



## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

# OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY PATTERNS VOLUME IV



### EXAMINING OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY PATTERNS: Access, Opportunity, Social Capital and Leadership in the NFL

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at University of Central Florida

A report presented by the National Football League.



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



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## NFL Occupational Mobility Patterns (Volume IV)

*Examining Occupational Mobility Patterns of General Managers, Head Coaches, Offensive Coordinators and Defensive Coordinators: A Timely Report on Leadership, Access, Opportunity, Social Capital and “The Reshuffling Effect” in the NFL*

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*A report presented by the National Football League*

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## 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 Troy Vincent, NFL Executive Vice President of Football Operations

We have made tremendous progress in establishing a new paradigm in human capital development of the 21st Century athletic industry. Diversity is working because of a collective and successful effort toward inclusion. While results progressively build upon each previous level, and never seem to move fast enough, we are swiftly moving toward a system of diversity and inclusion that objectively, fairly, and justly reduces subjective criteria, discrimination, and embraces high standards of character, ability, and shared responsibility. As we analyze our progress, we must do so with a commitment toward sustainable solutions that improve and perfect through the high standards of excellence.

## Message from Lead Author of the Report, Dr. C. Keith Harrison

It is an honor to have been asked by the NFL 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. This report is Volume IV in the NFL Diversity and Inclusion Series. Previous reports have focused on coaching/occupational mobility and female spectators and influencers of the NFL. This report supplements and complements previous volumes in this “good business” series by extending the analysis on occupational mobility patterns of leaders within NFL teams. Closely related to the issue of occupational mobility and diversity is the broader context of race relations. At the start of 2015, I watched the movie *Selma* with two friends who were both White. One of my friends asked the following question after we watched the movie: “Aren’t things better than they were before in terms of race relations?” The answer to this question from my perspective is “yes and no.” Yes, we have come a long way as a society when it comes to race relations in the broader sense of integration and the participation of ethnic minorities throughout the landscape of sport. But, no, we have not reached our zenith when it comes to overcoming unconscious bias and the nuances of attitudinal diversity and inclusion. What I mean by this is that specific to the NFL—a league known for innovation since its inception—we continue to see the reshuffling of coaches and other team executives across many teams in the league. So, what is the solution? The solution is to continue to make the process of each hiring decision transparent, open and inclusive to all the talented individuals who seek to live out their passions in a leadership role.

## Report Background

This report provides an overview and analysis of occupational mobility patterns in the National Football League (NFL). Volume I in the NFL Diversity & Inclusion Series examined coaching mobility patterns within the NFL. Volume III extended the occupational mobility analysis to general managers, offensive coordinators and defensive coordinators. This Volume IV report functions as an update and supplement to the Volume I and Volume III reports. This report extends the findings in previous volumes through an analysis of fifty-three years of human resource data (1963-2015) provided by the NFL relating to the mobility patterns of NFL coaches. This report also specifically spotlights mobility patterns of head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers during the one-year period from Super Bowl XLVIII (February 2, 2014) to Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015)<sup>1</sup>. In addition, this report provides an analysis of occupational mobility patterns for these same team leaders from the start of the 2012 NFL season (September 5, 2012) to Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015). This report concludes with practical recommendations for improvements to diversity and inclusion business practices currently implemented by the NFL and individual NFL teams that will enable the league and its teams to address “the reshuffling effect” with respect to team leadership positions.

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<sup>1</sup> This report includes data for open head coach, offensive coordinator and defensive coordinator positions that were not officially filled by kickoff of Super Bowl XLIX on February 1, 2015. This report also includes data for the Seattle Seahawks defensive coordinator position, which became available shortly after Super Bowl XLIX when former Seattle Seahawks defensive coordinator Dan Quinn accepted the head coach position with the Atlanta Falcons.



BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 1963 AND FEBRUARY 1, 2015, 97 WHITE INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN HIRED AS A HEAD COACH, OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR OR DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR AFTER A FIRST HEAD COACH OPPORTUNITY. ONLY 14 MEN OF COLOR HAVE BEEN HIRED AS A HEAD COACH, OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR OR DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR AFTER A FIRST HEAD COACH OPPORTUNITY DURING THIS SAME TIME PERIOD.

BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 1963 AND FEBRUARY 1, 2015, 21 WHITE INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN HIRED AS A HEAD COACH, OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR OR DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR AFTER A SECOND HEAD COACH OPPORTUNITY. ONLY THREE MEN OF COLOR HAVE BEEN HIRED AS A HEAD COACH, OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR OR DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR AFTER A SECOND HEAD COACH OPPORTUNITY DURING THIS SAME TIME PERIOD.

BETWEEN SUPER BOWL XLVIII (FEBRUARY 2, 2014) AND SUPER BOWL XLIX (FEBRUARY 1, 2015), NFL TEAMS HIRED A TOTAL OF 36 GENERAL MANAGERS, HEAD COACHES, OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS AND DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS. WHITE INDIVIDUALS WERE HIRED FOR 30 OF THESE POSITIONS. ONLY SIX MEN OF COLOR WERE HIRED FOR THESE 36 OPENINGS.

BETWEEN SUPER BOWL XLVIII (FEBRUARY 2, 2014) AND SUPER BOWL XLIX (FEBRUARY 1, 2015), 32 OF THE 36 GENERAL MANAGERS, HEAD COACHES, OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS AND DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS WHO WERE FIRED, RESIGNED OR OTHERWISE "MUTUALLY PARTED WAYS" WITH AN NFL TEAM WERE WHITE INDIVIDUALS. ALL GENERAL MANAGERS, HEAD COACHES AND OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS WHO SEPARATED FROM A POSITION WERE WHITE INDIVIDUALS. FOUR MEN OF COLOR SEPARATED FROM A DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR POSITION DURING THIS TIME PERIOD.

AFTER SEPARATING FROM A FIRST HEAD COACH POSITION, 51 WHITE INDIVIDUALS (37.2% OF THE 137 TOTAL WHITE HEAD COACHES FROM 1963-2015) HAVE RECEIVED (AND ACCEPTED) A SECOND HEAD COACH OPPORTUNITY. DURING THIS SAME FIFTY-THREE YEAR TIME PERIOD, NINE COACHES OF COLOR HAVE RECEIVED (AND ACCEPTED) A SECOND HEAD COACH OPPORTUNITY.

BETWEEN SUPER BOWL XLVIII (FEBRUARY 2, 2014) AND SUPER BOWL XLIX (FEBRUARY 1, 2015), NFL TEAMS HIRED SIX WHITE HEAD COACHES. DURING THIS SAME ONE-YEAR PERIOD, NFL TEAMS HIRED ONE HEAD COACH OF COLOR.

BETWEEN THE START OF THE 2012 NFL SEASON (SEPTEMBER 5, 2012) AND SUPER BOWL XLIX (FEBRUARY 1, 2015), NFL TEAMS HIRED 19 WHITE HEAD COACHES. DURING THAT SAME TIME PERIOD, NFL TEAMS HIRED THREE HEAD COACHES OF COLOR.

BETWEEN SUPER BOWL XLVIII (FEBRUARY 2, 2014) AND SUPER BOWL XLIX (FEBRUARY 1, 2015), NFL TEAMS HIRED 13 WHITE OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS AND ZERO OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS OF COLOR. DURING THIS SAME ONE-YEAR PERIOD, NFL TEAMS HIRED EIGHT WHITE DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS AND FOUR DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS OF COLOR.

BETWEEN THE START OF THE 2012 NFL SEASON (SEPTEMBER 5, 2012) AND SUPER BOWL XLIX (FEBRUARY 1, 2015), NFL TEAMS HIRED 34 WHITE OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS AND FOUR OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS OF COLOR. DURING THAT SAME TIME PERIOD, NFL TEAMS HIRED 20 WHITE DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS AND 15 DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS OF COLOR.

BETWEEN THE START OF THE 2012 NFL SEASON (SEPTEMBER 5, 2012) AND SUPER BOWL XLIX (FEBRUARY 1, 2015), 18 WHITE INDIVIDUALS HAVE RECEIVED A SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH OR FIFTH OPPORTUNITY TO WORK AS AN NFL OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR. DURING THAT SAME TIME PERIOD, ONE AFRICAN AMERICAN INDIVIDUAL (HUE JACKSON) RECEIVED A SIMILAR "SECOND OR GREATER CHANCE" OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR OPPORTUNITY.

