



**DIVERSITY  
& INCLUSION**

# COACHING MOBILITY VOLUME 1



## EXAMINING COACHING MOBILITY TRENDS AND OCCUPATIONAL PATTERNS:

Head Coaching Access, Opportunity and the Social Network  
in Professional and College Sport

**Principal Investigator and Lead Researcher:**

Dr. C. Keith Harrison, Associate Professor at University of Central Florida

A report presented by the National Football League.



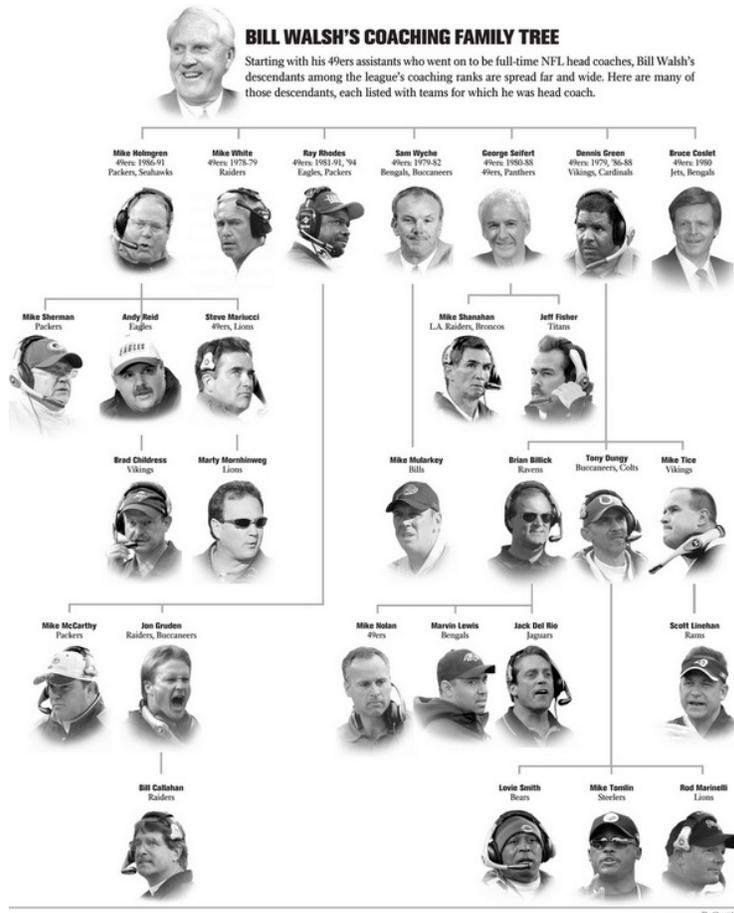
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The report is available online at <http://www.nfl.com/DrHarrison/goodbusinessvolume1/diversityinclusionbestpractices>.

Bringing together people with diverse racial, gender and ethnic backgrounds provides far-reaching and varied perspectives and skills that are crucial for any organization to expand its horizons. Making diversity in the workplace a priority is good business. A collaborative and inclusive team of employees provides the foundation for success and growth, and we believe in it strongly.

Commissioner **Roger Goodell**

“The Rooney Rule has been a valuable tool in expanding diversity and inclusion in hiring practices, but there is more work to do, especially around increasing and strengthening the pipeline of diverse candidates for head coach and senior football executive positions. We have already started the process of developing a plan for additional steps that will better ensure more diversity and inclusion on a regular basis in our hiring results.”

“The Rooney Rule very much is all about the process . . . it certainly was a disappointment that we did not have diversity relative to the outcomes, but I think that presents an opportunity.”

**Robert Gulliver**, NFL Executive Vice President for  
Human Resources and Chief Diversity Officer (2013)

## MESSAGE FROM NFL COMMISSIONER ROGER GOODELL

Our diversity policy has focused on the Rooney rule over the past decade. It has served us well, but we cannot be complacent, nor should we. To lead our industry with best business practices, our progress on diversity must be reflected throughout our organization, not in just one aspect of it. We want to have the best people in the best possible positions, and give everybody the opportunity to excel. We seek to ensure that we have full diversity and inclusion throughout our coaching and executive ranks. To achieve this goal, we as an organization must collectively find solutions through our commitment to innovation. The success of our league depends on it.

## MESSAGE FROM ROBERT GULLIVER NFL EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER

The NFL has benefited from the Rooney Rule, which was implemented a decade ago. As we seek to build upon the success of the Rooney Rule, we have a compelling opportunity to further integrate diversity into our business. While diversity and inclusion are core values at the NFL, they also present us with opportunities to attract, retain and develop talent and to identify new and innovative ways to reach our increasingly diverse fan base.

## MESSAGE FROM TROY VINCENT NFL SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT PLAYER ENGAGEMENT

A new paradigm must be established where trust is foundational as we look at the 21st Century social justice system. We must move beyond traditional historic concepts of leveling the playing field and equal opportunity toward developing human capital and occupational mobility from the perspective of good business sense and individual enterprise. When we look at diversity it often focuses on race. Diversity's success, however, cannot be solely dependent upon issues of color. Diversity and inclusion is the essence of a person's character, gifting, best qualities, and how these distinguishing characteristics advance ideas. Our inclusion thought must also extend to religion, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, and age to frame diversity and inclusion as a 21st Century movement. We must advance our efforts in occupational mobility with an organic 21st Century ideal of diversity and inclusion as good business, a moral and just system embracing best practices, and shared responsibility from both employee and employer. Our vision must be to establish best practices and processes to develop, introduce and promote an atmosphere that establishes trust across all aspects of hiring actions. Diversity and inclusion should reflect good business and value-based leadership.

The NFL has asked Dr. C. Keith Harrison and his research team to analyze diversity and inclusion issues and opportunities and also to help the NFL develop practical and effective business strategies to address these issues and opportunities.

## MESSAGE FROM DR. C. KEITH HARRISON, AUTHOR OF THE REPORT

In 1975, I had the opportunity at the age of seven years old to sit with my father and watch a game between the New England Patriots and Oakland Raiders. I fell in love with the team that had the center on the helmet (Pat Patriot). Little did I know that it would be the position I would play my entire student-athlete career from fifth grade at Gardena Elementary to my senior year at West Texas A & M University. During this same period my love of the NFL grew through electric football, touch football in the streets, tackle football on the grass, and my first NFL game in person that my father took me to in the 1970's between the then St. Louis Cardinals and the then Los Angeles Rams. All this had me fall in love with the NFL brand as something that was exciting, unique and inclusive. I enjoyed watching many players from Randy Cross to Dwight Stephenson to John Hannah to Art Shell to Jim Plunkett to Mike Webster.

Fast forward to today where diversity and inclusion is on the tongues of many, but still understood by few. Even fewer of us have a collective vision of what diversity and inclusion looks like in the 21st

Century. When I got the phone call that I would be commissioned as the researcher for the series on Diversity and Inclusion with Good Business—it was a great honor. However, not because of any fan-based connections was I thrilled. Rather, I am excited to contribute to the “great conversation” about so many issues related to diversity and inclusion because my approach as a scholar has always been to be theory-based with a vision for best practices and practical application. Coaching mobility is one of the more timely issues facing American and international sports organizations. Three things will probably never disappear: leadership, diversity and sport.

