

Sports & Entertainment



This is where I want to be. We're not at the level we need to be as a team and a part of my love for this game is getting better every day and doing it together. We will be deliberate in everything we do. Championships are won by people, and we have the right people to construct a championship-caliber program. Finally, I want to make sure I recognize and thank the San Francisco 49ers, The York Family, Kyle Shanahan and John Lynch for five special seasons, where I grew not only as a coach, but as a husband and father. The relationships I built during my time there have made me better and given me the opportunity to be here. My family is fired up to join the Titans and this special community. Let's get to work."

Saleh arrives in Tennessee with 21 seasons of NFL coaching experience: six seasons with the Houston Texans (2005-10), three with the Seattle Seahawks (2011-13), three with the Jacksonville Jaguars (2014-16), five total seasons over two stints with the San Francisco 49ers (2017-20, 2025), and four campaigns as the head coach of the New York Jets (2021-24). During his time in the NFL, he has been a part of nine top-10 defenses, and in his nine seasons as a defensive coordinator or head coach, his team has finished in the top five in total defense on five occasions.

In 2025, Saleh returned to the San Francisco 49ers for his second stint as defensive coordinator under head coach Kyle Shanahan. With the roster decimated by injuries, including season-ending injuries to All-Pro defensive lineman Nick Bosa and All-Pro linebacker Fred Warner, the 49ers went 12-5 during the regular season and progressed to the Divisional Round of the playoffs.

As the head coach of the Jets (2021-24), Saleh guided four different players in their first four years in the NFL to Associated Press First-Team All-Pro honors (cornerback Sauce Gardner, defensive lineman Quinnen Williams and returner Braxton Berrios) and/or Pro Bowl appearances (Gardner, Williams and linebacker Jermaine Johnson II). The Jets defense finished in the top 10 in multiple categories over the 2022 and 2023 seasons, and over that two-year span, Saleh's Jets ranked first in passing yards allowed per game (178.9) and opponent yards per play (4.7), second in total defense (301.7) and sixth in opponent yards per rush (4.1). The unit also tallied 93 sacks and 29 interceptions during that time, tied for the eighth and 10th-most, respectively, in the NFL.

The 2023 Jets featured a pair of first-team Associated Press All-Pros in Gardner and linebacker Quincy Williams, as well as three Pro Bowl selections in Gardner, Johnson II and Quinnen Williams. The Jets also won four games after trailing in the fourth quarter, tying for the second-most such victories in the NFL. Defensively, the Jets finished in a tie for first place in opponent yards per play (4.6) and ranked second in passing yards allowed per game (168.3), third in total defense (292.3) and tied for eighth in takeaways (27). The Jets held opponents to seven points or less in 10 of their 17 games, which was tied for the most such games in the NFL. Meanwhile, the Jets offense gained 4,566 total yards in 2023, with 64.1 percent of those yards coming from rookie and second-year players, the second-most in the NFL. Saleh saw second-year running back Breece Hall register career highs in rushing yards (994), receiving yards (591), yards from scrimmage (1,585) and total touchdowns (nine).

In 2022, Saleh led a roster that featured two first-team AP All-Pro selections (Gardner and Quinnen Williams), a second-

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team All-Pro (linebacker C.J. Mosley) and four Pro Bowl selections (special teamer) Justin Hardee, Gardner, Mosley and Quinnen Williams). He also oversaw the development of the NFL's Offensive and Defensive Rookies of the Year in wide receiver Garrett Wilson and Gardner, making the Jets the third team in NFL history to have both rookie players win the honor. Wilson led all rookie wide receivers in receptions (83) and receiving yards (1,103), while Gardner led the NFL in passes defended (20). The Jets improved their win total by three games, which marked the sixth-largest win improvement in the NFL in 2022. The club boasted a defense that tied for first in opponent yards per play (4.8) and finished third in passing defense (189.4), fourth in scoring defense (316) and fourth in total defense (311.1).

In his first year as head coach of the Jets, the 2021 team was led by rookie quarterback Zach Wilson (2,519 passing yards), rookie running back Michael Carter (639 rushing yards) and rookie wide receiver Elijah Moore (538 receiving yards). The Jets were just the second team since the 1970 NFL-AFL merger to be led by rookies in passing yards, rushing yards and receiving yards.

Before taking the helm in New York, Saleh logged four seasons (2017-20) in his first stint as the defensive coordinator for the 49ers. During that span, the 49ers defense ranked third in passing yards allowed per game (211.4), fourth in total defense (323.6) and opponent yards per play (5.1) and sixth in opponent yards per rush (4.1).

In 2020, despite injuries to key players throughout the year, the 49ers defense held top-five marks in passing yards allowed per game (207.9, fourth), third-down defense (35.5 percent, fourth), total defense (314.4, fifth) and opponent yards per play (5.0, tied for fifth). The unit also ranked tied for sixth in opponent yards per rush (4.0) and seventh in opponent rushing yards per game (106.4). The defense was led by Warner, who earned first-team AP All-Pro honors and a Pro Bowl selection after registering a team-high 125 tackles to go along with a sack, two interceptions, six passes defended, one forced fumble and two fumble recoveries.

