

COUNTDOWN TO KICKOFF (8 DAYS)

FROM WORST TO FIRST

Competitive balance, one of the hallmarks of the NFL, gives fans hope entering each season. Three 2012 playoff teams – the Washington Redskins (10-6 in 2012, 5-11 in 2011), Indianapolis Colts (11-5 in 2012, 2-14 in 2011) and Minnesota Vikings (10-6 in 2012, 3-13 in 2011) – finished in last place in 2011 and combined for a 21-win improvement last year.



For an NFL-record 10th consecutive season, at least one team finished in first place in its division the season after finishing in last place. In fact, of the 40 teams in league history to go from “worst-to-first,” 19 of them have done so in the past 12 years (2001-12), including an NFL-record three such teams in 2005 and 2006.

After finishing last in the division the prior year, the Redskins won seven consecutive games to close the 2012 campaign and claim the NFC East crown, becoming the fifth team in league annals to reach the playoffs after starting the season 3-6.

“The credit goes to our head coach (**MIKE SHANAHAN**),” says Redskins Pro Bowl linebacker **LONDON FLETCHER** (left, with Shanahan). “Coach Shanahan, the way he laid out the plan for us, told us what we had to do and got us ready each and every week. This is a tribute to him. Our mentality was no different at 3-6 than it was at 9-6.”

The teams to go from “worst-to-first” in their division since 2001:

SEASON	TEAM	RECORD	PRIOR SEASON RECORD
2001	Chicago	13-3	5-11
2001	New England**	11-5	5-11
2003	Carolina	11-5	7-9
2003	Kansas City	13-3	8-8*
2004	Atlanta	11-5	5-11
2004	San Diego	12-4	4-12*
2005	Chicago	11-5	5-11
2005	New York Giants	11-5	6-10*
2005	Tampa Bay	11-5	5-11
2006	Baltimore	13-3	6-10*
2006	New Orleans	10-6	3-13
2006	Philadelphia	10-6	6-10
2007	Tampa Bay	9-7	4-12
2008	Miami	11-5	1-15
2009	New Orleans**	13-3	8-8
2010	Kansas City	10-6	4-12
2011	Denver	8-8	4-12
2011	Houston	10-6	6-10*
2012	Washington	10-6	5-11

* Tied for last place

** Won Super Bowl



KICKOFF WEEKEND RECORDS OF NFL HEAD COACHES

<u>COACH</u>	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>W-L</u>	<u>PCT</u>	<u>COACH</u>	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>W-L</u>	<u>PCT</u>
John Harbaugh	Baltimore	5-0	1.000	Leslie Frazier	Minnesota	1-1	.500
Jim Harbaugh	San Francisco	2-0	1.000	Jason Garrett	Dallas	1-1	.500
Greg Schiano	Tampa Bay	1-0	1.000	John Fox	Denver	5-6	.455
Mike Shanahan	Washington	15-4	.789	Marvin Lewis	Cincinnati	4-6	.400
Rex Ryan	N.Y. Jets	3-1	.750	Dennis Allen	Oakland	0-1	.000
Mike McCarthy	Green Bay	5-2	.714	Chuck Pagano	Indianapolis	0-1	.000
Bill Belichick	New England	12-6	.667	Joe Philbin	Miami	0-1	.000
Sean Payton	New Orleans	4-2	.667	Mike Munchak	Tennessee	0-2	.000
Mike Tomlin	Pittsburgh	4-2	.667	Ron Rivera	Carolina	0-2	.000
Mike Smith	Atlanta	3-2	.600	Bruce Arians	Arizona	0-0	--
Tom Coughlin	N.Y. Giants	10-7	.588	Gus Bradley	Jacksonville	0-0	--
Jeff Fisher	St. Louis	10-7	.588	Rob Chudzinski	Cleveland	0-0	--
Pete Carroll	Seattle	4-3	.571	Chip Kelly	Philadelphia	0-0	--
Gary Kubiak	Houston	4-3	.571	Doug Marrone	Buffalo	0-0	--
Andy Reid	Kansas City	7-7	.500	Mike McCoy	San Diego	0-0	--
Jim Schwartz	Detroit	2-2	.500	Marc Trestman	Chicago	0-0	--