



Buck Shaw

This article was written by Matt Keddie.

Before Bill Walsh and George Seifert coached the San Francisco 49ers to five Super Bowl championships, Buck Shaw roamed the sidelines for nine seasons (1946-1954) at Kezar Stadium. He led the 49ers to a 38-14-2 mark in the team's four years in the All-American Football Conference (AAFC) that included an appearance in the 1949 championship game.¹ San Francisco lost, 21-7, to the Cleveland Browns that followed a 17-7 victory over the New York Yankees in the Divisional round of the postseason.² Shaw's success in the AAFC was overshadowed by that of the Browns, who won all four league championships (1946-1949). Shaw's 49ers beat the Browns twice in those days as San Francisco finished second to Cleveland each year.

Shaw then led the 49ers in their first five seasons in the NFL. In his nine years as San Francisco's head coach, Shaw's record was 71-39-4 for a .645 winning percentage.³ He ranks third in team history in winning percentage, wins, and games coached. From 1946 to 1979, Shaw had a higher winning percentage and more wins than any other 49ers coach. At the time, he was the longest tenured coach in team history.⁴ The biggest knock on him was not winning a championship. Owner Tony Morabito fired Shaw following the 1954 season stating, "The failure to win a title must be blamed on Shaw."⁵

Several years later in 1958, Shaw had his day of reckoning. He returned to the NFL coaching ranks with the Philadelphia Eagles, and in three seasons (1958-1960), Shaw went 19-16-1 and captured that elusive NFL championship. The Eagles defeated Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers, 17-13, for the 1960 NFL title. The win marked the only time a Lombardi coached club lost a championship game. Shaw retired at season's end stating, "At 61 years old I believe I've had it and it is nice to leave on a pleasant note and quit while you're ahead."⁷ He went out a winner. In 12 years as an NFL head coach in San Francisco and Philadelphia, he accumulated a record of 95-55-5, and two wins in three playoff games.⁸

Lawrence Timothy "Buck" Shaw was born on March 28, 1899 in Mitchellville, Iowa to Tim and Margaret Shaw. He was one of five children, having three brothers (William, James, John) and one sister, Mary. Growing up on a farm, he did not have much exposure to athletics, playing in just four high school football games.⁹ Thereafter, he matriculated to the University of Notre Dame not in pursuit of football, rather running track. Shaw caught the eye of head football coach Knute Rockne, who convinced him to play football. For three seasons, he was a solid tackle that also handled the kicking duties.¹⁰ As a senior in 1921, he received a prestigious award from the university being named the "Apollo of Notre Dame" awarded to "the best-built man at Notre Dame."



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Shaw often went unnoticed due to the spotlight claimed by other star players, but the *South Bend News-Times* wrote, “He has never been given the notoriety which he deserves because he is one of the most modest men who ever donned a uniform. Buck is no grandstand man.”¹¹ The *South Bend Tribune* reinforced that by describing him by saying, “Buck Shaw is the most modest and most unappreciated athlete at Notre Dame.”¹² Notre Dame was extremely dominant, posting a 28-1 record during Shaw’s three seasons, earning at least a share of the national championship in 1919 and 1920. Its lone loss was in 1921 to Iowa, 10-7. The Irish were led by ends George Gipp and Eddie Anderson and linemen Hunk Anderson and George Trafton.¹³ All four were eventually inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. Shaw had strong praise for Gipp saying, “Gipp was a master at football. He could do everything. Kick, pass and lug that pigskin. He just seemed to have winner's luck at every game, whether it was football, billiards or what have you.”¹⁴

Rockne himself was also an inductee. Arguably one of the greatest coaches in college football history, Rockne won multiple national championships and sported a 105-12-5 record. He led the Irish to five perfect seasons (1919, '20, '24, '29, '30), and to a victory over Stanford in the 1925 Rose Bowl.¹⁵ Rockne also brought a plethora of innovations to the game. Shaw finished his collegiate career as an All-American by *Football World Magazine*. Shaw also set the school record by converting 38 of 39 extra points, a mark that stood until 1976. The relationship he formed with Rockne would prove to be vital in his foray into the coaching ranks.

