant to the head coach with the Cincinnati Bengals for approximately two months; in January 2019, the Bengals decided not to renew Jackson's position with the team.

+Note: Freddie Kitchens also briefly served as interim offensive coordinator for the Cleveland Browns from October 2018 to January 2019.

^Note: Mike McCarthy plans to take a year away from coaching in order to spend time with his family during the 2019 NFL season before potentially returning to coach an NFL team during the 2020 NFL season. McCarthy is expected to be a top candidate for any head coach opportunities that open during or after the 2019 NFL season.

#Note: During the 2018 NFL season, Brian Flores became responsible for defensive play-calling for the New England Patriots; the Patriots did not officially hire a new defensive coordinator when Matt Patricia left the organization in order to accept the head coach position with the Detroit Lions.

As the above Table 1 illustrates, between February 5, 2018 (the day following Super Bowl LII) and February 3, 2019 (day of Super Bowl LIII), NFL teams hired seven White head coaches. During that same time period, NFL teams hired one head coach of color. In addition, between the start of the 2012 NFL season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), NFL teams hired 42 White head coaches. During that same time period, NFL teams hired eight head coaches of color. Notably, only two of the eight head coaches of color hired since the start of the 2012 NFL season remain current NFL head coaches as of February 2019 (Anthony Lynn and Brian Flores).<sup>10</sup>

Eight current NFL head coaches have been hired since Super Bowl LII (February 4, 2018). Six of these eight head coaches are first time NFL head coaches (Vic Fangio, Brian Flores, Kliff Kingsbury, Freddie Kitchens, Matt LaFleur, and Zac Taylor). Two of the eight recently hired NFL head coaches have prior NFL head coaching experience. New Tampa Bay Buccaneers head coach Bruce Arians previously served as head coach of the Arizona Cardinals from 2013-2017. In addition, recently named New York Jets head coach Adam Gase previously served as head coach of the Miami Dolphins from 2016-2018.

Two of the eight recently hired head coaches (Bruce Arians and Adam Gase) most recently served as head coaches of another NFL team.<sup>11</sup> One of the eight recently hired head coaches (Matt LaFleur) was most recently the offensive coordinator of another NFL team. Three of the eight recently hired head coaches (Arians, Gase, and LaFleur) have previous experience as an NFL offensive coordinator for at least one full NFL season. None of the other three recent new head coaches with offense-related prior coaching experience—Zac Taylor, Kliff Kingsbury, and Freddie Kitchens—have served as NFL offensive coordinators for at least one full NFL season. One of the eight recently hired head coaches (Vic Fangio) was most recently the defensive coordinator of another NFL team; even though Brian Flores was responsible for defensive play calling during the Patriots' 2018 NFL season, Flores was officially the team's linebackers coach.

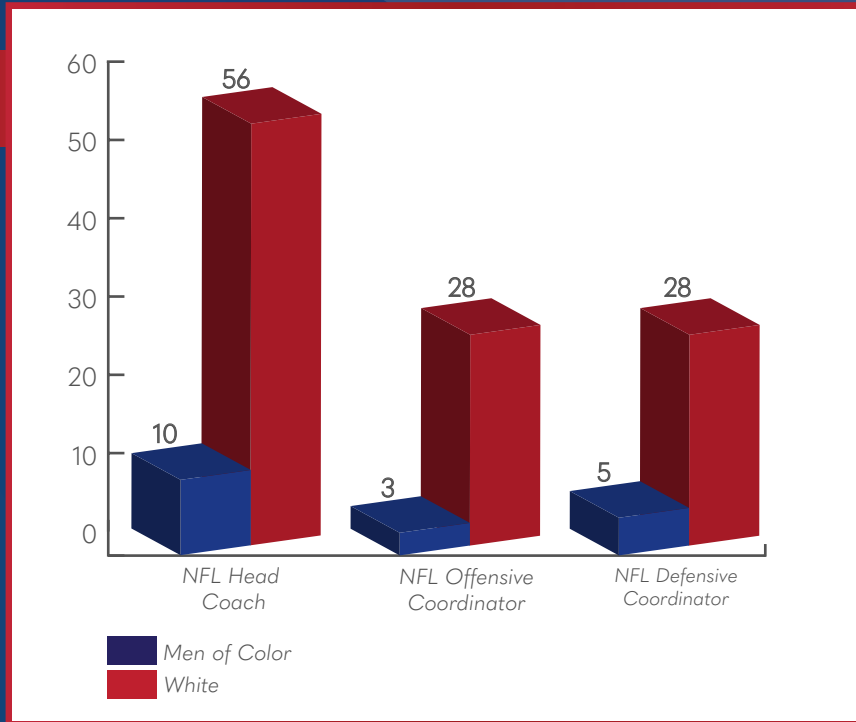
It is important to note that, as of February 2019, five of the eight head coaches that were fired during or shortly after the 2018 NFL season (or who retired after the season) subsequently received a new head coach opportunity or earned a coaching opportunity in a key pipeline position. For instance, Adam Gase received the head coach position with the New York Jets. In addition, Todd Bowles, Vance Joseph, and Steve Wilks each earned the opportunity to once again serve as NFL defensive coordinators; similarly, Dirk Koetter recently earned another opportunity to serve as the offensive coordinator of an NFL team.

**“ Between February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) and February 3, 2019 (day of Super Bowl LIII), NFL teams hired a total of 36 head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers for open positions. White individuals were hired for 30 of these 36 available positions. Only six different men of color were hired for these 36 recently filled positions. ”**

<sup>10</sup> Lovie Smith served as head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers during the 2014-2015 NFL seasons. 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.

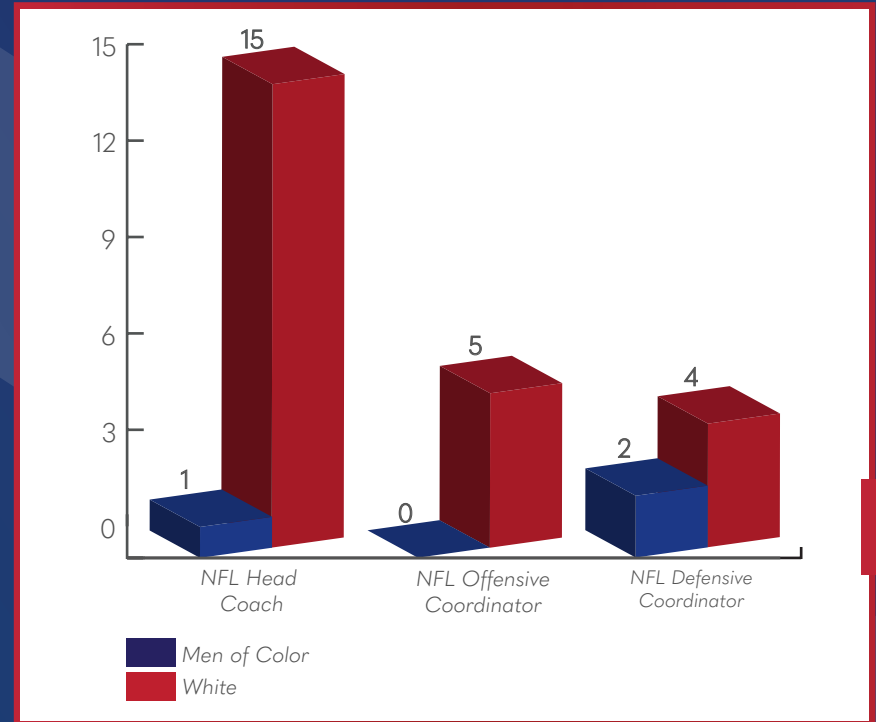
<sup>11</sup> Bruce Arians took a year away from coaching during the 2018 NFL season after he served as the head coach of the Arizona Cardinals from 2013-2017.

