

Arizona hires Buddy-replacement

■ NEW COACH: Tobin's low-key and determined style was important in the decision to hire him

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — For the second time, Vince Tobin is in territory vacated by Buddy Ryan.

The Arizona Cardinals hired the defensive coordinator of the Indianapolis Colts as their coach Wednesday. He replaces Ryan, who was fired Dec. 26, 1995, after his team skidded to 4-12 with a season-ending 37-13 loss to Dallas.

In 1986, Tobin replaced Ryan as defensive coordinator of the Chicago Bears after Ryan got his first head coaching job with Philadelphia.

Cardinals owner Bill Bidwill, who kept his plans secret until the last day, said he likes Tobin's low-key but determined style.

"He comes across as a very straightforward person," Bidwill said. "He has been described that way to me by a number of people. What you see is what you get."

Tobin, 52, said he always prepares for victory. But he demurred when asked if he was saying there was "a winner in town," the now infamous way Ryan described himself when he was hired Feb. 3, 1994.

"I've never gone into a game or a season thinking we couldn't win," Tobin said. "Now, is that a goal? I don't know. But the only purpose of coaching or playing in the National Football League is to win, is to want to get to the Super Bowl."

Bidwill flew to Honolulu for last week's Pro Bowl and made his first contact with Tobin there. Both said the deal wasn't closed until Wednesday afternoon, just hours before the Cardinals called their news conference.

Tobin's five-year contract is for coaching only, and Bidwill said he has not yet settled on a general manager, the other position that Ryan left vacant. The owner said he would not try to hire a general manager until after the NFL scouting combine, which begins Thursday in Indianapolis.

Bill Tobin, the new coach's older brother, is the Colts' director of football operations and has been mentioned as a possibility. Vince Tobin said he didn't know whether his brother was a serious candidate.

"This is something that Mr. Bidwill and I discussed at great length, and he has assured me when he hires a general manager it will be a guy who is very compatible with me," Tobin said.

Bidwill took six weeks to replace Ryan, but he beat his own deadline by one day. He had said he wanted to send the new coach to the combine.

Tobin said he hopes to talk to defensive tackle Eric Swann and cornerback Aeneas Williams, the team's two most valuable free agents, before returning to Indianapolis this weekend.

Arizona's offense was anemic throughout Ryan's two years, but the third-ranked defense helped the Cardinals to an 8-8 record in 1994. Last year, the defense was as mediocre as the offense.

The Cardinals have not had a winning season since 1984 or been to the playoffs in a non-strike year since 1975.

Tobin becomes the Cardinals' fifth coach since the team moved to Arizona from St. Louis in 1988, and the 32nd coach in the franchise's 75-year history. He emerged as a top candidate for the job from a field that included Green Bay defensive coordinator Fritz Shurmur and former UCLA coach Terry Donahue.

Tobin's 1986 Bears defensive

unit set an NFL record for fewest points allowed (187) in a 16-game season, and the 1988 Bears also were the league's stingiest in opponent scoring. He was out of football in 1993, then joined the Colts.

In 1994 he took over a defense that had ranked last the previous season and molded it into a unit that tied for seventh in total defense and fifth in fewest points allowed in 1995.

And his stock climbed during Indianapolis' drive to the AFC title game last season. His defensive unit played a major role in the Colts' 9-7 regular season and electrifying postseason.

It was the 15th season in Tobin's 17th year as a defensive coordinator in Canada, the USFL and the NFL that he had been on a winning team.

"I'm not against a defensive guy as long as the offense is not vanilla," center Ed Cunningham said. "That happens sometimes — they're wary about going after it on offense, because they think they'll just have to put the defense back on the field. But with the high-powered offense they had at Indianapolis, I don't think that will be any problem."

Frank Sanders, a star wide receiver last year as a rookie, said Tobin will inject some pizzazz into the offense.

"I think he's going to make things happen, because he's going to let people go out and make plays," he said. Middle linebacker Eric Hill, the team's leading tackler the last two seasons, said he wasn't happy about more rebuilding.

"With a new coach, you get a new regime, a guy who wants to build a team around his character," he said. "To me, that puts us a few years away from winning, and I'm not getting any younger."

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WEDNESDAY'S TRANSACTIONS

AUTO RACING

■ **INDY REGENCY RACING**—Signed Hideki Noda, driver, for the Indy Lights series.