Rockne recommended Shaw as a head coach when he received offers from both Auburn University and the University of Nevada. He vividly recalls, “I never thought about coaching until Rockne came to me in the spring of my senior year with a couple of letters from Auburn and Nevada.”¹⁶ Rockne said of Shaw, “He is the kind of man I can recommend without reservation. He has no bad habits, he is a loyal and enthusiastic worker and he is one of the best linemen we have ever turned out.”¹⁷ In 1924, he began his coaching career, although he signed with North Carolina State University. He won his coaching debut, 14-0, over Duke, but it was just one of two victories for the Wolf Pack. Shaw's team stumbled to a 2-6-2 mark and he left for Nevada the following year.¹⁸ He recalled, “A friend of mine at school (Notre Dame) was from Nevada and he told me American football was new out there. It sounded like an interesting challenge.”¹⁹ It would prove to be.

In Shaw's first season (1925) at the helm, he took over a struggling Wolf Pack team that hadn't experienced a winning season in three years. He expressed gratitude saying, “It's like getting back home. It was like being in exile to spend a year in North Carolina.”²⁰ He took Nevada to a 4-3-1 record, going 3-1 in the Far Western Conference, earning a



second place finish. Shaw followed that up with a 4-4 mark in 1926, again finishing second place in the FWC to Saint Mary's.²¹ After winning its first three contests, the Wolf Pack was blown out at Stanford then suffered a frustrating defeat to Saint Mary's at home, 13-0, losing a key fumble that allowed the Gaels to take control of the game. Over the next two seasons, Nevada won just two contests, posting a 2-13-2 record that prompted Shaw to resign.²² Despite his exit, the *Reno Evening Gazette* wrote, "He has made a team that is a team that knows how to play not as individuals but as a team."²³ It would take until 1932 for Nevada to earn a share of the FWC championship, outright winning the conference in 1933.²⁴

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- 1 "Buck Shaw," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/coaches/ShawLa0.htm>.
 - 2 "Buck Shaw," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/coaches/ShawLa0.htm>.
 - 3 "Buck Shaw," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/coaches/ShawLa0.htm>.
 - 4 "San Francisco 49ers Coaches," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/coaches.htm>.
 - 5 "Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving," recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.
 - 7 "Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving," recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.
 - 8 "Buck Shaw," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/coaches/ShawLa0.htm>.
 - 9 McGowen, Deane. "Buck Shaw dies at 77," nytimes.com, March 20, 1977, <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/03/20/archives/buck-shaw-dies-at-77-coached-eagles-to-nfl-crown-in-1960-the.html>.
 - 1 0 "Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving," recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.
 - 1 1 "Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving," recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.
 - 1 2 "Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving," recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.
 - 1 3 "Notre Dame Fighting Irish School History," sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sportsreference.com/cfb/schools/notre-dame/index.html>.
 - 1 4 "Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving," recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.
 - 1 5 "Notre Dame Football Memories: Knute Rockne," und.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://und.com/notre-dame-football-memories-knute-rockne/>.
 - 1 6 "Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving," recordcourier.com,



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Shaw remained on the West Coast as he was lured to Santa Clara University by former Notre Dame college teammate Maurice Smith. Smith hired him to coach the line. Each season from 1929 to 1934 the Broncos won at least five games. The 1934 club may have been the strongest, attaining a 7-2-1 record.²⁵ Its two defeats were 7-0 to Saint Mary's and a narrow, 9-7 loss to TCU.²⁶ Smith moved on in 1935 for the head coaching position at Villanova, leaving Shaw to become head coach. The decision turned Santa Clara into a national power.

The Broncos went 8-1 in 1936, defeating Stanford, 13-0, on the road to open the season. On October 31 they defeated 16th ranked Auburn, 12-0, at Kezar Stadium that vaulted them into the Top 10 in the Associated Press poll. Two weeks later, Santa Clara ripped Saint Mary's, 19-0. Their lone defeat was to TCU, 9-0.²⁷ The success earned the Broncos a trip to the 1937 Sugar Bowl against the Louisiana State University Tigers. In the game, Santa Clara scored two quick touchdowns by Nello Falaschi and Norman Finley, to put them ahead 14-0. LSU cut the lead in half on a score by Gus Tinsley. Santa Clara put the game away on another Falaschi touchdown, prevailing 21-7. It marked the school's first

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- 1 7 “Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving,” recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.
- 1 8 “Buck Shaw,” sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/coaches/buck-shaw-1.html>.
- 1 9 “Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving,” recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.
- 2 0 “Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving,” recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.
- 2 1 “Buck Shaw,” sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/coaches/buck-shaw-1.html>.
- 2 2 “Buck Shaw,” sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/coaches/buck-shaw-1.html>.
- 2 3 “Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving,” recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.
- 2 4 “1933 Football Schedule,” nevadawolfpack.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://nevadawolfpack.com/sports/football/schedule/1933>.
- 2 5 “Santa Clara Broncos School History,” sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/schools/santa-clara/>.
- 2 6 “1934 Santa Clara Broncos Schedule and Results,” sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/schools/santa-clara/1934-schedule.html>.



