

Military, Law Enforcement News, and More...

NFL announces head coaches for 99th East-West Shrine Bowl on February 1

NEW YORK — Jan. 23, 2024 — The National Football League announced the head coaches for the 2024 East-West Shrine Bowl, **Richard Hightower** of the **Chicago Bears** and **Mike Kafka** of the **New York Giants**.

“Coaches Hightower and Kafka have the opportunity to not only evaluate top athlete prospects, but also to showcase their skills in leading players and coaching staffs in this high-profile game,” said Troy Vincent Sr., executive vice president of football operations for the NFL. “This is an important evaluation week for prospects as well as for coaches as they pursue their professional and personal goals. The game also shows the humanitarian side of football as participants greatly encourage the children and families at the Shriners Hospitals.”

Hightower has spent the past two seasons as the Bears’ special teams coordinator and completed his third year overall in Chicago in 2023 after previously serving as the club’s assistant special teams coach in 2016. Hightower has 17 years of NFL coaching experience, including stops with Houston (2006-08), Washington (2010-13), Cleveland (2014), San

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Francisco (2015, 2017-21) and Chicago (2016, 2022-23).

Kafka recently completed his second season as the Giants’ offensive coordinator and has seven years of NFL coaching experience. He spent five seasons as an assistant coach on Andy Reid’s staff with the Kansas City Chiefs, the last two as the team’s quarterbacks coach and passing

game coordinator. In 2016, Kafka served as an offensive graduate assistant at his alma mater, Northwestern University.

“We’re excited to have Mike Kafka and Richard Hightower as our head coaches for the 99th annual East-West Shrine Bowl,” said Bob Roller, vice president of sports for Shriners Hospitals for Children. “Coach Kafka played in our game 14 years ago and was the game’s most valuable player. Now, he returns to coach, develop and provide his wisdom to our quarterbacks and the entire West roster. Coach Hightower is among the best special teams coordinators in the NFL and has Texas ties as a University of Texas alum. We’re looking forward to him leading the East roster.”

At the conclusion of the NFL regular season, teams nominated deserving assistant coaches who were reviewed by a panel that includes NFL Football Operations staff, East-West Shrine Bowl leadership, members of the NFL’s General Managers Advisory Committee and the Fritz Pollard Alliance.

Coaches nominated by NFL

clubs must be active assistant coaches who display extraordinary teaching and communication skills and are recognized for their integrity and commitment to excellence in the coaching profession. The coaches must be accomplished at developing and preparing players to compete in the NFL.

The 99th East-West Shrine Bowl, which features some of college football’s best prospects, will kick off at 8 p.m. ET on Thursday, Feb. 1, from Ford Center at The Star in Frisco, Texas, and will be televised on NFL Network.

For more than 90 years, some of football’s greatest players and coaches have contributed to the tradition of the East-West Shrine Bowl, the nation’s first college all-star football game. Created by the Shriners in 1925, the game is driven by the desire to support Shriners Hospitals for Children in its mission to help children in need of expert medical care. Participating players make an annual visit to the local Shriners Hospital, visiting children and staff in an experience that they will truly never forget.

Sen. Blackburn battles Biden’s VA practice of putting illegal immigrants over America’s veterans



Sen. Marsha Blackburn

WASHINGTON, D.C. Jan. 17, 2024 – U.S. Senator Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) pressed Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough on reports that the VA is prioritizing medical care and benefits for illegal immigrants at the expense of American veterans and taxpayers.

• **Over 1 Million Veterans Are Waiting For A Claim To Be Processed, While Taxpayers Cover \$94.3 Million In Medical Care For Detained Migrants**

“In fiscal year 2022 alone, taxpayers shouldered the cost for \$94.3 million worth of medical expenses for detained migrants, money that should have been used to support American veterans who bravely served this nation... Yet at the same time, veterans and their families are rewarded for their sacrifice with months- and years-long waiting times for their claims to be processed. Currently, 1,048,765 veterans are waiting for staff to process their claims. The VA claims that the average wait time for a claim to be processed is about five months; yet the agency’s own data shows that its backlog has increased and is expected to grow this year.”

• **The Biden Administration Is Seemingly Putting Illegal Immigrants Above America’s Veterans, And They Deserve Answers**

“The VA was created to support those who have served and protected this nation, and now senior VA officials have seemingly placed these veterans on a tier below the flood of illegal immigrants that are crossing our porous border. Since President Biden took office, more than 8.5 million illegal immigrants, including 1.7 million known “go-taways” have entered our country... It is unacceptable to see the VA redirect its resources away from those who defended this country in favor of those who flout its laws without remorse.”

