

# Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

Friday, April 25, 2025  
Seattle, Washington, USA

**John Schneider**

**Mike Macdonald**

Weekday Press Conference



JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, exciting day. It's a cool take in Seahawk history, really is. Started out outstanding with Nick. We waited on Arroyo. Adding Jalen right there at the end was a big deal for us. Really excited about it.

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, talk about all three guys, having just a consensus, a plan for them, a vision for them joining our team. All three really exciting in their own right.

Yeah, it's a great day.

## Q. What is it about this year, this player, this round?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Well, I mean, give Ryan Florence and Aaron Hines a ton of credit. Those guys did a ton of work on him. It's really hard on those guys to be able to see 22 miles an hour, whatever he ran around the field. No, he's an incredible athlete. Very, very fast. I think literally it's 21.2, something like that, his GPS speed.

Hard worker. He's a William Campbell Award, Academic Heisman Award winner. Has had four different offensive coordinators. Works his tail off. Mom, former Navy. Dad is Marine.

He came in on a visit, had a really great visit. He was in a spot and he just kept coming. He was there by himself.

## Q. (No microphone.)

JOHN SCHNEIDER: No, I don't think he was actually, no. But it was damn close. He's a unique, special, special kid, special athlete, special kid, special young man, athlete. We're going to develop him as a quarterback. With that, he's going to add something special as we go.

## Q. (No microphone.)

MIKE MACDONALD: You got to look at it through the lens of things we talked about when we first hired Klint. One of

the reasons we hired him was to incorporate the whole roster and really bring out what everybody does really well.

Adding Jalen is a part of that. The ability to kind of bring the best out of all the players is really exciting. That's you it fits. We're running Klint's offense. Jalen is going to fit right in. But when he's in there, we're going to be doing the stuff he does great, just like we do when Sam is leading the charge.

Yeah, it's going to be a lot of fun.

## Q. (No microphone.)

MIKE MACDONALD: I don't think it's fair to say Taysom. Taysom is such a great player. The way they used him was more in a tight end-fullback hybrid role, sometimes taking snaps.

Jalen is a quarterback through and through. He's going to be trained to play quarterback for us. When he's in there, he's going to be playing quarterback.

But the athleticism is going to come to life when he's on the field. That's how he's going to help us.

## Q. Mike, with Nick, how much did you have Kyle Hamilton in mind?

MIKE MACDONALD: I think there's two boxes we got to check with Nick. Just kidding (smiling).

## Q. Did Kam or Kyle come into your thinking as you evaluated Nick?

MIKE MACDONALD: I think the physicality of Kam. You have such a respect for Kam. He's just a unicorn of a player, NFL history for us, Legion of Boom. He's so unique. Kyle is the same way.

I think what we found with Kyle is that the system allows for us to get multiple safeties on the field and also be in the slot kind of like with enhanced coverage responsibilities.

He can affect the game that way kind of at the second level while training at the third level. Gives us some depth at the safety room, guys that we currently love that are on the roster. To be able to affect the game early on in his career,

**ASAP** sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

too, as he starts to develop.

Same story with Nick. Coming in throughout the process, getting to know us on his visit really helped out. Buying into the vision we have for him. It's going to be really fun to work with him when he comes next week.

**Q. John, were you surprised Nick was available on day two? Somebody you considered on day one?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Another softball (smiling).

Yeah, we had him right next to Greg. Your question last night, Other people you're interested in? Yeah.

So yeah, great relationship with Chad Brinker, Tennessee. We were talking to a couple clubs there. Yeah, it worked out great. We were a little nervous that things were going to fall apart. Not sure how far he would have gone. Felt like a way. 50, 52 felt like a far distance. He wouldn't have fallen there.

Yeah, I mean, this is one of the best Combines I've ever seen. Physically he does kind of look like Kam. I think Kam would tell you he didn't test like that, but...

**Q. To move up as far as you did, does that take an extra level of conviction with a player to give up what it takes to move up that far?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Absolutely. But we felt like we added two first-round draft picks, so... When you're doing that, it's like, We're giving up a third-round pick, then you have to figure out what's third round is going to look like once everything is picked apart there.

It was just evident to Mike and myself, everybody in the room, that it was well worth it.

**Q. What did you learn about him on the 30 visit? What did you want to learn about him?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, again, we entered the equation late as coaches. Give us an opportunity to kind of see how he sees the game. Jeff Howard does a great job. Carl Scott did a great job throughout the whole process, getting him to open football-wise about how he sees it. Our vision for him started to mesh.

We had a great conversation. Ernest Jones was in my office. We sat down with Nick. I gave him a bunch of grief about South Carolina football.