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bowl victory in program history and earning the number six ranking in the final Associated Press poll.²⁸ Falaschi earned honors on the All-Pacific Coast team.

Shaw's Broncos repeated their stellar success in 1937, turning in a 9-0 record. The Broncos shut out eight of their nine opponents, yielding only a safety all season against San Jose State. Santa Clara once again defeated Stanford, 13-7, at Stanford Stadium, rival Saint Mary's 7-0, and capped a perfect season once again in the Sugar Bowl, besting number eight LSU for the second consecutive year, 6-0.²⁹ LSU dominated the stat sheet, but Santa Clara scored the game's only points on a Jim Coughlan touchdown from Bruno Pellegrini.³⁰

The victories drew all sorts of praise and notoriety for Shaw. The *San Francisco Examiner* wrote, "The most convincing coaching record in football today is held by Lawrence Timothy 'Buck' Shaw of Santa Clara. It is almost unbelievable. There is not a critical fan, coach or football writer throughout the country who doesn't know that fellow Shaw has something. But the country is just awakening to his achievements. He never lifts his voice on the practice field. No player is humiliated or browbeaten and made to feel like a day laborer. Not a man is idle during practice, not a fourth stringer trots off the field feeling belittled because he received no attention from the coach."³¹ Shaw remained at Santa Clara through 1942. From 1939 until 1942 his teams never won less than five games, and posted three Top 15 finishes in the Associated Press final poll. Shaw posted a 47-10-2 record in seven seasons at Santa Clara.³²

He was approached with an offer to become the head coach at Notre Dame in 1940, but declined. Santa Clara discontinued football in 1942, halting his run of success. For one season in 1945, he was the head coach of the California Golden Bears, leading them to a 4-5-1 mark.³³ Despite not attaining a winning mark, Shaw set the foundation for the

2 7 "1936 Santa Clara Broncos Schedule and Results," sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/schools/santa-clara/1936-schedule.html>.

2 8 "Third Annual Sugar Bowl Classic ~ January 1, 1937," allstatesugarbowl.org, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://allstatesugarbowl.org/sports/2022/4/15/third-annual-sugar-bowl-classic-january-1-1937.aspx>.

2 9 "Fourth Annual Sugar Bowl Classic ~ January 1, 1938," allstatesugarbowl.org, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://allstatesugarbowl.org/sports/2022/4/15/fourth-annual-sugar-bowl-classic-january-1-1938.aspx>.

3 0 "Fourth Annual Sugar Bowl Classic ~ January 1, 1938," allstatesugarbowl.org, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://allstatesugarbowl.org/sports/2022/4/15/fourth-annual-sugar-bowl-classic-january-1-1938.aspx>.

3 1 "Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving," recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.

3 2 "Buck Shaw," sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/coaches/buck-shaw-1.html>.



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Bears, who, beginning in 1947 began a stretch of consistent success under Pappy Waldorf.³⁴ California finished 9-1 in 1947, then participated in three consecutive Rose Bowl games from 1948 to 1950, winning three Pacific Coast Conference championships.³⁵ As a result of his local success in the Bay Area, 49ers owner Tony Morabito tapped Shaw as the first head coach in San Francisco 49ers history..

Shaw brought excitement to the 49ers inaugural season. He was able to recruit star talent from local universities such as Stanford, Santa Clara, Saint Mary's, the University of San Francisco, etc.³⁶ Quarterback Frankie Albert was a two-time consensus All-American at Stanford who played alongside fullback Norm Standlee. He also hand-picked end Alyn Beals and guard Dick Bassi from Santa Clara who proved valuable.³⁷ Albert led the team in passing with 1,404 yards and 14 touchdowns, Standlee was the team's top rusher with two rushing scores and 651 yards, and Beals led the 49ers in receiving, hauling in 40 passes and 10 touchdowns. The results were positive as San Francisco racked up 307 points, turning in a 9-5 record and second place finish in the AAFC Western Division.³⁸

San Francisco finished second again in 1947 at 8-4-2, then put together a 12-2 record in 1948, which was their best chance to win the division.³⁹ The 49ers started out 10-0, needing to beat the Browns just once to earn a share of the West Division. In Week 12, they lost a narrow, 14-7 contest in Cleveland. Albert tossed three costly interceptions and Johnny Strzykalski was held to just 65 rushing yards. The rematch was held two weeks later at Kezar Stadium on November 28.⁴⁰ All looked up for the 49ers as they jumped to a 21-10 third quarter lead after scoring three consecutive touchdowns. However, the Browns returned the favor scoring 21 consecutive points of their own to take a 31-21 lead heading to the fourth quarter. San Francisco pulled to within three at 31-28 on an Albert

3 3 "Buck Shaw," sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/coaches/buck-shaw-1.html>.

