

# Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

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Seattle, Washington, USA

**John Schneider**

**Mike Macdonald**

Press Conference



JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, so wow, where to start? Just big thanks to everybody, the personnel staff, the cafeteria staff, all the coaches, support from Jody and Bert and Chuck. Just the whole weekend.

Honestly, just taking it in, like, right now. The free agency stuff is going on right now, but the guys are in there just kicking butt. Yeah, just very grateful. I don't know, yeah, very proud of everybody and how everybody worked together, completing our 16th draft. It's a blessing. We're, like, very excited about what we've added to this team, the depth and the toughness, the competitors, the reliability.

Just excited for this growth-minded staff to get their hands on these guys and get ripping.

MIKE MACDONALD: Man, I've been told John is going to do this, but I think it's appropriate from my perspective, as coaches, what we're coming into, to share our appreciation for John. Our team on the personnel side of the ball, I wish you could be in that room, how we operate. It's unique to the rest of the league, in my opinion. I think we do it better than anybody else. It's our style, how we want to operate.

Everybody is included. It's just a special operation, man. Just really cool to work alongside John and see him do his thing with the rest of the crew.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Thanks, buddy. That's cool. Very nice of you.

MIKE MACDONALD: These guys, they're really good at what they do. Yeah, it was a lot of fun this weekend. Just can't wait to practice next week, rookie camp, see these guys in here, get to work.

**Q. Can you talk about the call to Mason, how that went down, who decided that was going to happen?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, Mike found out -- usually don't

fly first-round draft picks. That was Saturday. No, today is Saturday. That was Friday morning. Yeah, we flew him in. Came with his folks. Mike brought him in, introduced him to everybody.

We were talking. Said hi to him. We're picking in, like, two minutes. I'm exaggerating, it was like 10 or 15 minutes.

We basically was there. I was like, Well, kind of cool. The Rams did it last year with Jared Verse. Somebody was like, Hey, he should announce it.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: He did? That's funny. That's pretty funny (smiling).

**Q. Haven't done that before?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: No. If he's there playing center, he can do it. Nice job.

**Q. Those of us who have been around here, you're pretty enthusiastic about this whole three days. Is that accurate?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Was a little aggressive last night. I was like, Slow down, sheriff (laughter). I don't know, just these guys, the work that everybody did, I don't know, it was a cohesive process.

We worked our tails off. It may have a little bit to do with second year, with, like, the defensive staff, Mike, his group; then an offensive staff that has been through different draft processes, whether it be Denver, Minnesota or New Orleans.

**Q. As a defensive guy, did you feel left out with only two guys on your side of the ball?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Honestly, I realized that at the end, going through the free agency process and gave the defensive guys some grief.

No, they're really excited. Excited about our UDFA class as well. The offensive guys were rocking and rolling today, as they should be. We got some really good players to join the team, so...

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Yeah, all positive, man. It's great.

**Q. Is that an emphasis or just the way it happened?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: No, it was just the way it happened. We had some defensive guys. We talk about the upsets. Things started happening. It was like, Okay, we're going here, we're going here, we're going here.

Yeah, the offensive guys ended up standing out on our board.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, Bryce is a 30-30-30 guy, really athletic. Chip on his shoulder. Very smart. Projected to play inside.

Then Richman, we'll start him at tackle. The buy-in there was awesome. They were so excited. Believe it or not, in the seventh round it does get hairy like that. They were so stoked to be able to get him, yeah.

J.B. was pretty fired up.

**Q. A class that seems so excited, yet they were humble and ready to go. I would also use the word 'vibe' because it seems like every one of them had a vibe about humility and playing for the Seahawks.**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think it's a credit to the players and the competitors, then a credit to the scouts and the coaches working together to figure out what our guys are, what does a Seahawk look like as we move forward here.

Yeah, I can see this group, if you look at the group, you can see them interacting, hanging out. So yeah.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, Matt is a really awesome, awesome guy. I feel awful for him. Yeah, I couldn't imagine what he's going through. When you spend that much time away from your family, you end up having dinners and coffees and beers and all that with a lot of guys on different teams. You become very close.

We love Matt. I thought it was pretty cool we did that. I think it was Ed's idea, yeah. Ed is kind of a hard-ass, so it kind of surprised me.

