

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

For NFL Mascots, Meaner Is Better

By Darren Everson

The Wall Street Journal,
Sports Section W5
Friday, January 23, 2009

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:

Tampa Bay Buccaneers:

Has there ever been a less menacing logo than Bucco Bruce? After dumping the dashing pirate in 1997 for a skull and crossed swords, the team won its first five games—and its first Super Bowl in 2003.

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's lost four Super Bowls by then, introduced their intimidating new horse-head logo. They won back-to-back Super Bowls the next two seasons.

New England Patriots:

Just a few years after ditching their old cartoonish minuteman logo in 1993, the Pats reached their first Super Bowl in 11 years. Then it was off to the races. The new, sterner soldier has helped them win three Super Bowls since 2002.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. Friday, January 23, 2009 WS

SPORTS

EXTRA POINTS

For NFL Mascots, Meaner Is Better

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 look—'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:
—Darren Everson

OLD  **NEW** 

OLD  **NEW** 

Tampa Bay Buccaneers: Has there ever been a less menacing logo than Bucco Bruce? After dumping the dashing pirate in 1997 for a skull and crossed swords, the team won its first five games—and its first Super Bowl in 2003.

Seattle Seahawks: After darkening its colors in 2002 and giving its sad-sack bird 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's lost four Super Bowls by then, introduced their intimidating new horse-head logo. They won back-to-back Super Bowls the next two seasons.

OLD  **NEW** 

New England Patriots: Just a few years after ditching their old cartoonish minuteman logo in 1993, the Pats reached their first Super Bowl in 11 years. Then it was off to the races. The new, sterner soldier has helped them win three Super Bowls since 2002.

OLD  **NEW** 

New England Patriots: Just a few years after ditching their old cartoonish minuteman logo in 1993, the Pats reached their first Super Bowl in 11 years. Then it was off to the races. The new, sterner soldier has helped them win three Super Bowls since 2002.