BETWEEN THE START OF THE 2012 NFL SEASON (SEPTEMBER 5, 2012) AND SUPER BOWL XLIX (FEBRUARY 1, 2015), 14 WHITE INDIVIDUALS HAVE RECEIVED A SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH, FIFTH OR GREATER OPPORTUNITY TO WORK AS AN NFL DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR. DURING THAT SAME TIME PERIOD, SEVEN MEN OF COLOR RECEIVED A SIMILAR "SECOND OR GREATER CHANCE" DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR OPPORTUNITY.

BETWEEN SUPER BOWL XLVIII (FEBRUARY 2, 2014) AND SUPER BOWL XLIX (FEBRUARY 1, 2015), NFL TEAMS HIRED THREE WHITE GENERAL MANAGERS AND ONE GENERAL MANAGER OF COLOR.

BETWEEN THE START OF THE 2012 NFL SEASON (SEPTEMBER 5, 2012) AND SUPER BOWL XLIX (FEBRUARY 1, 2015), NFL TEAMS HIRED 12 WHITE GENERAL MANAGERS AND ONE GENERAL MANAGER OF COLOR.



## 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 40 years before another ethnic minority would serve as the head coach of a professional football team (and over 60 years before the next African American head coach). 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 1963-2015, there have been 137 White head coaches in the NFL, 15 African American head coaches, and three Latino head coaches. Historically, the disparity and skewed representation between White head coaches in the NFL (88.4%) and non-White head coaches (11.6%) is indisputable over a fifty-two year period (1963-2015)<sup>1</sup>. At the time of publication of this Volume IV report, there were six head coaches of color (18.75% of NFL head coaches), as compared with 26 White head coaches (81.25% of NFL head coaches).<sup>2</sup>
- Fifteen 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. In January 2015, Todd Bowles (new head coach of the New York Jets who was recognized as the 2014 AP Assistant Coach of the Year) became the first African American 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 2011-12 NFL season.
- Only six NFL teams have hired two African American head coaches from 1963-2015. In January 2015, Todd Bowles became the second African American head coach in the history of the New York Jets. 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). 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.
- Seven current NFL head coaches have been hired since Super Bowl XLVIII (February 2, 2014). Three of these seven head coaches are first-time NFL head coaches (Todd Bowles, Jim Tomsula and Dan Quinn). The remaining four recently hired NFL head coaches all have prior NFL head coaching experience. Three of these individuals (Rex Ryan, Gary Kubiak and Jack Del Rio) are now in their second head coach stint. John Fox, new head coach of the Chicago Bears, received his third head coach opportunity after previously serving as a head coach with the Carolina Panthers and Denver Broncos. Todd Bowles is the only head coach of color hired since Super Bowl XLVIII (February 2, 2014).
- Two of the seven recently hired head coaches served as NFL head coaches of another team immediately before being hired as the head coach of their current team (John Fox and Rex Ryan). Three of the seven recently hired head coaches were most recently defensive coordinators of another NFL team (Todd Bowles, Jack Del Rio and Dan Quinn). In addition, one of the recently hired head coaches was most recently an offensive coordinator of another NFL team (Gary Kubiak), and one of the recently hired head coaches was most recently the defensive line coach of the same team to which he was named a head coach (Jim Tomsula).
- Between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015), five White individuals and two African American individuals received a second head coach opportunity after separating (that is, being fired, resigning or otherwise "parting ways") from a first head coach position during this time period. John Fox is the only person to receive 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

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<sup>2</sup> All data and statistics in this report are based on information provided by the NFL.

position. During this same time period, five 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, one White individual and one African American individual received an opportunity to be a defensive coordinator after separating from a first head coach position.

- After separating from a first head coach position, nine different non-White individuals (50% of the 18 total non-White head coaches from 1963-2015) have received (and accepted) a second head coach opportunity in the NFL since 1963. Lovie Smith and Jim Caldwell are the two African American individuals who most recently earned a second head coach opportunity in January 2014. No head coach of color has received a second head coach opportunity since Super Bowl XLVIII (February 2, 2014). After separating from a first head coach position, 51 White individuals (37.2% of the 137 total White head coaches from 1963-2015) have received (and accepted) a second head coach opportunity, as compared with nine non-White individuals.
- 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. Thirteen White coaches have received (and accepted) a third opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. For example, Pete Carroll recently coached the Seattle Seahawks in Super Bowl XLIX. Carroll is currently in his third NFL head coach opportunity. Carroll was previously the head coach for the New York Jets (1994) and the New England Patriots (1997-1999). In addition, John Fox was recently named head coach of the Chicago Bears. Fox was previously the head coach of the Carolina Panthers (2002-2010) and the Denver Broncos (2011-2014). Also, Wade Phillips has been a full-time NFL head coach for three teams (Denver Broncos, Buffalo Bills and Dallas Cowboys)<sup>3</sup>. In January 2015, Phillips was named defensive coordinator of the Denver Broncos—this is the eighth NFL defensive coordinator opportunity for Phillips. In addition, two White coaches (Bill Parcells and Marty Schottenheimer) have had a fourth opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team. Not a single person of color has had a fourth opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team.
- After separating from a first head coach position, 22 White individuals have held defensive coordinator positions and 24 White individuals have held offensive coordinator positions. For example, former Chicago Bears head coach Marc Trestman was recently named offensive coordinator of the Baltimore Ravens. After separating from a first head coach position, two non-White individuals (Romeo Crennel and Leslie Frazier) have held the defensive coordinator position and three non-White individuals (Tom Fears, Jim Caldwell and Hue Jackson) have been offensive coordinators. The findings of this report (which highlight occupational mobility patterns from 2012-2015) demonstrate significant progress as compared with the findings in Volume I, which noted that from 1963-2012 only two non-White individuals (Romeo Crennel and Tom Fears) had accepted an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator position after one stint as a head coach in the NFL, and no non-White individual had held an offensive coordinator position after one stint as an NFL head coach since Tom Fears made that transition in the early 1970s.
- Four White individuals have held defensive coordinator positions and four White individuals have held offensive coordinator positions after separating from a second head coach position. For example, Eric Mangini was recently named defensive coordinator of the San Francisco 49ers after previously serving as head coach with the New York Jets (2006-2008) and Cleveland Browns (2009-2010). In addition, Chan Gailey was recently named offensive coordinator of the New York Jets after previously serving as head coach with the Dallas Cowboys (1998-1999) and Buffalo Bills (2010-2012). Only two non-White individuals (Ray Rhodes and Romeo Crennel) have held a defensive coordinator position and zero non-White former head coaches have held an offensive coordinator position after separating from a second stint as a head coach in the NFL.
- Between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015), NFL teams have hired 38 offensive coordinators and 35 defensive coordinators<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Wade Phillips was also interim head coach of the New Orleans Saints (1985), Atlanta Falcons (2003), and Houston Texans (2013).

<sup>4</sup> The defensive coordinator position with the Seattle Seahawks became available on February 2, 2015 when Dan Quinn was named new head coach of the Atlanta Falcons. This position is included in the data for this report even though the official opening occurred shortly after Super Bowl XLIX, which took place on February 1, 2015.

Thirty-four of these recently hired offensive coordinators are White and four of the offensive coordinators are African American. Twenty of these recently hired defensive coordinators are White and 15 of the defensive coordinators are African American individuals.