To all the fans, coaches, players, owners, administrators, stakeholders, educators, researchers and those on the outside looking in I ask one thing. That after you read the report you focus on what the facts indicate plus the analysis and not on who said what. We should commend the NFL for being a global brand that turns the mirror on itself and even dares to ask the question: How can we get better? Further, how can the process of the final hire get better and more inclusive for everyone? These answers are just some of the things my team of committed researchers, educators, and students hope to accomplish in what will come to be known as volume one of this series of reports.

“IT IS GOOD BUSINESS.”

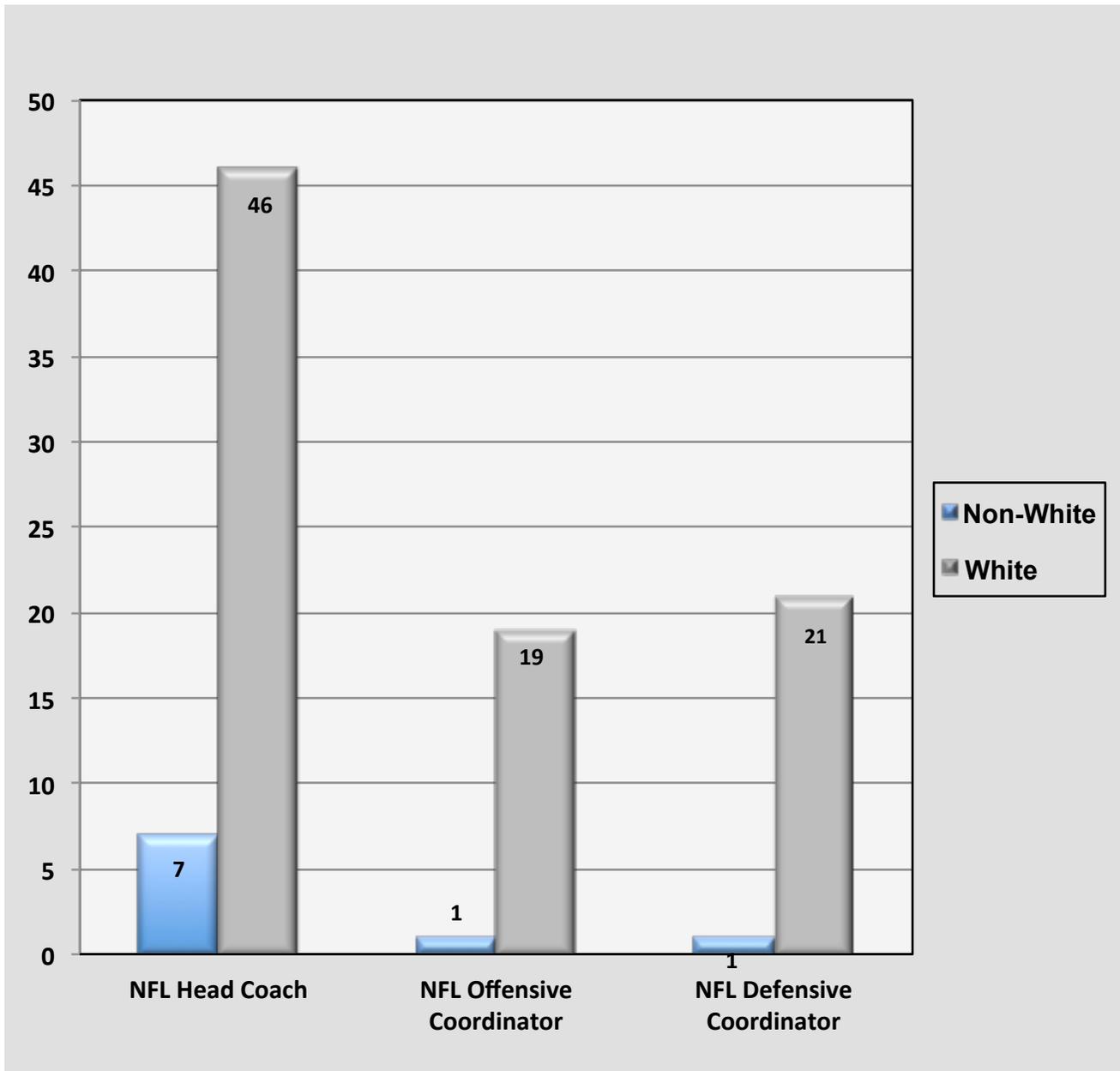
NFL Commissioner **Roger Goodell** on increased opportunities for coaches of color.

## BACKGROUND OF REPORT

This report provides an overview and analysis of coaching mobility patterns in the National Football League (NFL). Coaching and employment mobility patterns of individuals from various racial and ethnic groups in professional and college sport have received significant recent attention in the popular press as well as in scholarly spaces. In an ever-increasing diverse and inclusive society, coaching mobility patterns are a timely issue—an issue that is as much about business strategy and success as the issue is about the historical, sociological and cultural impact of hiring and maintaining a diverse workforce. This report examines fifty years of human resource data (1963-2012) provided by the NFL relating to the mobility patterns of NFL coaches, and offers practical recommendations with respect to further improvements to current diversity and inclusion business practices implemented by the NFL and individual NFL teams. Many companies, organizations and institutions present compelling evidence that creating a diverse and inclusive workforce is not only better for everyone involved but also is simply good business in terms of achieving strategic objectives.

