



## 2009 WASHINGTON REDSKINS

Record: 4-12  
 4<sup>th</sup> Place – NFC East  
 Head Coach: Jim Zorn

| <b>2009</b> |   | <b>4-12</b> |                 |
|-------------|---|-------------|-----------------|
| Sept. 13    | L | 17-23       | at NY Giants    |
| Sept. 20    | W | 9-7         | St. Louis       |
| Sept. 27    | L | 14-19       | at Detroit      |
| Oct. 4      | W | 16-13       | Tampa Bay       |
| Oct. 11     | L | 17-20       | at Carolina     |
| Oct. 18     | L | 6-14        | Kansas City     |
| Oct. 26     | L | 17-27       | Philadelphia    |
| Nov. 8      | L | 17-31       | at Atlanta      |
| Nov. 15     | W | 27-17       | Denver          |
| Nov. 22     | L | 6-7         | at Dallas       |
| Nov. 29     | L | 24-27       | at Philadelphia |
| Dec. 6      | L | 30-33       | New Orleans     |
| Dec. 13     | W | 34-13       | at Oakland      |
| Dec. 21     | L | 12-45       | NY Giants       |
| Dec. 27     | L | 0-17        | Dallas          |
| Jan. 3      | L | 20-23       | at San Diego    |

## **Redskins Suffer Worst Season in Decades**

The era of Redskins owner Dan Snyder has produced a series of gut-wrenching lows, from 5-11 to 6-10 seasons, to egregious free agent signings and trades, to a swell of fan mistrust of the team's front office.

But the nadir of Snyder's reign occurred in 2009, a long, arduous and chaotic season when the Redskins resembled a dysfunctional entity. It was the Year of the Calamity. In fact, 2009 was the Redskins' most turbulent season in a half-century, when one combines the team's on-the-field ineptitude that led to a 4-12 record, with the incessant fan and media acrimony directed mostly at Snyder and his long-time sidekick, Redskins vice president Vinny Cerrato. Frustrations reached a boiling point, to put it mildly.

Ominous signs were clear early on. The Redskins opened 2-4, losing to two featherweights, including a Lions team that snapped a 19-game losing streak, and barely beating two other doormats. They blew myriad fourth-quarter leads and found ways to drop games they were in position to win, including a bizarre 33-30 loss to the eventual Super Bowl-champion Saints. Plus, they went winless against and were outclassed by their division rivals, the Giants, Eagles and Cowboys, and failed to show up mentally for multiple games. They also tried to pull off one of the most ridiculous plays one could imagine, a fake field goal attempt turned comedy hour in a home game against the Giants. The circus had arrived at FedExField.

To make matters worse, Snyder's 2009 celebrity free agent signing, mammoth defensive tackle Albert Haynesworth, failed to live up to his \$100 million value. He missed four games due to injury and was way out of shape, often collapsing from exhaustion on the field. He also publicly questioned the team's leadership and his role on the field, and was disciplined because he apparently showed up late for a meeting.

In the NFC East, the Redskins finished in last place for the second straight season. Their record matched the team's worst one of the 16-game era, 4-12 in 1994, while their winning percentage of .250 exceeded the percentages in the franchise's two worst seasons ever, .167 in 1960 and .107 in 1961. The latter accomplishment was nothing to be proud of.

Quarterback Jason Campbell, whom the Redskins tried to trade in the offseason, enjoyed his best season statistically: 327 of 507 (64.5 percent), 3,618 yards, 20 touchdowns and 15 interceptions. However, he failed to exploit several opportunities to craft game-winning drives – the mark of a leader – and twice threw killer interceptions.

Meanwhile, fans staging a "Burgundy Revolution" vilified Snyder and Cerrato, Redskin loyalists boycotted games at FedEx Field, which was its emptiest in years, players bickered in the locker room and Redskins alumni with Super Bowl rings such as Brian Mitchell and John Riggins blasted their former team like never before. Toss in an ongoing soap opera featuring constant speculation on coach Jim Zorn's job security, the hiring of a BINGO caller as a consultant and play-caller, and the temporary banning of signs critical of the Redskins at home games, a move that fueled the angst of many in

Redskins nation. It was like a volcano erupting, with sports talk radio stations, including Snyder-owned ESPN 980, Web sites and blogs serving as outlets for releasing venom.

“They need somebody who’s going to come in and construct this team properly,” Mitchell, who has a ring from Super Bowl XXVI, said during the season. “Until then, you’re going to have mediocrity.”

Snyder got the message. Late in the season, he parted ways with Cerrato, the butt of ridicule for his dubious personnel moves during the Snyder era, and hired Bruce Allen as his first general manager by title. Allen, the son of famed Redskins coach George Allen, was NFL Executive of the Year in 2002 when his Raiders appeared in Super Bowl XXXVII. He later served as general manager in Tampa Bay, which won two NFC South titles during his tenure.

Zorn was fired after the last game of the season, opening the door for a new coach whom Snyder had courted for some time: Mike Shanahan. Shanahan, out of the NFL for a year, brought a .598 win percentage (146-98) from 16 seasons of head coaching, 14 with the Broncos. In Denver, he won two Super Bowls in the late-1990s with Hall of Fame quarterback John Elway, but only one playoff game without him.

The goal of Shanahan and Allen would be to resurrect Washington’s premier sports franchise, which had become a laughingstock of the NFL. It was no small feat, for they were eyeing a multi-year rebuilding plan.