- Between Super Bowl XLVIII (February 2, 2014) and Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015), NFL teams hired 13 White offensive coordinators and zero offensive coordinators of color. During this same one-year period, NFL teams hired eight White defensive coordinators and four defensive coordinators of color.
- Between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015), 15 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 two men of color received a similar “second-chance” opportunity to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator. In addition, during this same time period, 17 White individuals received a “third or greater chance” to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team, whereas only six men of color received a similar “third or greater chance” to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator.
- Eight of the 13 offensive coordinators hired between Super Bowl XLVIII (February 2, 2014) and Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015) are currently holding an NFL offensive coordinator position for the third time (Rick Dennison and Dirk Koetter), fourth time (Kyle Shanahan and Scott Linehan) or fifth time (Marc Trestman, Greg Olson, Chan Gailey and Bill Musgrave). Three of the remaining five offensive coordinators hired during this one-year time period are currently holding an NFL offensive coordinator position for the second time (Greg Roman, Adam Gase and Geep Chryst). John DeFilippo and Frank Cignetti are first-time NFL offensive coordinators.
- Three of the 12 defensive coordinators hired between Super Bowl XLVIII (February 2, 2014) and Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015) are currently holding an NFL defensive coordinator position for the third or greater time (Vic Fangio, Steve Spagnuolo and Wade Phillips). Another three defensive coordinators hired during this time period, including one coordinator of color (Dennis Thurman), are serving as an NFL defensive coordinator for the second time. The remaining six defensive coordinators, which include three coordinators of color, are first-time NFL defensive coordinators.
- Five of the 13 offensive coordinators hired between Super Bowl XLVIII (February 2, 2014) and Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015) held the offensive coordinator position with an NFL team immediately before being named offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Five of the 13 recently hired offensive coordinators held the quarterbacks coach position with an NFL team immediately before being named offensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Five of the 12 defensive coordinators hired between February 2, 2014 and February 1, 2015 held the linebackers coach position with an NFL team immediately before being named defensive coordinator of their current NFL team. Two of the 12 recently hired defensive coordinators held the defensive coordinator position with an NFL team immediately before being named defensive coordinator of their current NFL team.
- Between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015), NFL teams hired 13 new general managers. Twelve of the 13 recently hired general managers are White individuals. Ray Farmer, who is African American, was hired as general manager of the Cleveland Browns in February 2014. At the time of publication of this report, there were seven African American general managers in the NFL.
- An analysis of the 12 NFL playoff teams for the recently completed 2014-15 season reveals that men of color held 11 out of the 46 (23.9%) total key team leadership positions (i.e., general manager, head coach, offensive coordinator and defensive coordinator). Head coaches Marvin Lewis, Ron Rivera, Jim Caldwell and Mike Tomlin all led their respective teams to the playoffs. During the 2014-15 NFL season, five men of color were head coaches. As indicated above, four of the five coaches of color led their teams to a playoff berth.

- 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, including new University of Michigan head football coach Jim Harbaugh, have been White coaches. Stated differently, zero non-White individuals have successfully transitioned from a former NFL head coach position to a college football head coach position 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. In addition, three of the 22 head coaches hired since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season were head coaches at the college level immediately before being hired as the head coach of an NFL team (Doug Marrone, Bill O'Brien and Chip Kelly).

## Review of Literature on Occupational Mobility Patterns

- Social and behavioral scientists have developed various theories to explain status, power, and upward social mobility (see, for example, Davis & Moore, 1945; see also Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2006). 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) (see Smith & Abbott, 1983; see also Loy, 1969). For example, social capital theorists explain that “social capital”<sup>5</sup> impacts occupational opportunities because social network connections provide information about and access to job opportunities (Granovetter, 1995). Scholars such as Barros and Alves (2003) have applied various social theory approaches (e.g., weak tie, structural hole and social resources) to the sports management job market. Barros and Alves (2003) concluded that human capital (i.e., education, experience and training) and social capital were both statistically significant determinants of a sport manager’s job earnings.
- 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 and 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).
- Sagas and Cunningham (2005) examined social capital of college football coaches with respect to network size, strength of ties/relationships, racial similarity within network, contacts in higher levels of organization, and inter-organizational ties. Sagas and Cunningham (2005) in part found that “White coaches have more opportunities to accrue occupational experience because they are more likely to occupy positions” (p. 791). Sagas and Cunningham (2005) also highlighted past research that has indicated cross-race networking ties are typically weaker (i.e., less effective) than matching-race networking connections; however, candidates of color typically have a “much smaller set of ‘similar others’ from whom to develop professional relationships” (p. 791). 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).
- Prior studies on occupational mobility of coaches have focused on geographical mobility patterns (see Sage & Loy, 1978), structural barriers and management hierarchies (Braddock, Smith, & Dawkins, 2012), and 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; Swaminathan, Wade, & Schwabb, working paper). For example, results from quantitative analyses by Day and McDonald (2010) demonstrated that social capital matters a great deal for promotions, but its impact is contingent on race; for example, network connections to heterogeneous contacts (e.g., racially heterophilous ties, weak ties, and high status ties) appear to be more effective for African American coaches than for White coaches, while access to same race contacts and strong ties are positively associated with the number of promotions received by White coaches. In addition, Seebruck and Savage (2013) examined how an assistant coach’s race and the race of his supervisor (e.g., 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 Whites, 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

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<sup>5</sup> Scholars have previously defined social capital 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).

capable minority assistant coaches” (pp. 75, 98)

- Other scholars have written about the social phenomena of racial stacking (determination of athlete playing position based on racial stereotypes) and centrality (relative distance to the center of the action on the playing field) to explain how race impacts the position an athlete plays (see, e.g., Edwards, 1973; Phillips, 1983; Smith & Harrison, 1996). Scholars have explained how athletes of color get “stacked” in “non-central” positions that require the smallest amounts of leadership qualities, interaction, and decision-making (see generally Yiannakis & Melnick, 2001). These scholarly studies that focus on how stereotypes and implicit, unconscious biases impact decisions with respect to athletes inform the current report’s focus on occupational mobility of coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers. For instance, in a data-based study, Rosette, Leonardelli, and Phillips (2008) found the following: (1) White business leaders are evaluated as more likely to succeed when such leaders are viewed as responsible for an organization’s success; (2) White business leaders are considered more effective and typically experience better career advancement opportunities than racial minority leaders; (3) the lack of racial and ethnic minorities in top positions is due in part to leadership prototypes and leadership categorization theories; and (4) 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. Furthermore, Greene (2012) examined the “discourse of privilege” phenomenon that relies on rarely articulated subjective evaluation standards, which operates to exempt individuals who select candidates for head coach positions from contemporary norms of fairness and legitimacy.
- Scholars have previously explored and 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 (for example, 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 on the part of the decision-maker. 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 . . . it is possible to lessen the effects of these biases or in some instances overcome them entirely” (p. 267-268).
- Existing research on dominant ideologies and system justification is also relevant to the current report. According to system justification theory, people are “motivated to defend and legitimize the systems in which they operate—that is, the rules and sociopolitical institutions within which people function” (Kay et al., 2009, p. 421). As explained by Day et al. (2009), “system justification theory posits that people are motivated to perceive current social, economic, and political arrangements as orderly, fair, just and legitimate . . . One of the primary drivers behind the system justification motive is the motivation to shield one’s self from the existential and epistemic threats that would surface if uncertain, illegitimate, or disorderly system conditions were acknowledged” (p. 292). The system justification motive explains why system failures “often lead to a retrenchment and defense of the system, rather than using the opportunity of failure to identify ways in which the system can be improved” (Kay & Friesen, 2011, p. 361). For example, Kay et al. (2009) explained that demographic factors (e.g., lack of sufficient role models, sense of exclusion from senior colleagues and exclusion from informal networks) present women with many objective obstacles to career advancement. These scholars also emphasized the consequences these types of underrepresentations may have on perceptions of what the ideal social structure should look like. In their empirical and theoretical study, Kay et al. (2009) found that people engage in “injustification,” which is a motivated tendency/bias to view and construe the current status quo as the most desirable and reasonable outcome.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Some of the content in this review of literature section is excerpted and adapted from the following publication: Harrison, C.K. and Bukstein, S. (2013). Occupational mobility patterns: A case study of leadership and access in the National Football League. *Sociology Mind*, 3(4), p. 264-267.



## METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

This report investigated data regarding NFL head coach demographics, stint and mobility patterns from 1963-2015. 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. 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 1963-2015. This report also contains data regarding NFL offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator and general manager demographics, stint and mobility patterns from the start of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) to kickoff at Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015). This report also highlights mobility patterns of head coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers during the one-year period from Super Bowl XLVIII (February 2, 2014) to Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015). A 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 pipelines for NFL head coach hires.

Attempts were made to verify 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, 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 1963-2015. This analytical framework was also applied to the occupational mobility patterns of offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators, and general managers from 2012-2015. Data was analyzed using SPSS to perform regression analysis. Descriptive statistics and cross tabulations were also performed using SPSS. The next section of this report presents the findings and results on NFL occupational mobility patterns.