Trying to get him in a setting where he can relax, get a great feel for the person. The football and the person

meshed and off we go.

**Q. May not be fair to compare to Kam, Kyle, but the Combine numbers, how do you see that manifesting the way he plays in coverage, plays downhill?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Mike probably gets tired of this, our defensive staff. The way I was raised in this business was with Ron Wolf: Why couldn't he be a corner?

He has coverage skills. Again, the Combine was one of the most impressive things we've seen, I mean, for how big and explosive he is.

All four of these guys are incredible athletes, which is awesome, because that also in turn plays into your point, transitions onto the football field. You can see it.

So yeah, I mean, Elijah, some of our coaches were like, Maybe he's an X receiver. This guy could like full route tree, super explosive. I mean, again great Senior Bowl.

**Q. With Jalen, is there kind of more patience there? Do you have a plan, more unique to him, we're going to give this really a lot of patience and not push him through?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, we don't use patience a lot around here (smiling). But, I mean, there's always going to be an urgency in how we're developing our players, how we're training them. Jalen is going to be right there with everybody else.

But yeah, I mean, Sam is going to take by far and away over 90% of our snaps this year. However Jalen deserves and earns the right to go out there, then we'll do that. If it's going to help the team, best for us to move the ball, give these defensive coordinators some headaches, which I'm really happy it's not going to be us, that's awesome.

Yeah, I don't want to put a timetable on it. It's not an immediate need for him to go out there and be taking a bunch of snaps for us initially.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I mean, we have five guys right now. These guys are all outstanding people, they're all competitors, all really smart guys. So yeah, I think it's going to be a great spot for him. A really great problem to have.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think it's a little bit of a unique



situation. But these are conversations that we've had throughout the process. Jalen has been awesome throughout that process. His agent has been awesome throughout the process.

I think we got a great plan together. You feel the alignment and the excitement about the opportunity for kind of everybody involved. That's where we're at right now, in a great situation where I feel like we can kind of move forward, get the best out of everybody and rock'n roll.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: You said that about the draft board because we added an explosive weapon while he develops as a quarterback. Which rookie quarterback is going to come in and knock it out of the park right away? It takes time.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think John alluded to it, Elijah is a unique situation, too, where this guy can run an extensive route tree. To have to account for a tight end body on the field and him also to be able to split out wide, do extra receiver type of things, bigger body that we probably have right now on our roster, just provides a ton of value. Then he's going to throw it in there as the actual tight end and be able to create some of those bigger personnel formations that we have for him. Really exciting.

**Q. John, when it comes to Elijah, he missed quite a few games. You mentioned a lot of routes for him were slip routes. How does that complicate trying to look at a player when he's missed a lot of time and maybe wasn't being utilized?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: That's exactly why he was there when we were picking at 50. I mean, otherwise, like I told you guys before, we end up beating these guys up so much throughout the process, but you have to be real about it.

He has missed time. If he hasn't missed time, the talent is like a top-15 pick, so... I mean, this guy's special.

**Q. You started by saying this is a great day in Seahawks history. What about today makes it feel that way?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It just feels like today, with adding Nick... Last night we had a lot of conversations about how we do this. I mean, we almost traded back up in to get Nick. Everybody was extremely passionate about it. If we would have come out of the draft without him, we would have been disappointed.

Now, same thing with Elijah. I mean, everybody was talking throughout the process, throughout all of our meetings. There's no way, are we going to be okay with this guy? Are we going to be able to use him? How do you add that guy?

All four, the people, the competitors, the athletes, they just feel special. I can't describe it any different than to say they feel special, like they feel different. It's a great thing, like I said last night, respecting the group of players that are here right now, to be able to add these guys in. It's outstanding.

**Q. What did you learn about Jalen when you spent some time around him?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think you feel the urgency, the passion for his vision he wants for his career, where he wants to go. He's incredibly determined. This guy is a tireless worker, highly respected by his teammates, highly intelligent. He's just really determined to become a great player and a great quarterback.

We all have a lot to learn and grow, in my career, his career, as a football team. We all see that. Just felt like it was a great opportunity to add him to the mix and be able to do it together.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: As a quarterback. I mean, quarterbacks that extend the play are incredibly difficult to defend. The worst thing in the world is you play the first play of the play perfectly on defense, you defend it. All right, sweet. We did it. Then the guy still has the ball. You got to defend the next play, sometimes a third play.

He can kill you in the first play, the second play, the third play. It's not a fun existence to live consistently. He has that ability.

**Q. In your experience in Baltimore with Lamar play into how you evaluated him in terms of what you were just talking about, the difficulty in defending that type of mobility or the ability for a quarterback to develop as a passer in the NFL?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think, yeah, is the short answer. Of course. I have so much respect for that organization obviously. Lamar obviously is a tremendous player.