3 4 "California Golden Bears School History," sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/schools/california/index.html>.

3 5 "California Golden Bears School History," sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/schools/california/index.html>.

3 6 "Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving," recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.

3 7 "1946 San Francisco 49ers Roster & Players," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/1946_roster.htm.

3 8 "1946 San Francisco 49ers Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/1946.htm>.



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to Joe Perry touchdown, but that is as close as they would get. The defeat led to an unfortunate second place finish.⁴¹

In 1949, the league altered the playoff format that eliminated divisions, and the top four teams qualified for the postseason. Also, teams played 12 games instead of 14. The 49ers powered through with a 9-3 record finishing behind the Browns, in second place. In the playoffs, they met the number three seed New York Yankees on December 4 at Kezar Stadium with the winner to play for the AAFC title.⁴²

The game was deadlocked at 7-7 in the second quarter when the 49ers added a Joe Vetrano field goal to take the lead, 10-7. They put the game away in the second half on a 10 yard touchdown pass from Albert to Don Garlin, resulting in the final score, 17-7.⁴³ This set up yet another showdown with Cleveland, in Cleveland the following week.

The AAFC championship game was mostly a defensive struggle. Cleveland took 7-0 lead, on an Edgar Jones two-yard run, which they held until the third quarter. Browns back Marion Motley broke free on a 68-yard rush to give Cleveland a 14-0 lead. San Francisco got on the board in the fourth quarter on an Albert touchdown pass to Paul Salata, but the Browns sealed the win on a 4-yard run by Dub Jones.⁴⁴

The following season, the 49ers, Browns, and Baltimore Colts all joined the NFL, resulting in the folding of the AAFC. San Francisco struggled to a 3-9 record in 1950, but Shaw enacted his talent acquisition skills, pulling in several key players in the 1950 draft.⁴⁵ He selected defensive tackle Leo Nomellini from Minnesota in the first round, tackle Ray Collins in the third round, and in the 22nd round with the 283rd pick, end Billy Wilson.⁴⁶ These players helped fuel the team's success for the seasons to come.

3 9 “San Francisco 49ers Franchise Encyclopedia,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/>.

4 0 “1948 San Francisco 49ers Roster, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/1948.htm>.

4 1 “Cleveland Browns at San Francisco 49ers – November 28th, 1948,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/boxscores/194811280sfo.htm>.

4 2 “1949 San Francisco 49ers Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/1949.htm>.

4 3 “Divisional Round – New York Yankees at San Francisco 49ers – December 4th, 1949,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/boxscores/194912040sfo.htm>.

4 4 “Championship – San Francisco 49ers at Cleveland Browns – December 11th, 1949,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/boxscores/194912110cle.htm>.

4 5 “1950 San Francisco 49ers Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/1950.htm>.

4 6 “1950 San Francisco 49ers Draftees,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/1950_draft.htm.



In the 1951 draft, Shaw chose quarterback Y.A. Tittle with the third overall pick. Albert and Tittle split reps at quarterback during the season, with Tittle leading the team by throwing eight touchdown passes.⁴⁷ San Francisco went 7-4-1 and finished tied for second place in the NFL National Conference with the Detroit Lions. Four 49ers were selected for the Pro Bowl: Soltau, Collins, Nomellini, and defensive back Jim Cason.⁴⁸

The 1952 club finished at 7-5, but after starting 5-0 they lost five of their final seven contests to derail any championship game aspirations. The presence of rookie Hugh McElhenny, chosen with the ninth overall pick in the 1952 NFL Draft, proved valuable. He ran for 684 yards, averaging 7.0 yards per carry as a rookie.⁴⁹

