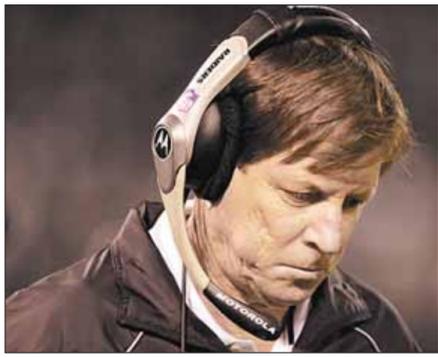


# As expected, Raiders fire coach Norv Turner



By JANIE McCAULEY  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## ALAMEDA, Calif.

The Oakland Raiders fired coach Norv Turner on Tuesday following consecutive losing seasons in which the team managed only one victory in its division.

The 53-year-old Turner, who had a year remaining on his contract worth about \$1.75 million, had known his job was in jeopardy for the past two months after struggling to get the most out of star receiver Randy Moss and an offense that also included quarterback Kerry Collins, receiver Jerry Porter and running back LaMont Jordan.

Oakland lost its final six games and eight of nine to finish 4-12 and with one fewer victory than Turner produced in his first season a year ago. The Raiders

have strung together three straight losing seasons for the first time since Al Davis came aboard in 1963 to coach and eventually own the team.

"I don't think this was a surprise to anyone. It was speculated over the last two months," Turner said in a conference call after meeting with Davis earlier in the day.

Turner grew up in nearby Martinez, Calif., rooting for the Raiders. His firing leaves eight coaching vacancies in the NFL.

Detroit fired Steve Mariucci in November, and Kansas City's Dick Vermeil retired Sunday. Other fired coaches include St. Louis' Mike Martz, Jim Haslett of New Orleans, Minnesota's Mike Tice, Mike Sherman of Green Bay and Houston's Dom Capers.

Davis is suddenly left looking for his third head coach in five years. He ousted

Bill Callahan following the 2003 season, a year removed from the Raiders' 48-21 Super Bowl loss to Tampa Bay.

"The No. 1 thing I've learned in this league, and what everyone's looking for, is the quick fix," Turner said. "I'm not sure there's such a thing."

Turner had the support of many of his players, some of whom insisted they should get the blame for the team's failures instead of Turner.

"I think he did what he could," linebacker Danny Clark said. "Ultimately, everybody involved didn't get it done. Unfortunately, this is a production-based business, and if you're not winning, the weight falls on someone."

Turner, who has a reputation as a talented offensive coach, was hired as the organization's 14th head coach in January 2004 to invigorate a franchise that flopped after losing a Super Bowl.

## In other news

BEREA, Ohio

### Browns president resigns

Cleveland Browns president John Collins resigned Tuesday, ending a late-season power struggle in the team's front office that nearly led to the firing of general manager Phil Savage.

In a statement released by the Browns, owner Randy Lerner said Collins has resigned his position and that Savage and coach Romeo Crennel will remain in their current roles. Lerner said he will assume Collins' duties until a new president is hired. Lerner added there are no candidates and no set time frame to bring in another executive. Phone messages left for Collins were not immediately returned.

Collins joined the Browns on May 1, 2004, after working as a marketing vice president for the NFL in New York. He replaced Carmen Policy.

## • Sorgi

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

the responsibility, especially after guiding the Colts to a victory.

"For me, it was huge. It was a confidence-builder," said Sorgi, who knows he might not take another snap this season as the Colts head into the playoffs.

But if nothing else, he made the most of limited opportunities.

Sorgi played well two weeks ago during a 28-13 loss at Seattle, his first action of the season. He completed 22 of 31 attempts for 237 yards with one touchdown and no interceptions for a quarterback rating of 103.8.

Against Arizona in the regular-season finale, he was 21 of 31 for 207 yards, two touchdowns, one interception and a passer rating of 94.4.

But his numbers weren't the most impressive aspect of Sunday's performance. It was the fact that he was able to put them up in the teeth of a fierce pass rush that kept him on the move, or on the turf, much of the afternoon.

That's what happens to quarterbacks who don't have the benefit of playing behind the first-unit offensive line. Most of the first-stringers didn't play after the second or third series of Sunday's game.

Sorgi expected as much going in. But it didn't deflate his enthusiasm.

## THE SORGI FILE

**Name:** Jim Sorgi  
**Position:** Quarterback  
**Size:** 6-foot-5, 196 pounds  
**Experience:** Second year in NFL, second with Indianapolis Colts. Has appeared in six career games.  
**Acquired:** Selected by Colts in the sixth round of 2004 draft (193rd overall pick)  
**College:** Wisconsin  
**Born:** Dec. 3, 1980

"At first I was (nervous) going out there, because I knew that it was going to be that kind of (blitzing) game," he said. "I was well-prepared throughout the week. I knew how to pick up a lot of the stuff."

But it wasn't easy with Arizona's first-unit defenders blitzing and speed rushing on almost every play.

Yet Sorgi, a lean 6-foot-5 and 196 pounds, frequently did what the 6-5, 230-pound Manning seldom has to do. He completed passes on the run.

Apart from taking sacks, Sorgi had no choice.

"After the first-string linemen went out, we had a lot of young guys in there," Sorgi said. "We were just trying to get everybody on the right guy and get everybody in the right place."

"And it got overwhelming for a little bit, but then it calmed down, and we finally did what we had to do."