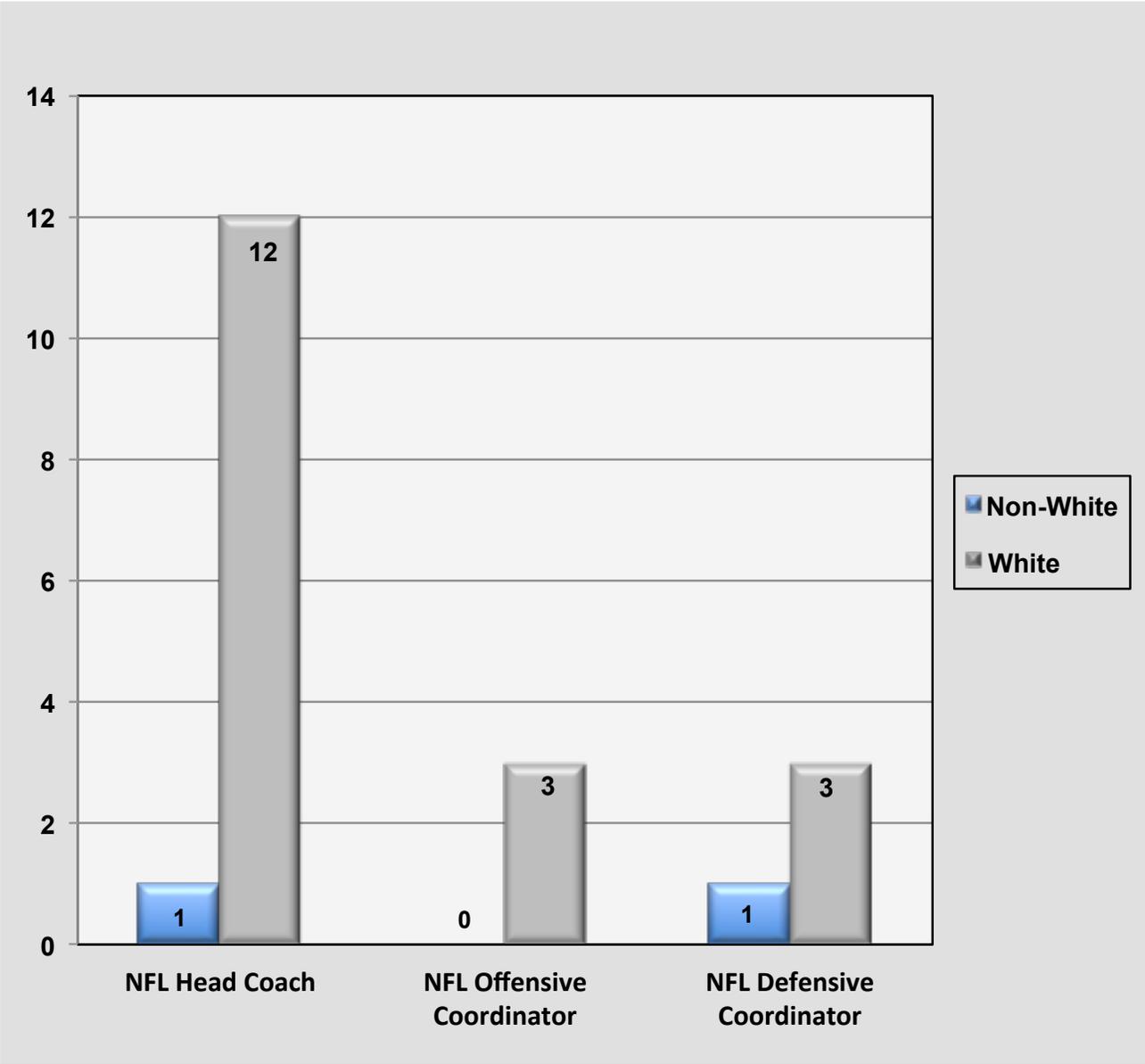
BETWEEN 1963 AND 2012, 17 PEOPLE OF COLOR HAVE BEEN HIRED AS THE HEAD COACH OF AN NFL TEAM. BETWEEN THAT SAME 50-YEAR PERIOD, NFL TEAMS HAVE HIRED 124 WHITE HEAD COACHES. THAT MEANS APPROXIMATELY 88% OF ALL HEAD COACHES HIRED IN THE NFL FROM 1963-2012 HAVE BEEN WHITE COACHES.

## NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER FIRST HEAD COACH POSITION



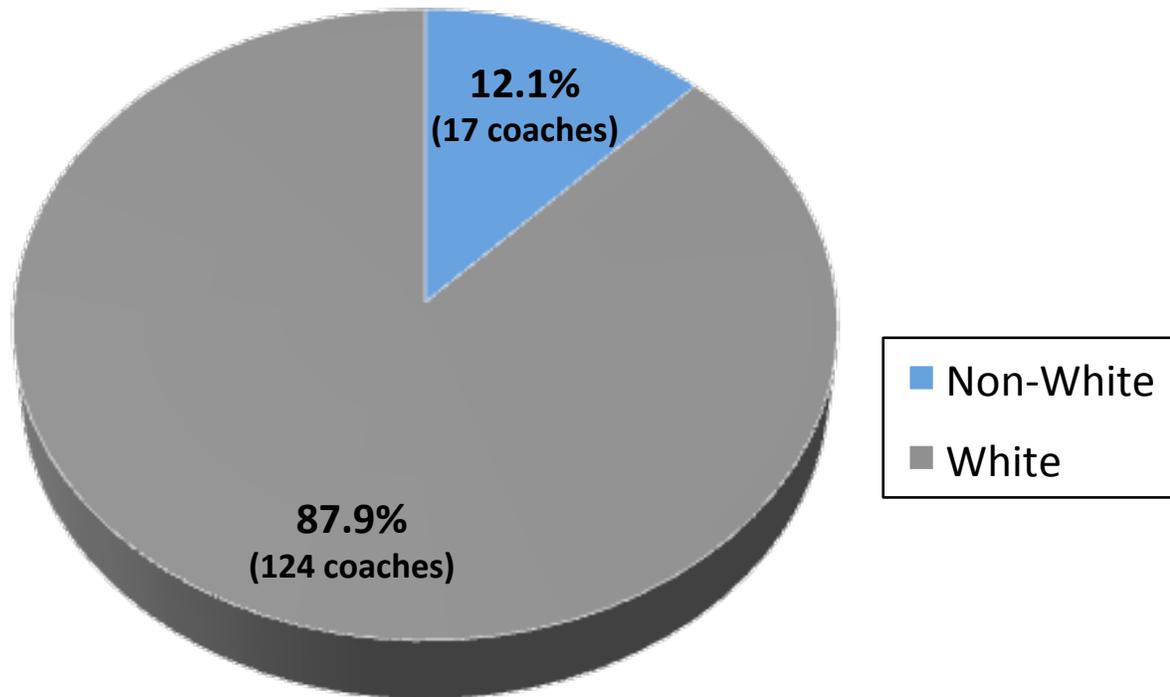
Source: Dr. C. Keith Harrison (based on data provided by the NFL).

NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER SECOND HEAD COACH POSITION



