

THE WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

21300 COACH GIBBS DR.
ASHBURN, VA 20147

BigBear.ai
PERFORMANCE CENTER

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
January 30, 2026

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS NAME **DARONTE JONES DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR**

LOUDOUN COUNTY, Va. – The Washington Commanders announced today they have named Daronte Jones as the team's defensive coordinator.

Jones will enter his first season with the organization after five seasons with the Minnesota Vikings (2020; 2022-2025). Jones was the defensive backs coach in Minnesota in 2020 and 2022. In 2023, Jones became the defensive pass game coordinator in addition to his role as defensive backs coach.

During Jones' four-year tenure with the Minnesota Vikings from 2022-25, he was part of a defensive unit that ranked Top 10 in the NFL twice in points/game and ranked Top 10 three times in total takeaways, including 2024 when they ranked tied for No. 1 in the NFL with 33 takeaways (24 interceptions and nine forced fumbles). The Minnesota defense also finished Top 5 twice in third down defense from 2022-25.

This past season, Minnesota was the No. 3 ranked defense overall, No. 7 ranked defense in points/game and No. 10 ranked defense in total takeaways in the NFL. Minnesota allowed the second-fewest pass yards per game across the league (158.5), and second-fewest passing touchdowns (15). The Vikings also held opponents to an average completion percentage of 62.4, which was the lowest during Jones' tenure.

In 2024, when the Vikings went 14-3 and tied for the third-most wins in the league, Jones' unit led the league in interceptions (24) and passes defended (95). Minnesota was the only team to record a defensive takeaway in every regular season game that year. Jones worked closely with CB Byron Murphy Jr. who earned his first Pro Bowl honor following the season.

Jones coached CB Byron Murphy Jr. to a Pro-Bowl caliber season in 2024, helping him post career highs in tackles (81), tackles for loss (six), interceptions (six) and passes defended (14). Murphy topped off his career year being named the 2025 NFL Pro Bowl Games Defensive MVP.

Under Jones' guidance, Vikings S Camryn Bynum and Josh Metellus achieved career numbers in 2023. Bynum posted career highs in tackles (137), passes defended (nine), forced fumbles (three) and tied his career-best mark in interceptions (two). His 137 total tackles led all Vikings defenders and were the most by a defensive back in the league in 2023. Metellus started a career-high 17 games, after combining for just three starts from 2020-22. He recorded single-season career highs in tackles (116), tackles for loss (seven), sacks (2.5) and forced fumbles (four).

Jones coached two veteran All Pro defensive backs during his time with the Vikings. During Patrick Peterson's one season under Jones' tutelage in 2022, he posted his highest total in interceptions (5) and passes defended (15) since 2012. He also posted a single-season career high in total tackles (66) and interception return yardage (92). Jones coached All Pro safety Harrison Smith for five total seasons (2020; 2022-25). Smith tied single-season career highs in interceptions (5) in two of his five seasons with Jones. Smith also posted 10-plus passes defended in four of his five seasons playing under Jones and had a career-high three forced fumbles in 2023.

Prior to joining the Vikings for a second stint with the team in 2022, Jones spent one season with LSU in 2021 as defensive coordinator. Jones' LSU defensive unit ranked No. 7 in the nation in interception percentage and No. 21 in the nation in takeaways. At LSU, Jones helped LB Damone Clark earn second-team All-America honors, be selected as a finalist for the Butkus Award and win SEC Defensive Player of the Week twice that season. Jones also coached and developed CB Derek Stingley Jr., who was selected third overall in the 2022 NFL Draft by the Houston Texans.

In 2020, Jones joined the Minnesota Vikings defensive staff as the team's defensive backs coach under Coach Mike Zimmer. Under Jones' leadership and oversight of the secondary, the team ranked in the top 10 in the NFL in interceptions.

Jones originally entered the NFL coaching ranks with the Miami Dolphins as assistant defensive backs coach (2016-17) working under defensive coordinator Vance Joseph in 2016. He also spent two seasons with the Cincinnati Bengals as secondary/cornerbacks coach (2018-19).

Jones worked two seasons with the Miami Dolphins as an assistant defensive backs coach. In 2017, Jones helped S Reshad Jones to a team-high 122 tackles and a berth in the Pro Bowl. In his first season as a professional coach in 2016, Jones helped coach a Dolphins defense that recorded 16 interceptions, third-most in the NFL. Miami also ranked No. 4 in the league in third-down defense, allowing opponents to convert on only 36.15 percent of attempts.

Prior to the NFL, Jones served as defensive backs coach at Wisconsin in 2015, as the Badgers led the nation with just seven passing touchdowns allowed. Wisconsin's passing defense ranked second in the Big Ten and seventh nationally, allowing 173.2 pass yards per game. From 2012-14, Jones served as the secondary coach at Hawaii, adding the title of assistant head coach in 2014. He helped improve Hawaii's passing defense by 62.1 yards per game, as the Rainbow Warriors went from 85th nationally in 2011 to the 11th-best passing defense in 2012.

In 2011, Jones served as the defensive backs coach for the Montreal Alouettes of the Canadian Football League and as the cornerbacks coach for UCLA in 2010. Jones was named assistant head coach/defensive coordinator at Bowie State from 2005-09. His defense finished in the top three nationally in three of his five seasons.

Prior to his time at Bowie State, Jones served as defensive coordinator at two Louisiana high schools — Jeanerette (2004) and Franklin (2003). He also spent the 2002 season coaching safeties at Nicholls State after starting his coaching career as a graduate assistant at Lenoir-Rhyne before coaching for two seasons at the high school level in the Louisiana area.

A Capital Heights, Maryland native, Jones attended Bishop McNamara High School. He later attended Morgan State where he played cornerback for four seasons and earned his bachelor's degree in 2001.

– Washington Commanders est. 1932 –