Sorgi's poise might have come as a bit of a surprise to a sold-out RCA Dome crowd that hadn't had

a first-hand look at the young player since he attempted a single pass Dec. 5, 2004, against visiting Tennessee.

But Colts coach Tony Dungy wasn't startled by Sorgi's resolve. It's what he expected to see.

"He does a very good job when he gets the opportunity," Dungy said. "He led my team to a victory over the regulars in the blue-and-white mock game, so that's when I first knew he had that kind of poise."

"When the situation presents itself out on the field in game time, he does a great job. He just doesn't get the opportunity to play much."

Little doubt the Colts hope the opportunity doesn't arise in the playoffs, when Manning will likely take every snap barring injury or a dramatic unforeseen circumstance.

But if Sorgi does have to play in the postseason, the Colts are confident the offense is in capable hands. Not ideal, perhaps. But capable.

"Jim is going to be a good player for us," Dungy said. "He's much younger (than Manning), and he listens. He's taken in a lot of information, and he's just trying to execute the game plan. But he's calm."

"He's a guy that doesn't get rattled out there, and that's what you need in a quarterback."

Top-seeded Indianapolis has a first-round bye and won't play again until 1 p.m. Jan. 15 in a divisional playoff game, at home, against either Pittsburgh, New England or Jacksonville.

## BY THE NUMBERS

Indianapolis Colts backup quarterback Jim Sorgi's career statistics:

Year	G	GS	Att.	Comp.	Pct.	Yds.	TDs	Ints.	Rating
2004	4	0	29	17	58.6	175	2	0	99.1
2005	2	0	62	43	69.4	444	3	1	99.1
Career	6	0	91	60	65.9	619	5	1	99.1

# Gibbs proves he can still coach as Redskins prepare for playoffs

By JOSEPH WHITE  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## ASHBURN, Va.

When Dan Snyder bought the Washington Redskins six years ago, he ordered huge blowups of magazine covers from the glory years, framed them and put them on the walls outside the locker room. All were from the Joe Gibbs era, when the team won three Super Bowls.

When Gibbs came out of retirement, the coach immediately took them down.

"It was like starting over again," Gibbs said. "(The players) want something now. They want something for modern day, and so do I."

Now he has something. For the second time in his career, Gibbs has transformed the franchise, imposing his will to lift it out of the doldrums and into the playoffs.

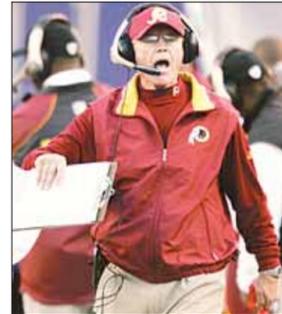
He will coach his first postseason game since 1993 when the Redskins visit Tampa Bay on Saturday, a stirring comeback for a club that was 27 games under .500 during the 11 seasons he was away from football.

"Those trophies in there are not by accident," defensive end Renaldo Wynn said. "It's been there from the beginning, the sense that 'Has this game passed him by?' And it hasn't."

"The Xs and Os have changed, but at the same time, you have to have the mentality to go out and be physical, hit people and have a unity, a togetherness."

A coach with a good reputation doesn't hurt, either.

Since the day of his comeback announcement in January 2004, the 65-year-old coach has said that



AP PHOTO

Washington Redskins coach Joe Gibbs yells from the sidelines during an Oct. 30 game against the New York Giants at Giant Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J.

the past doesn't buy you anything. Actually, it has bought him plenty, starting with a five-year \$27.5 million contract.

It also bought him Phillip Daniels.

Throughout his eight-year career in Seattle and Chicago, Daniels had always gone home to Atlanta to train in the offseason. But Gibbs asked Daniels, and the entire team, to stay in town.

"If it was a different coach that hadn't won Super Bowls? Naw, I would have probably stayed in Atlanta. But my thing is, I just trust Joe Gibbs so much," Daniels said.

In fact, anyone looking for a sign good things were on the horizon for the Redskins this season should have listened to Gibbs in the spring and summer. He kept bragging about a 97 percent attendance rate for workouts, meetings and other activities. He claimed it was the best attended

offseason in all of sports.

Even free-spirited Clinton Portis stuck around instead of going home to Miami, saying he was humbled after the team's 6-10 record in 2004.

There are several other factors involved in Gibbs' quick revival act, including a superb selection of players. His initial offseason haul included Marcus Washington, Shawn Springs, Cornelius Griffin, Ryan Clark, Chris Cooley, Mark Brunell, Sean Taylor, Daniels and Portis, all major contributors to the playoff run.

Gibbs' best move might have been the hiring of assistant Gregg Williams, whose defense kept games winnable while Gibbs modernized an offense that came out stagnant in the new millennium.

Gibbs also needed a year to weed out unwanted players and reinforce his zero-tolerance for anything that embarrasses the team or distracts from game preparation.

"The first year, we had some guys that probably didn't want to be here, so that didn't help," linebacker Lemar Marshall said. "This year, Coach Gibbs was just determined. That was the key word, he was determined to make that change, to get this team back to where it needs to get to. He was determined not to be in that situation again."

Now comes the next step. The playoffs are here. Gibbs' message: Focus even harder, and don't be content just to be there. "I think our guys are too smart for that," Gibbs said. "I hope that's not going to be the case. I talk to them about that all the time."

It would be hard to bet against him. Gibbs' playoff record is 16-5.

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