BASEBALL

■ **BALTIMORE ORIOLES**—Agreed to terms with Armando Benitez and William Percival, pitchers, and Juan Bautista, infielder, on one-year contracts.
■ **MINNESOTA TWINS**—Agreed to terms with Ron Coomer and Denny Hocking, infielders; Chris Latham and Matt Lawton, outfielders; Mike Durant, catcher; Marc Barcelo, Joe Jacobsen, Jose Parra and Brett Roberts, pitchers, to one-year contracts.
■ **NEW YORK YANKEES**—Agreed to terms with Jeff Nelson, pitcher, on a two-year contract.

NL

■ **CHICAGO CUBS**—Agreed to terms with Frank Castillo, pitcher, on a one-year contract.
■ **FLORIDA MARLINS**—Agreed to terms with Uivan Hernandez, pitcher, on a four-year contract.
■ **NEW YORK METS**—Agreed to terms with Paul Byrd, Bryan Rogers, Hector Ramirez and Robert Person, pitchers, and Alex Ochoa, outfielder, on one-year contracts and Jerry Browne, infielder-outfielder, on a minor-league contract.

BASKETBALL

NBA

■ **ORLANDO MAGIC**—Activated Darrell Armstrong, guard, from the injured list. Placed David Vaughn, forward, on the injured list.

FOOTBALL

NFL

■ **ARIZONA CARDINALS**—Named Vince Tobin coach.
■ **ST. LOUIS RAMS**—Named George Warhop co-offensive line coach.
■ **ARENA FOOTBALL LEAGUE**
■ **ARIZONA FOOTBLERS**—Placed Geoff Bender, quarterback, on the exempt list.
■ **CONNECTICUT COYOTES**—Signed Larry Ray Willis, offensive specialist; Terrence Jones, quarterback; and Curtis Cotton, wide receiver-defensive back.
■ **MILWAUKEE MUSTANGS**—Signed Jody Reineohr and Garrett Greedy, full-back-linebackers.

HOCKEY

NHL

■ **CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS**—Assigned Patrick Poulin, left wing, to Indianapolis of the IHL.
■ **LOS ANGELES KINGS**—Recalled Steve Larouche, center, and Dan Bylsma, right wing, from Phoenix of the IHL.
■ **NEW YORK ISLANDERS**—Recalled Bob Halkidis, defenseman, from Utah of the IHL.
■ **WINNIPEG JETS**—Traded Teemu Selanne, right wing; the rights to Marc

Chouinard, center; and their 1996 fourth-round draft pick to the Anaheim Mighty Ducks for Oleg Tverdokhovsky, defenseman; Chad Kilger, center; and a 1996 third-round draft pick.

INTERNATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE

■ **CHICAGO WOLVES**—Signed Doug Crossman, defenseman.

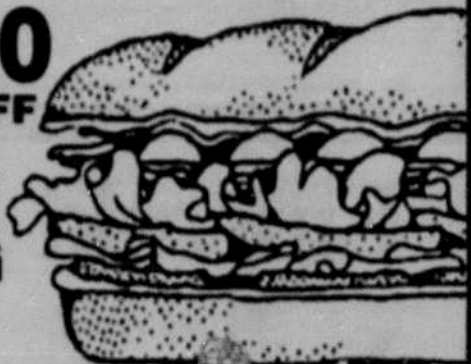
COLLEGE

■ **AMERICAN FOOTBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION**—Elected Arizona football coach Dick Tomey, Tennessee football coach Phil Fulmer, Washington and Jefferson football coach John Luckhardt, and Bowling Green football coach Gary Blackney to the board of trustees. Named Kirk Koll chairman of the assistant coaches committee.
■ **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE DIRECTORS OF ATHLETICS**—Named Bob Vecchione associate executive director.
■ **CALIFORNIA, PA.**—Announced the retirement of Chuck Gismond, baseball coach, at the end of the season.
■ **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**—Fired Charlie Parker, men's basketball coach. Named Henry Bibby interim men's basketball coach.
■ **WASHINGTON**—Announced Scott Lineham, wide receivers coach, will take on the additional duties as offensive coordinator and Bill Diederick, offensive coordinator, will continue as quarterback coach.

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