**Figure 1: NFL Opportunity After First Head Coach Position (1963-2019)**



As the above Figure 1 illustrates, between February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) and February 3, 2019 (day of Super Bowl LIII), NFL teams hired seven White head coaches. During that same time period, NFL teams hired one head coach of color. In addition, between the start of the 2012 NFL season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), NFL teams hired 42 White head coaches. During that same time period, NFL teams hired eight head coaches of color. Notably, only two of the eight head coaches of color hired since the start of the 2012 NFL season remain current NFL head coaches as of February 2019 (Anthony Lynn and Brian Flores).

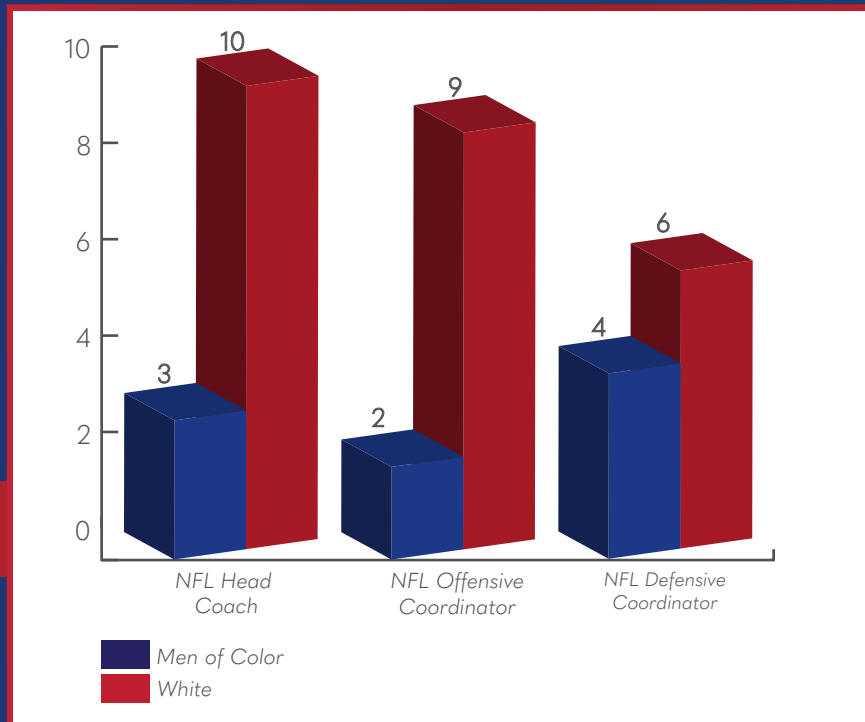
**Figure 2: NFL Opportunity After Second Head Coach Position (1963-2019)**



As illustrated above in Figure 2, after separating from a second head coach position, only one coach of color, Tom Flores, has received (and accepted) a third opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. Fifteen White coaches have received (and accepted) a third opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. For example, in January 2018 Jon Gruden was named head coach of the Oakland Raiders. This is Gruden's second head coach stint with the Raiders and third overall head coach opportunity; Gruden previously served as head coach of the Oakland Raiders (1998-2001) and Tampa Bay Buccaneers (2002-2008). In addition, two White coaches (Bill Parcells and Marty Schottenheimer) earned a fourth opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. Not a single person of color has earned a fourth opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team.



**Figure 3: NFL Opportunity After First Head Coach Position (2012-2019)**



As illustrated above in Figure 3, between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), ten White individuals and three African American individuals received a second head coach opportunity after separating (that is, being fired or promoted, resigning, retiring or otherwise “parting ways”) from a first head coach position during this time period. For example, Adam Gase was recently named head coach of the New York Jets after previously serving as head coach of the Miami Dolphins (2016-2018). In addition, Bruce Arians was recently named head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers after previously serving as head coach of the Arizona Cardinals (2013-2017). John Fox, Mike Mularkey and Jon Gruden are the only three coaches who received a third NFL head coach opportunity during this same time period. In addition, one individual

(Jim Harbaugh) received a head coach opportunity at the college level after separating from his first NFL head coach position, and two individuals (Lovie Smith and Chip Kelly) received a head coach opportunity at the college level after separating from a second NFL head coach position.

During this same time period between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), nine White individuals and two African American individuals received an opportunity to be an offensive coordinator after separating from a first head coach position. In January 2019, former first time NFL head coach Dirk Koetter was named offensive coordinator of the Atlanta Falcons after previously serving as head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (2016-2018).

Also, during this same time period, six White individuals and four African American individuals received an opportunity to be an NFL defensive coordinator after separating from a first head coach position. For example, in February 2019, former first time NFL head coach Greg Schiano was named defensive coordinator of the New England Patriots after previously working as head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (2012-2013). In January 2019, three African American individuals who served as NFL head coaches during the 2018 NFL season subsequently earned defensive coordinator opportunities with other NFL teams. For instance, former first time NFL head coach Todd Bowles was named defensive coordinator of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers after previously serving as head coach of the New York Jets (2015-2018). Similarly, former first time NFL head coach Vance Joseph was named defensive coordinator of the Arizona Cardinals after previously working as head coach of the Denver Broncos (2017-2018). Also, former first time NFL head coach Steve Wilks was named defensive coordinator of the Cleveland Browns after previously serving as head coach of the Arizona Cardinals during the 2018 NFL season.

Findings in the current research study also revealed that 18 African American individuals have been head coaches in the NFL since 1963; in addition, four Latino Americans—including recently hired Brian Flores—have served as head coaches in the NFL since 1963.<sup>12</sup> Seven African American individuals have held interim head coach positions (i.e., these individuals were head coaches for a part of an NFL season) but were not offered the head coach position for the following full NFL season. In January 2015, Todd Bowles became the first African American leader named to a head coach position after previously serving as an interim head coach earlier in his career; Bowles served as interim head coach for three games with the Miami Dolphins during the 2011-2012 NFL season. In January 2017, Anthony Lynn became the second African American leader named to a head coach position after previously serving as an interim head coach earlier in his career; Lynn served as interim head coach for one game with the Buffalo Bills during the 2016-2017 NFL season.

In addition, only eight NFL teams have hired two different African American head coaches from 1963-2019. For example, in January 2018 Steve Wilks became the second African American head coach in the history of the Arizona Cardinals; Dennis Green was the head coach of the Cardinals from 2004-2006. Similarly, in January 2016 Hue Jackson became the second African American head coach in the history of the Cleveland Browns; Romeo Crennel was the head coach of the Cleveland Browns from 2005-2008. Also, with the hiring of Lovie Smith in 2014, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers became the first NFL team to hire three African American head coaches (Tony Dungy, Raheem Morris and Lovie Smith). The Buccaneers fired Smith in January 2016. In addition, the Indianapolis Colts became the first (and only) NFL team to hire African American head coaches back-to-back when the Colts hired Jim Caldwell to succeed Tony Dungy in 2009.

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12. Based on internal NFL research data, NFL teams hired 88 head coaches during the previous four-teen-year period from 2006-2019. Only twelve of these 88 head coach vacancies (14%) were filled by men of color.