**FINDINGS AND RESULTS:  
NFL COACHING MOBILITY PATTERNS**

**RACE OF COACHES (1963-2015)**

| <b>NUMBER OF COACHES</b> |            | <b>PERCENT</b> |
|--------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Non-White                | 18         | 11.6%          |
| White                    | 137        | 88.4%          |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>155</b> | <b>100.0%</b>  |

**NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER FIRST HEAD COACH POSITION (1963-2015)**

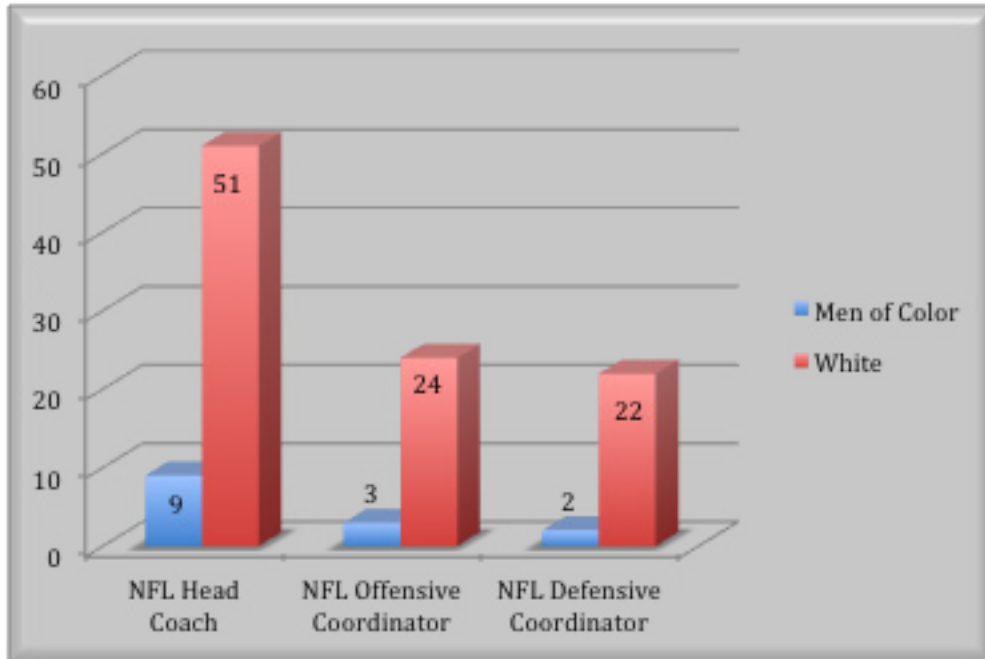
| <b>RACE</b>               | <b>NON-WHITE</b> | <b>WHITE</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| NFL Head Coach            | 9                | 51           |
| NFL Offensive Coordinator | 3                | 24           |
| NFL Defensive Coordinator | 2                | 22           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>14</b>        | <b>97</b>    |

**NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER SECOND HEAD COACH POSITION (1963-2015)**

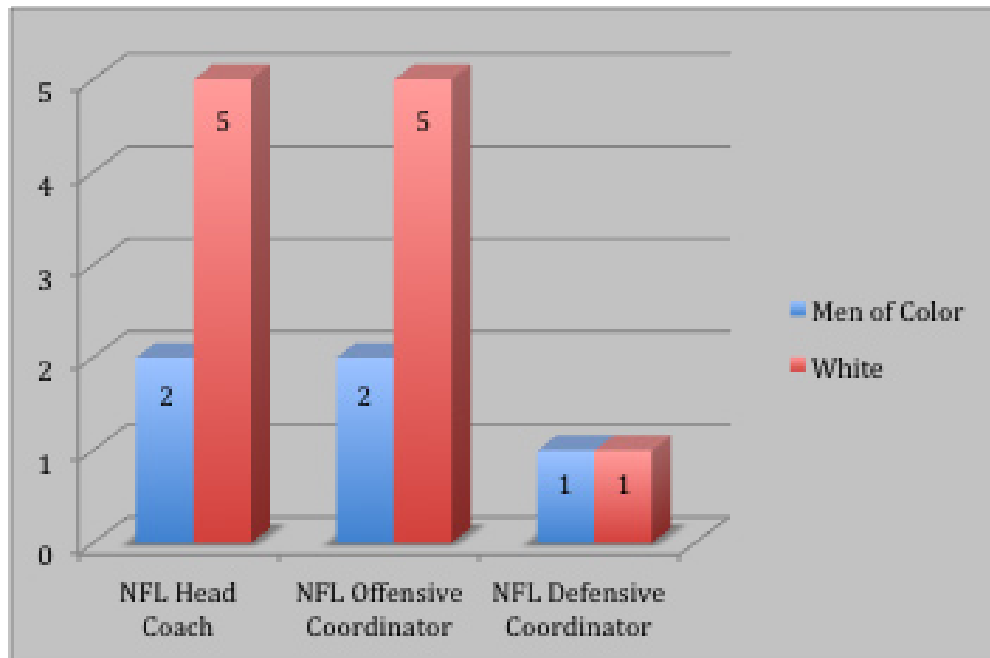
| <b>RACE</b>               | <b>NON-WHITE</b> | <b>WHITE</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| NFL Head Coach            | 1                | 13           |
| NFL Offensive Coordinator | 0                | 4            |
| NFL Defensive Coordinator | 2                | 4            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>3</b>         | <b>21</b>    |

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

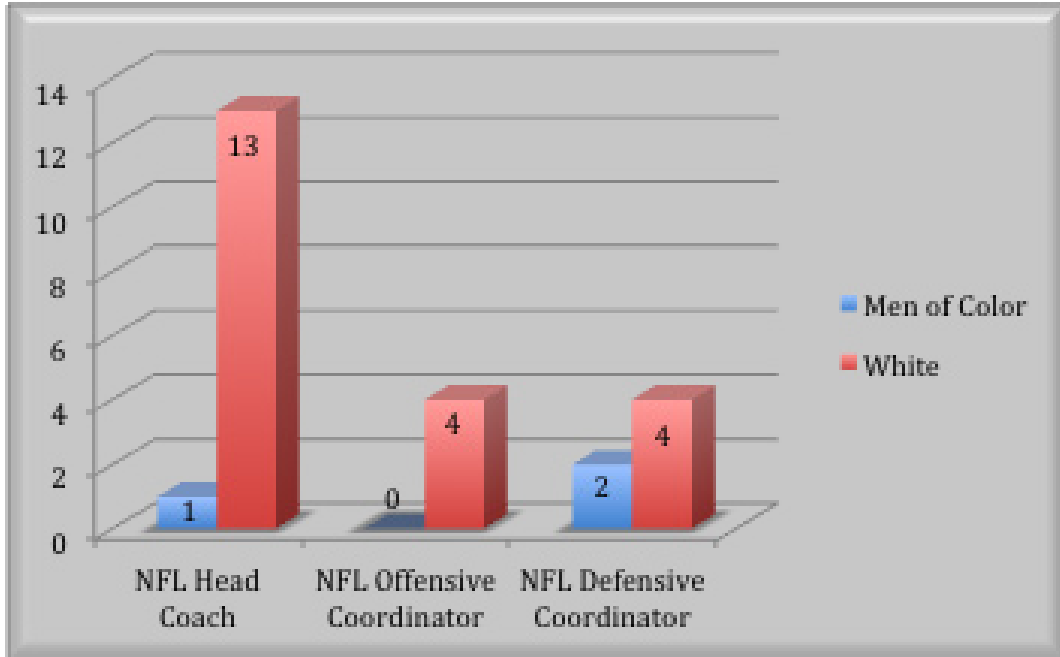
NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER FIRST HEAD COACH POSITION (1963-2015)



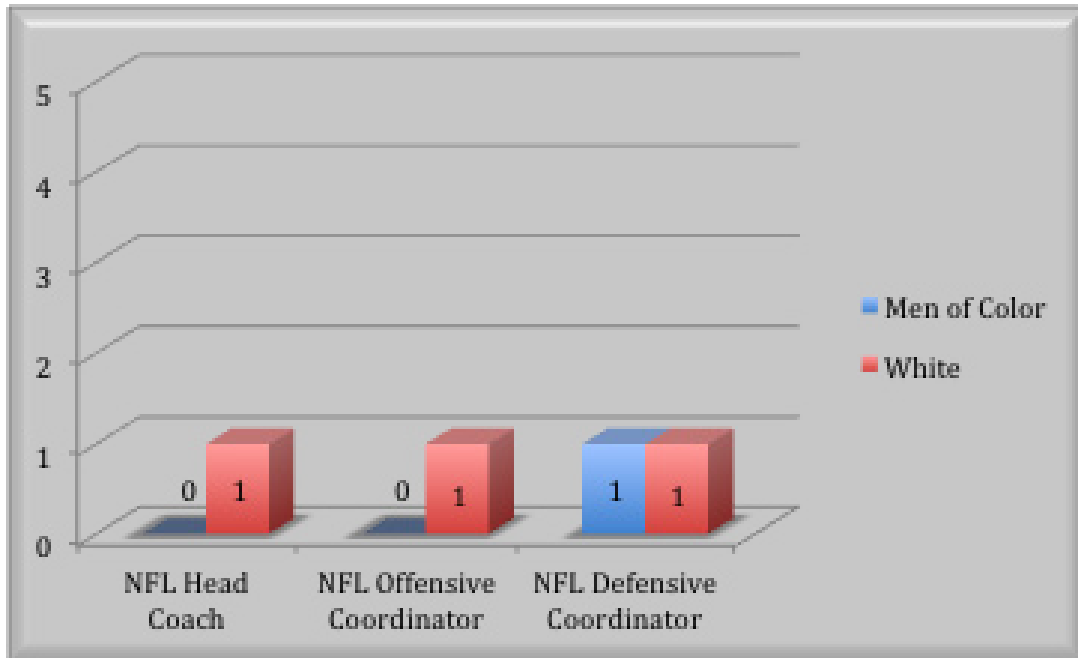
NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER FIRST HEAD COACH POSITION (2012-2015)



