In His New Role, Doug Williams Will Help Mold Best Roster For The Redskins

Promoted to Senior Vice President of Player Personnel, Doug Williams will oversee a personnel department that will help construct a roster that Jay Gruden and his staff will try to get the best out of during the season.

While Doug Williams has links with the Redskins dating back to 1986 when Pro Football Hall of Fame coach Joe Gibbs decided to bring in the quarterback to eventually lead the team to a Super Bowl XXII championship, June 13 marked a new chapter in his life in Washington.

Williams was promoted to Senior Vice President of Player Personnel after serving in the role of Senior Personnel Executive for the last three seasons (2014-16). He will be tasked with overseeing a restructured personnel department and help build up a competitive football team for head coach Jay Gruden to work with on the field.

“Together, we’re going to have a good marriage between Jay and myself and the personnel department and that’s what it’s all about,” Williams said in a press conference at the Inova Sports Performance Center at Redskins Park in Loudoun County, Va. “Our job is not to coach ‘em, our job is to pick ‘em. And we’re going to try to do the best job – we will do the best job – to give Jay and his coaching staff the players he needs to take all of us back to the Super Bowl.”

Redskins President Bruce Allen said the organization talked to more than a dozen candidates to fit the role that Williams is now going to serve in, but it was clear from the start who was best suited to serve as Senior Vice President of Player Personnel.

“His résumé is impressive, as you all know, but it’s really remarkable when you consider everything he’s done that matters in this job,” Allen said. “This job is daily communication and leadership of the personnel department. Its daily communication and leadership of our coaches and players. And Doug being a high school coach, a high school athletic director, obviously an outstanding player, fits the role perfectly for where we want to be as Washington Redskins.”

Allen added that when he hired Williams with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers back in 2004, he used him as a “people-meter” to help gauge personalities to best fit the front office and the roster.

“He had an uncanny ability to talk to a player or a coach in one or two minutes and be able to read that person,” Allen said. “I was proud of when Doug presented his plan because his vision was a team. He was a quarterback again leading a team, and the way he talked just now and the way he talked when we had discussions about his teammates and what they bring to the table and the necessity of having good people really, really shined.”

The two sat down four times to go over future plans for the Redskins, and while Williams will have an increased voice in the decision-making process, everyone will have a hand in making decisions for the team.

“It’s going to be a Redskins decision,” said Allen when asked about the process of talent evaluation. “No different than how we did free agency, no different than how we did the draft. Coach Gruden will have influence, Doug will have influence and between them, they ought to be able to work it out and yes, I will be involved.”

Eager to build on his legacy in Washington, Williams is thankful that the team promoted him. Now the next step is to get the Redskins back to the Super Bowl.

“Standing here today, I’m a real humble individual and I’m going to say something my college coach used to always say to me, he ‘had to be the luckiest man in the world,’ and that’s how I feel this morning to be in this position proudly,” Williams said. “I’m humbled this morning, but it’s my job to lead the personnel department and we’re going to do that with all the continuity that we have back there. So I want to say thank you to Bruce again, thanks to Mr. Snyder for giving me this opportunity, and thanks to all the fans in Washington, D.C.”

The Washington Times
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Hogs 2.0

After two consecutive winning seasons, the Redskins know the foundation for their success belongs to the offensive line, a young, talented group trying to forge a new path from a well-established legacy.

By: Perry Mattern

On a hot, stormy day in the summer of 1982, Washington Redskins offensive line coach Joe Bugel couldn’t have known he was going to create a term that would still be recognizable 35 years later.

“Okay, you hogs, let’s get down there and start working!” Bugel shouted.

There wasn’t much thought behind Bugel’s command, other than Hall of Fame left guard Russ Grimm having the nickname “Porky” and everyone being covered in mud.

“All of a sudden everyone started laughing and it caught fire,” Bugel recalled to Redskins Chronicles.

The Hogs were born.

Together the legendary collection of offensive linemen helped produce thousands of rushing yards for John Riggins, dozens of touchdown passes by Joe Theismann and Mark Rypien, countless pig noses worn by fans and, of course, three Super Bowl titles.

However, following the Redskins’ 1991 championship – Washington’s third Super Bowl victory in 10 years – the team has won just three playoff games since, including none since 2005. Without consistent success, The Hogs moniker slowly faded.

When Trent Williams opened his massive 35,000-square foot gym last summer, O Athletik in Houston, he couldn’t think of a better way to christen the space than paying our respects to them as well and also channeling that, being Redskins and those guys, I figured there was a way we could channel that, that nastiness they played with on a day to day basis.