Over the next two seasons, San Francisco posted 9-3 and 7-4-1 records, respectively, but could not break the streak of failing to win the conference. The 1953 team lost to the Lions twice, the eventual NFL champion. The 1954 team opened with a 4-0-1 record, but suffered a three-game losing streak that put them out of contention.⁵⁰ After a 31-3 win over the Pittsburgh Steelers on November 20, San Francisco suffered an inexplicable 17-13 loss at the lowly Baltimore Colts. Baltimore finished last in the Western Conference. The 49ers settled for a third place finish.⁵¹ Dissatisfied with the results and feeling his team should have won the title, Morabito fired Shaw following the season. Shaw reacted, "It's just one of those things. It's the first time I've been fired in 32 years."⁵² Fans were in complete disapproval because Shaw brought them success, wins, and a fun team to watch, despite not winning a championship. It would be another 16 years before the 49ers would win another playoff game.⁵³

Shaw returned to the college ranks in 1956 as the head coach of the Air Force Falcons. He coached in Colorado Springs for two seasons, leading the Falcons to marks of 6-2-1 and 3-6-1, before returning to the NFL.⁵⁴ Shaw also coached the college all-star teams in

4 7 "1951 San Francisco 49ers Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/1951.htm>.

4 8 "1951 San Francisco 49ers Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/1951.htm>.

4 9 "1952 San Francisco 49ers Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/1952.htm>.

5 0 "1953 San Francisco 49ers Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/1953.htm>.

5 1 "1953 San Francisco 49ers Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/1953.htm>.

5 2 "Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving," recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.

5 3 "San Francisco 49ers Franchise Encyclopedia," ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/sfo/>.



the East-West Shrine Game in San Francisco in 1956. The *San Francisco Examiner* wrote, “He got the biggest hand during the pre-game introductions and a tremendous cheer when the final gun sounded. Perhaps the crowd was showing the Morabito brothers what it thought of the coach the San Francisco 49ers fired.”⁵⁵

On February 14, 1958 Shaw was hired as head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles, who were mired in a rut of losing. Having won the 1949 NFL title, the Eagles since had four different head coaches.⁵⁶ Shaw knew the expectations were not high and the team had young, talented draft picks: Clarence Peaks, Billy Barnes, and Tommy McDonald – all stellar running backs.⁵⁷ He also traded for star quarterback Norm van Brocklin, dealing Buck Lansford, Jimmy Harris, and a 1959 second round draft pick to the Los Angeles Rams.

The Eagles continued their cellar-dwelling ways in 1958 at 2-9-1, but improved to 7-5 in 1959, finishing in a tie for second place in the NFL East Division.⁵⁹ Prior to the 1960 campaign, Shaw announced it would be his final season. Taking it to heart, his team made it one for the ages. After a season opening loss to the Browns, Philadelphia ran off nine consecutive victories and finished the regular season with a league best 10-2 record.⁶⁰

Boasting the league's third ranked offense and top ranked defense in turnovers forced, the Eagles met Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers for the championship. The Eagles entered the fourth quarter trailing 13-10 until Ted Dean scored the go-ahead touchdown that held up for a 17-13 win.⁶¹ It marked the Eagles' first championship since the 1949 season. They would not qualify for the playoffs again until 1978.⁶² The win finally

5 4 “Buck Shaw,” sportsreference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/coaches/buck-shaw-1.html>.

5 5 “Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving,” recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.

5 6 “Philadelphia Eagles Franchise Encyclopedia,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/phi/>.

5 7 “1958 Philadelphia Eagles Rosters, Stats, Schedule, Team Draftees,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/phi/1958.htm>.

5 9 “Philadelphia Eagles Franchise Encyclopedia,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/phi/>.

6 0 “Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving,” recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.

6 1 “Championship – Green Bay Packers at Philadelphia Eagles – December 26th, 1960,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/boxscores/196012260phi.htm>.

6 2 “Philadelphia Eagles Franchise Encyclopedia,” ProFootballReference.com, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/phi/>.



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yielded Shaw, known as the “Silver Fox,” the championship he sought for nearly two decades. Upon his retirement Shaw said, “The prime requisite in football is still its oldest element. Enthusiasm.”⁶³

Following his retirement from football, Shaw worked for a papers product company in California. On September 22, 1962 Santa Clara University opened a new football, baseball and soccer stadium named, “Buck Shaw Stadium” in his honor.

Shaw is enshrined in the Santa Clara University Hall of Fame, the San Francisco Bay Area Hall of Fame, the San Jose Sports Hall of Fame and the Iowa Sports Hall of Fame. He was also recognized as an all-time Notre Dame football player.

Shaw died of cancer on March 19, 1977.

6 3 “Buck Shaw started with Nevada Wolf Pack, became great after leaving,” recordcourier.com, August 29, 2020, <https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2020/aug/29/buck-shaw-started-with-nevada-wolf-pack-became-gre/>.