



ROBERT SALEH

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

16TH NFL SEASON × 4TH WITH 49ERS

Robert Saleh (SAH-luh) is in his 16th NFL season and fourth as the 49ers defensive coordinator.

In 2019, Saleh was named Coordinator of the Year by *Sporting News* after leading the 49ers defense to rank second in the NFL in total yards allowed per game (281.8), the fewest total yards allowed per game by the team since 1997 (250.8). San Francisco ranked first in the NFL in passing yards allowed per game (169.2), the fewest passing yards allowed per game in the NFL since 2009 (NYJ - 153.7). It marked the first time San Francisco led the NFL in passing yards allowed per game since 1987 (165.6). The 49ers ranked tied for second in the NFL in third-down percentage allowed (33.3) and tied for fifth in the NFL in sacks (48.0), the most by the team in a single season since 1998 (51.0). San Francisco also ranked seventh in both opponent completion percentage (61.3) and opponent quarterback rating (83.0).

Rookie DL Nick Bosa, who played in all 16 games (14 starts) and registered 47 tackles, 9.0 sacks, one interception, one forced fumble, two fumble recoveries and two passes defended, was named Defensive Rookie of the Year by the Associated Press and the PFWA, and Rookie of the Year by *Sporting News*, PFWA and Pepsi. He was also named to the PFWA All-Rookie Team and was named a starter in the Pro Bowl. With DLs Arik Armstead (10.0), Bosa (9.0), 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 6.5-or-more sacks in 2019. LB Fred Warner started all 16 games and led the team with 118 tackles, while also adding 3.0 sacks, one interception (returned for a touchdown), three forced fumbles, one fumble recovery and nine passes defended. Rookie LB Dre Greenlaw played in all 16 games (10 starts) and tallied 87 tackles, 1.0 sack, one interception and two passes defended as he was named to the PFWA All-Rookie team. The secondary was led by CB Richard Sherman, who registered 57 tackles, three interceptions (one returned for a touchdown) and 11 passes defended and was named Associated Press Second-Team All-Pro.

In 2018, the 49ers defense registered 37.0 sacks, the most by the team in a single-season at the time since 2013 (38.0 sacks). The defense ranked in the top half of the league in rushing yards per play allowed (4.09 - seventh), opponent completion percentage (63.5 - 10th), yards per play allowed (5.42 - 11th), net passing yards per game allowed (233.3 - 11th), yards per game allowed (346.6 - 13th), rushing yards per game allowed (113.4 - 14th) and passing yards per play (6.45 - 14th). 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 49ers defense was anchored by DL DeForest Buckner who led the team with a career-high 12.0 sacks, ranked second with 67 tackles and was named to the Pro Bowl for the first time in his career. His 12.0 sacks were the most by a 49ers defender since LB Aldon Smith registered 19.5 sacks in 2012. 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. Warner became the first rookie in the NFL since 2000 to begin his career with four consecutive games with 10-or-more tackles, according to Gamebook Statistics.

In 2017, Saleh led 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 2016-17 (Cle. - 0.76 yards per play; NYJ - 0.72 yards per play). The defense also finished the season holding their 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). It also marked the first time the 49ers held five straight opponents to under 100 yards rushing since Weeks 11-15 of the 2012 season. The 49ers defense was among the league leaders at getting into the opponent's backfield on running plays, finishing ranked tied for fifth in the NFL by forcing 53 rushes for negative yardage.

Saleh's defense continued to improve throughout the season. Over the final eight weeks of the year, San Francisco ranked second in the NFL in rushing yards allowed (640), tied for fourth in yards per carry allowed (3.62), fifth in rushing yards allowed per game (91.4), seventh in net yards allowed per game (314.4) and tied for eight in rushing touchdowns allowed (four).

Saleh joined San Francisco after three years (2014-16) as the linebackers coach of the Jacksonville 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 LB Paul Posluszny started all 16 games at MLB and led the team in tackles for the second consecutive season. According to Jaguars team statistics, LB Telvin Smith registered 118 tackles while starting all 16 games at outside linebacker for the first time in his career. Smith's 350 career tackles 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, the fifth lowest rushing average allowed in the NFL. Posluszny led the Jaguars and ranked fifth in the league with 133 tackles, according to Gamebook Statistics, while tying with Smith for the team lead with 13 tackles for loss. According to Jaguars team statistics, Smith registered a career-high 128 tackles in 2015.

Under Saleh's guidance, Smith stepped in the starting lineup and ranked third among all rookies with 99 tackles, according to Gamebook Statistics, in 2014. 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, LB J.T. Thomas stepped in and set a career high in tackles along with two interceptions, two tackles for loss and five passes defended.

Prior to Jacksonville, Saleh spent three seasons (2011-13) as a defensive quality control coach for the Seattle Seahawks. During his three seasons with the Seahawks, 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 LB K.J. Wright, LB Bobby Wagner and Super Bowl XLVIII MVP LB Malcolm Smith.

Before joining the Seahawks, Saleh spent six seasons with the Houston Texans, serving as a coaching intern (2005), defensive assistant (2006-08) and assistant linebackers coach (2009-10). In Houston, 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 both rank among the league's top 10 tacklers, according to Gamebook Statistics.

Saleh joined the Texans after three seasons working in the collegiate ranks. He began his career as an offensive assistant/tight end (2002) and defensive assistant/defensive line (2003) at Michigan State University before spending one season (2004) as a defensive assistant/defensive line at Central Michigan University and a brief stint (2005) at the University of Georgia as a defensive assistant/linebackers coach.

A native of Dearborn, MI, Saleh attended Northern Michigan University where he started at tight end for four years. Saleh and his wife, Sanaa, have six children: four sons, Adam, Zane, Michael and Sam, and two daughters, Mila and Ella.

SALEH'S BACKGROUND

YEARS	COACHING BACKGROUND	HEAD COACH
2017-current	Defensive Coordinator, San Francisco 49ers	Kyle Shanahan
2014-16	Linebackers, Jacksonville Jaguars	Doug Marrone/Gus Bradley
2011-13	Defensive Quality Control, Seattle Seahawks	Pete Carroll
2009-10	Linebackers, Houston Texans	Gary Kubiak
2006-08	Defensive Assistant, Houston Texans	Gary Kubiak
2005	Coaching Intern, Houston Texans	Dom Capers
2005	Defensive Assistant/Linebackers, University of Georgia	Mark Richt
2004	Defensive Assistant/Defensive Line, Central Michigan University	Brian Kelly
2003	Defensive Assistant/Defensive Line, Michigan State University	John Smith
2002	Offensive Assistant/Tight Ends, Michigan State University	Morris Watts/Bobby Williams
1997-2001	*Tight End, Northern Michigan University	Eric Holm

* Player