The secret was kept much better in the ‘80s compared to now, but The Hogs didn’t create their bond just while playing football. The group’s camaraderie was obvious by Redskins running backs. Seven times the Redskins were in the Top 10 in points scored. In two of Washington’s three Super Bowl title seasons, the Redskins led the NFL in points.

If Hogs 2.0 wanted to down a few cold beers at Wembley Stadium in London, England.


The Hogs have multiplied the expectations of the defense, the Redskins offensive line considerably.

In simpler terms, and with less numbers, the Hogs 2.0-led offense was equally as powerful as the top-ranked offenses that led the Redskins to three Super Bowl titles. For the first time since 1996-1997, the Redskins have had back-to-back winning seasons and the evolution of Hogs 2.0 has certainly been a big part of that.


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tested as he has to prepare a massive meal for a group of the biggest, strongest – not to mention hungriest – human beings alive.

“I mean we’re O-lineman, we like to eat so what better than have dinner every Thursday night right after weigh-ins so you know,” Williams said. “I thought they would take to it pretty nice.”

Camaraderie, intensity, nastiness – the three attributes with which Williams labeled The Hogs. All are important, none are quantifiable. Without talent, none of those intangibles matter.

Grimm is the only Hogs Hall of Famer, but he was far from only talent throughout the group’s decade-long dominance. Undrafted out of Louisville but signed by the Redskins, Joe Jacoby made four Pro Bowls and two All-Pro First Teams. Jim Lachey was an All-Pro First Teamer three times. Jeff Bostic made the Pro Bowl in 1983 and started 132 of 153 Redskins regular season games from 1982-1991. Mark May, a first round pick in 1981, made the Pro Bowl in 1988. Mark Schlereth made the Pro Bowl in 1991 in just his third season.

Williams won’t turn 30 until July of 2018, but he has already cemented his status as one of the all-time great Redskins offensive linemen. However, the left tackle isn’t receiving all of the accolades anymore. Joining Williams in the Pro Bowl last season was second-year guard Brandon Scherff, who personifies the nastiness found in the original Hogs.

“You have to know him to understand him,” Williams says of Scherff. “I mean he’s very lighthearted, you know he jokes around a lot. It’s just big Iowa guy, he looks mean but he’s a really cool guy. When he gets on the field, he’s no smile, no joking at all.”

Scherff and Williams are certainly friendly off the field, but no Redskins lineman smiles more than Morgan Moses. Scherff and Williams are certainly friendly off the field, but no Redskins lineman smiles more than Morgan Moses. The 6-foot 6 right tackle missed half of his first season in 2014, but like Scherff he took off in his second year on the field, started all 16 games in 2016 and playing his way to a $40 million contract extension.

“[Moses has] really come a long way,” offensive line coach Bill Callahan said. “I just love him—everything about him. He’s mindful about everything in his preparation, he’s great in the meeting room, he’s great with the young players, he can help players at other positions, he can see well in so many respects and, of course, he’s going to execute.”

In his third season, Spencer Long made the transition from guard to center so well that he will be the starter in front of quarterback Kirk Cousins heading into training camp. The elder statesman of the line, left guard Shawn Lauvao, is only 29 years old. The line averages less than five years of experience, but the two youngest – Scherff and Moses – have already shown they’re more than capable. The Redskins line is young and talented – the best possible combination.

“When you look at us, you know, you’ve got Spence going into his fourth year,” Moses said. “You’ve got Brandon going into his third year, you’ve got Shawn going into year eight, Trent as well, so we’ve got a young offensive line, so we’re always learning, and we’re always learning together, and that’s what makes us such a good offensive line, because we work hard in the office with Callahan and we work hard on the field as well.”

Pro Football Focus ranked the Redskins offensive line the seventh-best in the NFL last season. If there was an argument to that ranking, it might be that Washington should’ve been higher.

Only three teams allowed fewer sacks than Hogs 2.0 in 2016, as Cousins comfortably threw for more than 4,700 yards. Overall, the Redskins finished third in total yards. Encouragingly, the Redskins return their top seven offensive linemen. Also back for his second year is running back Robert Kelley, who totaled 704 rushing yards in nine starts.

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Despite all the rankings and statistics, without a Super Bowl victory, there may be no legacy for Hogs 2.0. Which means, despite not playing on a muddied practice field any more, it’s time for these Hogs to get to work.
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Four Redskins teammates – Josh Norman, D.J. Swearinger, Bashaud Breeland and Matt Hazel -- share a similar upbringing in South Carolina and a commitment to giving back to their communities that have brought them closer together.

By JAKE KRING-SCHREIFELS

During the first week of OTAs, as the defense was learning the installations for a new scheme and getting adjusted to the new faces acquired in the offseason, Redskins cornerback Josh Norman gave a brief history lesson.

