



# MATTHEW HARPER

## ASSISTANT SPECIAL TEAMS

**6TH YEAR IN NFL • 6TH IN PHILADELPHIA**  
**COLLEGE: OREGON**



After serving as the Eagles' assistant defensive backs coach in 2015, Matthew Harper returned as the team's assistant special teams coach in 2016, a position he held from 2013-14.

In 2016, the Eagles ranked second in the NFL with a franchise record 27.314 kickoff return average, led the league with five kickoff returns of 50-plus yards, and were the only team to record multiple kickoff returns for TDs (two). Additionally, the Eagles finished second in the NFL in punt return average (12.9). In his first full season as the Eagles kicker, Caleb Sturgis connected on a career-high 35 field goals, marking the most in single-season franchise history.

In his first year as the team's assistant defensive backs coach, Harper was part of a staff that went on to coach the 10th-ranked defense in terms of total takeaways (26) and interceptions (15). A key contributor on the defensive side of the ball was S Malcolm Jenkins, who earned his first trip to the Pro Bowl in 2015 after posting career and team highs in tackles (120), passes defended (15) and forced fumbles (three). Fellow defensive back Walter Thurmond, who transitioned from cornerback to safety during the 2015 offseason, started all 16 games and set career highs in tackles (76), interceptions (three), sacks (two) and forced fumbles (two).

Under the direction of Harper and special teams coordinator Dave Fipp in 2014, the Eagles special teams unit was instrumental to the team's success, accounting for a franchise-best and NFL-leading seven touchdowns (three blocked punt returns, two kickoff returns and two punt returns) and a league-best six blocked kicks. The Eagles special teams unit was rated as the best in the league by *The Dallas Morning News* columnist Rick Gosselin in his annual special teams rankings.

In 2014, PR Darren Sproles earned All-Pro and Pro Bowl honors for the first time in his career after leading the NFL in punt return average (13.0), punt return yards (506 - 101 yards ahead of the next closest returner) and punt returns for touchdowns (two). Acquired from the Colts late in training camp, rookie K Cody Parkey turned in one of the best kicking seasons in Eagles history en route to Pro Bowl honors. Parkey (150 points) broke Kevin Butler's NFL rookie record and the Eagles franchise record for points scored in a single season while finishing second in the league in scoring. LS Jon Dorenbos also garnered Pro Bowl honors for the second time in his career.

Additionally, with two 100+ yard kickoff returns for touchdowns by RB Chris Polk and WR Josh Huff, the Eagles became the first team since the 1970 Green Bay Packers to have two 100+ yard kickoff returns by different returners in a season.

### COACHING TIMELINE

2016-	Philadelphia Eagles	Assistant Special Teams
2015	Philadelphia Eagles	Assistant Defensive Backs
2013-14	Philadelphia Eagles	Assistant Special Teams
2012	Oregon	Graduate Assistant
2009-11	Oregon	Coaching Intern
2008	City College of San Francisco	Safeties

In 2013, the Eagles special teams units featured the stellar play of P Donnie Jones, who set team records in net punting average (40.5), single-game net punting average (50.7) and punts inside the 20 (33). Jones became only the fourth punter to earn NFC Special Teams Player of the Week honors in consecutive games in a single season.

Harper played collegiately at Oregon, where he recorded 98 tackles, three interceptions, two sacks, two tackles for a loss, two forced fumbles and 12 passes defended during his senior campaign in 2007. He appeared primarily on special teams during his junior season, notching 16 tackles and two pass breakups in limited action.

Prior to transferring to Oregon, Harper garnered first-team All-NorCal Conference and honorable mention All-America honors at the City College of San Francisco after collaring 95 tackles and recording a team-high seven interceptions in 2005. Harper also began his coaching career at the City College of San Francisco, where he tutored the safeties in 2008.

The Union City, CA, native attended Logan High School, earning first-team all-league honors as a senior. Born on 11/26/84 in Secaucus, NJ, Harper is the son of two-time Nebraska All-America defensive end and 11-year NFL veteran Willie Harper. Harper is one of nine children (six brothers and two sisters) of Willie and Roxane Harper.

