Beat: Sports

Tampa Bay Hires Lovie Smith as Head Coach

Former Bears Coach Back in NFL

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USPA NEWS - Tampa Bay has hired former Chicago Bears coach Lovie Smith to replace Greg Schiano. Smith, who coached the Bears from 2004-2012, could bring immediate improvement to the Buccaneers, especially on the defensive side of the ball.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers have their man. Two days after firing head coach Greg Schiano, The Bucs have hired former Chicago Bears coach Lovie Smith as his replacement. Smith, who began his NFL coaching career at Tampa Bay as a member of Tony Dungy´s staff, was out of the league during the 2013 season.
Smith was the head coach in Chicago for nine seasons (2004-2012) and compiled an 83-61 record. He led the team to the playoffs on three occasions, including an appearance in Super Bowl XLI, where the Bears lost to Peyton Manning and the Indianapolis Colts 29-17. Prior to his stint in Chicago, Smith was the defensive coordinator for the St. Louis Rams from 2001-2003.
The hiring of Smith, who is African-American, comes one off-season after

several former black coaches, including Dungy and former New York Jets and Kansas City Chiefs coach Herm Edwards, criticized the ineffectiveness of the NFL´s Rooney Rule. The rule, named for Pittsburgh Steelers chairman Dan Rooney, was instituted in 2003 to promote minority hiring by requiring teams to interview at least one minority candidate for any open head coach or general manager position.
Dungy and Edwards spoke out following the 2012 season when all fifteen new hires at these positions were white. Dungy, the first black head coach to win a super bowl, had this to say: “I know the concept is good and something we need to do, but obviously it´s not working the way it should.“ Smith becomes one of three current African-American head

coaches in the NFL, joining Cincinatti´s Marvin Lewis and Pittsburgh´s Mike Tomlin.
The hiring seems to be a good fit. Smith, know as a defensive minded coach, inherits a Tampa Bay defensive that finished 17th in total defense in 2013; a ranking that should improve immediately given Smith´s track record. In St. Louis, Smith took over a defense that was last in the league in 2000, allowing 29.4 points per game. In 2001, the Rams´ ranking improved to 7th, with a 17.1 points per game avearge.
The same thing happened in Chicago. In 2003 the Bears defense allowed 21.6 points per game, ranking 22nd in the NFL. In 2004, in Smith´s first season as head coach, Chicago improved to 13th, allowing 20.7 points per game. The following season, the Bears

led the league, allowing just 12.6 points per game. This ability to make an immediate improvement bodes well for Smith.
Though the Bucs´ offense struggled this past season, young quarterback Mike Glennon appears to be progressing. Plus the return of injured running backs Doug Martin and Mike James should help. Former Cal head coach Jeff Tedford, known for working with Aaron Rodgers at Berkeley, will be Smith´s offensive coordinator.
Overall the hiring of Smith appears to be a sound move. It was a bit surprising that he wasn´t hired as a head coach immediately after being fired by Chicago. But now that someone has given him a chance, it wouldn´t be a shock to see quick improvement in Tampa Bay.

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