As he spoke with reporters about free agent addition D.J. Swearinger, Norman reminded them that the hard-hitting safety wasn't new to him at all. Together at Greenwood High School in South Carolina, the two of them wreaked havoc in the secondary, and their connection—a shared understanding of their upbringing and respect for each other's talent—has stayed strong since then in valuable ways.

"Where you're from, you pretty much know what's going on without even saying much," Norman said of their communication on the field. "I think the non-verbal are more keen than the verbal. I know where he's going to be, he knows where I'm going to be, so we can pretty much play in a way where we're just ballin'. Dogs and ballers—that's it. I know he has that in him just playing with him."

Patrolling the field together again, the memories flooded back, "like riding a bike," Norman offered.

"I can just look at him," Swearinger later said. "[Norman] knows the look in my eye when I'm going to take something across the middle or when he's gonna make a play certain ways, we just have that communication."

What both of them were speaking about was trust, which has also extended to fellow cornerback Bashaud Breeland, an Allendale, S.C., native, and wide receiver Matt Hazel, growing up in nearby Greenwood in North Augusta, and is trying to make the Redskins' active roster.

Bonds can still be forged between teammates from different backgrounds, schools and cities, but for these four players, emerging from similarly impoverished areas has given them a greater, unspoken connection within the locker room, and a greater appreciation of where they are today.

Beat The Odds

The median household income in Greenwood is $24,760. Schools there spend about $3,000 less per student than the nationwide average, with fewer teachers and resources per pupil. With a population of 23,000, the city remains a place filled with the daily struggle of making ends meet to provide for a family.

"Growing up, you know, it was a struggle for sure but I had both my parents so it was definitely easy," Swearinger said. "The struggle was definitely camouflaged for me with having both my parents working hard. You know, me and most of my sisters and stuff like that...It was challenging but my parents, like I said, I'd do anything for my parents. They paved the way for me. The hard work they did, that's the reason I'm here today because of my parents because they taught me hard work. You never get nowhere without hard work and if I didn't work hard, I'd probably be still in Greenwood myself."

When Norman talks about the desire as a kid to beat his big brothers at every sport, when they played, in the back alleys and gravel streets, he's talking about something more than just a fleeting victory. He's talking about, eventually, beating the odds.

The same mentality applies to Breeland growing up in Allendale, which has a median income of just $22,302 in a population below 10,000. The need to come out victorious always meant something bigger. "Everything down there is competitive," Hazel said. "Josh had brothers. I had a brother, but I had friends, too. So just trying to compete on everything, it doesn't matter what it was, and I think that's the difference with them, it is just a competition. So I kind of know with whoever I am going against, I know if I am going against Breeland, I am getting my best, I know if I am going against Josh, I am getting my best. I know DJ is going to be back there talking and doing what he needs to do."

Swearinger said Greenwood represents the many pockets of America struggling to survive, a blue-collar town that instilled values around him from an early age.

"Growing up, I remember when I was probably three or four years old just playing football in the apartments...and guys I'm playing against in third, fourth or fifth grade," Swearinger said. "So you know, that's sort of kind of made me tough, especially at a young age, three or four years old you know, playing ball, throwing them up, busting them up. Whoever gets the ball, gets hit. Growing up playing those games like that all the way up until I was like 12 or 13, man, that definitely gives you a competitive drive. If you're from Greenwood, you definitely can play football."

The competition would extend into high school, where Hazel would often meet Swearinger in the secondary running post routes. Things didn't always go well for Hazel's squad.

"They used to beat us so bad," Hazel said of North Augusta's games against Greenwood.

"We stumped them, we stumped North Augusta," Swearinger laughed, remembering his matchups with Hazel.

"We were head hunters," Norman said of him and Swearinger. "Just take you and knock your socks off. Literally, everything would come off. He has a unique way of doing things, got to be at his position and he elevated that and he got himself a scholarship." Norman left for Coastal Carolina two years before Swearinger received a scholarship to play at the University of South Carolina. Hazel would follow in Norman's footsteps and joined his eventual Redskins teammate at Coastal, while Breeland stayed local, too, jumping to play at Clemson.

Giving back

Greenwood, and towns like it, has little to offer its community in terms of entertainment and spaces to play sports, which often keep kids out of trouble. It's part of the reason why Norman hosted a football camp there last summer and why Swearinger hosted one this past June.

"Greenwood, we don't have any outside stuff to do like Chuck E. Cheese or Dave & Buster's or a lot of the things that the big cities have, we don't really have that much to do," Swearinger said. "So anytime I can go back, I try to give the city something to do."

Swearinger also helped run a car show following the camp, another way to engage with the community and have its older members connect outside with each other.

