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Jerry R. Williams hired as assistant coach for Philadelphia Eagles Professional Football Club

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MISSOULA, Montana, Feb. 20---The Philadelphia Eagles Professional Football Club today announced that Jerry R. Williams, Montana University's head football coach, has been hired as an assistant coach.

Williams, who set several professional football records while playing for the Eagles, had served as player-coach for the Philadelphia team prior to accepting the head coaching job at Montana in 1955.

"I hate to leave Montana," Williams declared after making his decision to join the Eagles. "We have a very good chance for a successful season next fall."

"It took me three years to get a couple of quarterbacks that could really pass. Now that I have them, it's going to be tough to leave. But this position with the Eagles is just too good to pass up," he added.

Montana athletic director George (Jiggs) Dahlberg said that Montana is losing a very able coach. "We, of course, hate to see Jerry leave, but we certainly wouldn't stand in the way of his advancement."

Dahlberg said that Williams was one of the most talented mentors to hold the head coaching job at Montana. "I wouldn't be a bit surprised that, in a few years, we shall be able to point with pride to the fact that Jerry got his start with the Grizzlies---just like we now do with Bernie Bierman."

Bierman was head coach at Montana for three years---1919-21---before going on to gridiron glory as head coach of the Golden Gophers of Minnesota.

Dahlberg said that the faculty athletic board could do nothing about selecting a replacement until President Carl McFarland returned to the MSU Campus March 2.

"The president was notified of Williams' resignation just before he departed for Washington, D. C., Sunday and the athletic board was instructed to postpone any action on a replacement until he returned," Dahlberg said.

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Williams said that whoever gets the MSU head coaching job will be stepping into a "good deal."

"A veteran line, anchored by Stan Renning, two passers like Earl Keeley and Jim Onasmith, and a receiver like Larry Myers, will give the new coach a tremendous potential with which to work," he asserted.

While he was laying plans for the 1958 football season at Montana, Williams declared that he would shoot for three goals: A possible Skyline football championship; a national passing championship for the team; and national passing and receiving leadership for Keeley and Myers.

"Those goals still are within Montana's grasp," Williams said, "regardless of who takes over as head coach."

Williams, a 1949 Washington State College graduate, last fall finished his third season as Montana University's 22nd football coach in 57 years of gridiron history. The 33-year-old, former professional grid star guided the Grizzlies to a 6-29 won-loss record in those three years. His teams posted a 5-17 mark in Skyline play.

Despite the three lean years, material and win-wise, Williams still produced two nationally-ranked passers---Norm Kampschror in 1955 and Earl Keeley in 1957---two nationally-ranked receivers---Terry Hurley in 1955 and Larry Myers in 1957---and an All-American guard in Stan Renning.

Williams played both defense and offense as a halfback with the Los Angeles Rams from 1949 through 1952. He was traded to the Eagles after the '52 season and played with that team for two years.

He was an All-Pacific Coast Conference halfback with WSC in 1948. He dominated Cougar individual statistics and set a league record for yardage on kickoff returns. Williams set a National Football League record of 99 yards with the return of an attempted field goal against the Green Bay Packers, while on defense for the World Champion L. A. Rams in 1951.

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In 1954 he figured in the longest touchdown via an aerial when he took a pass from Eagle quarterback Adrian Burk and went 84 yards to score. He ranked fourth in the league for punt returns in 1954 and was one of the leading pass receivers among the backs.

Williams was a flying officer during World War II. He played in the East-West Shrine game and the College All-Star game of 1949.

Williams was born and raised in Spokane and participated in football, basketball, baseball and track at North Central High School, 1938-42.

He married the former Marion Munro, also of Spokane, and they have four children, Jerry Bill, 5; Rebecca Sue, 4; Todd David, 2; and Julie Ann, born in Missoula, Monday, Feb. 17.

Williams leaves two assistants at Montana---Lauri Niemi, a former WSC teammate, and Robert Zimny. Neither would comment on whether they were interested in the now-vacant head coaching job.

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