

For Immediate Release

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WASHINGTON COMMANDERS ANNOUNCE 2026 BILL WALSH NFL DIVERSITY COACHING FELLOWS FOR TRAINING CAMP

LOUDOUN COUNTY, Va. – The Washington Commanders announced today the team's 2026 Bill Walsh NFL Diversity Coaching Fellows for training camp – Ryan Crawford, Sammy Morris and DJ Gillins. Washington will host all three fellows through the first week of the preseason schedule.

- **Ryan Crawford** will work with the defensive backs and is currently the associate head coach at Harvard University. This is his second stint with Harvard after originally joining the team as the secondary and special teams coordinator from 2012-2017. For the 2022 season, Crawford was the safeties and punt return coordinator at the United States Naval Academy. Crawford served as the nickels and assistant special teams coordinator at Wake Forest University from 2020-2022 after originally joining as the corners and punt return coordinator in 2018. Ryan completed a Bill Walsh Fellowship with the Seattle Seahawks in 2016. Crawford joined the University of Rhode Island as the secondary coach in 2008 before adding the defensive coordinator position for his final season in 2012. Prior to Rhode Island, Crawford served as the cornerbacks coach at Bucknell University from 2005-2007 and the secondary coach at his alma mater Davidson College from 2003-2004. Crawford played collegiately at Davidson College as a defensive back where he was named 1999 & 2000 Associated Press First Team All-American and 2012 Davidson Hall of Fame Inductee.
- **Sammy Morris** will assist the offensive line and special teams units and is currently the assistant director of player development and NFL liaison for Texas Tech University. Morris played collegiately as a running back at Texas Tech University from 1996-1999. Morris was drafted in the 5th round (156th overall) by the Buffalo Bills during the 2000 NFL Draft. During his 12 years playing in the league, Morris played for the Buffalo Bills, Miami Dolphins, New England Patriots and the Dallas Cowboys. Morris saw action in over 140 games and contributed on offense and special teams. Morris attended the NFL Business Management and Entrepreneurial Program at Harvard Business School in 2009.
- **DJ Gillins** will work with the tight ends and offensive line and is joining Washington after his stint as a Bill Bidwill fellow and assistant tight ends coach for the Arizona Cardinals. Prior to joining the Cardinals, Gillins was the running backs coach for Stony Brook University in 2024. From 2022-2024 he was the wide receivers coach at Long Island University. In 2021, Gillins was the wide receivers coach at Iowa Western University. Gillins served as the graduate assistant wide receivers coach at the University of Iowa in 2020 and at the

University of Arkansas in 2019. He was also quality control, safeties and wide receivers coach at Utah State University in 2019. Gillins played collegiately at Southern Methodist University in 2017, Pearl River Community College in 2016 and the University of Wisconsin in 2014 as a quarterback and wide receiver.

Washington's first group of Bill Walsh Fellows wrapped up their experience with the team following the conclusion of Phase 2 of OTAs: [Stafford, Virginia natives Michelle Boateng and Chris Hicks relish "surreal" Bill Walsh Fellowship opportunity](#)

Washington's second group of Bill Walsh fellows wrapped up their experience with the team at the conclusion of the offseason program: [Ambitious Bill Walsh fellow quartet makes the most out of minicamp stint](#)

Established in 1987, the Bill Walsh NFL Diversity Coaching Fellowship provides NFL coaching experience to a diverse group of participants every year. The program is named after the man who conceived the idea – late Pro Football Hall of Fame head coach **BILL WALSH** – and exposes talented minority college coaches, high school coaches and former players to the methods and philosophies of NFL coaching staffs. Walsh introduced the concept to the league in 1987 when he brought a group of minority coaches into his San Francisco 49ers' training camp.