"We love cars and we love being able to do something instead of staying in the house playing cards or whatever you may be doing in Greenwood," he said. "Car shows are big in South Carolina and definitely big in Greenwood."

Hazel has even been invited to guest speak at Greenwood High School, where his former North Augusta football coach has taken over the program.

"I just try to give them what I have been through," Hazel said of speaking to students. "I know because a lot of guys in high school probably don't really get a lot of insight on a lot of things, so I always try to talk to them about what I did and if you take the advice or however you want to do it and make it where you want just incorporate certain things that I tell you and you could just go from there."

Norman's biggest goal is to get Greenwood a gym or recreation center, a common meeting place to provide kids a physical outlet that "helps more of them grow, be better in life, just overall," he said.

Since emerging as a premiere player in the NFL with massive amounts of influence, he realizes the importance of what he's doing in Greenwood and how his actions hope to spread throughout the state.

"Right now I'm putting my foot down on that gas and we're going forward, hopefully ask some guys to get on that train, get on that bus with us," Norman said. "If I can do something and come in [and give them] just a little bit more of a shot, then I'm all for it. Giving kids a shot and opportunity to make something of themselves. Kids just need encouragement."
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Never In A Million Years

After a prolific college career at Alabama, Jonathan Allen was expected to have his name called early in the 2017 NFL Draft. But a drop down the boards made the Redskins’ decision easy to select him.

By: Stephen Czarda

“Never in a million years” did Washington Redskins head coach Jay Gruden believe Jonathan Allen – the top player on the team’s draft board – would be available when the 17th-overall pick rolled around in the 2017 NFL Draft.

Allen had originally entered the 2016 NFL Draft before deciding to return to Alabama for his senior season.

The 6-foot-3, 286 pounder was dominant in his return to Tuscaloosa, finishing his senior season with 69 tackles along with 15 quarterback hits, 10.5 sacks and three fumble recoveries. For his efforts during the 2016 season, Allen's trophy case significantly expanded, as he was named the Bronko Nagurski Trophy winner, the Chuck Bednarik Award winner and the Ted Hendricks Award winner.

Additionally, Allen was a unanimous first-team All-American selection who finished seventh in Heisman Trophy voting.

During the early stages of the draft process, it appeared Allen would be the No. 2-overall pick. But once Thursday's draft started to unwind, including the Chicago Bears unexpectedly trading up to the second pick to select University of North Carolina quarterback Mitchell Trubisky, Allen's name still hadn't been called entering the third hour of the draft.

Then he got a phone call from a familiar area code.

“I was so emotional, it was hard for me,” said Allen, a Loudoun County native. “I kind of blacked out, I feel like, so I don’t really remember the specifics of what was said. But I do remember him saying, ‘We didn’t think we’d get you but we’re blessed and lucky to have you.’ And I said, ‘No, I’m lucky that you took me.’ But it was a great conversation.”

Adding an impact defensive lineman in the offseason was a priority for the Redskins and Allen will fit that mold.

“There really wasn’t anything not to like, really,” Gruden said of Allen. “We like his size, we like his strength, we like his ability to rush the passer, play the run. He’s a very versatile guy – he can play all the positions on defense.”

Allen is the first defensive player selected in the first round of the NFL Draft by the Redskins since Washington picked Ryan Kerrigan No. 16 in 2011.

Allen is the first defensive player selected in the first round of the NFL Draft by the Redskins since Washington picked Ryan Kerrigan No. 16 in 2011.

Allen hopes to create his own legacy now that he’s in the NFL, but he’s closely watched some of the top players in the trenches to see how they attack opponents, notably Cincinnati Bengals defensive tackle Geno Atkins and Los Angeles Rams defensive tackle Aaron Donald.

“Just the mentality that they had going into every play,” Allen said of what he gathered watching their game film. “I mean, you never see those guys take a play off. Just their tenacity and how they play the game is just what I love about them the most.

Allen is known for his work ethic in preparation for individual games and an entire season-long slate, but sliding down to No. 17 will add a little extra motivation. He admitted that when the Redskins appeared on-deck to pick, his hope was that Washington would be the one to get him onto the stage with a No. 1 jersey. But to be a top-rated talent that went mid-round adds fuel to the fire.

“For me, my motivation is to prove why the Redskins were right and smart for drafting me,” Allen said. “That’s going to be my motivation. So, I mean, it’s definitely going to sit in the back of my mind, but I have a job and I have a business to do, and that’s what I’m going to do.”

And to play for the team he rooted so passionately for growing up still feels like a surreal moment for Allen.

“It’s only something you read about in books – it doesn’t even seem real,” Allen said. “For me to be going back home to Washington, it’s honestly just the biggest blessing I could have ever received.”
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