



RYAN NIELSEN

SENIOR DEFENSIVE ASSISTANT

FIRST-AND-10

RYAN NIELSEN joins the Bills in 2025 as a senior defensive assistant. Nielsen arrives in Buffalo after spending the 2024 season as the defensive coordinator for the Jacksonville Jaguars. He brings to the Bills more than 20 years of coaching experience, including eight seasons in the NFL.

COACHING SHOUTOUTS

2024: (Jacksonville Jaguars)

- Was the Jaguars defensive coordinator during the 2024 season. Under Nielsen's guidance, Josh Hines-Alen and Tramon Walker totaled 67 and 60 quarterback pressures respectively, making the Jaguars the only team in the NFL in 2024 with two pass rushers with over 60 quarterback pressures per Next Gen Stats.

2023: (Atlanta Falcons)

- Spent the 2023 season with the Atlanta Falcons as defensive coordinator, where the defense finished the regular season tied for the second-most forced fumbles in the NFL (18). Under his lead, the Falcons ended the regular season as the third Falcons unit since 2000 to record 40-plus sacks in a season.

2017-22: (New Orleans Saints)

- In his tenure in New Orleans, the Saints did not allow a 100-yard rusher in an NFL-record 55 regular-season and postseason games between 2017 and 2020 and finished in the top four in run defense in four of the past five seasons.
- Served as the co-defensive coordinator and defensive line coach in 2022.
- During his six seasons (2017-22) working with New Orleans' defensive line, Cameron Jordan was named to six Pro Bowls, earned second-team All-Pro honors twice and became the first Saints defensive lineman to earn first-team All-Pro honors in franchise history. Also worked with two-time Pro Bowl defensive end Trey Hendrickson, who had a career season in 2020 with New Orleans. Hendrickson finished with 25 total tackles, 13.5 sacks and 25 quarterback hits under his tutelage in 2020.

COACHING SHOUTOUTS

2013-16: (North Carolina State)

- Served as the defensive line/recruiting coordinator/run game coordinator at North Carolina State for four seasons (2013-16). Was a Broyles Award candidate in 2015 and 2016, given annually to college football's top assistant coach. In 2016, the Wolfpack ranked 8th in the nation in rushing defense and led the ACC, limiting opponents to 108.6 rushing YPG — the school's best mark since 2004.

2011-12: (Northern Illinois)

- Coached at Northern Illinois from 2011-12, including the 2012 season where he was the co-defensive coordinator/defensive line/recruiting coordinator.

2010: (Tennessee-Martin)

- Serving as the defensive line/special teams coach at Tennessee-Martin in 2010, the Skyhawks led the Ohio Valley Conference in total defense.

2008-09: (Central Connecticut State)

- Was the defensive coordinator and coached the defensive line/linebackers at Central Connecticut State. Won the Northeast Conference title in 2009.

2005-07: (Mississippi)

- Was the defensive line coach at the University of Mississippi. Mississippi defensive linemen led the SEC in sacks twice during his three-year stint.

2004: (Idaho)

- Earned his first full-time coaching opportunity as Idaho's defensive line coach.

PERSONAL/PLAYING CAREER

- Got his start in coaching as a volunteer assistant at his alma mater, the University of Southern California in 2002. Nielsen, a Simi Valley, Calif. native who started 30 games at defensive tackle at USC from 1998-2001, finished his college career with 107 career tackles and was voted the team's Defensive Lineman of the Year in 1999. Graduated with a bachelor's degree in public policy in 2002 and went to training camp with the Philadelphia Eagles. He played for the Arena Football League's Los Angeles Avengers in 2004.