***“Between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), ten White individuals and three African American individuals received a second head coach opportunity after separating (that is, being fired or promoted, resigning, retiring or otherwise “parting ways”) from a first head coach position during this time period. During this same time period between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), nine White individuals and two African American individuals received an opportunity to be an offensive coordinator after separating from a first head coach position. Also, during this same time period, six White individuals and four African American individuals received an opportunity to be an NFL defensive coordinator after separating from a first head coach position.”***

# Offensive and Defensive Coordinator Mobility Patterns, and Coordinator Career Opportunities Following NFL Head Coach

Table 2: Offensive Coordinator Mobility Patterns (2018-2019)

| Team               | Name of Former Offensive Coordinator | Race of Former Offensive Coordinator | Next Opportunity for Former Offensive Coordinator | Name of New Offensive Coordinator(s) | Race of New Offensive Coordinator(s) | Previous Position of New Offensive Coordinator            |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Atlanta Falcons    | Steve Sarkisian                      | White                                | Offensive Coordinator, University of Alabama      | Dirk Koetter                         | White                                | Head Coach, Tampa Bay Buccaneers                          |
| Arizona Cardinals  | Mike McCoy                           | White                                | [no new position]                                 | [not applicable]*                    | [not applicable]                     | [not applicable]  |
| Baltimore Ravens   | Marty Mornhinweg                     | White                                | [no new position]                                 | Greg Roman                           | White                                | Assistant Head Coach / Tight Ends Coach, Baltimore Ravens |
| Cincinnati Bengals | Bill Lazor                           | White                                | [no new position]                                 | Brian Callahan                       | White                                | Quarterbacks Coach, Oakland Raiders                       |
| Cleveland Browns   | Todd Haley                           | White                                | [no new position]                                 | Todd Monken                          | White                                | Offensive Coordinator, Tampa Bay Buccaneers               |
| Dallas Cowboys     | Scott Linehan                        | White                                | [no new position]                                 | Kellen Moore                         | White                                | Quarterbacks Coach, Dallas Cowboys                        |
| Denver Broncos     | Bill Musgrave                        | White                                | [no new position]                                 | Rich Scangarello                     | White                                | Quarterbacks Coach, San Francisco 49ers                   |
| Detroit Lions      | Jim Bob Cooter                       | White                                | Running Backs Coach, New York Jets                | Darrell Bevell                       | White                                | Offensive Coordinator, Seattle Seahawks (2011-2017)       |

Date range for data: February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) to February 3, 2019 (date of Super Bowl LIII)

\*Note: The Arizona Cardinals decided not to hire a new offensive coordinator. New head coach Kliff Kingsbury will be responsible for offensive play-calling. The Arizona Cardinals recently hired Tom Clements as the team's passing game coordinator / quarterbacks coach.

**Table 2: Offensive Coordinator Mobility Patterns (2018-2019) (continued)**

| <b>Team</b>          | <b>Name of Former Offensive Coordinator</b> | <b>Race of Former Offensive Coordinator</b> | <b>Next Opportunity for Former Offensive Coordinator</b>    | <b>Name of New Offensive Coordinator(s)</b> | <b>Race of New Offensive Coordinator(s)</b> | <b>Previous Position of New Offensive Coordinator</b> |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Green Bay Packers    | Joe Philbin                                 | White                                       | [no new position]   | Nathaniel Hackett                           | White                                       | Offensive Coordinator, Jacksonville Jaguars           |
| Houston Texans       | [not applicable]#                           | [not applicable]                            | [not applicable]  | Tim Kelly                                   | White                                       | Tight Ends Coach, Houston Texans                      |
| Jacksonville Jaguars | Nathaniel Hackett                           | White                                       | Offensive Coordinator, Green Bay Packers                    | John DeFilippo                              | White                                       | Offensive Coordinator, Minnesota Vikings              |
| Miami Dolphins       | Dowell Loggains                             | White                                       | Offensive Coordinator and Quarterbacks Coach, New York Jets | Chad O'Shea                                 | White                                       | Wide Receivers Coach, New England Patriots            |
| Minnesota Vikings    | John DeFilippo                              | White                                       | Offensive Coordinator, Jacksonville Jaguars                 | Kevin Stefanski                             | White                                       | Quarterbacks Coach, Minnesota Vikings+                |
| New York Jets        | Jeremy Bates                                | White                                       | [no new position]   | Dowell Loggains                             | White                                       | Offensive Coordinator, Miami Dolphins                 |
| Tampa Bay Buccaneers | Todd Monken                                 | White                                       | Offensive Coordinator, Cleveland Browns                     | Byron Leftwich                              | African American                            | Quarterbacks Coach, Arizona Cardinals^                |
| Tennessee Titans     | Matt LaFleur                                | White                                       | Head Coach, Green Bay Packers                               | Arthur Smith                                | White                                       | Tight Ends Coach, Tennessee Titans                    |
| Washington Redskins  | Matt Cavanaugh                              | White                                       | Senior Offensive Assistant, Washington Redskins             | Kevin O'Connell                             | White                                       | Passing Game Coordinator, Washington Redskins         |

Date range for data: February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) to February 3, 2019 (date of Super Bowl LIII)

\*Note: The Arizona Cardinals decided not to hire a new offensive coordinator. New head coach Kliff Kingsbury will be responsible for offensive play-calling. The Arizona Cardinals recently hired Tom Clements as the team's passing game coordinator / quarterbacks coach.

#Note: Houston Texans head coach Bill O'Brien also served as the team's offensive coordinator during the 2018 NFL season.

+Note: Kevin Stefanski also briefly served as interim offensive coordinator for the Minnesota Vikings in December 2018.

^Note: Byron Leftwich also served as interim offensive coordinator of the Arizona Cardinals from October 2018 to December 2018.

**Table 3: Defensive Coordinator Mobility Patterns (2018-2019)**

| <b>Team</b>        | <b>Name of Former Defensive Coordinator</b> | <b>Race of Former Defensive Coordinator</b> | <b>Next Opportunity for Former Defensive Coordinator</b>             | <b>Name of New Defensive Coordinator(s)</b> | <b>Race of New Defensive Coordinator(s)</b> | <b>Previous Position of New Defensive Coordinator</b> |
|--------------------|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Atlanta Falcons    | Marquand Manuel                             | African American                            | [no new position]  | [not applicable]*                           | [not applicable]                            | [not applicable]                                      |
| Arizona Cardinals  | Al Holcomb                                  | African American                            | Linebackers Coach / Defensive Run Game Coordinator, Cleveland Browns | Vance Joseph                                | African American                            | Head Coach, Denver Broncos                            |
| Chicago Bears      | Vic Fangio                                  | White                                       | Head Coach, Denver Broncos   | Chuck Pagano                                | White                                       | Head Coach, Indianapolis Colts (2012-2017)            |
| Cincinnati Bengals | Teryl Austin                                | African American                            | Senior Defensive Assistant, Pittsburgh Steelers                      | Lou Anarumo                                 | White                                       | Defensive Backs Coach, New York Giants                |
| Cleveland Browns   | Gregg Williams+                             | White                                       | Defensive Coordinator, New York Jets                                 | Steve Wilks                                 | African American                            | Head Coach, Arizona Cardinals                         |
| Denver Broncos     | Joe Woods                                   | African American                            | Passing Game Coordinator, San Francisco 49ers                        | Ed Donatell                                 | White                                       | Defensive Backs Coach, Chicago Bears                  |

Date range for data: February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) to February 3, 2019 (date of Super Bowl LIII)

\*Note: Atlanta Falcons head coach Dan Quinn will now also serve as the team's defensive coordinator.

+Note: Gregg Williams also served as interim head coach of the Cleveland Browns from October 2018 to December 2018.

**““ Between February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) and February 3, 2019 (day of Super Bowl LIII), NFL teams hired seven White head coaches. During that same time period, NFL teams hired one head coach of color. In addition, between the start of the 2012 NFL season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), NFL teams hired 42 White head coaches. During that same time period, NFL teams hired eight head coaches of color. ””**

**Table 3: Defensive Coordinator Mobility Patterns (2018-2019) (continued)**

| <b>Team</b>          | <b>Name of Former Defensive Coordinator</b> | <b>Race of Former Defensive Coordinator</b> | <b>Next Opportunity for Former Defensive Coordinator</b> | <b>Name of New Defensive Coordinator(s)</b> | <b>Race of New Defensive Coordinator(s)</b> | <b>Previous Position of New Defensive Coordinator</b>                 |
|----------------------|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Kansas City Chiefs   | Bob Sutton                                  | White                                       | Senior Assistant Coach, Atlanta Falcons                  | Steve Spagnuolo                             | White                                       | Defensive Coordinator, New York Giants (2015-2017)                    |
| Miami Dolphins       | Matt Burke                                  | White                                       | Defensive Assistant, Philadelphia Eagles                 | Patrick Graham                              | African American                            | Linebackers Coach / Defensive Run Game Coordinator, Green Bay Packers |
| New England Patriots | [not applicable]                            | [not applicable]                            | [not applicable]   | Greg Schiano#                               | White                                       | Assistant Head Coach and Defensive Coordinator, Ohio State University |
| New York Jets        | Kacy Rodgers                                | African American                            | Defensive Line Coach, Tampa Bay Buccaneers               | Gregg Williams                              | White                                       | Defensive Coordinator, Cleveland Browns                               |
| Tampa Bay Buccaneers | Mike Smith                                  | White                                       | [no new position]  | Todd Bowles                                 | African American                            | Head Coach, New York Jets   |

Date range for data: February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) to February 3, 2019 (date of Super Bowl LIII)

#Note: Greg Schiano formally resigned on March 28, 2019.

