

W.S.S.U. Sports

Women's Basketball Scoreboard

Jan. 11	Livingstone College (H)	W (58-49)
Jan. 13	Columbia Union (H)	W (88-52)
Jan. 16	Shaw University (H)	L (75-60)
Jan. 18	St. Paul's College (A)	W (75-74)
Jan. 22	Virginia State University (H)	W (56-50)
Jan. 25	Johnson C. Smith (H)	W (64-63)
Jan. 28	Fayetteville State (A)	L (61-44)
Feb. 1	North Carolina Central(A)	W (58-55)
Feb. 4	St. Augustine's College (H)	W (83-60)

NFL wants more black coaches, but who's qualified?

By George Croom
ARGUS SPORTS EDITOR

Since 1989, when the Oakland Raiders hired Art Shell as the first black head coach in the NFL, there have only been six other black head coaches.

Tony Dungy (Indianapolis Colts), Herman Edwards (New York Jets) and Marvin Lewis (Cincinnati Bengals) are currently the only active head coaches. Ray Rhodes, Dennis Green and Terry Robiskie, an interim head coach for the 2000 Washington Redskins' final three games, are the three no longer in head coaching positions.

Out of that group of six, only two have been fired and rehired as head coaches.

Tony Dungy was fired by Tampa Bay in 2001 and moved to the Indianapolis Colts. Ray Rhodes was hired by Green Bay in 1999 after being fired by the Philadelphia Eagles in 1998.

The argument about black head coaches has been overflowing for many years.

Many say that the NFL, comprised of 70 percent black players, has set higher standards for black coaches. Many also feel that black coaches do not become a part of the "Good ol' boy loop" that transfers fired white head coaches into other head coaching opportunities.

These statements are probably true. But realistically the fact remains that without a healthy crop of qualified black candidates, there is no argument that can be made.

For instance, when the NFL had coaching vacancies this year, Marvin Lewis and Tyrone Willingham were the

Opinion

only legitimate names of black qualifiers.

Why? Because man can no longer live on résumé alone; every team is looking for the name. They have to have something that gives validation to their selection.

Complaints can be made about the "Good ol' boy" system, but even the white coaches go through the cycle. For instance, when John Gruden left the Raiders and Bill Callahan was brought in, fans were outraged because they didn't recognize the name.

Dennis Green probably gets looked over mostly because of the player issues he could not control in Minnesota. Ray Rhodes fell through the cycle because his teams failed to win games.

Tony Dungy beat the system because he was a name that people could put a face and history to, and he won games.

Every man has to pay his dues. The situation cannot be solved if there is no one willing to do this.

Most of the time the successful assistant coaches get chosen. Marvin Lewis may have been passed over for three years, but the cream eventually rose to the top.

For too long people have been fighting the wrong battles. Many have been seeking tougher hiring rules in the NFL.

The rules only get black men in the interview chair. Even with the rules in place, an owner still has discretion on who will coach his or her team.



The N.Y. Jets, under coach Herman Edwards, went to the AFC Divisional Championship game, but lost to the Oakland Raiders in December. KRT photo

Black coaches should be encouraged to work as a coordinator at a major college where they are able to succeed, and then they can rise from there.

That will eventually increase the number of successful black head coaches in the NCAA Division I, and then strong arguments can be raised.

The NFL is not the only business where the ratio of black leaders to black employees is unbalanced.

It all comes back to blacks fulfilling their end of the obligation. For years the bar has been raised when blacks are considered for any position, not just in football.

The only way to fight injustice is to take away the validity of injustice. If there is a wealth of qualified black coaches then there is no league that can keep the door of opportunity shut.

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