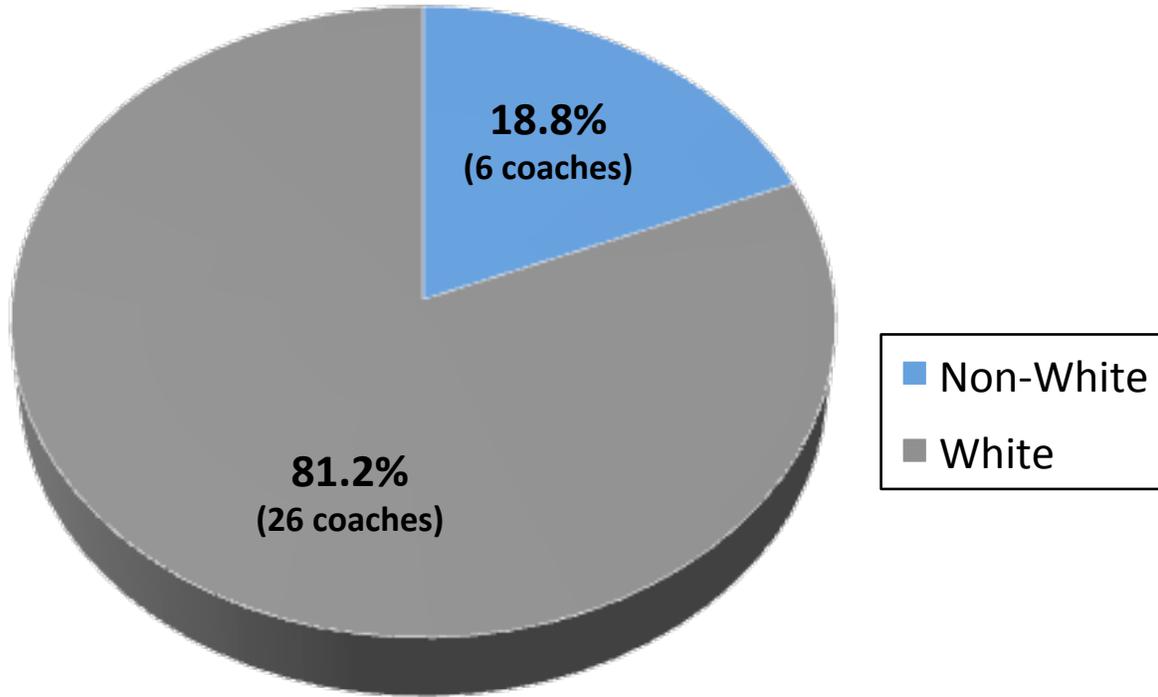
Source: Dr. C. Keith Harrison (based on data provided by the NFL).

## RACE OF NFL HEAD COACHES FROM 1963 - 2012



Source: Dr. C. Keith Harrison (based on data provided by the NFL).

## NFL HEAD COACHES AT START OF 2012 NFL SEASON



Source: Dr. C. Keith Harrison (based on data provided by the NFL).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In 1921, Fritz Pollard became the first person of color hired as a head coach of a professional football team. Pollard, an African American, coached the Akron Pros and Hammond Pros from 1921-1925. Employment opportunities in professional football for non-White coaches were limited following the leadership of Pollard. From the time of Pollard's last game coaching in 1925, it would be over forty years before another ethnic minority would serve as the head coach of a professional football team. Tom Fears, who is Latino, became the first ethnic minority head coach hired in the modern NFL era in 1967. Art Shell became the first African American head coach in the modern NFL era when he was hired by the Los Angeles Raiders in 1989.
- From 1963-2012, there have been 124 White head coaches in the NFL, 14 African American head coaches, and three Latino head coaches. Historically, the disparity and skewed representation between White head coaches in the NFL (87.9%) and non-White head coaches (12.1%) is indisputable over a fifty-year period (1963-2012).<sup>1</sup>
- At the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season, there were six non-White head coaches (18.8% of head coaches), as compared with 26 White head coaches (81.2% of head coaches). At the time of publication of this report, there were only four non-White head coaches (12.5% of head coaches in the NFL).
- After separating<sup>2</sup> from a first head coach position, seven non-White individuals (41.2% of the 17 total non-White head coaches from 1963-2012) have received (and accepted) a second head coach opportunity in the NFL. However, since 2007 only one non-White individual, Romeo Crennel, has received (and accepted) a second head coach opportunity. After separating from a second head coach position, only one non-White coach, Tom Flores, has received (and accepted) a third opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. Not a single non-White coach has had a fourth opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team.
- After separating from a first head coach position, 46 White individuals (37.1% of the 124 total White head coaches from 1963-2012) have received (and accepted) a second head coach opportunity, as compared with seven non-White individuals. Twelve White coaches have received (and accepted) a third opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team, as compared with only one non-White coach, Tom Flores. Three White coaches (Bill Parcells, Wade Phillips, and Marty Schottenheimer) have had a fourth opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team, as compared with zero non-White individuals.
- After separating from a first head coach position, 21 White individuals have held defensive coordinator positions and 19 White individuals have held offensive coordinator positions. After separating from a first head coach position, one non-White individual (Romeo Crennel) has held the defensive coordinator position and one non-White individual (Tom Fears) has been an offensive coordinator. It is important to note that only two non-White individuals (Romeo Crennel and Tom Fears) have accepted an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator position after one stint as a head coach in the NFL, and no non-White individual has held an offensive coordinator position after one stint as an NFL head coach since Tom Fears made that transition in the early 1970s.<sup>3</sup>
- Three White individuals have held defensive coordinator positions and three White individuals have held offensive coordinator positions after separating from a second head coach position. Only one non-White individual (Ray Rhodes) has held a defensive coordinator position and zero non-White coaches have held an offensive coordinator position after separating from a second stint as a head coach in the NFL.

<sup>1</sup> All data and statistics in this report are based on information provided by the NFL.

<sup>2</sup> Separating means either being fired or resigning from an NFL head coach position.

<sup>3</sup> Report data is based on the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season. Jim Caldwell, an African American who was previously the head coach of the Indianapolis Colts, was named Offensive Coordinator of the Baltimore Ravens during the 2012 NFL season.

- Since 1980, approximately 30 individuals who have served as head coaches in the NFL have subsequently accepted a head coach position with a college football team in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS). All of these individuals have been White coaches. Stated differently, zero non-White individuals have successfully transitioned from a former NFL head coach to a college football head coach since 1980. It is important to note that there is no reliable data with respect to how many non-White individuals have pursued (but were not offered and/or did not accept) these college head coach positions after at least one stint as a head coach in the NFL.
- Fourteen African American individuals have been head coaches in the NFL since 1963. Six additional 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.
- Only five NFL teams have hired two African American head coaches from 1963-2012. No NFL team has hired three African American head coaches. Also, 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.
- Eight NFL head coaches were fired shortly after the end of the 2012 NFL regular season. Six of these head coaches were White individuals, and two were non-White coaches. As of the time of publication of this report, four of the six White individuals had already accepted another NFL coaching-related position (one as a head coach and three as offensive coordinators), but neither of the two non-White individuals had been named to a head coach or coordinator position (*see the table below*).

### NFL OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEAD COACHES FIRED AT END OF 2012 NFL SEASON

NAME OF COACH	RACE	FORMER POSITION & TEAM	NEW POSITION & TEAM
Andy Reid	White	Head Coach (Eagles)	Head Coach (Chiefs)
Norv Turner	White	Head Coach (Chargers)	Offensive Coordinator (Browns)
Ken Whisenhunt	White	Head Coach (Cardinals)	Offensive Coordinator (Chargers)
Pat Shurmur	White	Head Coach (Browns)	Offensive Coordinator (Eagles)
Chan Gailey	White	Head Coach (Bills)	no new position
Mike Mularkey	White	Head Coach (Jaguars)	no new position
Romeo Crennel	African American	Head Coach (Chiefs)	no new position
Lovie Smith	African American	Head Coach (Bears)	no new position

At and/or near the end of the 2012 NFL regular season, eight head coaches either resigned or were fired; all of the newly hired head coaches were White individuals (see the table below).

### COACHES HIRED AT END OF NFL 2012 SEASON

NAME OF COACH	RACE	TEAM
Chip Kelly	White	Philadelphia Eagles
Marc Trestman	White	Chicago Bears
Mike McCoy	White	San Diego Chargers
Andy Reid	White	Kansas City Chiefs
Doug Marrone	White	Buffalo Bills
Rob Chudzinski	White	Cleveland Browns
Bruce Arians	White	Arizona Cardinals
Gus Bradley	White	Jacksonville Jaguars

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### THEORY AND PRACTICE: THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE ON NFL AND COLLEGIATE COACHING MOBILITY PATTERNS

The following is a summary review of the literature on coaching mobility and occupational patterns in the context of diversity and inclusion within collegiate and professional sport. The scholarly approaches to this topic have included: examining how individuals and groups access the football and coaching networks; quantifying the opportunities and assessing the types of organizations/teams that ethnic minorities are afforded the opportunity to coach; evaluating the inertia of public policies like the Rooney Rule in terms of broadening the talent and hiring pool landscape; and examining the dynamics of race and culture in terms of making the hiring process more transparent at the professional and collegiate football levels.

- Previous research on occupational mobility patterns has generally focused on three approaches: the career or work history approach, the human capital approach (education and competencies), and the status attainment approach (social capital and mentors) (*Smith & Abbott, 1983*).
- Previous literature has highlighted the importance of positioning individual coaching identities on specific hiring trees of influential employers and head coaches with icon status, access and opportunity (*Brooks & Althouse, 1993, 2000, 2007, 2013*).
- Results from quantitative analyses demonstrate that social capital matters a great deal for promotions, but its impact is contingent on race; for example, network connections to heterogeneous contacts (racially heterophilous ties, weak ties, and high status ties) appear to be more effective for African American coaches than for White coaches (*Day & McDonald, 2010*).
- Some of the previous research indicates that same-race networking for ethnic minority groups is a negative influencer when attempting to access upward coaching mobility patterns (*Day & McDonald, 2010*).
- Evidence by some scholars presents a clear argument that greater integration across the fields of organization and sport science is needed in particular in the area of networked approaches to team processes (*Day, Gordon & Fink, 2012*).
- Analyses of the regular season win/loss records, and of making the playoffs, for NFL team coaches by both African Americans and Whites between 1990 and 2002 show that African American coaches were more successful (*Madden, 2004*).
- Policy analysis has indicated that the NFL's implementation of the Rooney Rule has created more opportunities in the hiring marketplace for non-White head coach candidates and has accomplished its initial intended purpose of bringing attention to the issue of underrepresentation of ethnic minorities as head coaches in the NFL (*see Thornton, 2009*); the Appendix of this report contains two figures regarding the research by *Madden & Ruther (2011)* that provide additional information on the number of African American head coaches, offensive coordinators, and defensive coordinators in the NFL (data is through 2009).
- A 2002 study commissioned by the late Johnnie Cochran, Jr. and prominent employment discrimination lawyer Cyrus Mehri, conducted by Dr. Janice Madden, looked directly at the performance statistics of African American head coaches in the NFL compared to those of White coaches; the study found that African American head coaches averaged 1.1 more wins per season, led their teams to the playoffs 67% of the time compared to 39% of the time for White coaches, averaged 2.7 more wins in their first season and, in their final seasons, terminated African American coaches averaged 1.3 more wins than White coaches who were also terminated (*Greene, 2012*).

- Researchers have found that the accountability of the Black Coaches & Administrators Hiring Report Card (BCA HRC) conducted the first six years by the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic & Athletic Prowess should focus on the process of universities interviewing and hiring candidates as compared with focusing entirely on the final hiring decision (*Harrison & Yee, 2003-2009*).
- Since the BCA HRC's first publication by Harrison & Associates in 2004, there has been a 600% increase in the number of hires of people of color at the FBS and FCS college football levels, and 61% of the total hires of ethnic minorities (ever) have taken place in the last eight years (*Gaither, 2012*).
- Critical Race Theory<sup>4</sup> was applied to six years of the BCA HRC (2004-2009) and revealed that both the progress and lack of progress at the collegiate level was informed by the study's approach to investigating the process of hiring head coaches (*Singer, Harrison & Bukstein, 2010*).
- Professor N. Jeremi Duru's (2011) research examined the history of the Rooney Rule in the context of broader equity-inducing initiatives, and thoroughly chronicles the NFL's track record of moving from very few non-White head coaches or front office representatives to becoming the model for diversity and inclusion workforce practices.

## METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

### DATA ANALYSIS: NFL CONTEXT

This report investigated data regarding NFL head coaching demographics, stint and mobility patterns from 1963-2012. This time period is used because 1963 serves as the first year that the NFL began to track relevant data on head coach mobility patterns. Based on the NFL database of human resources in terms of head coaches, these data were analyzed for mobility patterns. Report data is based on the start of the 2012 NFL season. Interim head coaches were not included in the data set with respect to determining the total number of people who have held head coaching positions in the NFL from 1963-2012. Attempts were made to verify the number of vacancies filled and individual separations, trajectories and occupational patterns of NFL head coaches based on the data provided by the NFL. If an individual was a head coach for multiple NFL teams, the report counts that coach one time in the data set because this report 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 1963-2012. Data was analyzed using SPSS to perform regression analysis. Descriptive statistics and cross tabulations were also performed using SPSS.

<sup>4</sup>Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a tool through which scholars and researchers can address certain problems in sport organizations as CRT offers a way to understand how ostensibly race-neutral structures and processes in sport business are, in many instances, ways of forming and maintaining racial boundaries (Singer, 2005).

**FINDINGS AND RESULTS:  
NFL COACHING MOBILITY PATTERNS (1963 - 2012)**

**RACE OF COACHES (1963-2012)**

<b>NUMBER OF COACHES</b>		<b>PERCENT</b>
Non-White	17	12.1%
White	124	87.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Source: Dr. C. Keith Harrison (based on data provided by the NFL)*

**NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER FIRST HEAD COACH POSITION**

<b>RACE</b>	<b>NON-WHITE</b>	<b>WHITE</b>
NFL Head Coach	7	46
NFL Offensive Coordinator	1	19
NFL Defensive Coordinator	1	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>86</b>

*Source: Dr. C. Keith Harrison (based on data provided by the NFL)*

**NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER SECOND HEAD COACH POSITION**

<b>RACE</b>	<b>NON-WHITE</b>	<b>WHITE</b>
NFL Head Coach	1	12
NFL Offensive Coordinator	0	3
NFL Defensive Coordinator	1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>

*Source: Dr. C. Keith Harrison (based on data provided by the NFL)*

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

It is important in this section that we do two things: ask questions and attempt to answer those questions in ways that move forward our current thinking about the business of diversity and inclusion in the NFL. Questions to address include the following: What do the major findings and highlights of the study mean from a scholarly and practical perspective? How does this report inform theory and practice in terms of diversity and inclusion dynamics related to hiring practices and processes in the NFL? How does this study validate or differ from the current academic and research literature on this topic? Do the results of this study enable practitioners to implement best practices and good business solutions? How do we engage the public in terms of NFL fans and consumers to better understand that inequalities continue to exist regardless of the many African American star athletes that occupy team rosters in the NFL? What will a report like this look like 25 years from now in terms of the demographics and social network patterns of head coaches and assistant coaches?