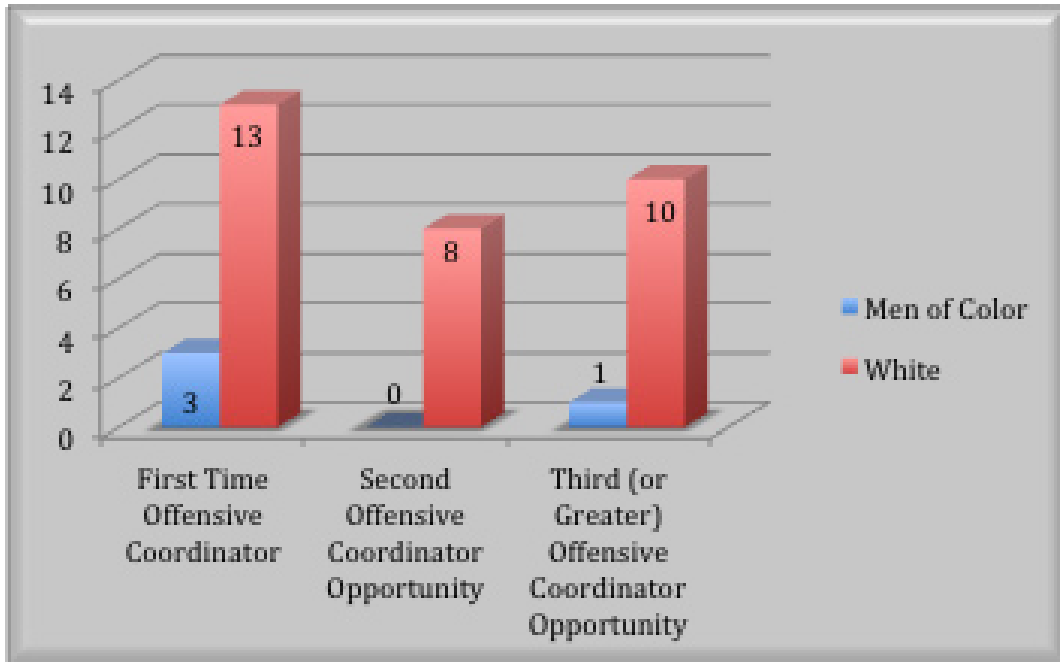
NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER SECOND HEAD COACH POSITION (1963-2015)



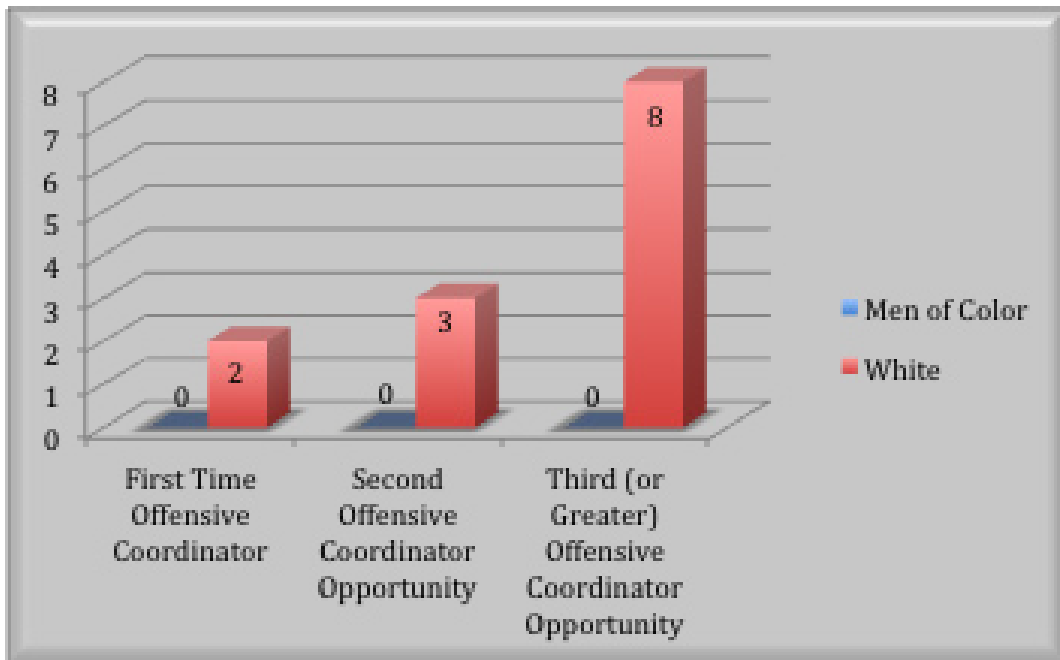
NFL OPPORTUNITY AFTER SECOND HEAD COACH POSITION (2012-2015)



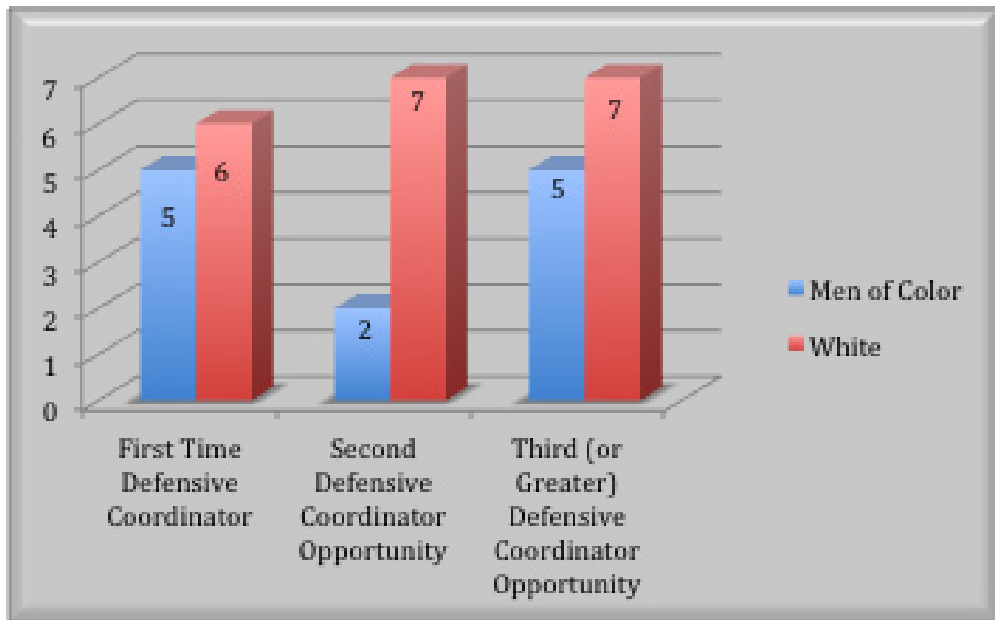
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2012-2015)



OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2014-2015)



**DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2012-2015)**



**DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2014-2015)**

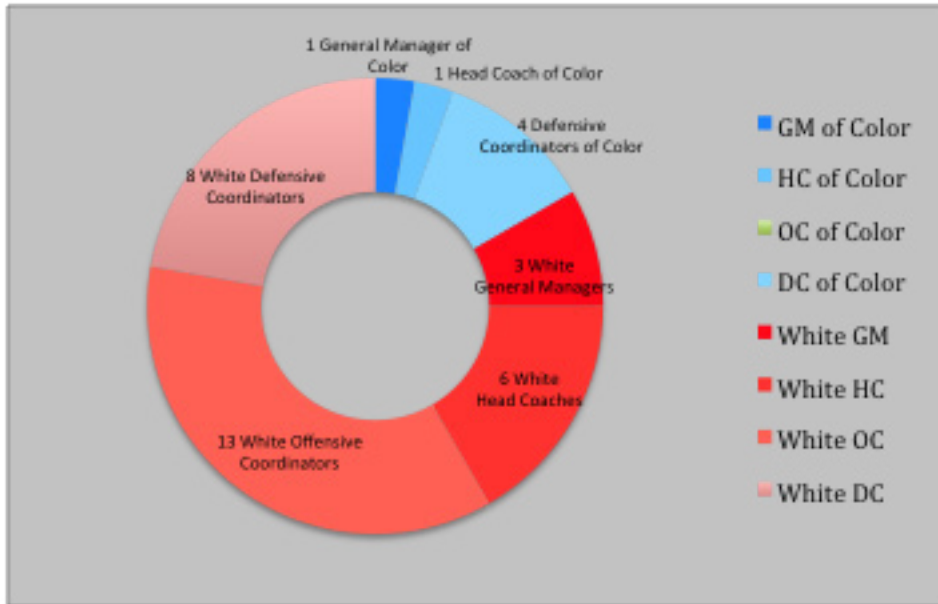




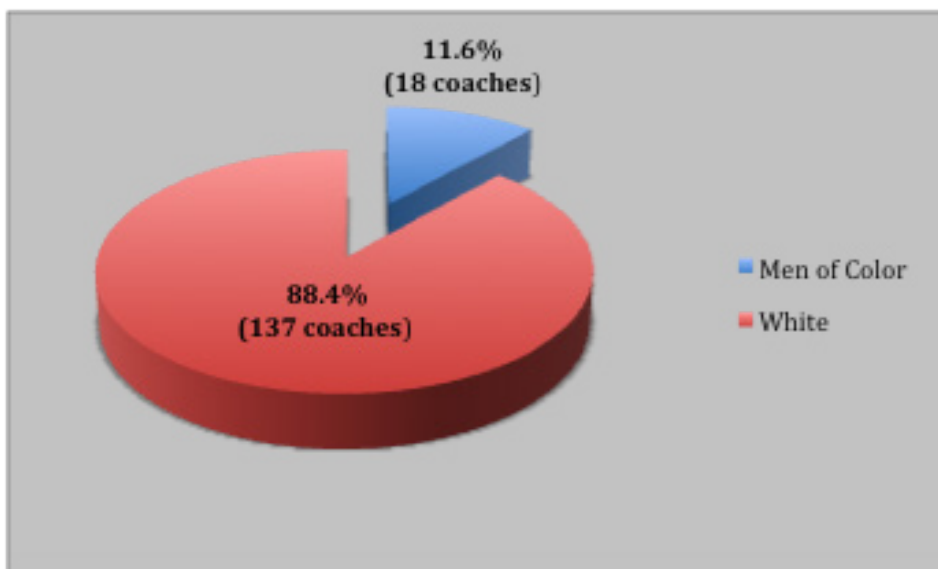
**GENERAL MANAGERS, HEAD COACHES, OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS AND DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS HIRED FROM FEBRUARY 2, 2014 TO FEBRUARY 1, 2015**

36 total hires

(30 positions filled by White candidates)



**RACE OF NFL HEAD COACHES FROM 1963-2015**



**TABLE: HEAD COACH MOBILITY PATTERNS (2014-2015)\***

| TEAM                | NAME OF FORMER HEAD COACH | RACE OF FORMER HEAD COACH | NEXT OPPORTUNITY FOR FORMER HEAD COACH                          | NAME OF NEW HEAD COACH | RACE OF NEW HEAD COACH |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| Atlanta Falcons     | Mike Smith                | White                     | [no position as of February 2, 2015]                            | Dan Quinn              | White                  |
| Buffalo Bills       | Doug Marrone              | White                     | Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Line Coach, Jacksonville Jaguars | Rex Ryan               | White                  |
| Chicago Bears       | Marc Trestman             | White                     | Offensive Coordinator, Baltimore Ravens                         | John Fox               | White                  |
| Denver Broncos      | John Fox                  | White                     | Head Coach, Chicago Bears                                       | Gary Kubiak            | White                  |
| New York Jets       | Rex Ryan                  | White                     | Head Coach, Buffalo Bills                                       | Todd Bowles            | African American       |
| Oakland Raiders     | Dennis Allen              | White                     | Defensive Assistant, New Orleans Saints                         | Jack Del Rio           | White                  |
| San Francisco 49ers | Jim Harbaugh              | White                     | Head Coach, University of Michigan                              | Jim Tomsula            | White                  |

\* Date range for data: February 2, 2014 (date of Super Bowl XLVIII) to February 1, 2015 (date of Super Bowl XLIX)

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

**TABLE: OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2014-2015)\***

| TEAM                 | NAME OF FORMER OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR | RACE OF FORMER OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR | NEXT OPPORTUNITY FOR OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR                    | NAME OF NEW OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR | RACE OF NEW OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Atlanta Falcons      | Dirk Koetter                         | White                                | Offensive Coordinator, Tampa Bay Buccaneers                   | Kyle Shanahan                     | White                             |
| Baltimore Ravens     | Gary Kubiak                          | White                                | Head Coach, Denver Broncos                                    | Marc Trestman                     | White                             |
| Buffalo Bills        | Nathaniel Hackett                    | White                                | Quarterbacks Coach, Jacksonville Jaguars                      | Greg Roman                        | White                             |
| Chicago Bears        | Aaron Kromer                         | White                                | Offensive Line Coach, Buffalo Bills                           | Adam Gase                         | White                             |
| Cleveland Browns     | Kyle Shanahan                        | White                                | Offensive Coordinator, Atlanta Falcons                        | John DeFilippo                    | White                             |
| Dallas Cowboys       | Bill Callahan                        | White                                | Offensive Line Coach, Washington Redskins                     | Scott Linehan                     | White                             |
| Denver Broncos       | Adam Gase                            | White                                | Offensive Coordinator, Chicago Bears                          | Rick Dennison                     | White                             |
| Jacksonville Jaguars | Jedd Fisch                           | White                                | Quarterbacks and Wide Receivers Coach, University of Michigan | Greg Olson                        | White                             |
| New York Jets        | Marty Mornhinweg                     | White                                | Quarterbacks Coach, Baltimore Ravens                          | Chan Gailey                       | White                             |
| Oakland Raiders      | Greg Olson                           | White                                | Offensive Coordinator, Jacksonville Jaguars                   | Bill Musgrave                     | White                             |
| San Francisco 49ers  | Greg Roman                           | White                                | Offensive Coordinator, Buffalo Bills                          | Geep Chryst                       | White                             |
| St. Louis Rams       | Brian Schottenheimer                 | White                                | Offensive Coordinator, University of Georgia                  | Frank Cignetti                    | White                             |
| Tampa Bay Buccaneers | Jeff Tedford                         | White                                | Head Coach, BC Lions Football Club (Canadian Football League) | Dirk Koetter                      | White                             |

\* Date range for data: February 2, 2014 (date of Super Bowl XLVIII) to February 1, 2015 (date of Super Bowl XLIX)

\* Note: On February 12, 2015, the Green Bay Packers promoted Tom Clements from offensive coordinator to associate head coach/offense. The Packers correspondingly promoted Edgar Bennett, an African American individual, from wide receivers coach to offensive coordinator. Clements will have primary offensive play-calling responsibilities.

