



Darren Rizzi enters his 10th season as a member of the Dolphins' coaching staff, his eighth as special teams coordinator and second as associate head coach. He joined the Dolphins as assistant special teams coach in 2009.

Since becoming special teams coordinator in 2011, his units are second in the NFL with 20 blocked kicks. During his Dolphins tenure, three special teams players (long snapper John Denney [twice], punter Brandon Fields and kicker Dan Carpenter) have been named to the Pro Bowl. Rizzi has coached four players to the NFL All-Rookie team in the past five years. Punter Matt Darr earned All-Rookie honors in 2015, kick returner Jarvis Landry in 2014 and kicker Caleb Sturgis and special-teamer Don Jones in 2013.

Rizzi's units have ranked in the top half of Rick Gosselin's annual Dallas Morning News Special Teams rankings in all seven years that he has served as the Dolphins' special teams coordinator.

In 2017, the Dolphins were tied for second in the NFL with three blocked kicks – two field goals and one punt. Kicker Cody Parkey tied a team field goal percentage record by converting 21-of-23 attempts (91.3 pct.), including a 54-yard game-winner in the season opener at L.A. Chargers (9/17), the longest game-winner in team history. Parkey also successfully converted four inside kicks, the most in NFL history since records date back to 1997. Miami's kickoff coverage unit was the best in the NFL, forcing opponents to start on average at their own 23-yard line after kickoffs. The team graded out at No. 11 in Gosselin's rankings and Pro Football Focus ranked the team's special teams No. 6 in the NFL. Michael Thomas was named PFF's Special Teamer of the Year and led the Dolphins with 11 special teams tackles.

Miami was seventh in Gosselin's rankings in 2016 and led the NFL in opponent gross punting average (41.8 yards per punt) and tied for the league lead with four blocked kicks. Kicker Andrew Franks made the first two game-winning kicks of his career and drilled an important 55-yard field goal at Buffalo (12/24) as the field goal unit was rushing onto the field to tie the game and send it to overtime. The eventual Dolphins win went on to solidify the team's first playoff berth since 2008. Rookie punt returner Jakeem Grant and kickoff returner Kenyan Drake each had touchdown returns, becoming the second Dolphins rookie tandem and fourth NFL rookie duo to return a punt and kickoff for a touchdown in the same season. Thomas tied for the NFL lead in special teams tackles (19) and Mike Hull was third (18). Walt Aikens scored the first 2-point defensive conversion in team history after he returned a blocked PAT for two points vs. Arizona (12/11). The team finished in the top 10 in several additional special teams units including opponents starting field position following a kickoff (10th/24.4 yard line), own starting field position following a kickoff (8th/25.3 yard line) and opponent net punting average (3rd/37.4 yards per punt).

The Dolphins were No. 15 in Gosselin's rankings in 2015. Landry earned AFC Special Teams Player of the Week honors for his Week 1 performance at Washington where he returned a punt 69 yards for a touchdown in the win. Landry was fourth in the league with 356 punt return yards. Darr posted the fourth-best single-season punting average (47.6) in team history and earned NFL All-Rookie team honors as his average ranked third in the league. Franks was 13-for-16 in field goal attempts as a rookie. The Dolphins ranked in the top 10 in five special teams categories.

In 2014, Rizzi guided a special teams unit that set the franchise record with three blocked punts in a season. They also added two blocked field goals, giving Miami five blocked kicks on the year, the most since the team blocked seven in 1977. Explosive plays weren't limited to the block units as Jarvis Landry won AFC Special Teams Player of the Month for October when he returned five kickoffs for 178 yards (35.6), with a long of 54 yards. The 35.6 average kickoff return was the second-highest in the NFL in October and was the highest October average in franchise history. Landry finished the season with a 28.1 kick return average, the fourth-highest in the NFL and tops among rookies.

In 2013, for the third-consecutive season, the Dolphins' special teams were rated among the top eight units in the NFL based on the annual Dallas Morning News Special Teams rankings. Miami was one of three teams to remain in the top 10 (along with Baltimore and Seattle) in both the 2013 and 2012 rankings. Additionally, from 2011-13, only Miami and Seattle were ranked by the Dallas Morning News in the top 10.

Rizzi's 2013 special teams units were highlighted by the play of Fields, who earned his first Pro Bowl berth. Fields ranked second in the NFL in punt average (48.8 yards per punt), second in net average (42.4, which was

eighth-best in NFL history at the time), tied for third with 33 punts inside the 20-yard line and also recorded the third-longest punt (74 yards) during the season. Fields is one of only two Dolphins punters to be selected to the Pro Bowl, joining Reggie Roby (1984, 1989).

