



DIVERSITY INCREASES IN NFL COACHING RANKS;
GREEN WITH CARDS, SMITH WITH BEARS

The NFL’s program to enhance diversity in the coaching ranks is working.

With the hiring this offseason of **DENNIS GREEN** and **LOVIE SMITH** as head coaches of the Arizona Cardinals and Chicago Bears, respectively, there are now more African-American head coaches – five – than in any other time in NFL history.

Green and Smith join **TONY DUNGY** (Indianapolis), **HERMAN EDWARDS** (NY Jets) and **MARVIN LEWIS** (Cincinnati) as minority head coaches.

The NFL Committee on Workplace Diversity, instituted in 2002 and chaired by Pittsburgh Steelers Chairman **DAN ROONEY**, requires, among other conditions, that NFL clubs interview at least one minority candidate when they have a head-coaching availability.

The committee also allows NFL assistant coaches whose teams are in the playoffs and have a bye week to interview for head-coaching positions during that week.

New Bears head coach Smith believes the bye-week rule enabled him to win the job with Chicago. “I interviewed with four different teams and the bye-week allowance helped me get a job,” he says.

More than that, says Smith, the requirement that teams interview at least one minority head-coaching candidate immeasurable helped him. “I have to think it helped me,” he says. “It’s a step in the right way, and I’m living proof of that.”

In Arizona, Green teams with another minority – Vice President of Football Operations **ROD GRAVES** – to form a solid football tandem.

“I really believe that (Cardinals owner) **BILL BIDWILL** should be commended on what he is doing,” says NFL Players Association Chairman **GENE UPSHAW** about the Green-Graves pairing.

Also in the past offseason, seven African-American coaches were newly appointed to NFL coordinator positions. In 2004 there will be 14 African-American coordinators in the NFL, tying last season for the most in history.

One of those new coordinators is **ALEX WOOD**, a graduate of the **NFL MINORITY COACHING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**. The program, begun in 1987, annually provides NFL training-camp positions to minority coaches. Numerous present-day NFL coaches have partaken in the program, such as head coaches Edwards of the Jets and Lewis of the Bengals.

Wood was appointed the Cardinals’ offensive coordinator this year by new coach Green. Wood – who was then head coach at James Madison University – participated in the Coaching Fellowship in 1998 at the camp of the Minnesota Vikings when Green was the head coach there.

“Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the program was the access to the professional level of a football team and the networking which accompanies the program,” says Wood. “The program allows coaches to receive first-hand experience in the meeting room and on the practice field, learn how to work with people from diverse backgrounds, and better evaluate plans for a future in football -- whether it be to remain at the college level or aspire to become part of a professional organization.”

This season’s African-American head coaches/coordinators:

2004 NFL AFRICAN-AMERICAN HEAD COACHES/COORDINATORS

Greg Blache, Washington, Defense *	Marvin Lewis, Cincinnati, Head Coach
Maurice Carthon, Dallas, Offense	Sherman Lewis, Detroit, Offense
Ted Cottrell, Minnesota, Defense *	Tim Lewis, NY Giants, Defense *
Romeo Crennel, New England, Defense	Ron Meeks, Indianapolis, Defense
Tony Dungy, Indianapolis, Head Coach	Jimmy Raye, Oakland, Offense *
Herman Edwards, NY Jets, Head Coach	Terry Robiskie, Cleveland, Offense *
Leslie Frazier, Cincinnati, Defense	Ray Rhodes, Seattle, Defense
Jerry Gray, Buffalo, Defense	Lovie Smith, Chicago, Head Coach *
Dennis Green, Arizona, Head Coach *	Alex Wood, Arizona, Offense *
Donnie Henderson, NY Jets, Defense *	* Appointed in 2004

Another program to help **all assistant coaches** advance is the **NFL COACHES CAREER DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM**. The symposium, conceived by NFL Commissioner **PAUL TAGLIABUE** as a way to help assistant coaches and coordinators develop the unique skills demanded of NFL head coaches, offers a far-ranging agenda of career-enhancement topics tailored specifically to NFL assistants. The seventh annual Coaches Career Symposium was held this past May in Orlando.

The **NFL EUROPE LEAGUE** this past spring conducted for a second-year a program similar to the NFL Minority Coaching Fellowship.

The **NFL COACHING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM** included eight active and 26 former NFL players who participated in the month-long NFLEL training camps in Tampa in February. Twelve of the former players continued coaching for the entire 10-week NFL Europe League season in Europe, and some joined NFL clubs during training camp as part of the NFL Minority Coaching Fellowship Program.

The 12 were **BEN COATES, WILLIE DAVIS, D’MARCO FARR, JAMES HARRELL, ROBERT HARRIS, RON HELLER, DWIGHT HOLLIER, AMP LEE, TIM LESTER, TOM NÜTTEN, JEFF OGDEN** and **TIM WATSON**. The NFL Coaching Internship Program is a joint effort of the NFL and the NFL Players Association.