

# NFL sued for racial discrimination by former Dolphins coach Brian Flores

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Brian Flores, fired last month as head coach of the Miami Dolphins, has sued the National Football League and each of its franchises for racial discrimination.

**Why it matters:** The NFL for decades has been criticized for its paucity of Black coaches, and now Flores plans to hold the league's feet to the legal fire.

**What the lawsuit says:** "Mr. Flores has determined that the only way to effectuate real change is through the Courts, where the NFL's conduct can be judged by a jury of Mr. Flores' peers. A judgment that is long overdue."

- The suit is filed as a proposed class action.
- Flores claims that he was informed by New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick that the New York Giants head coaching job had gone to someone else, three days before Flores was scheduled to interview for the position. He calls the Giants interview process a "sham" through which he was "humiliated."
- Flores also alleges that before getting the Dolphins job, he interviewed with the Denver Broncos — a meeting for which then-general manager John Elway was an hour late and appeared to be hungover.
- Flores claims in the suit that he was only interviewed for that job because of the Rooney Rule, an NFL policy requiring teams to interview minority candidates for head coaching jobs; and that the Broncos never considered him a legitimate candidate for the job.

**By the numbers:** There is currently only one black head coach in the NFL, although there still are a few open positions. Flores' law firm estimates that around 70% of NFL players are black.

- Flores was a former defensive coordinator with the Patriots who compiled a 24-25 record in three seasons leading the Dolphins. His firing was widely viewed as a surprise.
- There have been reports that he interviewed earlier this week to be head coach of the Houston Texans and that he may also be interviewing for the New Orleans Saints job. It is unclear how this lawsuit will impact those processes.

**Flores is asking**, among other things, for an increase in the hiring influence of Black individuals, more transparency in hiring and firing decisions and an effort to help source Black investors to take majority ownership stakes in NFL teams.