

Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

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Mike MacDonald

Weekday Press Conference



Q. Talk a little bit about Leonard Williams, defensively as a player and as a personality?

MIKE MACDONALD: Man, he's one of our driving forces. You have to give him a lot of credit on his approach since we met him a year ago. We knew he was an awesome guy. We knew he was a great football player, but what we needed from him was more in terms of a leadership role and asserting himself and his style.

At this point in your career to challenge yourself to take it to another level, I think that speaks volumes for who he is. A lot of coaches deserve a shout-out too because they saw it in him and worked with him consistently. Leslie does a great job with that, AD. Obviously we love him, but there's high expectations too.

He's got to win rushes. He has to be disruptive in the run game. He has to set other guys up, and they're giving him attention in the blocking and in their protection scheme.

That's what you want as a premiere player. You want that added attention.

Q. How do you feel I guess kind of about the offseason and where you guys are?

MIKE MACDONALD: You try to put it in perspective. The feeling you want coming out, going into the whole offseason program, we wanted to be tough and connected. I think we're on our way to being tough. We haven't had to prove it yet with pads on, but definitely feel like we're a connected group. I think we've made a lot of strides confidence-wise in the schemes we are running and understanding what's expected and just how we roll here in general.

So really excited about this group. They're a lot of fun to coach. I think I speak for the whole coaching staff when I say that. Yeah, it's good that, hey, we're going into a break here so you can kind of regather and take a breath and then kind of recalibrate going into camp, but I tell you what,

I think I speak for the whole team, we're really excited to get this team going starting in training camp.

Q. What's your assessment of where the offense is going into camp?

MIKE MACDONALD: I think right where they need to be. It's tough to assess right now. It really is. It's going to come to life when you can separate the defense. You know, we are on some of these runs and then all of a sudden it's second and four rather than, hey, we're just kind of -- looks like a soft spot right there or we broke a tackle. That's where it really comes to life when you are wearing defenses down, and then here comes the actions and the movements that you have to honor the run game.

So I think we'll have a better feel a couple of weeks into training camp. At that point you're going to start making decision on narrowing down schematically of where we want to kind of center our focus both personnel-wise, and you can't be doing everything all the time, so you're going to have to make some decisions as camp starts to unfold.

Q. The guys have talked about that. When did you learn, not simplifying, but to focus on fewer things and being great at that? Who taught you that, or where did that come?

MIKE MACDONALD: It's a really interesting question. Earlier in my career when I was a GA, we didn't execute very well. We didn't play very confidently, so that was kind of a bummer.

Going to Baltimore, there was such elegance, simplicity behind some of the calls we had, and you're like, Man, we could just say two words, and all this comes to life, and the guys know it? That was really cool.

So there's some magic going on there, and then you go to Michigan, and you have to make some decisions on what you are going to do. I think we've kind of settled on, hey, there's a complementary set of things that we want to be able to get really, really good at, and then let's mix and match it based on who we got and have a clear vision of what we're trying to create too.

You know, you have to know where you are going so you can make decision.

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Q. This isn't the best setting obviously to evaluate offensive linemen, but based on what you have been able to see from able Grey Zabel what have you thought?

MIKE MACDONALD: Really excited about Grey. He is what we thought he was up to this point. He's going to be that. Again, hard to go, but just intentionality.

Really fired up to see him in the fall. The great competition, the one-on-ones, getting the pads on. It's going to be a lot of fun to compete with the D-line.

Q. The offensive line in general, what's your assessment of that group as a whole?

MIKE MACDONALD: I can tell you what, right now what are you looking for? You want growth every day. You want the guys having the right mindset, finishing plays the right way.

You can't do it physically, but you can chase the ball. You can run out of the stack. You can take the line of scrimmage. The operation right now is good. You know, I think it's something that we're still chasing. I would say very good, but we'll see. There's a lot of competition.

Like, we haven't settled some of the spots, and that means we have a lot of guys that are options, so it's exciting.

Q. You guys rotated a lot on the offensive line end of the season last year. Do you have an idea of when you are hoping to see some of that settle in training camp?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I think we would like to make some decisions sooner than later, but we're going to let the play speak for itself. We're not going to force decision. We're going to be intentional in what happens probably within the first two weeks.

Q. Following up on Brady's question about Grey, just the rookies in general, how are you seeing that class growing so far?

MIKE MACDONALD: You know, they allow us to have a lot of time with these guys, and they don't really have a place to go after, so they're here a lot.

What are you going to do with that time? Are you going to make the most of it, take advantage of it, spend time with one another? Are you going to eat meals together? Are you going to watch extra tape? These are the things that these guys are doing.

We kind of hinted it at them. You can lead a horse to water. You can't make them drink. They're making those decision on their own, which is really exciting. It tells me they're a tight unit, and they really care about what shows up on tape and really their careers and they're taking ownership for what shows up out there.

Again, early. We'll see when we're playing real football, but I'm optimistic.