**Q. Your largest draft class, 11 players. Drafted six offensive linemen the last two years, the most in the NFL. Talk about the investment you're making in that**

**position.**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Grey was standalone. Bryce was this guy that Trent and Kirk, like, loved. Very much under-the-radar kind of dude. Then we had buy-in with Mason, with the coaches and the guys that went to the school on the intelligence, the competitor, the toughness.

He started or played 2023, I think it was almost the whole season in a hairline fracture in his leg. He wanted to help them and played through it. Pretty rare these days. Used to happen all the time. Yeah, he played through it.

It's an area of need, but it always is. I can't emphasize that enough. I mean, every team in the National Football League is looking to help their offensive line. It's just an ongoing issue. We'll have these guys in competing. We'll see where it goes with this new group, with these three guys coming in, the free agents that we signed. We'll see what it looks like.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Started at the owners meeting, talking with Kevin and Rob and - Rob Brzezinski and Kwesi, just about the situation, what it looked like. Yeah, we had met with Drew down there. There was a possibility to sign Drew back. We like the quarterbacks in the draft, and we thought there was a chance that might happen.

There were several teams that were interested. Minnesota was a team that ended up pulling the trigger.

**Q. You mentioned what a Seahawk looks like. When you look at this class as a whole, is there kind of a shared identity? What are the common components you see?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Smart, tough, reliable, swaggy, athletic, speed. The GPS, I mean, we added a 275-pound fullback that runs 19 miles an hour. That's pretty cool (smiling). What does Pat say, a lot of momentum heading downhill. Pat Ward, shout-out.

**Q. You talk about the style of football you want to play. Fullback, physical running back.**

MIKE MACDONALD: I'm really excited to see them out there do their thing. Yeah, I mean, I'm really excited to see our run game come to life. These guys fit what we're trying to do, how we want to do it. You have to move people, man. Got to get downhill and play north and south. That's what they're going to help us do.

I don't know. I can't wait for them to get here and teach



'em all the stuff, let's get rocking and rolling. Yeah, they're going to be a big part of what we're doing, competing with the rest of the guys we've got on our roster right now that we're really excited about. It's going to be an awesome competition.

**Q. Mike, you talked about wanting to find an A-gap player. This was a good draft to find a nose tackle. Did that A-gap by not fall?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think both are fair. If there's an opportunity for us, I think we probably would have gone for it. Not to speak for John, but...

Yeah, we still got a long time before we play. There's hopefully going to be some more opportunities as we unfold there.

**Q. Had you do you see Rylie in the D-line? How is he coming back from injury?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Excited. He's doing great. We flew him in. He was able to spend time with Dr. Ed. He was pleased with where he's going. Post Combine. Yeah, Ed was able to have another exam, felt good about it.

He's doing great with his rehab. We're hopeful that, like, maybe later season he's going to be a viable candidate to add to our group.

He's a really good player. If we wouldn't have drafted him, I'm not sure if A.D. would have showed up for work on Monday.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, he's got position flexibility for us, base. He can play at least two spots. Then run four down, our sub stuff. Playing inside. We'll see how he plays the big ends, like a six technique. The multiple gap things on early downs.

Going through him and meeting him and talking football with him, seeing how he approaches the game, his approach with the rush, how they orchestrate their pass-rush games, it's really impressive. Sounds like a five-, six-year vet. Compete for pass-rush snaps, two.

**Q. What did you think of the two receivers you added?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Robert Turbin texted me. He's fired up. Loves 'em both.

No, yeah, it's pretty cool. He loves those guys. It's just fun getting those from guys that you drafted in the past. He's a

huge part of our family.

Yeah, Tory is an underrated guy, in our opinion. I mean, he can return punts, the catch radius, he's like this long competitive, very fast receiver.

Yeah, Ricky, the special teams part, Jay and Fitz are really excited about him. Josh, like all those guys. He's blocked four punts.

Personally he kind of reminded me of Donald Driver, who we drafted... Actually I shouldn't say that, I came after that draft. They drafted him in the sixth round. He was one of the better special teams players in the league before he completely established himself as our number one receiver. That's kind of who he reminded me of.

He's tough. He's kind of got that gangly feel to him, too. We call Horton T-bone, if you are interviewing him.

Yeah, excited about both those guys. Add to the group.

