



Throwback Thursday: Redskins QB In Awe Of Two Of The Team's Legends

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*For today's
Throwback
Thursday
moment
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SUBWAY® restaurants, Redskins.com looks back at former Redskins quarterback Doug Williams' recollections of two of Washington's greatest players.

We've all experienced jaw-dropping moments. Doug Williams had one when he entered Redskin Park for the first time in August 1986.

"One of my biggest moments was walking into the building and seeing Bobby Mitchell and Charley Taylor," said Williams, now the Redskins' personnel executive. "Because I followed the Redskins, I knew who Bobby Mitchell was, I knew who Charley Taylor was. When I came in the building, I went to Bobby Mitchell's office. I'm sitting in my first team meeting, and I looked over and said, 'Wow, Charley Taylor's in this room.' Being in the same building with those guys was huge."



When Williams became a Redskin, Mitchell was the team's assistant general manager and Taylor the receivers coach. They were both members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, Williams entering in 1983 and Taylor in 1984. The team's new quarterback was in awe.

"No question about that," he said. "You try to keep your feelings in. If I was not a player and just a fan, you would have had to drag me out of that building. But being a player, you want to be a little macho. You don't want them to know how you feel about them. At the end of the day, both of those guys new how I felt about them."

Mitchell, a running back-turned-receiver, played in D.C. from 1962 to 1968, producing statistics that were staggering by the time he retired and prompting the Hall of Fame to write: "Few offensive stars ever found more ways to inflict telling damage on a National

Football League opponent than Bobby Mitchell." He was one of quarterback Sonny Jurgensen's favorite receiving targets during the team's offensive explosion of the 1960s.

So was Taylor, who also transitioned from running back to receiver. He played his entire 14-year career (1964-77) in the nation's capital, hauling in 649 passes and once sitting No. 1 in the NFL record books. At 6-3, 215 pounds, he was nearly unstoppable running with the ball after making catches.

Williams felt a special affinity for Mitchell, one of the first black players to sign with the Redskins once the team integrated its roster after the 1961 season. Mitchell, who played his first four seasons in Cleveland, had been acquired in a trade with the Browns in exchange for a rookie, Heisman Trophy-winning running back Ernie Davis.

"I went to Bobby's office every day, and even to this day when I see Bobby I hug him because of what he meant to this city, what he meant to this franchise," Williams said. "We're talking history here. I don't know if Bobby Mitchell gets as much credit as he deserves, but Bobby Mitchell's an iconic figure to me and for this organization. He's a Hall of Famer, but it was what he stood for at the time he came here. How told me how tough it was for him when he became a Redskin."

Williams added: "When I see Bobby Mitchell, my heart goes out to him. I'm from Louisiana, he's from Arkansas. He tells me stories that he came to my alma mater, Grambling, to play in college. He says he left Grambling because when he looked out there, he saw a bunch of Bobby Mitchells. He didn't think he had a chance. So he went to play at Illinois. We share stories. It's been good."

Like Mitchell, Williams also broke racial barriers. In his second season with the Redskins, 1987, the 6-4, 220-pounder became the first black quarterback to lead his team to a Super Bowl victory, in the Redskins' 42-10 demolition of the Broncos in Super Bowl XXII.

It almost didn't happen. After spending the 1986 season as a reserve to starter Jay Schroeder, Williams was nearly traded to the Raiders right before the 1987 campaign. But Redskins coach Joe Gibbs, an offensive assistant while Williams played for Tampa Bay earlier in his career, had a premonition.

"Joe Gibbs told me he decided not to make the trade because he had a feeling I was going to be more important to (the Redskins) than I was to the Raiders," Williams said. "He actually told me in his office that we were going to find a way to win a championship with me being a part of the team. I didn't see it at the time because I was a little angry, and I didn't care. I wasn't looking that far."

Williams rotated in and out of the lineup in 1987, before replacing Schroeder in the season-finale at Minnesota and steering the Redskins to victory. He then became the undisputed starter and exhibited clutch performances in playoff wins over the Bears and Vikings.

The latter victory sent the Redskins to Super Bowl XXII, where Williams orchestrated one of the greatest feats in NFL championship-game history. He threw for a Super Bowl-record 340 yards and four touchdowns to earn MVP honors. In the second quarter, he led one of the most breathtaking displays of offensive firepower in Super Bowl history when the Redskins erupted for 35 points and 356 yards in less than six minutes.

Williams played two more years in D.C. and retired after the 1989 season to cap his memorable nine-year career. Today, while working hard to determine the best personnel moves for the Redskins, he reminisces about how honored he was being in the company of Bobby Mitchell and Charley Taylor.



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Throwback Thursday: Doug Williams



"I knew what being a Redskin was all about at that time because I knew how those guys played," said Williams, one of the Redskins' 80 greatest players. "I think what the Redskins were for me was a historical moment, from the fans that made RFK Stadium rock to the players I was able to sit in the room with."

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