As the above Tables 2 and 3 illustrate, between February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) and February 3, 2019 (day of Super Bowl LIII), NFL teams hired 15 White offensive coordinators and one offensive coordinator of color. During the same approximate one-year time period, NFL teams hired six White defensive coordinators and four defensive coordinators of color. Between the start of the 2012 NFL season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), NFL teams hired 86 White offensive coordinators and nine offensive coordinators of color. During that same time period, NFL teams hired 46 White defensive coordinators and 28 defensive coordinators of color.

Two of the 16 offensive coordinators hired between the day after Super Bowl LII (February 5, 2018) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019) are currently holding an NFL offensive coordinator position for the fourth time (Dirk Koetter and Dowell Loggains). Four of the 16 offensive coordinators hired during this time period are serving as an NFL offensive coordinator for the third time (Darrell Bevell, John DeFilippo, Nathaniel Hackett and Greg Roman). One offensive coordinator hired during this time period is serving as an NFL offensive coordinator for the second time (Todd Monken). The remaining nine offensive coordinators were hired as first time

NFL offensive coordinators. Four of the 16 offensive coordinators hired between the day following Super Bowl LII (February 5, 2018) and kickoff at Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019) held the offensive coordinator position with a different NFL team immediately before being named offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. In addition, five of the 16 offensive coordinators hired during this same time period held the quarterbacks coach position with an NFL team immediately before being named offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Another three of the 16 offensive coordinators hired during this same time period held the tight ends coach position with an NFL team immediately before being named offensive coordinator of their current NFL team.

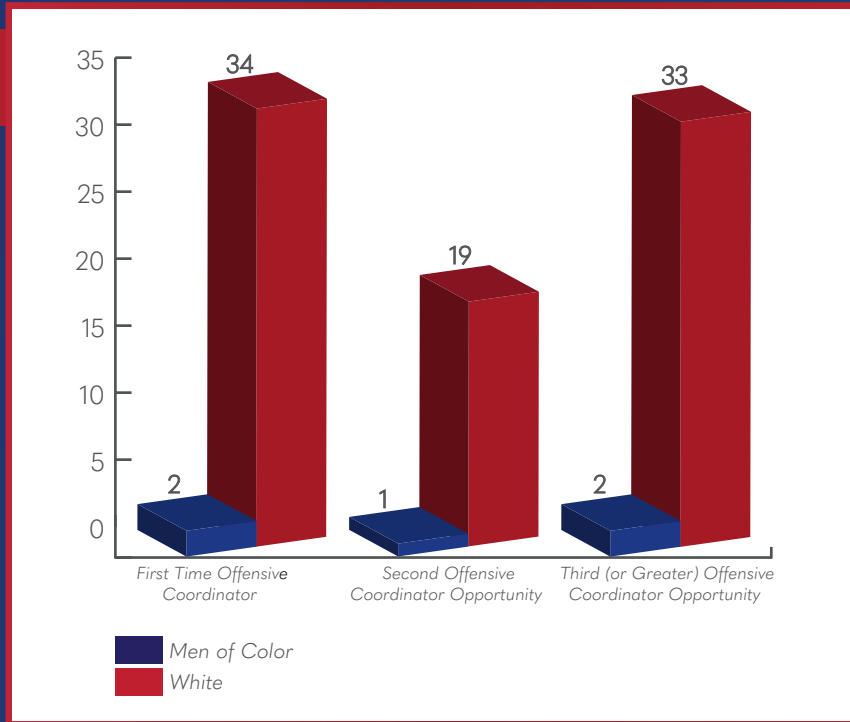
Three of the ten defensive coordinators hired between the day after Super Bowl LII (February 5, 2018) and kickoff at Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019) are currently holding an NFL defensive coordinator position for the third or greater time (Ed Donatell, Steve Spagnuolo and Gregg Williams). Four of the 10 defensive coordinators hired during this time period are serving as an NFL defensive coordinator for the second time (Todd Bowles, Vance Joseph, Chuck Pagano, and Steve Wilks). The remaining three defensive coordinators are first time NFL defensive coordinators (Lou Anarumo, Patrick Graham and Greg Schiano). One of the 10 defensive coordinators hired between the day after Super Bowl LII (February 5, 2018) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019) held the defensive coordinator position with a different NFL team immediately before being named defensive coordinator of their current NFL team (Gregg Williams). In addition, three of the 10 defensive coordinators hired during this same time period served as the head coach of a different NFL team immediately before being named defensive coordinator of their current NFL team.

As illustrated above in Figure 1 of this report, after separating from a first head coach position, 28 White individuals have held offensive coordinator positions and 28 White individuals have held defensive coordinator positions since 1963. For example, Dirk Koetter was recently named offensive coordinator of the Atlanta Falcons after previously serving as head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (2016-2018). In addition, Chuck Pagano was recently named defensive coordinator of the Chicago Bears after previously serving as head coach of the Indianapolis Colts (2012-2017). Similarly, Greg Schiano was recently named defensive coordinator of the New England Patriots after previously serving as head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (2012-2013).

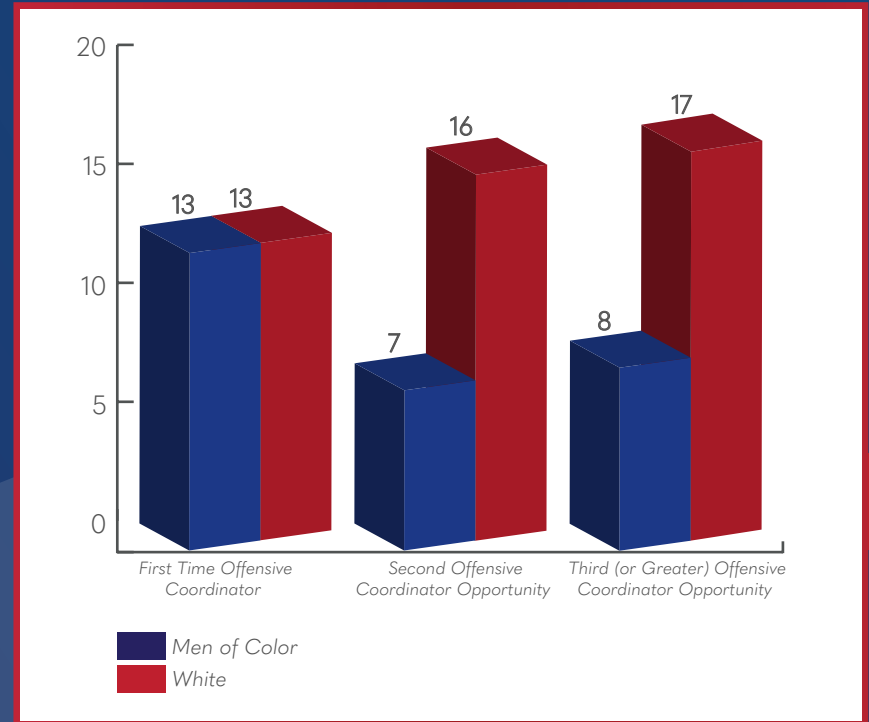
After separating from a first head coach position, three coaches of color (Tom Fears, Jim Caldwell, and Hue Jackson) have held the offensive coordinator position and five coaches of color (Romeo Crennel, Leslie Frazier, Todd Bowles, Vance Joseph, and Steve Wilks) have been defensive coordinators. Bowles, Joseph and Wilks each earned defensive coordinator opportunities in January 2019 after separating from their first NFL head coach position.

**“ Between the start of the 2012 NFL season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), NFL teams hired 86 White offensive coordinators and nine offensive coordinators of color. During that same time period, NFL teams hired 46 White defensive coordinators and 28 defensive coordinators of color. ”**

**Figure 4: NFL Offensive Coordinator Mobility Patterns (2012-2019)**



**Figure 5: NFL Defensive Coordinator Mobility Patterns (2012-2019)**



**“ Between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), NFL teams hired 27 general managers; 25 of the 27 general managers (93%) hired during this timeframe are White individuals.”**

As illustrated above in Figure 4 and Figure 5, between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), 35 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 eight men of color received a similar “second-chance” opportunity to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator. In addition, during this same time period, 50 White individuals received a “third or greater chance” to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team, whereas only ten men of color received a similar “third or greater chance” to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator.



# General Manager Mobility Patterns

Table 4: General Manager Mobility Patterns (2018-2019)

| Team             | Name of Former General Manager | Race of Former General Manager | Next Opportunity for Former General Manager | Name of New General Manager | Race of New General Manager | Previous Position of New General Manager    |
|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Baltimore Ravens | Ozzie Newsome                  | African American               | [retirement]                                | Eric DeCosta                | White                       | Assistant General Manager, Baltimore Ravens |
| Oakland Raiders  | Reggie McKenzie                | African American               | Senior Personnel Executive, Miami Dolphins  | Mike Mayock                 | White                       | NFL Network Draft Analyst                   |

Date range for data: February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) to February 3, 2019 (date of Super Bowl LIII)

As the above Table 4 illustrates, between February 5, 2018 (day following Super Bowl LII) and February 3, 2019 (day of Super Bowl LIII), NFL teams hired two White general managers. During that same time period, two general managers of color were fired or replaced whereas NFL teams hired zero new general managers of color. Between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), NFL teams hired 27 general managers; 25 of the 27 general managers (93%) hired during this timeframe are White individuals. Ray Farmer, who is African American, was hired as general manager of the Cleveland Browns in February 2014. In addition, Chris Grier, who is African American, was hired as general manager of the Miami Dolphins in January 2016. As of February 2019, Chris Grier remained as the only African American general manager of an NFL team.<sup>13</sup> In February 2019, Grier hired former Oakland Raiders general manager Reggie McKenzie to assist the Dolphins' player personnel department.

<sup>13</sup> The NFL team in Washington currently has no official general manager. Doug Williams, who is African American, serves as the team's senior vice president of player personnel.

## Additional Key Research Findings Based on NFL Internal Data Collection & Analysis

Internal research by the NFL league office found that first time NFL coaches hired during the eleven-year period between 2006-2016 who had less than five years of coordinator experience succeeded at a rate of 19% (that is, six of the 31 coaches had a career coaching record above .500 or coached in the playoffs more than once). This NFL research study also found that first time NFL coaches hired between 2006-2016 who had five or more years of coordinator experience succeeded at a rate of 73% (that is, 11 of the 15 coaches had a career coaching record above .500 or coached in the playoffs more than once).

Seven NFL head coaches were hired between the day following Super Bowl LI (February 6, 2017) and kickoff at Super Bowl LII (February 4, 2018). Five of these seven head coaches were hired as first time NFL head coaches (Matt Nagy, Matt Patricia, Frank Reich, Mike Vrabel and Steve Wilks). Only two of the seven NFL

head coaches hired during this same time period (Jon Gruden and Pat Shurmur) had prior NFL head coaching experience. Three of the five first time head coaches hired during this same time period had two years or less of NFL coordinator experience (Nagy, Vrabel and Wilks) before earning the opportunity to coach an NFL team. Frank Reich and Matt Patricia each had at least four years of previous NFL coordinator experience before becoming an NFL head coach.

Based on this internal research by the NFL league office discussed above, Reich and Patricia were better prepared and positioned to succeed as first time NFL head coaches as compared with Nagy, Vrabel and Wilks as a result of Reich's and Patricia's extensive prior experience as NFL coordinators. During the 2018 NFL regular season, the three teams coached by Nagy (Bears: 12-4 record), Vrabel (Titans: 9-7 record), and Wilks (Cardinals: 3-13 record) combined for 24 wins and 24 losses (50% combined winning percentage); Nagy coached the Bears to the playoffs. Conversely, during the 2018 NFL regular season, the two teams coached by Reich (Colts: 10-6 record) and Patricia (Lions: 6-10 record) combined for 16 wins and 16 losses (also a 50% combined winning percentage); Reich coached the Colts to the playoffs.

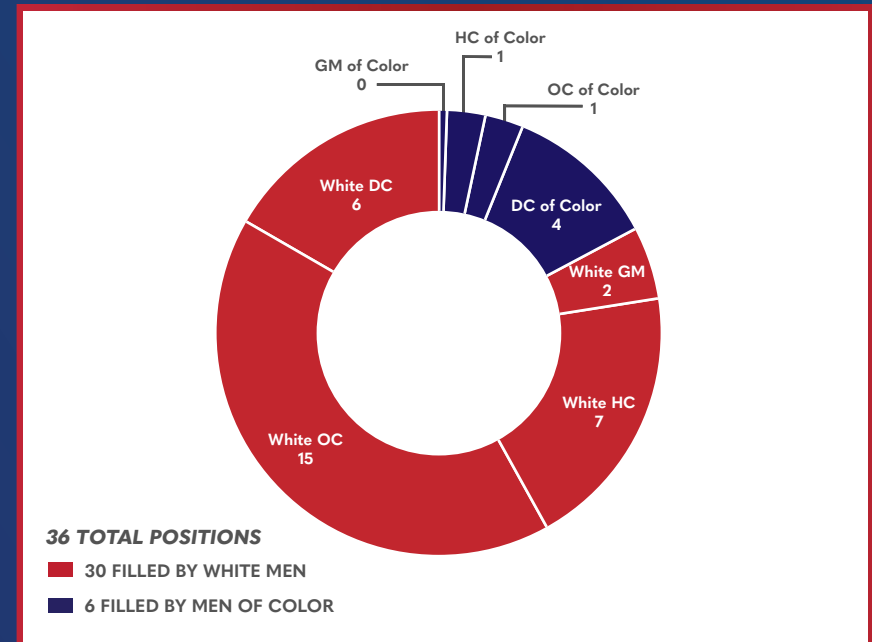
Five of the six first time head coaches recently hired during or shortly after the 2018 NFL regular season had two years or less of NFL coordinator experience before earning the opportunity to coach an NFL team. Vic Fangio spent 19 seasons serving as the defensive coordinator of five different NFL teams before earning his first NFL head coach opportunity. Again, based on the research by the NFL league office discussed above, Fangio is better prepared and positioned to succeed as a first time NFL head coach when compared with the five other recently hired first time NFL head coaches as a result of Fangio's extensive prior experience as an NFL defensive coordinator.

Recent research by the NFL league office also found that, during the eleven-year period between 2006-2016, second-time head coaches who had winning records during their first stint as an NFL

head coach succeeded at a rate of 45%. Conversely, second time head coaches who had losing records during their first stint as an NFL head coach only succeeded at a rate of 33%.

Two of the eight NFL head coaches hired during or shortly after the 2018 NFL regular season are second-time NFL head coaches. Bruce Arians, recently named new head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, previously coached the Arizona Cardinals to a combined 49-30-1 record from 2013-2017. The NFL research discussed above predicts a 45% success rate for Arians in his new head coach position. Adam Gase, recently named new head coach of the New York Jets, previously coached the Miami Dolphins to a combined 23-25 record from 2016-2018. The NFL research discussed above predicts a 33% success rate for Gase in his new head coach position.