The 2012 campaign built off a strong 2011 season for Rizzi and the Dolphins special teams. Gosselin ranked Miami as one of the top five special teams units in the NFL for the second consecutive year, making the Dolphins the only team in the NFL to rank in the top five during both the 2012 and 2011 seasons, following a second place finish in '11. Fields continued to establish himself as one of the most productive punters in NFL history, leading the NFL with a 50.2 average, while moving into first place in team history for highest-career punting average (46.4), highest-career net punting average (38.7) and second place in NFL history for highest-career punting average (46.4). Newcomer Marcus Thigpen became the first player in team history to return a kickoff (96 yards at Buffalo on November 5, 2012) and a punt (72 yards at Houston on September 9, 2012) for touchdowns in the same season. Thigpen also stood alone as the only player in the NFL to rank in the top five in kickoff return average (27.4) and punt return average (12.2) in 2012. Additionally, Miami became the first NFL team in the last 20 years to block a field goal, block a punt and recover their own onside kick in the same game when the unit accomplished that feat at the New York Jets on October 28, 2012.

Rizzi led an impressive 2011 season by the Dolphins special teams. After he took over the special teams in Week 5, the Dolphins improved in almost every major statistical special teams category, including net and gross punt average, punt and kick return average, average drive start and opponent's gross and net punt average. The units showed the biggest improvement of any NFL special teams unit in the NFL from 2010 to 2011 according to the annual special teams report compiled by Gosselin. The improvement saw the Dolphins jump from their 2010 ranking of 24th in the NFL to second in 2011. The 22-place advancement was aided by Carpenter's 13 of 16 in field goals from 40 yards and beyond and Fields' net punting average of 41.1 yards, finishing just behind the special teams units of the San Francisco 49ers.

Rizzi joined the Dolphins with four years of experience as a collegiate head coach, including the 2008 season at the University of Rhode Island. Prior to taking over the program at URI, Rizzi was an assistant at Rutgers for the previous six seasons (2002-07), where he headed up the Scarlet Knights' special teams unit. He also tutored the team's running backs his first three years there and the linebackers for his final three. In addition, he held the title of assistant head coach from 2004-06 and associate head coach in 2007. In Rizzi's six years at Rutgers, he coached three players who earned first-team All-Big East honors in special teams including kick returner Nate Jones (2002), kick/punt returner Willie Foster (2005) and punter Joe Radigan (2006). Jones also was named the conference's co-Special Teams Player of the Year in 2002 while Foster was the Big East Special Teams Player of the Year in 2005.

Before his stint at Rutgers, Rizzi was the head coach at the University of New Haven, where he guided the Chargers to a three-year record of 15-14 from 1999-2001. Rizzi was the special teams and linebackers coach at Northeastern University in 1998. He coached at New Haven from 1994-97, where he was UNH's defensive coordinator in his final year there, after overseeing the special teams and defensive line his first three. Rizzi began his coaching career as a graduate assistant at Colgate in 1993.

Rizzi played tight end at Rhode Island, where he first walked on in 1988. He went on to tally 160 receptions for 2,426 yards (15.2 avg.) and 15 touchdowns in his collegiate career and was a consensus All-American in 1992. Following his time at Rhode Island, Rizzi was signed as a free agent by the Philadelphia Eagles prior to beginning his coaching career.

A native of Hillsdale, New Jersey and a graduate of Bergen (N.J.) Catholic High School, Rizzi earned a degree in speech communications from URI in 1992. During the spring of 2013, Rizzi was inducted into the Bergen Catholic High School Hall of Fame. A two-sport high school star, he concluded his prep football career with 69 receptions, a school record which stood for 22 years, while also excelling as an All-League outfielder for the baseball team.

He and his wife, Tracey, have two daughters, Mackenzie and Alexandra, and three sons, Christian, Casey and Cameron.

DARREN RIZZI'S COACHING CAREER		
1993	Colgate	Graduate Assistant
1994-97	New Haven	Special Teams/Defensive Line Coach (1994-96) Defensive Coordinator (1997)
1998	Northeastern	Special Teams/Linebackers Coach
1999-2001	New Haven	Head Coach
2002-07	Rutgers	Special Teams/Running Backs Coach (2002-03) Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator/Running Backs Coach (2004) Linebackers/Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams (2005-06) Outside Linebackers/Special Teams/Associate Head Coach (2007)
2008	Rhode Island	Head Coach
2009-present	Miami Dolphins	Assistant Special Teams Coach (2009) Special Teams Coach (2010) Special Teams Coordinator (2011-15) Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator (2015-16) Associate Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator (2017-)