**TABLE: DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR MOBILITY PATTERNS (2014-2015)\***

| TEAM                | NAME OF FORMER DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR | RACE OF FORMER DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR | NEXT OPPORTUNITY FOR DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR       | NAME OF NEW DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR | RACE OF NEW DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Atlanta Falcons     | Mike Nolan                           | White                                | Linebackers Coach, San Diego Chargers            | Richard Smith                     | White                             |
| Arizona Cardinals   | Todd Bowles                          | African American                     | Head Coach, New York Jets                        | James Bettcher                    | White                             |
| Buffalo Bills       | Jim Schwartz                         | White                                | <i>[no position as of February 2, 2015]</i>      | Dennis Thurman                    | African American                  |
| Chicago Bears       | Mel Tucker                           | African American                     | Defensive Backs Coach, University of Alabama     | Vic Fangio                        | White                             |
| Denver Broncos      | Jack Del Rio                         | White                                | Head Coach, Oakland Raiders                      | Wade Phillips                     | White                             |
| New York Giants     | Perry Fewell                         | African American                     | Defensive Backs Coach, Washington Redskins       | Steve Spagnuolo                   | White                             |
| New York Jets       | Dennis Thurman                       | African American                     | Defensive Coordinator, Buffalo Bills             | Kacy Rodgers                      | African American                  |
| Oakland Raiders     | Jason Tarver                         | White                                | Linebackers Coach, San Francisco 49ers           | Ken Norton, Jr.                   | African American                  |
| Pittsburgh Steelers | Dick LeBeau                          | White                                | Assistant Head Coach / Defense, Tennessee Titans | Keith Butler                      | White                             |
| San Francisco 49ers | Vic Fangio                           | White                                | Defensive Coordinator, Chicago Bears             | Eric Mangini                      | White                             |
| Seattle Seahawks    | Dan Quinn                            | White                                | Head Coach, Atlanta Falcons                      | Kris Richard                      | African American                  |
| Washington Redskins | Jim Haslett                          | White                                | <i>[no position as of February 2, 2015]</i>      | Joe Barry                         | White                             |

\* Date range for data: February 2, 2014 (date of Super Bowl XLVIII) to February 1, 2015 (date of Super Bowl XLIX)

\*Note: Dan Quinn resigned from his position as defensive coordinator of the Seattle Seahawks on February 2, 2015. Quinn subsequently accepted the head coach job with the Atlanta Falcons. Data for this position is included in the above chart.

**TABLE: GENERAL MANAGER MOBILITY PATTERNS (2014-2015)\***

| TEAM                | NAME OF FORMER GENERAL MANAGER | RACE OF FORMER GENERAL MANAGER | NEXT OPPORTUNITY FOR GENERAL MANAGER                  | NAME OF NEW GENERAL MANAGER | RACE OF NEW GENERAL MANAGER |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Chicago Bears       | Phil Emery                     | White                          | <i>[no position as of February 2, 2015]</i>           | Ryan Pace                   | White                       |
| Cleveland Browns    | Michael Lombardi               | White                          | Assistant to the Coaching Staff, New England Patriots | Ray Farmer                  | African American            |
| New York Jets       | John Idzik                     | White                          | <i>[no position as of February 2, 2015]</i>           | Mike Maccagnan              | White                       |
| Washington Redskins | Bruce Allen                    | White                          | President, Washington Redskins                        | Scot McLoughan              | White                       |

\* Date range for data: February 2, 2014 (date of Super Bowl XLVIII) to February 1, 2015 (date of Super Bowl XLIX)

\*Note: The data in this report does not include individuals who hold “general manager equivalent” positions (for example, individuals who are responsible for “controlling the draft board”). For example, Will McClay, who is African American, prepares and oversees the draft board for the Dallas Cowboys even though his official job title is not “general manager.” Other examples include Mike Tannebaum (who was recently hired as vice president of football operations with the Miami Dolphins) as well as Howie Roseman (who was promoted from general manager to executive vice president of football operations with the Philadelphia Eagles).

**TABLE: ETHNICITY OF GENERAL MANAGERS, HEAD COACHES, OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS, AND DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS FOR ALL TWELVE NFL PLAYOFF TEAMS IN 2014-2015\***

| <b>TEAM</b>          | <b>GENERAL<br/>MANAGER</b>          | <b>HEAD<br/>COACH</b>              | <b>OFFENSIVE<br/>COORDINATOR</b>     | <b>DEFENSIVE<br/>COORDINATOR</b>   |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Arizona Cardinals    | Steve Keim                          | Bruce Arians                       | Harold Goodwin<br>(African American) | Todd Bowles<br>(African American)  |
| Baltimore Ravens     | Ozzie Newsome<br>(African American) | John Harbaugh                      | Gary Kubiak                          | Dean Pees                          |
| Carolina Panthers    | Dave Gettleman                      | Ron Rivera<br>(Latino)             | Mike Shula                           | Sean McDermott                     |
| Cincinnati Bengals   | [No General Manager]                | Marvin Lewis<br>(African American) | Hue Jackson<br>(African American)    | Paul Guenther                      |
| Dallas Cowboys       | Jerry Jones                         | Jason Garrett                      | Bill Callahan                        | Rod Marinelli                      |
| Denver Broncos       | John Elway                          | John Fox                           | Adam Gase                            | Jack Del Rio                       |
| Detroit Lions        | Martin Mayhew<br>(African American) | Jim Caldwell<br>(African American) | Joe Lombardi                         | Teryl Austin<br>(African American) |
| Green Bay Packers    | Ted Thompson                        | Mike McCarthy                      | Tom Clements                         | Dom Capers                         |
| Indianapolis Colts   | Ryan Grigson                        | Chuck Pagano                       | Pep Hamilton<br>(African American)   | Greg Manusky                       |
| New England Patriots | [No General Manager]                | Bill Belichick                     | Josh McDaniels                       | Matt Patricia                      |
| Pittsburgh Steelers  | Kevin Colbert                       | Mike Tomlin<br>(African American)  | Todd Haley                           | Dick LeBeau                        |
| Seattle Seahawks     | John Schneider                      | Pete Carroll                       | Darrell Bevell                       | Dan Quinn                          |

\* Note: Ethnicity of each team executive is White unless otherwise indicated in the above table.



## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS <sup>7</sup>

**Scholarly and Practical Contributions of Current Study:** The current study builds on all the previous literature cited earlier in this report related to occupational mobility patterns as well as diversity, inclusion and perception issues associated with head coaches and other leaders with NFL teams. The current study informs both theory and practice in addressing head coach mobility inequities over a long period of time as well as occupational mobility patterns of offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers from 2012-2015. The current study also provides practitioners with the facts, data and scientific assessment needed to approach this issue in a strategic and authentic way. The uniqueness of having access to the NFL database of head coaches enabled the researchers to expand on previous knowledge, as few studies have analyzed the historical occupational mobility patterns of team executives 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 head coaches of color) and comparing the win/loss records of head coaches (for example, determining whether coaches of color are provided with a true meaningful opportunity to turn around a team with a losing record). This study focuses on whether Whites and persons of color face access barriers with respect to offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator and general manager positions, as well as access barriers after one or more stints as a head coach in the NFL. For example, this study attempts to address whether Whites and/or persons of color 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 person of color for a head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator position after a person of color has previously separated from a head coach position in the NFL. For example, since 1963, 97 White individuals have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a first NFL head coach opportunity, whereas only 14 men of color have been hired as an NFL head coach, offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator after a first head coach opportunity. However, the hiring of Lovie Smith and Jim Caldwell as “second opportunity” NFL head coaches in 2014 is an indicator of improvement and hope; as of February 2015, nine out of the 18 total non-White head coaches from 1963-2015 have had a second opportunity to be the head coach of an NFL team.

**Unconscious Bias and Social Capital:** 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. Similar to the findings in the Volume III report published in 2014, the findings in the current study also underscore and uncover the complexity of organizational nuances that may influence the final hiring decisions and determine the fate of non-White coaches, offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and general managers to maneuver the hierarchies of leadership positions. For example, in terms of occupational mobility, the second and third chances for persons of color to continue careers at the positions of head coach, offensive coordinator and defensive coordinator are inequitable in comparison to Whites. Phillips et al. have developed a theory-based argument that supports the current report’s research findings with respect to whether variables such as “institutional inequality” (Davis & Moore, 1945, p. 243; see also Acker, 2006) and “membership in powerful coaching families” (Greene, 2012, p. 131) have more of an impact in the hiring and evaluation processes than do the substantive skill sets of individuals. Phillips

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<sup>7</sup> The recommendations in this Volume IV report are generally consistent with the recommendations provided in Volume III last year. As a result, some of the content in this recommendation section is adapted and derived from the recommendations in the Volume III report.

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 the focus of this report, these researchers investigated the phenomenon of discrimination differences and different evaluative criteria with respect to job performance in business. Further, Phillips et al. 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: (1) White business leaders are evaluated as more likely to succeed when such leaders are viewed as responsible for an organization’s success; (2) White business leaders are considered more effective and typically experience better career advancement opportunities than racial minority leaders; (3) the lack of racial and ethnic minorities in top positions is due in part to leadership prototypes and leadership categorization theories; and (4) 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 with respect to leadership opportunities within the NFL. While the Rooney Rule has been effective in allowing ethnic minority candidates more initial access than was previously realized at the time (see, for example, Collins, 2007; Thornton, 2009)—the culture of NFL male networks, cronyism (i.e., showing favoritism to friends and colleagues without regard to actual competencies and qualifications), and the “who knows you” culture necessitates continued innovation and idea generation relating to practical strategies aimed at creating a new playing field for occupational mobility in the NFL. Past research has concluded that greater diversity in the functional backgrounds and experiences of top management team members enables these members, collectively, to consider a broader range of alternatives and perspectives when considering strategic choices (see Certo et al., 2006). Strategic diversity management is a business imperative (see Thomas, 2010), as a more diverse and inclusive (and informed) workforce could make the NFL an even stronger organization and brand.

The findings of the current study support the power of social capital, as nine out of the 18 total non-White head coaches from 1963-2015 have had 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 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. 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).

**Spotlighting Success Stories, and Improving the Pipeline by Expanding the Rooney Rule:** 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 or coordinator 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 and coordinating capabilities of non-Whites may still exist and persist (see Shropshire, 1996).

One potential practical strategy to address implicit and unconscious biases (for example, negative race consciousness) is to more systemically highlight the accomplishments of coaches and other leaders of color. For example, the NFL could focus a high level of media coverage on Ron Rivera’s accomplishment of earning Coach of the Year honors for the 2013-14 NFL season. And, the NFL could also focus on Lovie Smith and Jim Caldwell earning a second opportunity to coach an NFL team, or Todd Bowles being named head coach of the New York Jets. These are only a few examples of the many compelling stories related to the professional accomplishments of coaches of color in the NFL. Also, it is important to note that in recent years several individuals have successfully transitioned from head college football coach to NFL head coach. For example, three of the 22 head coaches hired since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season were head coaches at the college level immediately before being hired as the head coach of an NFL team (Doug Marrone, Bill O’Brien and Chip Kelly).

The Fritz Pollard Alliance has proposed that the NFL extend application of the Rooney Rule to the interview process for coordinators and assistant head coaches because these positions function as the primary “pipeline” for NFL head coach candidates<sup>8</sup>. The findings in the current study indicate that ten out of the 22 head coaches hired since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season were previously an offensive coordinator in the NFL. Nine of the 22 head coaches hired since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season were previously a defensive coordinator in the NFL. These findings indicate that the offensive coordinator position is historically (but not always) the primary pipeline for NFL head coaches, whereas defensive coordinator can be viewed as the next most viable pipeline for the head coach position. For example, six out of the seven head coaches hired between February 2, 2014 and February 2, 2015 have defensive coaching backgrounds (Bowles, Del Rio, Fox, Quinn, Tomsula and Ryan) as compared with only one coach with an offensive coaching background (Kubiak). While it is very encouraging that 15 out of the 35 defensive coordinators hired since the start of the 2012 NFL regular season are African American individuals, only four of the 38 offensive coordinators hired during this same time period have been coordinators of color. Extending the Rooney Rule to coordinator positions would potentially increase the number of offensive coordinators of color in the head coach pipeline.

**Creating a More Informed and Transparent Hiring Process:** After the 2012 NFL season, Commissioner Goodell acknowledged that having eight White head coaches hired for eight open positions was “not acceptable.” As a result, Commissioner Goodell took the initiative to create an eight-member Career Development Advisory Committee comprised of former head coaches, general managers and coordinators to help teams identify qualified candidates for head coach and general manager vacancies. In its first year of existence, the Career Development Advisory Committee has already received praise for its effectiveness and impact with respect to further improving the hiring and decision-making process. For example, the Miami Dolphins received recommendations from the Career Development Advisory Committee during the organization’s search for a new general manager after the 2013 NFL regular season. The Dolphins also decided to keep members of the general public informed with respect to the final candidates the team interviewed for the position. Nonetheless, some confusion existed with respect to the opportunity, which led the Fritz Pollard Alliance to initially advise candidates of color to not interview with the Dolphins for the general manager position until the organization clarified the role and scope of the position. The Dolphins eventually provided additional information on the general manager opportunity, and the Fritz Pollard Alliance then encouraged candidates of color to apply for the open general manager position. This situation illustrated how communication between all stakeholders can further improve. The Career Development Advisory Committee will likely have an even greater impact in the months and years ahead as the committee continues to assist NFL teams by providing timely and

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that wide receiver coach and running backs coach positions often function as the “pipeline” for coordinator roles. Therefore, it is imperative that qualified coaches of color also have a meaningful opportunity to compete for wide receiver coach and running backs coach positions.

thorough information about qualified candidates for each open position<sup>9</sup>.

In addition, 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. Improving a process usually results in improving corresponding outcomes—outcomes that are merit-based and reflect increased, fair competition for open positions.

**“The Reshuffling Effect”:** **Demonstrating the Need to Create and Examine New Talent Pools:** Between Super Bowl XLVIII (February 2, 2014) and Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015), NFL teams hired 36 general managers, head coaches, offensive coordinators and defensive coordinators. However, individuals that previously held the same position with another NFL team filled many of these 36 recently available positions. For example, five out of the 13 recently hired offensive coordinators simply changed team affiliation and will continue in the offensive coordinator role with that coordinator’s new team.

In addition, between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015), 32 White individuals have received at least a second opportunity to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team. Only eight men of color have received a similar opportunity during the same time period; seven of the eight “second or greater chances” have been for men of color hired as defensive coordinators. As mentioned in the executive summary section of this report, 15 White individuals have received a second opportunity to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team between the beginning of the 2012 NFL regular season (September 5, 2012) and Super Bowl XLIX (February 1, 2015). During this same time period, only two men of color received a similar “second-chance” opportunity to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator. During this same time period 17 White individuals received a “third or greater chance” to work as an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator of an NFL team, whereas only six men of color received a similar “third or greater chance” to be an offensive coordinator or defensive coordinator. For example, in January 2015 Wade Phillips was named defensive coordinator of the Denver Broncos—this is the eighth NFL defensive coordinator opportunity for Phillips. Likewise, in January 2015 Chan Gailey was named offensive coordinator of the New York Jets after Gailey spent the previous two years out of the football industry—this is the fifth NFL offensive coordinator opportunity for Gailey. Bill Musgrave, Marc Trestman and Greg Olson were all also recently hired as NFL offensive coordinators for the fifth time in each of their respective professional careers.

The authors of this report recommend that the NFL tasks its Career Development Advisory Panel with creating an innovative and practical list of new talent pools and pipelines to reduce the “reshuffling” that commonly takes place in terms of NFL teams hiring individuals who have previously held the same position with another NFL team. For instance, the Career Development Advisory Panel might create and then identify top talent in traditionally “overlooked” coaching realms such as college football, the Arena Football League, and the Canadian Football League. One practical initiative that continues to evolve is the Bill Walsh Minority Coaching Fellowship, which is an annual program administered by the NFL Management Council and NFL Player Engagement. All 32 NFL teams participate in this program each year during training camp. In summer 2013, 126 minority coaches participated in this innovative and practical program. This program serves as a “vocational tool” that helps individuals who aspire to be a head coach in the NFL with increased social capital and access to the head coach social network. 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). The NFL has an opportunity to continue to innovate as the league and its teams collaborate to develop a solution to “the reshuffling effect.”

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<sup>9</sup> Some NFL teams have recently hired executive search firms to assist with general manager and head coach hiring decisions (e.g., Atlanta Falcons hired Korn Ferry in December 2014 to assist with its head coach search).

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## Bios of Research Team

**Dr. C. Keith Harrison** is Associate Professor within the College of Business Administration at the University of Central Florida as well as Associate Director of the DeVos Graduate Sport Business Management Program. In addition to his role at UCF as Faculty and Curriculum Coordinator of the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate and Undergraduate 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, Minnesota Vikings, Oakland Raiders, Miami Dolphins, University of Oregon, Jordan Brand, Boise State University, Cal State University Northridge, 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 Program Director of the DeVos Undergraduate Sport Business Management Program within the College of Business Administration at the University of Central Florida. Bukstein is also the Assistant Director of the DeVos Graduate Sport Business Management Program at UCF. In addition, Bukstein is an Adjunct Assistant Professor within the Goizueta Business School at Emory University as well as an Adjunct Instructor within the College of Business at the University of South Florida. Bukstein's research focus is on the intersection of sport and the law, collective bargaining in professional sport, business analytics in sport, 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 other executives, and leadership and diversity/inclusion issues in sport. Bukstein and his colleague Dr. Harrison also co-authored each of the three previous volumes/reports in this NFL Diversity & Inclusion "Good Business" Series.

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**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.