**Q. Quarterback, didn't just fall the right way?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Fair, yes. It didn't fall that way, yeah.

**Q. Where do you feel you stand there? Still work to be done at that spot?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yes.

**Q. That series of trades, what is that whole process like when you have so many things going on at once?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I just think our guys did a great job, with Nolan, Trent, Matt, Willie, Aaron, those guys are on the phone. They're communicating, not necessarily on the phone or anything. We used to be on the phone. Now it's way more quiet. Everybody is texting. Get on the phone at the very end if things get turned up.

That did move pretty quick, though. No one had stuff going on with other teams, too. It got a little funky there for a minute, but it was great, very smooth. Nobody panicked. Everybody kept it all together.

**Q. How much did Tennessee jumping in front of you...**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: We were planning on this before.

**Q. For you, newer to this, what is the like watching them all work that situation?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, it's impressive. I mean, like the alignment of what we're trying to achieve. Someone



that doesn't really know what's going on, you can be confused from some organized chaos.

It's just succinct, bing, bang, boom. We know what we're trying to do. As offers came in, we definitely achieved the spirit of what we were trying to get, it felt like. That's what gets you excited.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Way less chaos as what we went through with Ricky's free agency.

**Q. What did A.D. love so much about Rylie?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: His instincts, his feel for the game.

MIKE MACDONALD: We met with him at the combine, then had him here. When you talk football with this guy, two people that have a lot of passion about D-line play, get together, you see where it goes. Justin Hinds, a big part of that process, too. Just the spirit of how he approaches the game, his energy, enthusiasm, toughness, competitiveness.

Again, when you turn the tape on, the guy just lights up. He's got all the reasons, this is what we're thinking, this is what I was thinking here. You're kind of throwing ideas back and forth. That's the spirit of everything. That's how it's made right there. That's big-time stuff.

Those are the people we want in our building, that love that type of thing. When you sharpen each other like that, you got no choice but to get better.

**Q. Is the point for him to be your primary fullback?**

MIKE MACDONALD: You're asking about Rylie?

**Q. Robbie.**

MIKE MACDONALD: I didn't answer that right at all.

**Q. Robbie, is it your plan to be the primary fullback?**

MIKE MACDONALD: He's going to compete with Brady. You don't have to live in 21. There's 12. All those guys are kind of competing for those roles. We got a lot of great players that fit that tight end-fullback mold. Special teams is going to be a big part of it, too.

I know this. To bet against Brady Russell would be a gigantic mistake. It's going to be a lot of fun.

**Q. How much are we talking about use at fullback?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I mean, you've seen how it's been

deployed in the past. But yeah, you're going two backs back there a good bit.

**Q. Mike, you're now two full drafts at head coach here. Thinking big picture, how far do you think you are with this team in terms of the vision you have for this roster?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I respect the question. It's not just me saying... This is us getting together, carving this thing out one move at the same time, one decision at a time, one practice at a time. It's just how we want to become.

We're on our way. We're growing. It's our job to expedite that process. We're competing for championships this year. That's what we want to do. I'm really confident that we're going to have that opportunity. That's the expectation for us.

The last week of the guys being in the building, the spirit, the conversations we're having, it's so much fun to come to work every day. I can't wait to come back and get back to the second week of Phase I. That's the way it should be. That's the environment we're trying to create, these guys are excited to come to work every day, keep connecting, getting tougher. Wring out every day, let the results speak for themselves.

**Q. Integrating Sam into all that, how has that gone?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Sam is kicking butt. I'm hearing the offensive plays. I'm trying to envision it in my head. He's on it. He's really sharp. Doing it his style is really cool. We want team power him. Something as simple as routes on air, no-huddle. All those things, we want to gas him up and Sam to play the best football of his career.

**Q. This can be kind of tricky, did you have to have a conversation with Sam about (indiscernible)?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, it became clear that we're going to pick Jalen, gave him a call. He was awesome.

**Q. You did that last night?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yes.

**Q. How long was that conversation?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I'm a pretty verbose guy (laughter). I had a hard time getting to the point.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: How long was it, like 13 1/2 seconds? Interesting conversation. Interesting question.





How long was the conversation? How about we interview you?

**Q. A year-long process. Three days. Do you go out and celebrate at the end or go home and not want to see each other?**

MIKE MACDONALD: We're one of the few draft rooms that aren't locked. Let me be clear on that one. Our doors are open (smiling).

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yes, we will (laughter).

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: This is interesting 'cause I think you got to let it happen about what he's going to do well. I think a safe bet is going to be at the second level initially, like at nickel, some dime reps. He's going to train to be a safety, too, give us the flexibility there.

I think it's kind of like offensive line, you kind of start a guy with an idea, see how those guys gel, who does what well. The competition at linebacker, too.

The competition, it's kind of like with tight ends, fullbacks, receivers, you're just not competing against your position group, you're competing against kind of your productivity and how well the unit operates when you're out there.

That's kind of where we're going to let it start. We'll see how it evolves as it goes.

He's going to train at safety. Start at safety, kind of go down, all the same jobs.

**Q. Why was Nick not a difficult evaluation?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think what I meant is when I started the scouting, that was the hardest position to evaluate in college. Everybody, they're never around the ball, they didn't have the cut-ups we had. The cut-ups we have now, you can just go through stuff literally like zipping through a game.

Yeah, it's much easier now. What I meant by that is when I started.

About him, I mean, besides all the testing, he's really tough. He's a good tackler, yeah. Good coverage skills, too.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: What's the plan for mini training camp?

**Q. Yes.**

MIKE MACDONALD: We have more guys signed up. We loved how last year went. A by-product of the whole thing is guys are going to understand how we're going to practice here, do it safe, compete, take care of your teammates, but get great work in at the same time.

Seeing them out there moving around. It's not like some comprehensive IQ football test. We want them to go play ball and get a good feel for them initially, understand how we're going to operate here, when they come back a week from then, they're kind of off the ground, hit the ground running.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think we'll have till the 2nd. Today is the 26th. Be an exciting day (smiling).

**Q. When free agency went the way it was, what was your plan for the draft interior offensive line? Did you meet those goals?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I think we talked about it last night a little bit, or maybe the night before.

The group of offensive linemen, like, once we got past the Super Bowl, through the combine, speaking with everybody we needed to speak with, there were a couple guys we were very interested in, but we knew we could kind of lean back a little bit just based on picking 18, where are these guys going to go, so...

I would say right in there. That was probably going in the plan. I mean, we knew we were going to address this, yeah.

**Q. With multiples, not just one?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I would say one high, yeah.

**Q. Is there a moment through this whole draft process for scout, someone standing up calling out for a player that stands out to you?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I don't know. I would have to say probably Josh's call to Tory Horton. We had a hard time getting ahold of him. Once he got ahold of him, it sounded like we were little kids, going to your buddy's house, calling your buddy's house to see if the mom, Is Tory there? Can

he come out and play? Can Tory sleep over tonight?

That was the funniest one. You mean pounding the table?

**Q. Yes.**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Clear view of understanding who likes who, then it's balancing all that. It's all about where you acquire the player and making people feel like we're all in this thing together. It's not like here is this player, go coach him. You know what I mean?

I think Mike does an awesome job with his staff, as does Klint and A.D. and Harvs. All of us working together, pretty fun.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It is different. That's a good question. There's a contingency there, too, if the player fails a physical... I mean, that was definitely part of the discussion. Good question, yeah.

**Q. How did the way Damien runs the ball fit with what you want?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think you know that. I think you respect that about him, about guys that can run the ball physically, downhill. Had a lot of great guys come through this building that have ran it like that. Nod to those people.

Just again, really excited about the guys we have on our roster. Come in and come kick butt with the rest of them. It's going to be a great competition. But we're really excited about him.

**Q. To clarify, you listed Richman as a guard. You're going to give him a shot at tackle?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah.

**Q. Which side?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Both.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: She's awesome. She loves it.

**Q. What is her role?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I'm not going to get into specifics. She's very interested. She's got a great sense of humor. She asks great questions. She's tough. So yeah.

**Q. What does happen if a player fails a physical?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: They revert, actually. If that happens, the player reverts back to the previous team. Then you have to decide.

**Q. The draft picks?**

JOHN SCHNEIDER: You have to figure out is there a player, what's going to happen. That's part of the negotiation. I'd love to be able to share it with you. I can't.

What happens is the player goes back. If that were to happen, which it won't, Sam is a very healthy man, you have to figure out what does the compensation look like for the next year if the player were to fail.

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