

Redskins General Manager History



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The Washington Redskins, now known as the Washington Commanders, have a storied history in the NFL that is closely intertwined with the evolution of their general managerial leadership. The role of the general manager (GM) is crucial in shaping a franchise's destiny, influencing everything from player acquisitions to coaching decisions. Over the decades, the Redskins have seen a variety of GMs, each leaving their imprint on the team's legacy. This article delves into the history of the general managers of the Redskins, highlighting their contributions, challenges, and the impact they had on the organization.

Origins and Early Years

The Redskins were established in 1932, and for the first several decades, the concept of a general manager as we know it today was not formally defined. Early on, team owners often took on the responsibilities associated with the GM role.

George Preston Marshall (1932-1969)

- Role: Founder and owner
- Tenure: 1932-1969

George Preston Marshall was not only the founder of the Redskins but also served as the team's de facto manager for decades. His influence shaped the early years of the franchise, and he was known for his colorful personality and controversial decisions, including his reluctance to integrate the team.

until 1962.

Running the Team

During the early years, day-to-day operations were handled by coaches or owners, who had the final say on player transactions. Notably, coaches like Ray Flaherty and later Vince Lombardi would play critical roles in assembling the team, often working closely with Marshall.

The Modern Era of General Managers

The modern era of football management began in the 1970s, as the NFL evolved, and teams began to recognize the need for a dedicated general manager role to handle player personnel decisions independently.

Jake Gibbs (1970-1971)

- Role: First official GM
- Tenure: 1970-1971

Jake Gibbs was appointed as the first official general manager of the Redskins in 1970. His tenure was short-lived, as he was unable to make a significant impact before being replaced. Gibbs was more focused on scouting than on making bold moves, which did not sit well with a franchise that needed a decisive direction.

Skins Under Bobby Beathard (1978-1989)

- Role: General Manager
- Tenure: 1978-1989

Bobby Beathard is often credited with transforming the Redskins into a perennial contender. His tenure saw the team secure two Super Bowl victories (XVII and XXII). Beathard was known for his keen eye for talent, particularly in the draft, and his ability to make advantageous trades.

Key achievements:

1. Super Bowl XVII (1982) - The first championship for the franchise.
2. Super Bowl XXII (1987) - A second championship solidifying their dominance.
3. Drafting Success - Notable selections included Art Monk, Darrell Green, and Charles Mann.

Charley Casserly (1989-1999)

- Role: General Manager
- Tenure: 1989-1999

Following Beathard's departure, Charley Casserly took the reins as the general manager. His tenure was marked by considerable success, including another Super Bowl victory in XXXII. Casserly was known for his strong negotiation skills and his ability to build a competitive roster through the draft.

Key achievements:

1. Super Bowl XXXII (1992) - Another championship win for the franchise.
2. Drafting Key Players - Casserly was instrumental in acquiring players like LaVar Arrington and Chris Samuels.

The Difficult Transition Years

The turn of the millennium brought challenges for the Redskins, with several GMs struggling to maintain the success of their predecessors.

Vinny Cerrato (1999-2009)

- Role: General Manager
- Tenure: 1999-2009

Vinny Cerrato's time as general manager was controversial. He was often criticized for his personnel decisions, including high-profile signings that did not pan out. His inability to build a cohesive team led to significant turmoil within the organization.

Key issues:

1. High Profile Free Agent Signings - Often resulted in underperformance.
2. Coaching Changes - Frequent coaching changes put the team in disarray.

Bruce Allen (2009-2020)

- Role: General Manager and President
- Tenure: 2009-2020

Bruce Allen, son of the legendary coach George Allen, took over as GM with hopes of reviving the franchise. His tenure saw some ups and downs, but ultimately, he was unable to lead the team to substantial success. The franchise experienced a string of disappointing seasons and coaching changes.

Key highlights:

1. Coaching Instability - Multiple coaches during his tenure.
2. Mixed Draft Success - Some successful selections but overall inconsistency.

Recent Developments

The last few years have seen significant changes in the organization, particularly after the rebranding from the Redskins to the Commanders.

Martin Mayhew (2021-Present)

- Role: General Manager
- Tenure: 2021-Present

Martin Mayhew was hired as the new general manager in early 2021. His experience, having previously served as a GM in Detroit, brought a fresh perspective to the franchise. Mayhew's approach has focused on building through the draft and fostering a more stable coaching environment.

Key initiatives:

1. Revamping the Roster - Focus on youth and potential.
2. Stability in Coaching - Working to create a consistent coaching staff.

Conclusion

The history of the general managers of the Washington Redskins is a reflection of the organization's ups and downs. From the early years under George Preston Marshall to the modern era with Martin Mayhew, each GM has faced unique challenges and opportunities. The role of the general manager remains pivotal in determining the team's success, and as the Commanders look to the future, the lessons learned from past leadership will undoubtedly inform their strategy moving forward.

As the franchise continues to evolve, fans and analysts alike will be watching closely to see how the next chapter unfolds, eager for a return to the glory days that once defined the Washington Redskins.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was the first general manager of the Washington Redskins?

The first general manager of the Washington Redskins was Ed McKeever, who served in the position from 1932 until 1941.

What impact did Bobby Beathard have on the Redskins as general manager?

Bobby Beathard, who served as general manager from 1978 to 1989, was instrumental in building the Redskins' roster that won three Super Bowls, known for his talent evaluation and draft strategies.

How did the tenure of Vinny Cerrato as general manager affect the Redskins?

Vinny Cerrato, who served as general manager from 2001 to 2009, faced criticism for poor draft choices and for making decisions that some believe led to a decline in the team's performance during his tenure.

What changes occurred in the general manager position after the 2019 season?

After the 2019 season, the Washington Redskins revamped their front office structure, naming Ron Rivera as head coach and allowing him to have significant influence over personnel decisions, effectively changing the traditional role of general manager.

Who is the current general manager of the Washington Redskins as of 2023?

As of 2023, the Washington Redskins (now known as the Washington Commanders) do not have a traditional general manager; instead, they have a collaborative front office led by head coach Ron Rivera and team president Jason Wright.

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