## Ethnicity of General Managers, Head Coaches, Offensive Coordinators, and Defensive Coordinators Hired in 2018-2019



# DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

## *“The Reshuffling Effect”—Limiting the Talent Pipeline*

Findings in the current research study indicate seven of the 16 recently hired offensive coordinators previously served at least one prior stint as an NFL offensive coordinator for one or more full NFL seasons; only one of the nine first time NFL offensive coordinators is a person of color (Byron Leftwich). In addition, seven of the ten recently hired defensive coordinators have previously served as an NFL defensive coordinator.

Findings in the current research study also indicate 27 out of the 50 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. Fifteen of the 50 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.

These findings indicate that the offensive coordinator position is historically (but not always) the primary pipeline for aspiring first time NFL head coaches, whereas defensive coordinator can be viewed as the next most viable pipeline for prospective first time NFL head coaches. Rider et al. (2016) studied head coach changes from 1985-2012 and found that approximately 70% of all head coach promotions involved coaches who were promoted from a coordinator position. The Rider et al. (2016) empirical study combined with the results of this research report reiterates 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. NFL coordinator experience is often viewed as essential with respect to NFL head coach prospects—especially for candidates of color.

A primary occupational mobility access barrier for coaches of color exists at the coordinator level. For example, the vast majority of African American offensive position coaches oversee running backs or wide receivers whereas only two African American coaches (Marcus Brady and Jim Caldwell) currently hold the quarterbacks coach position, which functions as a primary pipeline to become an offensive coordinator. The defensive backs (secondary) and linebackers coach positions presently function as two of the more viable occupational mobility paths for coaches of color in the NFL. For instance, Brian Flores spent eight NFL seasons combined as linebackers coach as well as defensive backs (secondary) coach for the New England Patriots; Flores was also the primary team leader responsible for defensive play-calling during the 2018 NFL season even though he was not officially the team’s defensive coordinator. In addition, Steve Wilks served as defensive backs (secondary) coach for three different NFL teams (Bears, Chargers, and Panthers) before earning an opportunity to serve as the defensive coordinator of the Panthers during the 2017 NFL regular season; Wilks eventually earned an opportunity to serve as head coach of the Arizona Cardinals during the 2018 NFL season.

Six out of the seven head coaches hired between February 2, 2014, and February 1, 2015 had defensive coaching backgrounds (including NFL defensive coordinator experience) as compared with only one coach with an offensive coaching background (including NFL offensive coordinator experience). Conversely, all seven head

coaches hired between February 2, 2015, and kickoff at Super Bowl 50 (February 7, 2016) had offensive coaching backgrounds; six of these seven head coaches had previous experience as an NFL offensive coordinator, and five of these seven head coaches were NFL offensive coordinators immediately prior to earning that head coach opportunity. In addition, 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). Also, 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, six of the eight head coaches recently 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, four of the eight recently hired 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.<sup>14</sup>

Findings in this research study once again reveal a troubling “reshuffling effect” in which recently “separated” (i.e., 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, linebackers coach and defensive backs (secondary) coach. In addition, five of the 16 recently hired offensive coordinators were most recently an NFL quarterbacks coach before being named to their current offensive coordinator position; two of these five former quarterbacks coaches received an internal promotion to offensive coordinator of the same

team. Overall, six of the 16 recently hired offensive coordinators have prior quarterbacks coach experience at the NFL level. Also, four of the recently separated offensive coordinators made a lateral career move with respect to being named an offensive coordinator of a different NFL team. On the defensive side, nine of the ten recently hired defensive coordinators have prior experience as a linebackers coach or defensive backs (secondary) coach in the NFL. Several of the recently separated defensive coordinators immediately received a new coaching opportunity in a key “head coach pipeline position.” For example, one of the recently separated defensive coordinators (Gregg Williams) made a lateral career move with respect to being named a defensive coordinator of a different NFL team.

Recent research by the NFL league office revealed 27 out of 88 (31%) NFL head coaches hired during the fourteen-year period from 2006-2019 were former NFL head coaches. Four of these 27 “second or greater opportunity” head coaches hired during this fourteen-year period were men of color. These findings demonstrate that in order to be hired as a head coach in the NFL oftentimes the perceived most valuable career background is previous experience as an NFL head coach. These findings demonstrate another instance of the reshuffling effect with respect to limiting the overall number of opportunities for prospective first time NFL head coaches.

Findings in this Volume VIII 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 LIII (February 3, 2019), eighty-five White individuals have received at least a second opportunity to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an

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<sup>14</sup> Although 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 have some experience serving as interim offensive coordinators in the NFL for part of one or more seasons; Taylor was also the offensive coordinator for one season at the University of Cincinnati. Kliff Kingsbury had no prior NFL level experience before being hired as head coach of the Arizona Cardinals.

“second or greater” opportunity during the same time period; fifteen of the eighteen “second or greater chances” have been for men of color hired as defensive coordinators. While it is somewhat encouraging that 38% (28 out of 74) of the defensive coordinators hired since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season are coordinators of color, only 9.5% (9 out of 95) of the offensive coordinators hired during this same time period have been coordinators of color. In addition, although it is likewise encouraging that Todd Bowles, Vance Joseph and Steve Wilks each recently earned another opportunity to serve as an NFL defensive coordinator, the hiring of these three “second chance” defensive coordinators nonetheless prevents new prospects of color from entering the head coach pipeline.

### ***Social Capital and Implicit Bias—The Importance of Trust and Perceived Competence***

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 qualified by the individuals who make the hiring decisions. A qualified 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). The findings in the current study reiterate the need to develop and implement bias-lessening processes and procedures with respect to the hiring process for head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers. The findings in the current study underscore and uncover the complexity of organizational nuances that may influence the final hiring decisions and might also determine the opportunities for coaches of color, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers to maneuver the hierarchies of leadership positions.

The findings of the current study support the power of social capital and the impact of men of color serving in decision-making leadership positions as well as men of color developing a mentor/mentee

relationship with current NFL head coaches and anticipated future head coach candidates. For example, shortly after being fired by the Cleveland Browns in October 2018, Hue Jackson was hired by his close friend and coaching mentor Marvin Lewis to serve as “special assistant to the head coach” with the Cincinnati Bengals. When Hue Jackson was asked about adding value to another NFL team after he was fired by the Browns, Jackson responded: “If there’s somebody who I know and trust and respect, felt like they needed me to help or to do something for them along the lines of assisting in any way that I can to help them be as good as they can be on gameday, I would do that in a heartbeat” (via Adam Schefter podcast).

Similarly, Bruce Arians has served as a professional mentor to Todd Bowles ever since Arians coached Bowles when Bowles was a collegiate football student-athlete at Temple University. Arians and Bowles then worked together on the Cleveland Browns coaching staff from 2001-2003. When Arians was named head coach of the Arizona Cardinals in 2013, he promptly hired Todd Bowles as defensive coordinator. Fast forward to January 2019—shortly after being named the head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Arians once again hired Bowles to serve as the team’s defensive coordinator.<sup>15</sup> Arians also recently hired several other men of color who are part of his “coaching tree” including Byron Leftwich (offensive coordinator), Harold Goodwin (offensive line coach and run-game coordinator) and Kevin Ross (defensive backs coach). Finally, new Miami Dolphins head coach Brian Flores hired Patrick Graham to serve as the team’s defensive coordinator. Flores and Graham worked together as defensive position coaches with the Patriots from 2009-2015.

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<sup>15</sup> In 2015, Bruce Arians made the following comments about Todd Bowles’ coaching abilities: “He was one of the smartest players I’ve ever coached, and then we had to work together in Cleveland, and I saw how great of a teacher he had become” (via Sports Illustrated).