**Major Findings of Study:** This report found that over a fifty-year period (1963-2012) a skewed number of Whites have occupied the head coaching position in the NFL. While strides have been made, at the start of the 2012 NFL season there was still a noticeable disparity in the numbers based on head coach ethnicity, as 26 coaches (81.2%) were White individuals. This simply means that the majority of head coaches are primarily from one population much like executives at Fortune 500 companies and other mainstream institutions (*Lapchick, 2012*). In his study on White and African American college coaches, Dr. Fitz Hill found that each racial group perceived that things were stacked against them in terms of the opportunity to become a head coach—even though the numbers clearly show that the barriers are more intense for ethnic minorities in college and professional football (*Hill, 2012*). Clearly, as other research indicates, African Americans and Whites view their existence in the social world differently (*Smith, 2007*). In addition to these differences in actual opportunities as well as perceptions relating to those opportunities, this study also found that there is a huge difference in the number of White individuals and non-White individuals in terms of opportunities following one or more stints as a head coach in the NFL.

**Supplementing and Extending Literature on Diversity and Inclusion:** The current study builds on all the previous literature cited earlier in this report related to diversity and perception issues with head coaches in collegiate and professional sport. The current study informs both theory and practice simultaneously because it addresses the head coaching mobility inequities over a long period of time and also provides practitioners with the facts, data and scientific assessment to approach this issue in a strategic and authentic way. The uniqueness of having access to the NFL database of head coaches over four decades enabled the researchers to expand on previous knowledge, as few studies have analyzed the historical occupational mobility patterns of individuals in the NFL. Previous studies in this area 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 non-White head coaches) and comparing the win/loss records of White and non-White head coaches (for example, determining whether non-Whites are provided with a true meaningful opportunity to turn around a team with a losing record). This study focuses on whether Whites and non-Whites face access barriers after one or more stints as a head coach in the NFL. Stated differently, this study attempts to address whether Whites and/or non-Whites only have one opportunity to prove themselves, and therefore attention must focus on retention, career progression, continued access and “life after being a head coach” in addition to the Rooney’s Rule noteworthy focus on initial entry/access for ethnic minorities. The findings of this study indicate that, historically, NFL teams have been reluctant to hire a non-White individual for a head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator position after a non-White individual has previously separated from a head coach position in the NFL.

**Timeliness of Report:** The journalistic attention given to the issue of ethnic minority coaching opportunities reveals a gift and a curse analogy. Articles range from optimism at the NFL and NCAA levels (for example, articles titled “College football hits a landmark for black coaches” (2012); “UCF’s David Kelley inspired by increase in number of black college football head coaches” (2010); and “Study: NFL draws best grade for diversity hiring” (2012)) to more pessimistic titles—titles that reflect the reality of inequalities—with features such as “Disparity in hiring of coaches lingers in the NFL” (1997); “Minority hires lag in NFL” (2003);

and “Black offensive assistants encounter roadblocks to becoming NFL head coaches” (2012). And then there have been messages about this topic that see the glass half full and half empty at the same time (for example, articles titled “A sign of progress? Not really” (2007) and “Progress in hiring black college football coaches: Yes and no” (2012)). During the most recent Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend, there were several articles in the mainstream press that called into question the lack of effectiveness of the Rooney Rule to assist ethnic minority coaches after initial access relating to the required meaningful interview of one minority head coach candidate.

**Coaching Mobility Patterns:** The findings of the study in this report underscore and uncover the complexity of organizational nuances that may influence the final hiring decisions at the professional and collegiate levels and determine the fate of non-White coaches to maneuver the hierarchies of leadership positions. In terms of occupational mobility, the second and third chances for non-Whites to continue coaching at the positions of head coach, offensive coordinator and defensive coordinator are inequitable in comparison to Whites. Previous analysis on this concept of fewer career opportunities has focused on African American quarterbacks and the phenomenon of racial stacking (*Edwards, 1973; Lapchick, 1991; Smith, 2007*), as well as the lack of ethnic minorities in other major professional sport leagues (e.g., Major League Baseball). In addition, researchers such as Professor Katherine Phillips and colleagues challenge scholars and practitioners to examine this issue on a deeper level beyond perceptions, policy and awareness. Phillips et al. have cleverly developed a theory-based argument that supports the current report’s research findings. Fittingly, Phillips and her colleagues were inspired to research this topic after the fate of coaches like Ty Willingham at Notre Dame, who compiled a 21-15 record but was fired after three years on a five-year contract, thereby becoming the first coach in the university’s history at the time to have his contract terminated in the middle of his tenure. Phillips explained, “We had a few ideas before the project, but the project started shaping itself. We started thinking that African Americans are not getting the credit they deserve; they do not always have the doors opened; and when they get there they are evaluated differently” (*Nov. 2008, p. 1*). Similar in part to this report’s focus, these researchers asked the question does the phenomenon of discrimination differences and different evaluative criteria with respect to job performance happen in business? Further, they also asked “can one show that these differences exist and have an impact on people’s ability to ascend to leadership positions and stay there?” (*Nov. 2008, p. 1*).

Also, in a data-based study *Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips (2008)* found the following:

- White business leaders are evaluated as more likely to succeed when such leaders are viewed as responsible for an organization’s success.
- White business leaders are considered more effective and typically experience better career advancement opportunities than racial minority leaders.
- The lack of racial and ethnic minorities in top positions is due in part to leadership prototypes and leadership categorization theories.
- The unconscious and conscious label of “the White Standard” by evaluators means evaluators perceive successful leaders as White regardless of the evaluator’s own race.

What the Rosette et al. study means in the context of the current report is that Whites and non-Whites experience different mobility patterns of success and failure as they move from organization to organization in the NFL. While the Rooney Rule has been effective in allowing ethnic minority candidates more initial access than was previously realized at the time—the culture of NFL male networks, cryonism (i.e., showing favoritism to friends and colleagues without regard to actual competencies and qualifications), and the “who knows you” culture requires that a serious analysis of the situation continues to occur. For now, the data in the current report affirm that some standard is in place for certain coaches to jump from team to team in head coaching or coordinator roles. Is that standard racist? That should not be the focus—the focus should be on changing the culture and figuring out why the same attributes that normally dictate

“the reshuffling effect” for White coaches does not transfer over for non-White coaches with the same pedigree (or even better pedigree) after their first or second separation from a head coaching position in the NFL. The data in the current report support the research by several colleagues mentioned earlier in this report that non-White coaches face a different reality in terms of “playing the game” and “staying in the game.”

The public discourse in terms of fans and outside observers of the NFL’s diversity and inclusion issues and policies such as the Rooney Rule remains limited, ill-informed and in need of some factual information on how diversity is defined, categorized and analyzed. As is often the case, numerous fans perceive that contemporary society is “post-racial” and that there is no need to address racial, gender and other social issues that impact sport in society. The high representation of non-White football players in particular distorts the public perception that equality has been realized. Access to leadership and top management roles in professional and college sport is not the same as access to physical participation at the competitive levels on the field of play. In the future a great push to educate fans of the NFL specifically could help contribute to a national and global culture that understands the true evidence relating to equality and the true meaning of equality.