In 2019, Saleh was named Coordinator of the Year by Sporting News after leading the 49ers defense to a second-place finish in total defense – 281.8 yards allowed per game – which was the fewest total yards allowed per game by the team since 1997 (250.8). San Francisco placed first in the NFL in passing yards allowed per game (169.2), the fewest passing yards allowed per game in the NFL since 2009 (153.7 by the Jets). It marked the first time San Francisco led the NFL in passing defense since 1987 (165.6). The 49ers tied for second in the NFL in third-down percentage allowed (33.3) and tied for fifth in the NFL in sacks (48), the most by the team in a single season since 1998 (51). San Francisco also ranked seventh in opponent completion percentage (61.3) and opponent quarterback rating (83.0).

Bosa, a rookie in 2019, played in all 16 games (14 starts) and reg-

istered 47 tackles, nine sacks, one interception, one forced fumble, two fumble recoveries and two passes defended. He was named Defensive Rookie of the Year by the Associated Press and the PFWA, and Rookie of the Year by Sporting News and PFWA, as well as the NFL's Pepsi NFL Rookie of the Year. He was also named to the PFWA All-Rookie Team and was named a starter in the Pro Bowl. With defensive linemen Arik Armstead (10.0), Bosa (nine), DeForest Buckner (7.5) and Dee Ford (6.5), the 49ers were the only team in the NFL to have four or more players with at least 6.5 sacks in 2019. Rookie linebacker Dre Greenlaw was named to the PFWA All-Rookie team. The secondary was led by cornerback Richard Sherman, who registered three interceptions (one returned for a touchdown) and was named second-team All-Pro.

In 2018, the 49ers defense registered 37 sacks, the most by the team in a single season at the time since 2013 (38). The defense ranked among the top dozen teams in the league in rushing yards per play allowed (4.09, seventh), opponent completion percentage (63.5, 10th), yards per play allowed (5.42, 11th) and net passing yards per game allowed (233.3, 11th). San Francisco was one of six teams (Baltimore Ravens, Buffalo Bills, Detroit Lions, Indianapolis Colts & New England Patriots) to allow fewer net yards per game, rushing yards per game and passing yards per game than in 2017. The 2018 San Francisco defense was anchored by Buckner, who led the team with a career-high 12 sacks and was named to the Pro Bowl for the first time in his career. His 12 sacks were the most by a 49ers defender since 2012 (19.5 by Aldon Smith). Warner started all 16 games as a rookie and led the team with 123 tackles, ranking 12th in the NFL and third among all rookies.

In 2017, Saleh spearheaded a 49ers defensive unit that allowed 5.28 yards per play, which was a 0.62 yards-per-play improvement from 2016 and the third-largest improvement in the NFL from 2016 to 2017 behind Cleveland (0.76) and the Jets (0.72). The defense also held its opponents under 100 yards rushing seven times. From Weeks 12-16, the 49ers' streak of holding each of their five opponents under 100 yards rushing was tied for the longest streak in the NFL over that span (Arizona). The 49ers defense was among the league leaders at getting into the opponent's backfield on running plays, finishing tied for fifth in the NFL by forcing 53 rushes for negative yardage. Over the final eight weeks of the year, San Francisco ranked second in the NFL in rushing yards allowed (640) and tied for fourth in yards per carry allowed (3.62).

Saleh joined San Francisco after three years (2014-16) as the linebackers coach of the Jaguars. In 2016, Saleh's linebackers helped the Jacksonville defense rank fifth in passing yards allowed (215.3) and sixth in opponent rushing average (3.82). Team captain Paul Posluszny started all 16 games at middle linebacker and led the club in tackles for the second consecutive season. According to Jaguars team statistics,

linebacker Telvin Smith Sr. registered 118 tackles while starting all 16 games at outside linebacker for the first time in his career. Smith's 350 career tackles from 2014 through 2016 were the most by a Jaguars player in his first three NFL seasons.

In 2015, the Jaguars defense allowed 3.68 yards per rushing attempt, which was the fifth-lowest rushing average allowed in the NFL. Posluszny led the squad and ranked fifth in the NFL with 133 tackles, according to GSIS statistics, while tying with Smith for the team lead with 13 tackles for loss.

Under Saleh's guidance, Smith stepped in the starting lineup in 2014 and ranked third among all rookies with 99 tackles. Smith led the team with two fumble recoveries while ranking second with nine tackles for loss. After a season-ending injury to Posluszny midway through the year, J.T. Thomas stepped in and set a career high in tackles along with two interceptions.

Prior to Jacksonville, Saleh spent three seasons (2011-13) as a defensive quality control coach for the Seahawks. During that period, he was responsible for assisting the defensive staff with day-to-day duties with a focus on the linebackers. Working under linebackers coach Ken Norton Jr., Saleh aided in the development of K.J. Wright, Bobby Wagner and Super Bowl XLVIII MVP Malcolm Smith.