Ten out of the twenty-two total NFL head coaches of color from 1963-2019 have earned a second opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. The key is to develop strategies and implement practices and processes that provide more candidates of color with a realistic opportunity to be a head coach in the NFL. As explained by scholars such as Kilduff et al. (2016), Day and McDonald (2010), and Sagas and Cunningham (2005), it is imperative to create a systemic approach that facilitates both strong and weak networking ties amongst leadership candidates of color in addition to increasing opportunities for rising industry stars to develop meaningful connections with “higher status” African American and White leaders within NFL teams and at the NFL league office.

The Rooney Rule may enable a person of color to earn an opportunity to secure an initial head coach or coordinator position, but intangible factors such as trust and perceived competence may have even more of an impact on future occupational mobility (second and third coaching or coordinator opportunities). Rider et al. (2016) expounded, “A decade after the Rooney Rule’s implementation, within-job racial disparity clearly persists” (p. 40). Therefore, in addition to working to increase the number of people of color who make hiring decisions (team owners and general managers), it is imperative to work on improving “the perception of competence” of sport business professionals of color (Shropshire, 1996, p. 129-30). Stated differently, even if there is an increase in general managers of color and team owners of color, negative race consciousness associated with the coaching and coordinating capabilities of candidates of color may still exist and persist (see Shropshire, 1996). Developing and implementing additional, formalized processes to complement the evolving Rooney Rule requirements might further ensure that all interviewees for open head coach, general manager and coordinator positions are truly provided with a meaningful opportunity during the interview process.<sup>16</sup>

## ***Occupational Mobility and Job Tenure—Change as the Consistent Constant***

This research study also analyzed the tenure/stint (i.e., length of time in current positions) of all current NFL head coaches, offensive coordinators, and defensive coordinators. For current NFL offensive coordinators, the average length of time is only one year in the current position. Twenty-six current NFL offensive coordinators have been in their current position for two NFL seasons or fewer. Only three NFL offensive coordinators have been in their current position for three or more NFL seasons (Pete Carmichael, Josh McDaniels, and Ken Whisenhunt). Three head coaches are responsible for primary offensive play calling duties (Kliff Kingsbury, Sean McVay, and Kyle Shanahan). The data is somewhat similar for defensive coordinators; the average length of time is 1.4 years in the current position. Twenty-five current NFL defensive coordinators have been in their current position for two or fewer NFL seasons, whereas only six NFL defensive coordinators have been in their current position for three or more NFL seasons (Dennis Allen, Keith Butler, George Edwards, Rod Marinelli, Jim Schwartz, and Todd Wash). The Atlanta Falcons recently decided not to hire a new defensive coordinator; current Atlanta Falcons head coach Dan Quinn is currently responsible for defensive play calling duties.

As of kickoff at Super Bowl LIII (February 3, 2019), only two African American individuals held an offensive coordinator position with an NFL team—Eric Bieniemy served as offensive coordinator of the Kansas City Chiefs during the 2018 NFL season,<sup>17</sup> and Byron Leftwich was recently named offensive coordinator of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Three offensive coordinators of color (Edgar Bennett, Harold Goodwin, and Terry Robiskie) were all fired during or shortly after the 2017 NFL regular season.

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<sup>16</sup> As explained by Troy Vincent, NFL Executive Vice President of Football Operations, “The Rooney Rule provides a point of entry, but to solve the long-term conundrum of opportunities versus the number of teams that can provide those opportunities, development of highly qualified individuals is imperative.”

<sup>17</sup> However, head coach Andy Reid maintained responsibility for play calling on offense during the 2018 NFL regular season.

The average tenure/stint in the current position for the ten current men of color in defensive coordinator positions is approximately 1.2 years. Each of the ten current NFL defensive coordinators of color has five or fewer NFL seasons of experience in his current defensive coordinator position; nine of the ten current NFL defensive coordinators of color have two or fewer NFL seasons of experience in their respective current defensive coordinator positions. The Cardinals, Browns, Buccaneers and Dolphins—four NFL teams who recently hired defensive coordinators of color in January/February 2019—had a combined record of 22-41-1 during the most recently completed 2018 NFL regular season. The combined win/loss record for teams coached by one of the other six current African American and Muslim American defensive coordinators was 46-49-1 during the 2018 NFL regular season.

The average coach tenure/stint for the four men of color currently in NFL head coach positions is 5.5 years. Brian Flores was recently named head coach of the Miami Dolphins in February 2019. Anthony Lynn has been the head coach of the Los Angeles Chargers for two seasons. Ron Rivera has been the head coach of the Carolina Panthers for eight seasons. Mike Tomlin has been the head coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers for twelve seasons. The combined win/loss record for teams coached by one of the eight then-current head coaches of color during the 2018 NFL regular season was 49-69-2 (.415 winning percentage).

### ***Recommendations for Pipeline Development & Hiring Process Programs***

Key NFL stakeholders are encouraged to examine the potential impact of creating new best practice guidelines or formal league policies related to the head coach and general manager search and hiring processes that focus both on hiring and retention. For example, one proposed new guideline/policy would further develop the Rooney Rule to require that all NFL teams interview at least one candidate of color with previous NFL level experience (including at least interim offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator experience) who also is not currently employed by the hiring team.

Since 2012, NFL teams have hired only two head coach candidates who did not have any previous NFL level experience (i.e., the Cardinals recently hired former college football head coach Kliff Kingsbury, and both the Eagles and 49ers hired former college football head coach Chip Kelly). In early 2018, the Raiders interviewed University of Southern California (USC) offensive coordinator Tee Martin and Raiders tight end coach Bobby Johnson in order to comply with the technical requirements of the Rooney Rule. However, neither of these men of color were considered strong or serious candidates for the Raiders head coach position. Martin remained the offensive coordinator at USC and Johnson accepted an assistant offensive line coach position with the Indianapolis Colts. Adding this additional “prior NFL coordinator experience” requirement to the Rooney Rule process could help ensure that the most prepared and compelling candidates are provided with a meaningful opportunity to interview.

Based on data provided by the NFL league office, as of February 24, 2019, NFL teams either interviewed or sought to interview 61 total candidates for the eight recent open head coach positions. Men of color represented nineteen of the 61 total candidates (31%) for these interviews (and planned interviews that ultimately did not take place). However, only seven different men of color received head coach interview opportunities. At least three NFL teams either interviewed or sought to interview the following minority head coach candidates: Eric Bieniemy (interview opportunity with five teams), Jim Caldwell (interview opportunity with four teams), Brian Flores (interview opportunity with four teams) and Kris Richard (interview opportunity with three teams). Hue Jackson, Vance Joseph and George Edwards represent the other men of color who were presented with head coach interview opportunities. Brian Flores is the only person of color who received a head coach offer during the recent hiring cycle.

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18 A The Browns fired head coach Hue Jackson midway through the 2018 NFL regular season; Jackson coached the Browns to a 2-5-1 record before he was fired.

19 In December 2018, the NFL strengthened the Rooney Rule in part by requiring all NFL teams to interview at least one diverse candidate from the Career Development Advisory Panel list or a diverse candidate not currently employed by the hiring team.

With respect to recent general manager hires, as of February 24, 2019, NFL teams interviewed (or sought to interview) six total candidates for the two open positions. Men of color represented three of the six total candidates (50%) for these interviews (and planned interviews that ultimately did not take place). Despite being provided with the opportunity to interview, no men of color were ultimately offered one of the two recently filled general manager positions.

### ***Recommendations for Future Research and Strategic Innovation***

This research study relied on data provided by the NFL along with publicly available data as reported by NFL teams. Researchers did not have access to NFL team notes and records from job candidate interviews, which would have provided more extensive insight with respect to the hiring decision-making process. In addition, this research study did not track the entire career trajectory of each individual coach, coordinator, and general manager examined in the study. The following recommendations for future research are made based on the findings in this research study.