In 25 years, the research in this area should continue to examine the dynamics of equality, opportunity and the demographic breakdown of ethnicity of coaches from 2013-2027. All stakeholders concerned with these issues must remain proactive and not take a stance that “only time will tell” in terms of addressing some of the injustices of head coaching opportunities in the NFL as well as at the NCAA level. Researchers should continue to expose and unravel the nuanced concepts of human relationships at the highest levels of decision-making with respect to the hiring process for coaches. Ultimately, this will result in all of us gaining a deeper understanding of what factors cultivate the trust level of selecting “the hired vs. the fired” and “the reshuffled vs. the overlooked.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS: POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- **The Social Network:** The NFL and the NCAA might consider combining forces and hold one event each year where coaches at both levels network and connect with one another. The American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) has a large annual event and the NFL coaches have a smaller exclusive gathering each year. For example, this type of collaborative meeting may have the potential to enable non-White former NFL head coaches to become head coaches at the NCAA level, as this report indicated above that since 1980 not a single non-White individual has made the transition from NFL head coach to NCAA head coach at the FBS level. Communication and interaction are the keys to an inclusive organizational culture and society. Even though coaches are not responsible for making the final hiring decisions with respect to other coaches (*see Cochran & Mehri, 2002, explaining the need to increase diversity among key decision-makers in the front office of NFL teams*), these collaborative meetings can facilitate a dialogue about the culture of the NFL and the NCAA, increase the level of trust amongst coach candidates, and also lead to brainstorming sessions regarding effective strategies to land a first head coach offer as well as how to remain a strong candidate for job opportunities after a stint as a head coach. This event would help the coaches build “social capital,” which represents a network of relationships with White and non-White colleagues and superiors who are critical to career success because they serve to encourage career advancement through the receipt of increased organizational and career-related support and access to information and resources (*Sagas & Cunningham, 2005*). In the words of Pro Football Hall of Fame Coach Bill Walsh, the hiring of head coaches in the NFL “is a very fraternal thing. You end up calling friends, and the typical coach has not been exposed to many black coaches” (*Proxmire, 2008, p. 5*).
- **Comprehensive Incentive and Disincentive Models:** Consideration should be given to the development of a comprehensive 21st Century incentive model to promote diversity hiring practices by acknowledging and rewarding “those that do it right” (and exceed the minimum requirements/expectations) in addition to existing policies such as the Rooney Rule that penalize “those that fail to do it right.” This proposal supplements the proposal of Cochran and Mehri (2002) that related to rewarding teams with a draft pick for engaging in noteworthy and inclusive hiring practices among management decision-makers. In terms of a parallel comprehensive 21st Century disincentive model to promote diversity in hiring practices, perhaps stronger financial disincentives are needed to provide an additional nudge (extrinsic motivation) from the NFL League Office for those organizations who do not demonstrate a genuine commitment to diversity and inclusion with respect to hiring decisions.
- **The Rooney Rule and Next Steps:** The Rooney Rule has unquestionably helped to shape a culture of opportunity in terms of those individuals that make it to the final interview process from a wider candidate pool. However, while the Rooney Rule “combats unconscious bias and increases the chances of selecting the best person for the job” (*Proxmire, 2008, p. 9*) there remains a need to improve both the policy and the process. The Rooney Rule has provided many non-White head coach candidates with access to a meaningful interview. The next step is to provide non-Whites with access to information about the culture of the NFL and with access to the powerful formal and informal networks (that is, social capital) that impact whether an individual might have a second or third opportunity in the NFL. The Rooney Rule may enable a non-White individual to have an opportunity to secure that initial head coach 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 opportunities). Therefore, in addition to working to increase the number of non-Whites who make hiring decisions (team owners and general managers), it is imperative to work on improving “the perception of competence” of non-White sport business professionals by both Whites and non-Whites (*Shropshire, 1996, p. 129-30*). Stated differently, even if there is an increase in non-White general managers and team owners, negative race consciousness associated with the coaching capabilities of non-Whites may still exist and persist (*see Shropshire, 1996*).

“All the Rooney Rule was supposed to do was get people into the room who otherwise might never have had a shot.”

Dr. Richard Lapchick, Director of DeVos Sport Business Management Program (2011)

- **More Transparent Hiring Process:** In the future, the NFL could consider making the hiring process even more transparent with an instrument or scorecard called the “Transparent Performance Scale” that might encompass key components that answer the question of what aspects are most important in terms of a person becoming a head coach in the NFL. Key components might include the following checklist with subjective and objective factors that each decision-maker on an NFL team would rank and complete: level of trust in candidate; level of perceived risk associated with hiring candidate; candidate’s previous win/loss record and coaching success; relationships with decision-makers at the team with which the candidate is interviewing; how the coach was referred to the team; and a comparison to other candidates previously interviewed by the team for the position.

## SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS: SYSTEMIC RESEARCH AND CHANGING THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION DIALOGUE

The following are some suggestions for future research that could impact the NFL’s “good business” vision in terms of diversity and inclusion best practices based on the facts and empirical data of this study:

- Future research should examine the demographics and career mobility patterns for each decade (ten-year period) to track progress and, where applicable, regress.
- Future research should analyze individual case studies of every current and former NFL head coach from 1980 to present (analysis would examine resumes of each coach and all football-related positions held by that individual to enable an analysis of occupational mobility patterns and to create models/road maps of successful career paths).
- Future research must also focus on the internal culture of the NFL coaching carousel and investigate the social networks of various influential owners, general managers, coaches, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Future research should analyze fan discourse about diversity and inclusion in sport.

- Future research should analyze specific case studies relating to head coaching and coordinator position vacancies over the past few years.
- Future research should explore the global context relating to disparities and inequalities associated with hiring practices and retention / continued access (for example, some European soccer clubs have similar issues with a lack of Black managers and key decision-makers).

In the final analysis, diversity and inclusion operates most effectively when becoming a part of the business model of any innovative organizational culture. This vision has been realized in past histories with the integration of sport for women, people of color and access for those physically disabled. Inclusion is not merely the right thing to do morally for business leaders. As evidence has shown in terms of untapped human resources, innovative solutions and even revenue generation, it is simply good business to maximize the broad stroke of talent potential and to enable all human beings to realize the American Dream.