But you have to respect their career trajectories as independent. We respect that. We have that vision of it. Yeah, I mean, when you add people to your organization, you want to have a vision for these people. Sometimes it's

bigger than they have for themselves. Our job is to make it come to life over time when you work together on it.

That's how we see Jalen. That's how we see all these guys. Anybody that's on our team, it's our job as coaches to have that vision for them. That's what makes it so fun.

When you see guys kind of do things that they didn't necessarily think they had the possibility of doing, now the team is coming together, now we're rocking and rolling. Man, that's the stuff right there. That's what you do it for.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Watching those guys, New Orleans last year, before they got so banged up on the offensive line, they are utilizing all their guys, shifting people around, it was really impressive. Scoring like 40 points a game.

MIKE MACDONALD: They have so many mechanisms to get guys around, change personnel groups, get the ball to guys inexpensively where they can let the guys do the things they do well.

Again, that's one of the reasons we hired Klint and the rest of those guys. Respect for how they operate, the creativity, but sticking to the foundation of the fundamentals, too, which is like a secret sauce to it. It's going to be a really fun journey to make it come to life.

**Q. John, you talked about upsets in the past. Curious how the draft has gone so far. Upsets, or gone according to what you expected?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I mean, the first round you kind of take that out. So through two and three, we've probably had four. Like, now it will start dissipating as we go.

But yeah, we talked about for the guys last night, every time a guy leaves, all the hours that went into scouting this player. We have guys coming from the free agency board, medical board. We have a grade that says this guy is a really great player, but they're not our type of person.

There are upsets, but then there's also big wins.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: How did we react?

MIKE MACDONALD: I didn't.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think you're just kind of going through. We're not listening. We're watching. We have it on, but we don't know the stories that are going on.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think it just got back to the normalcy of the draft. Last year was an anomaly, to have six guys go that high. Was it 12 picks, yeah.

**Q. (Indiscernible) make it harder for you to draft or trade?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: No, not necessarily. We could have gone back right there. I think we were the first trade of the day, right? People were definitely moving. Things really started going there. We had an opportunity to go back a little bit there, then we just decided to stay there and take Jalen.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: I can do that one.

You can ask our guys. We're going to get a maximum amount of reps. One thing that I think we take a lot of pride in here is our threes get a ton of reps. Probably speaks to, like, pre-season record over time.

We believe in development. In order to get good at football, you got to play football. If they're going to give us... A shout-out to the rest of the team out there, but they know this. If we're allotted 150 minutes, we're going to be out there for 150 minutes.

But the way you can do that is by changing the tempos, changing who's out on the field. The threes are getting a ton of reps. Plenty of opportunities before and after practice. All sorts of tools you can use to ramp up those cheap, really good reps.

As we go, what do the players need to work on to take their game to the next level. Quarterbacks are the same vision.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: He's had 33 career starts. He has played a lot of football already. It takes a minute for every rookie, right? The pro system. He's 21 and 6. He's fun, a really cool kid.

Young man? He's a grown man. He had a beard.

MIKE MACDONALD: You're just getting older (smiling).

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: With Nick? He's been a guy that our whole staff has been really excited about the whole process. How do you watch his tape and not just see the potential of what he can become?



To our coaches' credit, they really felt strongly about it. Go through the process, get aligned with the scouts, the scouts felt the same way.

It's our job to kind of make it come to life now, which is the fun process. Get in here, go to rookie football school, learn what a slot formation is, 21 personnel. Build it from the ground up. If you do it the right way, I believe it can be something special.

**Q. Jalen had 10 yards per attempt two years ago. This past season his interception rate almost doubled. Where do you view him right now from a passing standpoint, anticipation, progressions?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think similar to like I started earlier the whole group really. It's going to take a minute for all of them. Everybody is at different levels.

He's in a unique category with these quarterbacks because, again, he's like the explosive athlete, the speed. I saw him play live at Wisconsin. It's like great player, poor decision, he just scored from 60 yards or something. He just takes off and he's gone. This is a natural runner with the ball. Mike was talking about it puts so much pressure on defenses.

**Q. John, last night you said day three was probably the most fun. Did this year's day two give it a run for its money?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It did. Trading up for Nick, Elijah still being there, and Jalen still being there. I think everybody in the room... God helps those who can't help themselves. Work like it's up to you, pray like it's up to God, everything will go the way it's supposed to.

**Q. Do you feel good about the picks you got tomorrow?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think pliable is what I would say. We definitely have specific guys we'd like to add. We'll go back in there for a minute and talk about it. How do we maneuver to get to those spots to make sure we acquire those guys is the plan.

But I would say pliable.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports