

Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Seattle, Washington, USA

Mike MacDonald

Weekday Press Conference



MIKE MACDONALD: We have a good crew here today. Great to be back. Great practice. Guys are on it. Just the spirit of practice is right where we need it this time of year.

Got another great opportunity tomorrow to stack another one and then off we go, but to make sure we take advantage of the time we've been given now. The guys are doing that.

So just really pleased with effort, attitude, intent, spirit. A lot of stuff to work on. We have a long journey ahead of us, but for right now just really excited about the effort, enthusiasm of the team, and it's a fun group to work with.

Q. Coach, how do you decide to divvy up your time in practice, where you spend your time, and is it different than last year?

MIKE MACDONALD: It's completely random. No. Early in practice I like to spend more time with the offense during more of like the individual periods. That's an opportunity for me to be with those guys.

AD and I have been splitting up a good bit of the call periods, and he's done a great job of when I'm kind of managing the clock and working with Klint. It's a great little operation we have going.

Fun to work with. It varies by day. Different than last year. I don't remember what else I was doing last year.

Q. What have you learned about the new offensive coaches and how they try to coach on the field now? And being around them now, you've had some time to work with them.

MIKE MACDONALD: Look, they're doing a great job. I think how we want to operate as a team is be demanding, but let the guys go let it rip and practice the right way. We got a lot of offense in, which is awesome. They've been exposed to a lot over the course of the spring, but the standards are high. There's clarity.

A lot of great coaching going on. A lot of great teaching, a lot of great enthusiasm. It's unique to them and their personalities, which is what you want. That's why we hire them as the people and the men that they are. A lot of positive things right now.

The guys know what is expected, which is great, so they can go back and go watch the tape and get better and go fix it tomorrow.

Q. How are you seeing Sam fitting into this?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, Sam is doing a great job. Sam is a great feel for the offense right now in terms of growing every day. So you can feel the growth. You can feel the improvement, the confidence that we're doing on that side of the ball and that we're growing. It's exciting to work with.

He's a heck of a competitor. You know, this time of the year it's hard with all the competition periods, you're trying to create a bunch of situations where there's technically no winner or loser, but you are trying to just try to get great situational work where you're making great decisions, and we're doing that on both sides.

Those are fun periods when you feel his competitiveness, and really all three quarterbacks you feel the competitiveness and the sense of improvement every day.

Q. Is he a fiery guy, like a yeller?

MIKE MACDONALD: He has some stuff to him.

Q. Does that surprise you?

MIKE MACDONALD: No. We went against him. We felt it.

Q. How does he do the leadership piece? Does he have his own niche that you have recognized?

MIKE MACDONALD: The thing you love about Sam is he is just a dude, man. He's like one of the guys. There's a sense that he's one of the guys, so he's right there with them in all the things, but that's him.



There is some shit to him. Don't mess with him. He's got that edge to him, that competitiveness, and the guys respect that. But he's him. He's not trying to be anybody else, and you have to respect that about him.

Q. He hasn't played with any of these receivers previously in the NFL, but how much does it help having a guy like Cooper Kupp who has played in a similar system and then Valdes-Scantling who last year played for Coop -- how does it help to have two guys like that with this new-look receiver core to get the offense going early?

MIKE MACDONALD: I haven't asked him that question specifically, but talking about Quez and especially Coop, they're attacking every day, man. Just trying to master the playbook, all the formations, all the route steps, all the timing.

If you have that spirit about you every day, I mean, it's contagious, one, with the rest of the room, with the rest of the offense, the whole team. It makes it fun to go to work and enjoy the process.

But, of course, that's going to expedite your growth when you have guys like that.

Q. How does the new offense sharpen the defense?

MIKE MACDONALD: We're seeing a lot. We're seeing a lot. Klint is doing a great job mixing up the looks. There's a lot of motions and shifts and pictures, and you have counts that are changing on the fly. It's a lot of stress on us on defense.

And I have to give our defense a lot of credit. These guys, they're on a mission right now, and you have to respect that about them. Every opportunity we have whether it's a walk-through or an ACT practice at the end here, you really -- there's a competitive spirit about doing it the right way, mastering what we're trying to do as a system, and that's the expectation, as it should be.

It's great stuff all the way around.

Q. You mention the spirit of the practice. How much are those DBs in particular going to add to the juice out there?

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, again, it's great. Hopefully they hear this when we're talking about how we're evaluating them right now. They're not really expected to make the plays. They're expected to be in position to make the plays, but this time of year in these types of practices we're chasing execution, we're chasing about

being in the right spots.

Ultimately we're yielding to the offense for the most part, but in doing that, trying to make sure that -- like, they know when they can make the plays, when they can't. There's spirit there.

It's a great room. They push each other. Karl and Jeff are doing an awesome job.

Q. You switched things up with the schedule moving mini camp to this week. What was the thought process behind that?

MIKE MACDONALD: It was several things, but our guys just -- they did such a great job this offseason in phases one through three and felt like it was a good time, good change-up to go knock this week out of the park.

Rookies get to stick around for a little bit longer. It gives them a chance to get a break, get their bodies right, get away, and then come back better than ever for training camp.

Q. Cooper Kupp said he was in your office, and you was geeking out about some stuff on the defensive side. Who are the guys that are most frequent visitors to your office that you can talk about football?

MIKE MACDONALD: Nick keeps showing up.

I have to tell him, Hey, man, the door is closed. Knock.

No, Nick has been up there a bunch. Look, I'm proud of the atmosphere that we're creating where guys are in and out of the offices, talking to coaches. Not necessarily about football, but just what's going on.

It feels a lot like we had going on at Michigan to a certain extent. That speaks to the guys that are in the building, our coaches, the job they're doing, the relationships they're building.

Any time you're talking ball, especially with the guys, it doesn't get much better than that. Look, I mean, Coop, he's gone against our defense, and he kind of knows how people attack us. Why wouldn't you run ideas by him to see what he thinks? I think we have proof on that front.

Q. Emmanwori, looks like you're using him at different spots. What do you like out of him?

MIKE MACDONALD: First thing is the vets in the room are really leading him, and they're doing a great job of setting the expectation, bringing him along.

He's understanding he's a rookie, but hey, man, let's go. You're with us, but there's a certain standard that you're going to have to abide by. Nick has the humility to do that and to operate that way.

But to his credit, we're giving him a lot. The bullets aren't live yet. That's the next step for him is to show it he can handle it in those type of situations. He's going to be able to do that

He's really poised. He has a great -- he just understands ball, and again, he really likes the process of doing football all the time, and Jeff is doing a great job with him coaching him all the time. Really pleased.

Q. How much, if any, have you seen him come off the edge as a blitzer? Is there potential for that as a rookie?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, yeah. That shows up on college tape, his blitzability. There are some things that we're working with him technically speaking, but you don't want to -- you want to teach pass rush and how to win on edges and things like that, but there's also a playmaking aspect to it as well that you don't want to take away from him, so we need to balance that out. Hopefully he's blitzing a lot.

Q. You mentioned the sense that the defense is on a mission right now. Was that something instilled over time, or is that the character of who those guys are? Where do you think that comes from?

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, I would like to think that it started the first day we walked in the door, you know, but those relationships, you know, you do have to work on that over time. You just feel a lot of buy-in from the guys.

It goes to the attendance. The guys were here on their own volition. It's their defense. You can feel that. When we walk into a defensive meeting room, it's not just me blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. It's AD kicking butt, CP, all of our coach are getting in front of the room. Our players are getting in front of the rest of the room talking about all sorts of different things.

It's just a great spirit they have going on, so it's a collective buy-in that I think that you're experiencing, and they're taking control and taking responsibility for their group. That's exciting

Q. The Michael Dickson contract extension, what was your reaction to that, and how much of an asset has he been for this franchise?

MIKE MACDONALD: Really excited to get Michael done. Great job by the guys in the front office. Dicko is a premiere punter in the league, so hopefully we showed that with numbers involved.

He is a weapon for us. The stats show it. The film shows it. He has a great attitude about him, great personality. Guys love him.

Yeah, really excited to have him here for the long haul.

Q. When you get ownership, buy-in from the players, what does that say about your process? It has to help you believe that you all are moving forward.

MIKE MACDONALD: We're trying to do it together. Again, it's not just -- yeah, it's all these tiny conversations that you just -- these incremental gains that you are trying to shoot for every day, and then you look back a year or two into the whole process, and you feel like we've made a lot of progress.

But it's everybody pushing -- everybody has to push in that direction. That's how you get progress. It can't just be me. Our coaches, staff, everybody in the building, you know, you really feel that we're pushing in the same direction, and it's really exciting.

Q. We've seen intentionality in terms of how you practice from last year? Is that part of what happens, examinations, familiarity?

MIKE MACDONALD: The expectations are the same. Again, you're going through it. The guys understand what we're trying to get done. I'm probably communicating it better the way I'm wording stuff, and how we phrase it and message it is probably better the second time around. Yeah, the expectations are the same last year, honestly.

Q. We've seen Christian Haynes play center a little bit. What's the thought behind that, and kind of what have you seen?

MIKE MACDONALD: I think it goes to the interior part of our line. We're mixing and matching right now. It's a lot of great competition, and Christian has shown the ability to snap, so we've given him some opportunities to do so.

Q. Is Ken Walker dealing with something injury-wise?

MIKE MACDONALD: He's working through an ankle, but he will be fine.

Q. The real bullets aren't flying yet, but Shemar



Jean-Charles and D'Anthony Bell are making some plays out here. What did you see from those guys in free agency that you thought was a good fit and where they meshed with the defense?

MIKE MACDONALD: There's some familiarity with our staff and pro personnel department that brought those guys in. Again, it's an understanding about the type of people we want to bring into our building and onto our team, and they've shown that.

Just the work ethic. It's a different system than they're used to playing, but frankly, the special team's ability is the tip of the spear, so I'm excited to see what they do when they get their shot in the preseason.

Q. This offensive season, how much is it complementing that you can control gains with your defense, if you do succeed in running the ball? It's not just scoring as many points as you can, but controlling the game, if that makes sense. Is that an aim of that offense?

MIKE MACDONALD: I haven't looked at it through the lenses of, hey, our defense is going to go dominate games and offense. No, they're going to play our style of football, the Seahawk style of ball that we're trying to create.

Talk about methods and principles about how we operate, I mean, this is just a different method. This system, it's a tried and true system. They're coaching the heck out of it, but they believe in it, and it will come to life the way that we want to.

It's going to be unique to us, which is exciting, and that's the process that we're in right now, like kind of where it goes throughout camp.

The principle that's not negotiable is how we play and taking care of the ball and being physical up front and running off the rock and separating the defense and doing all those things, circling the defense, protecting the quarterback. That stuff, you need to be able to do that to win in this league, and they've shown the ability to do that.

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