Future research should further examine the “downward mobility” patterns of former NFL head coaches, general managers, and offensive and defensive coordinators of color in order to determine the impact and extent of minority vulnerability thesis implications within the NFL. For example, in January 2019, Al Holcomb experienced a downward occupational mobility shift when he accepted the linebackers coach / defensive run game coordinator position with the Cleveland Browns after serving as the defensive coordinator of the Arizona Cardinals. Teryl Austin experienced a similar downward occupational mobility shift during the same month, as he transitioned from working as the defensive coordinator of the Cincinnati Bengals to accepting a senior defensive assistant position with the Pittsburgh Steelers. Also in January 2019, Joe Woods experienced a comparable downward occupational mobility shift, as he transitioned from working as the defensive coordinator of the Denver Broncos to accepting a passing game coordinator

position with the San Francisco 49ers. Finally, Kacy Rodgers transitioned from serving as the defensive coordinator of the New York Jets to accepting the defensive line coach position with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Future research could also analyze data related to the NFL’s partnership with historic black colleges and universities in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) and Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC). Data collection and analysis could examine success stories involving former coaches and administrators at MEAC and SWAC institutions of higher learning who are now employed with an NFL team.

Future research should examine strategies to improve the overall hiring and decision-making process in order to expand the length of tenure (“opportunity to prove themselves”) for head coaches, coordinators and position coaches. For example, the Arizona Cardinals fired head coach Steve Wilks after his first season serving as the team’s head coach; similarly, the Denver Broncos fired head coach Vance Joseph after his second season serving as the team’s head coach. Overall, NFL teams have made 49 total changes at the offensive coordinator position during the previous four NFL seasons. Eight offensive coordinators (Jeremy Bates, Todd Haley, Mike McCoy, John DeFilippo, Bill Lazor, Dowell Loggains, Joe Philbin, and Bill Musgrave) were recently fired during their first season serving as offensive coordinator (or accepted another career opportunity following only one season in their respective positions). In addition, NFL teams have made 35 total changes at the defensive coordinator position during the previous four NFL seasons. For example, Teryl Austin was recently fired by the Cincinnati Bengals in November 2018 during his first season serving as the team’s defensive coordinator. Similarly, Al Holcomb was recently fired following his first season serving as the defensive coordinator of the Arizona Cardinals. Also, Marquand Manuel and

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<sup>20</sup> In a recent empirical research study, Day (2018) explained that, historically, African American workers have been more vulnerable to downward occupational mobility because of their segregation into racialized jobs and networks combined with decision makers’ cognitive biases and particularistic manipulation of performance criteria and (un)desirable employee characteristics. Day (2018) also noted that “scholars have recommended that employers can overcome such biases through the formalization of the hiring, promotion, and firing process” (p. 11).



Joe Woods were each recently fired after two seasons of serving as NFL defensive coordinators. This extremely high turnover rate in key team leadership roles is not ideal from a player development or career trajectory/sustainability perspective.

Future research should also attempt to examine the conversations and other communications/correspondence that take place between hiring managers (e.g., team owners and general managers), “interview influencers” and job candidates in addition to the 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 head coach and coordinator positions. For example, the Arizona Cardinals issued a press release in January 2019 after hiring Kliff Kingsbury as the team’s new head coach; the press release included the following narrative related to the connection between Sean McVay and Kliff Kingsbury:

*Kingsbury is friends with Rams coach Sean McVay – the 32-year-old offensive genius who has become the blueprint of many of the new coaching hires around the NFL – and McVay reached out to Kingsbury after Texas Tech let him go to see if Kingsbury wanted to join the Rams’ staff for the stretch run and postseason as an offensive consultant. Kingsbury considered it but ultimately joined USC. “I think he’s been a very good head coach,” McVay said last week when asked about Kingsbury’s NFL prospects. “I think he’s demonstrated the ability to do a lot of different things at a high level, and he’s got a great offensive mind.”*

Finally, future research should examine career opportunities in the XFL as potentially viable mobility platforms for both aspiring (and former) NFL coordinators, coaches and general managers. The XFL might serve as possible transitory career paths for former NFL coaches, coordinators, and general managers before these individuals earn another opportunity to once again help lead an NFL team. For instance, Jim Caldwell was fired by the Detroit Lions in January 2018. Caldwell subsequently served as a consultant to the XFL before earning an opportunity to serve as the assistant head coach and quarterbacks coach for the Miami Dolphins in February 2019.

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21 The Arizona Cardinals subsequently issued a revised press release, which seemed to intentionally omit the mention that “Kingsbury is friends with Rams coach Sean McVay.”



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# BIOS OF RESEARCH TEAM & AUTHORS OF REPORT

**Dr. C. Keith Harrison** is an Associate Professor at UCF as well as Associate Chair / Chief Academic Officer of the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate Program and founding director (2006-2014) of the Sport Business Management Undergraduate Program at UCF. In addition to his role as Faculty and Innovative Curriculum Coordinator of the Sport Business Management Programs, Dr. Harrison also served as Interim and Acting DeVos Chair in the College of Business during the Fall 2014 semester. As Senior Faculty/Associate Chair of the DeVos Graduate Sport Business Management Program, Dr. Harrison has contributed in the area of academic innovation and scholarship over the last decade to one of the most prestigious graduate sport business management programs. Dr. Harrison has taught leadership, diversity and sport marketing at the graduate level, and currently teaches diversity as well as co-teaches with Reggie Saunders (Director of Global Marketing, Jordan Brand) innovation and entrepreneurship in sport and entertainment at the undergraduate level. Dr. Harrison also served as an Adjunct Associate Professor at Emory University's Goizueta Business School from 2013-2015. Dr. Harrison has over two decades of university research, teaching and service experience at the community college level (Cerritos, Fullerton and Cypress) and university level (Washington State University, Indiana University, University of Michigan, Arizona State University, and UCF). A former NCAA scholar-athlete that was a center on the football team and graduated from West Texas A&M University, Harrison went on to earn his graduate degrees at California State University (Dominguez Hills) and the University of Southern California. Dr. Harrison has numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters that all disseminated from the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic and Athletic Prowess established in Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan (1998).

Dr. Harrison was Co-Editor of the Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics (2009-2011) housed at the University of North Carolina (Chapel-Hill). He is currently Editor of the Journal of Higher Education Athletics & Innovation housed at Oklahoma University. He also wrote and co-edited a book with Scott Bukstein on Sport Business Analytics published by Taylor & Francis (2016). Dr. Harrison's career focus is in a few areas: the identity of the student-athlete and professional athlete experience; diversity and inclusion issues related to gender and race relations in education, business, sport and entertainment; and the marketing of emerging multicultural demographics in the global environment in terms of fan engagement. Dr. Harrison's brief list of clients/partnerships past and present include the NFL, the Minnesota Vikings, Oakland Raiders, Miami Dolphins, University of Oregon, Jordan Brand, Boise State University, UCLA's School of Education, Wharton Sports Business Academy, UC-Boulder's Business of Sport Certificate Program, Florida Citrus Sports and numerous intercollegiate athletic departments through his co-founded non-profit Scholar-Baller. Since 2012, Dr. Harrison has been the principal investigator/researcher and co-author with Bukstein for the NFL's "Good Business" series in terms of diversity and inclusion initiatives within the NFL as well as on female spectators and influencers of the NFL brand. Harrison also served as the lead educational consultant and special/senior advisor for the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality (RISE), which is a not-for-profit organization founded by Miami Dolphins team owner Stephen Ross. Harrison and Bukstein developed and implemented a comprehensive academic curriculum focused on diversity, inclusion, respect and equality in sport along with creating marketing and branding content for RISE. Harrison is a guest columnist for the SportsBusiness Journal in the area of cultural innovation in sport business and entertainment management.

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*Acknowledgments:* A special thank you to Ginni Dunlop and Miranda Murphy for their assistance with data collection.

Report formatting and design by Karva Digital.



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