Before joining the Seahawks, Saleh totaled six seasons with the Texans, serving as a coaching intern (2005), defensive assistant (2006-08) and assistant linebackers coach (2009-10). While there, Saleh oversaw the growth of the Texans linebackers, including AP Defensive Rookie of the Year performances by DeMeco Ryans (2006) and Brian Cushing (2009). In 2009, the Pro Bowl duo of Ryans and Cushing were the only teammates to each rank among the league's top 10 tacklers.

Saleh's coaching career began with three seasons in the collegiate ranks. He launched his career at Michigan State University as an offensive assistant/tight ends coach (2002) and defensive assistant/defensive line coach (2003). He then spent one season (2004) as a defensive assistant/defensive line coach at Central Michigan University before a brief stint (2005) at the University of Georgia as a defensive assistant/linebackers coach.

A native of Dearborn, Mich., Saleh attended Northern Michigan University, where he was a four-year starter at tight end.

He and his wife, Sanaa, have eight children: sons Adam, Zane, Michael, Sam, Jacob and Robert Jr., and daughters Mila and Ella.

ROBERT SALEH'S COACHING TIMELINE

2026: Head Coach – Tennessee Titans
2025: Defensive Coordinator – San Francisco 49ers
2021-24: Head Coach – New York Jets
2017-20: Defensive Coordinator – San Francisco 49ers
2014-16: Linebackers Coach – Jacksonville Jaguars
2011-13: Defensive Quality Control – Seattle Seahawks

Please see sports-ent. 5

NSSF praises Interior Secretary Burgum's initiative for opening public lands to hunting



NSSF®, The Firearm Industry Trade Association, praises the announcement by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum to open lands managed by the Interior Department for hunting and fishing unless otherwise restricted by law, public safety or "resource protection." The initiative was a result of NSSF working closely with the Department of the Interior to produce a policy that benefits those who directly invest in wildlife conservation.

The announcement was made on January 15, 2026.

The "open until closed" initiative, conveyed through Secretarial Order 3447, will benefit sportsmen and women across the nation. The much-needed update prioritizes public access and conservation goals over anti-hunting and preservationist special interests. In short, the new initiative focuses on empowering conservationists who are most invested in perpetuation of wildlife and public access to public lands.

"Secretary Burgum is delivering for hunters and conservationists through this announcement," said Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF Senior Vice President for Government & Public Affairs. "NSSF has long advocated for public lands to be accessible to the American public, especially for hunting. Wildlife conservation decisions must be anchored in sound science that benefits healthy animal populations and the ability for Americans to enjoy the public lands for which they pay. We are grateful to Secretary Burgum for his commitment to remove barriers of entry to the outdoors and incentivize proven wildlife conservation strategies." The Secretary's initiative includes opening all public lands managed by the Interior Department, including National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs), to hunters and anglers unless a specific reason is cited requiring that they must remain closed. This approach will reflect state hunting and fishing regulations instead of incrementally opening new opportunities. Specifically, this new initiative outlines that these refuges were acquired by, created

for and are maintained and improved by investments by hunters through the Pittman-Robertson federal firearm and ammunition excise taxes, along with fees collected from the purchase of Federal Duck Stamps.

To date, the firearm industry has invested over \$29 billion, when adjusted for inflation, since 1937 toward wildlife conservation. These excise taxes, paid by the manufacturers, are dedicated solely for the conservation of wildlife, the habitats in which they thrive, hunter education programs and construction of new, or expansion of existing, recreational target shooting ranges to promote safe and responsible firearm skills, handling and ownership. These 10 to 11 percent excise tax dollars collected for the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act are specifically designated to be used by state wildlife agencies for conservation and related purposes. Collectively, the firearm industry, purchasers of firearms and ammunition and hunters are the greatest source of wildlife conservation funding.

Critical to this initiative, too, is the elimination of alternative ammunition requirements to be used on NWRs, which was forced by the Biden administration without sound scientific evidence to justify the burdensome rule. Instead, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will only require alternative ammunition in areas where a detrimental impact to wildlife populations has been proven by field data. The USFWS will continue to support incentive programs that allow hunters to choose the ammunition that best meets their needs.

About NSSF: NSSF is the trade association for the firearm industry. Its mission is to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. Formed in 1961, NSSF has a membership of thousands of manufacturers, distributors, firearms retailers, shooting ranges, sportsmen's organizations and publishers nationwide. For more information, visit nssf.org.

Postponements due to weather from sports page 1

All tickets purchased for the game will be honored on the rescheduled date.

Should you be unable to attend the rescheduled date, please reach out to your point of purchase for more information.

Single game tickets for all regular season Hustle games are on sale now. Tickets start at just \$15 and are available for purchase at memphishustle.com/ticket-center

tral or by calling (901) 888-HOOP. Additionally, all-inclusive floor seats and tables are still available for purchase, and the Hustle are accepting \$50 deposits for groups of 10-or-more.

For more information on the Memphis Hustle, visit memphishustle.com, follow the team on Twitter/X and Instagram (@MemphisHustle) or 'like' Memphis Hustle on Facebook.



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