Marty Hurney, the Panthers' general manager since 2002, has been relieved of his duties, Carolina Panthers Owner/Founder Jerry Richardson

announced Monday.

"This was an extremely difficult decision," Richardson said in a statement. "Marty made every effort to bring success to the Panthers and took the team to a Super Bowl and two NFC championship games. Unfortunately, we have not enjoyed the success we hoped for in recent years. I have the greatest respect and admiration for Marty and will always appreciate the way he tirelessly served the organization."

Hurney was general manager when the Panthers went to Super Bowl XXXVIII and NFC Championship games following the 2003 and 2005 seasons as well as winning the NFC South division in 2008.

"I am very fortunate to have been a part of one of the best organizations in the NFL since 1998," Hurney said in a statement. "As general manager I will always regret not helping us win the Super Bowl or having back-to-back winning seasons. I hope this change starts accomplishing the direction to those goals.

"I understand this decision by Mr. Richardson and will always have an extremely close relationship with him. I consider him the best owner in the NFL. I am responsible for everybody in coaching, the players, the scouts and everybody in football operations. After six weeks, we are 1-5 coming off a 6-10 season."

The team announced the decision the morning after the Panthers lost their fourth consecutive game, falling 19-14 to the Dallas Cowboys at Bank of America Stadium. Moments after the game, Hurney made some telling comments during his segment on the Carolina Panthers postgame radio show.

"I'm not an excuse guy. This is a bottom-line business," Hurney said. "I'm the one that's responsible for every player in that locker room, every coach, every scout that we have. It falls on me. There are no excuses in this business, there's final scores. Right now we are 1-5, and I'm responsible for that."

Hurney joined the Panthers in 1998 from the San Diego Chargers and managed the salary cap under head coaches Dom Capers and George Seifert. He was named general manager on Feb. 22, 2002, less than a month after the Panthers hired John Fox as head coach.

From 2002-09, Carolina compiled the seventh-best record in the NFL and was one of just four teams not to suffer double-digits losses in a season during that stretch. The Panthers struggled through a 2-14 campaign in 2010, however, and soon embarked on a rebuilding process that featured a new coaching staff as well as quarterback Cam Newton as the first overall pick in the 2010 draft.

The Panthers finished 6-10 last season with Newton earning NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year honors and won four of their last six games to set the stage for what everyone believed could be a breakout 2012 season.

That hadn't been the case through six games, prompting Richardson to make a change.

"There's just so many emotions. Anger. Frustration," Hurney said in the postgame radio show. "You start blaming yourself for everything. We are a better football team than 1-5. It can't be like

that. The organization, our fans, Mr. Richardson deserve better."

Photo Courtesy: Marty Hurney, Carolina Panthers