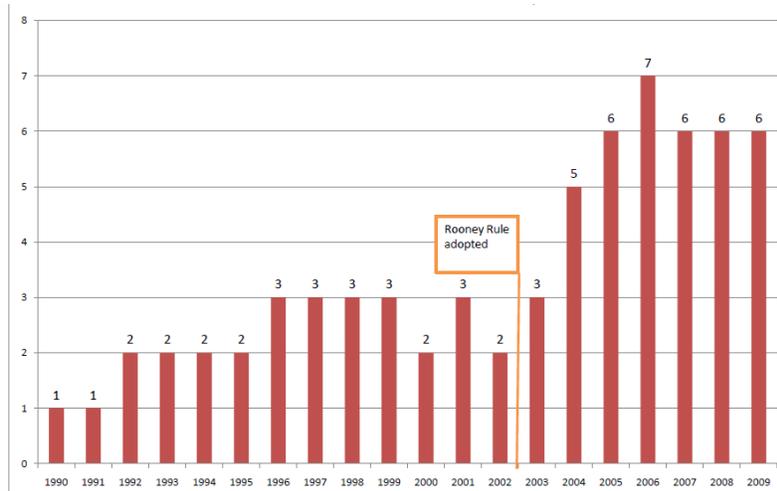
Developments at the interface of race, sport and society are dynamic. The struggle is therefore perpetual and there are no final victories. Not Jackie Robinson, not Tommy Smith and John Carlos, not Curt Flood who challenged the reserve rule. The question is who is going to stand up and analyze and project a vision of those challenges today?"

Dr. Harry Edwards, African American Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame Induction Speech (2008)

# APPENDIX

**FIGURE 1**

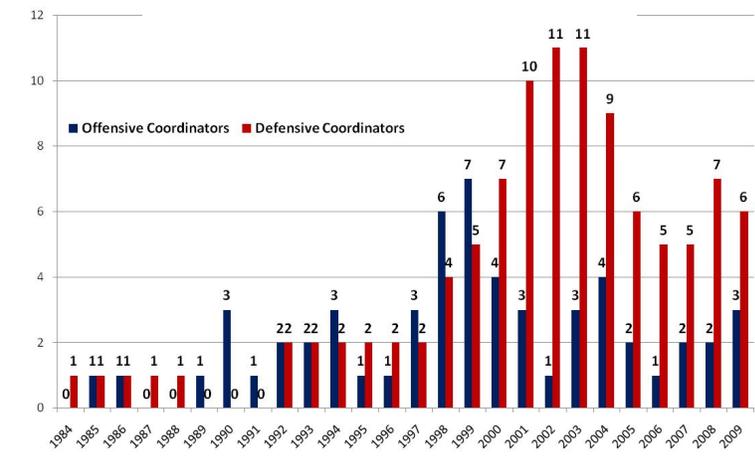
African American Head Coaches in the NFL, 1990-2009



Source: Madden & Ruther (2011)

**FIGURE 2**

Number of African American NFL Offensive and Defensive Coordinators, 1984-2009



Source: Madden & Ruther (2011)

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“We have entered a new phase in our societal efforts toward diversity and inclusion. In sports objective measures are used to determine who plays, and diversity and inclusion are near universally present. In head coaching jobs, however, decisions go beyond the objective win/loss record of a given coach to subjective [criteria] including such things as “style, fit and character.” Where subjectivity is allowed unconscious discrimination can occur. The data analyzed here is another step in raising the unconscious to the conscious level, allowing diverse and inclusive decisions to be more readily made. This is the path business entities must continue to follow on this difficult journey.”

**Professor Kenneth L. Shropshire**, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania and **Special Counsel, Duane Morris LLP**. Author of *In Black and White: Race and Sports in America*

“Dr. Harrison’s landmark study deserves close attention for those who care about equal opportunity and fair competition in sports. This is the first study looking at racial disparities in the career paths of former NFL head coaches. The NFL deserves tremendous credit for authorizing an independent, critical and transparent study. In my experience doing work involving many Corporate 500 companies, I have rarely seen this level of leadership. This underscores the NFL’s extraordinary commitment to get it right on the journey to equal opportunity and fair competition.”

**Cyrus Mehri**, counsel to the Fritz Pollard Alliance and an advocate for minority coaching opportunity

“Dr. Harrison’s new study will be a huge help with its keen historical perspective, analysis and suggestions for the NFL and college sport. It is a continuation of his great work in the spirit of pracademics.””

**Dr. Richard Lapchick**, Director of DeVos Sport Business Management Program (2011)

## BIOS OF RESEARCH TEAM

**Dr. C. Keith Harrison** is Associate Professor at the University of Central Florida as well as Associate Director of the DeVos Graduate and Undergraduate Sport Business Management Programs. In addition to his role at UCF as Faculty and Curriculum Coordinator of the DeVos Sport Business Management Programs, Dr. Harrison is an Adjunct Associate Professor at Emory University's Goizueta Business School and adjunct faculty member at Boise State University's Department of Communication. 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 the University of Central Florida). A former NCAA scholar-athlete that was a center on the football team at West Texas A & M University, Dr. Harrison has numerous peer-review journal articles and book chapters. His career focus is in a few areas: 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 education, sport and entertainment. Dr. Harrison's brief list of clients and partnerships include the NFL, Oakland Raiders, Miami Dolphins, University of Oregon, Jordan Brand, Boise State University, UCLA's School of Education, Wharton Sports Business Academy, and Emory University's Goizueta Business School (Department of Organization and Management).

**Scott Bukstein** is the Assistant Director, Program Coordinator and Instructor within the DeVos Graduate and Undergraduate Sport Business Management Programs at the University of Central Florida. Bukstein is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor within the Goizueta Business School at Emory University. Bukstein's research focus is on the intersection of sport and the law, the business of collegiate athletics and professional sport, the perceptions and academic performance of college student-athletes, mobility patterns and career paths of coaches, and leadership and diversity/inclusion issues in sport. Bukstein is also a licensed attorney.

**Dr. Sharon Yee** is currently the Assistant Director of Global Recruitment at Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona. Yee earned a PhD from Arizona State University, and she functioned as one of the lead researchers for the BCA Hiring Report Card from 2003-2009.

**Summer Dickey** earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Central Florida with a concentration in Marketing and a minor in Sport Business Management, and is currently working to earn a Masters of Business Administration in Sport Management and Marketing at Seton Hall University.

**Kelyn Varona** is a graduate of the University of Central Florida, and is currently a student at The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale.

**Jessica West** graduated from the University of Central Florida with a degree in event management, and is currently pursuing a Masters of Business Administration and a Masters in Sport Business Management.

**Leigh Weaver** earned a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations / Advertising as well as a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Central Florida. Weaver also earned a Masters of Business Administration and a Masters in Sport Business Management from the DeVos Graduate Sport Business Management Program at the University of Central Florida.

## ABOUT THE PAUL ROBESON RESEARCH CENTER FOR ACADEMIC AND ATHLETIC PROWESS (EST. 1998)

Dr. C. Keith Harrison founded the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic and Athletic Prowess on April 9, 1998 at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan. At the time of founding the Robeson Research Center, Harrison was a faculty member at the University of Michigan within the Division of Kinesiology, Department of Sport Management and Communication. Harrison created this research laboratory to disseminate systematic knowledge on issues related to education, diversity and sport. The concept continues today as a project that involves conducting research at the Behavioral Lab in the College of Business Administration at the University of Central Florida. Harrison collaborates with doctoral, graduate and undergraduate students nationally and internationally to create new knowledge and best practices for numerous organizations and higher education institutions.