



## Redskins Legacy: Ken Harvey On Gruden, Turner

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A sideline reporter for the Redskins Broadcast Network during the preseason, Ken Harvey has had a front-row seat in analyzing first-year coach Jay Gruden and his players.

Two decades ago, the former Redskins superstar linebacker also was on site for the debut of another Redskins rookie head coach: Norv Turner.

Harvey signed as a free agent with the Redskins in 1994, the same year Turner arrived in D.C. Turner was a hot item on the head coaching market, having served as the offensive coordinator for a high-scoring Cowboys' team that had won two straight Super Bowls. He took the mantle two seasons after the retirement of Joe Gibbs, who had led the Redskins through a glory period highlighted by three Super Bowl wins.



Harvey sees a notable difference between the start of

the Turner era and that of Gruden, who also was in high demand after a three-year stint as the Bengals' offensive coordinator.

"The big difference is that with Norv everybody was expecting it to be just pass the baton and bring the team right back to the Super Bowl," Harvey said on the "*Burgundy & Gold Flashback*" podcast. "With Gruden, it's more like, 'Come on, give us something, please, anything, so that we hope we can start winning.' I don't think the pressure's as great to be a mega-winner. The pressure is just to be a good team because of the record last year. If you win more than three games, you've done better than last year.

"I think both of them are young, both of them are offensive-minded guys," Harvey added. "But I think Gruden has a better defensive coaching staff unit that can put some stuff together, and I think cohesively, they have a lot of talent on this team."

Last season marked only the second time in the history of the 16-game season that the Redskins won only just three games. The other season: 1994.

In fact, they posted a disappointing 32-47-1 record under Turner from 1994 to 1998, Harvey's five seasons in Washington. However, he stood out on the field, earning the distinction as one of the franchise's greatest linebackers ever.

The 12<sup>th</sup>-overall pick in the 1988 draft, Harvey played his first six seasons in Arizona, building a reputation as one of the NFL's finest outside linebackers. He led the Cardinals in sacks from 1989 to 1993.

But his career took flight after he signed with the Redskins as an unrestricted free agent in the 1994 offseason.

The 6-2, 230-pounder, a package of speed, quickness and strength, made the Pro Bowl four straight times, the first Redskin to do so since two Hogs, Joe Jacoby and Russ Grimm, did it from 1983 to 1986.

Positioned as a linebacker on first and second downs and a defensive end on third downs, he led the Redskins in sacks in his first four seasons in D.C., averaging 10, in addition to an average of 121 tackles.

His first year in Washington – 1994 – was likely the best season of his career. He posted a career-high 13.5 sacks, finishing tied for first in the NFC and second in the NFL. He also set a Redskins record for most single-season sacks by a linebacker, breaking the mark of 10.5 set by Redskins great Monte Coleman in 1984.

Harvey credits Coleman, who concluded his 16-season Redskins mega-career in 1994, with improving his ability to play linebacker, and defensive tackle Tim Johnson with helping him rush the passer.

Harvey missed only one game in his first four years in Washington. But he pulled a hamstring in the 1998 preseason and suffered a knee injury in the 11<sup>th</sup> game, forcing the Redskins to put him on injured reserve. He tried to rehabilitate himself, but his knee didn't cooperate, and he retired before the 1999 season.

He later served as president of the Redskins Alumni Association and has been a preliminary nominee for induction into the Pro

Football Hall of Fame.

“Ken Harvey was just the consummate pro,” said ex-Redskins quarterback Trent Green, who played with Harvey for four seasons in Washington. “The way he took care of himself, the way he prepared himself in terms of workouts, he was always a guy who spent extra hours in the weight room. I used to watch Ken all the time in amazement in practices. He was a premier pass rusher. He did it while being quite a bit smaller than a lot of the tackles he was going up against.”

*Mike Richman is the author of [The Redskins Encyclopedia](#) and the [Washington Redskins Football Vault](#). He hosts a podcast called “[Burgundy & Gold Flashback](#).” His web site is [redskinshistorian.com](#). Check out his Facebook **Friend** and **Fan** pages and follow him on **Twitter**.*