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NFL Offers Free Admission to Military on February 7th

As a special thank you to the Military Community, the NFL will offer free admission to the Super Bowl Experience on Wednesday, February 7th for Military Appreciation Day. All active-duty United States Service Members, Veterans, and their Families tickets are 100% free on this day only, in partnership with Wounded Warrior Project, an NFL Salute to Service partner. Visit NFL.com for more information.

NFL announces head coaches for 75th Anniversary of Reese’s Senior Bowl

Terrell Williams of Tennessee Titans and Jeff Ulbrich of New York Jets will lead teams.

NEW YORK — Jan. 23, 2024 – The National Football League announced the head coaches for the 2024 Reese’s Senior Bowl, **Jeff Ulbrich** of the **New York Jets** and **Terrell Williams** of the **Tennessee Titans**.

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“This is an opportunity for two excellent coaches, Jeff Ulbrich of the Jets and Terrell Williams of the Titans, to take the reins as head coaches in leading their staffs and top football athletes in the Senior Bowl’s week-long evaluation of NFL prospects,” said Troy Vincent Sr., executive vice president of football operations for the NFL.

the Jets and Terrell Williams of the Titans, to take the reins as head coaches in leading their staffs and top football athletes in the Senior Bowl’s week-long evaluation of NFL prospects,” said Troy Vincent Sr., executive

vice president of football operations for the NFL. “The Senior Bowl is not only a showcase for top football student-athletes, but also a wonderful opportunity for coaches that are nominated by their NFL clubs to further develop their skills and learn from one another.”

Ulbrich recently completed his third season as the Jets’ defensive coordinator after joining New York as part of Robert Saleh’s first staff in 2021. Ulbrich, a 10-year NFL linebacker, has 14 years of coaching experience, 11 at the NFL level.

Williams has 26 seasons of coaching experience, including 12 in the NFL. He coached the past six seasons as a member of the Titans’ coaching staff, including the 2023 season as the team’s assistant head coach/defensive line coach.

“The Senior Bowl is excited about having two highly respected coaches like Jeff Ulbrich and Terrell Williams lead our

teams in Mobile,” said Jim Nagy, executive director of the Senior Bowl. “I had a chance to observe Jeff down here at the Senior Bowl two years ago when the Jets’ staff coached in the game, and he brought tons of juice to his defensive players. Jeff also has an impactful story to tell our players about being a one-year starter at Hawaii and the Senior Bowl helping him become a top-100 draft pick. I met Terrell years ago when he was defensive line coach at Purdue and always came away impressed with how he connected with his guys at practice. Over the past week, I’ve spoken to a number of friends in the league who have worked alongside Terrell, and they all gave him glowing recommendations. Our players are going to have a great week learning under these two men.”

This is the second year the Senior Bowl is implementing a “Coach Up” format in which coordinators and assistant coaches are

placed into elevated or different roles from the ones they currently hold with their respective clubs. Head coaches and general managers from all non-playoff teams and Wild Card round participants had the opportunity to nominate assistant coaches. Ulbrich and Williams were then selected by a group composed of league office executives and representatives from the General Managers Advisory Committee.

The Reese’s Senior Bowl, widely regarded as the preeminent college football all-star game and the first stage in the NFL Draft process, is the longest continuously running all-star game and has taken place in Mobile, Ala., for the previous years. The 75th anniversary Senior Bowl will kick off at 1 p.m. ET on Saturday, Feb. 3, from the University of South Alabama’s Hancock Whitney Stadium and will be televised on NFL Network.

NFL partners with TAPS to bring military families to Orlando for 2024 Pro Bowl Games presented by Verizon

Throughout the week, the NFL is once again partnering with TAPS to bring military families to Orlando for the 2024 Pro Bowl Games. TAPS is a nonprofit organization and an NFL Salute to Service partner that offers compassionate care to all those grieving the loss of a loved one who passed away while serving in our Armed Forces or as a result of their service. Through its partnership with TAPS, the NFL honors families of those who sacrificed their lives for our country by hosting them at year-round NFL events and supporting programs that help heal through mentorship and counseling. The NFL and TAPS will bring military families to the NFC and AFC Pro Bowl practices, participate in a meet and greet with Pro Bowl players, and engage in NFL PLAY 60 activities. On Sunday, Feb. 4, TAPS families will join other community groups to watch the 2024 Pro Bowl Game.... See more events on sports page 1

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