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For NFL Mascots, Meaner Is Better

By Darren Everson

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To the Detroit Lions and all the other lousy National Football League teams who can't even dream of making it to the Super Bowl: There may be a pretty simple reason for your futility. Your mascots don't look angry enough. In 2005, the once-hapless Arizona Cardinals tweaked the bird on their official logo (some had likened it to a parakeet) to give it a sharper, meaner frown. "The old bird kind of had a questionable—'Do I want to eat that?'" then-coach Dennis Green said. "This bird looks like he wants to eat it." Four years later, look where they are now: headed to Super Bowl XLIII, the franchise's first-ever Super Bowl appearance. They aren't the only NFL team to morph into champions shortly after a mascot makeover:

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Seattle Seahawks: After darkening its colors in 2002 and giving its sad-sack bird logo a more malevolent scowl, the team appeared in the playoffs five straight seasons starting in 2003 and its first Super Bowl in 2006.

Denver Broncos: One month after a bitter 1997 home playoff loss, the Broncos, who'd lost four Super Bowls by then, introduced their intimidating new horse-head logo. They won back-to-back Super Bowls the next two seasons.

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