Q. What have you seen from Anthony Bradford?

MIKE MACDONALD: AB has done a great job this spring. His body comp has really improved, which speaks to his work ethic. I think he's made strides now. Let's go. You know, it's time to go prove it consistently.

He knows that, but he's right in the thick of it with the battle at right guard.

Q. Your thoughts on the receiver battle right now? You have a lot of guys returning. (Indiscernible).

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, it's exciting, and it's going to come down to a large part of how they play on special teams. You know, can you move people? Can you block people? Can you get people in the ground? Who is going to play gunner for us? Who is going to be our personal protector? Who is going to be our punt returner? All those things haven't been settled yet.

And then go make plays on offense. You know, can you dig out safety and be a force out there and also come alive in the pass game as well, and how does that complement the skill sets of Coop and Jackson and Quez? Really excited about those guys. It will come to life throughout the preseason.

Q. (Indiscernible). How do you feel like those groups are in competition, punt return and kick?

MIKE MACDONALD: We're repping a bunch of guys right now, and we'll see. It's why we signed Sims in large part, but we got some competition there and the kick return battle too. So it's good. Yeah, it's good.

Q. How do you think time on task will help someone like Coby Bryant and his second full year with you?

MIKE MACDONALD: Man, how can I complement Coby the best? We talked about this to the team, and Caleb did a great presentation for Coby in front of the guys the other day.

What stuck out to me was just his intentionality, and he



cared about the minor details all the time even though his role wasn't a starter as a get-go. He has that chip on his shoulder naturally because he's just a great competitor, but those are the type of guys we want. They're not going to be deterred by things that are outside of their control.

When he finally got his opportunity, he knocked it out of the park, and he's earned himself a great role on our football team. So you take all that effort that he's done and move that forward, and it's just been expedited. He's in a great position.

I know he's playing really confident right now, and you feel him out there. So we're excited for Coby.

Q. (Indiscernible - question about corner).

MIKE MACDONALD: Great. Yeah, again, these are great battles going into the offseason. Now, I mean, are we not going to look to always improve our team in any aspect? No, we're always going to be out there and try to be in everything and chasing edges on making us better.

The guys that are with us right now kind of in that three, four, five spot is exciting. The guys are doing a great job, but go nail it this summer and come back and go compete your butt off.

Q. It seems like it's been mostly Christian and Bradford. Do you anticipate that it's still a two-man race in camp or more guys involved?

MIKE MACDONALD: We'll see when the pads come on because you have to work out the center position. (Indiscernible) is part of that equation. The rookies really haven't seen live and in color, so I wouldn't say it's a two-man race right now. It's more open.

Q. You've been having Nick all over the place. What have you learned about his skill set out here on the field with you guys? What do you think he can do with you compared to what you thought when you drafted him?

MIKE MACDONALD: There are a lot of things we're going to ask of him, and you're kind of in this phase now where you're exposing him to a lot of things to see what hits, what doesn't. So you have a better feel for what you are going to ask him to do when we start getting close to game time.

But his spirit about it and attitude, I'm going to go do this drill today. Great. I'm going to do this drill? Awesome. Keep building those skills and keep training yourself to be the best player you can, and then it's up to us as a coaching staff to keep putting him in positions where he

can do stuff that he does well.

Like I said, we've talked about this at length, but just with a guy with that attitude that he's had every day is just really fun to work with.

Q. Which spots are you most excited about the competition you're seeing?

MIKE MACDONALD: Oh, man. I haven't really thought of it through that lens. Wideout, tight end, offensive line. What four guys are going to pass rush? What four guys work the best? The back end of our DB room. Who can play gunner for us? Who is going to play punt runner for us? What else? Who is going to play fullback for us? Backup linebacker, fourth safety spot (laughing). I'm not trying to be a smart aleck, but it really is all those things.

Q. If you look at the offseason, one guy or one group really stick out as a surprise, pleasant surprise?

MIKE MACDONALD: You know, we're a young team, and these guys have like a gravity about them. They just really have a great spirit about them. We're young, but I feel like we're mature.

Then we do have a great couple of vets that, you know, they don't have to be here and they could say, Hey, look, I'm a vet, I got my money, I know what's expected of me. I can show up and everything is great.

You can do that, and there are guys that do that, and they do a great -- it is what it is, but our guys really decided to be invested in these young guys, and they care about where this team goes. Man, that fires you up.

Q. Beyond just the offensive line, what are some things that the defense does to make life easier?

MIKE MACDONALD: Man, I think it allows the quarterback to play decisive. It puts pressure on the defense. You know, it does -- you can't get fancy because you'll get gashed, so you have to play sound football at all times.

It's going to separate the levels of the defense so it's putting your second level players in conflict consistently as a play caller.

You know, you're taking risks consistently. If you really want to put pressure on the offense. It's all systematic, so it's not like, hey, do this one day and this the other day. No, we kind of live in this lane, and then we scramble it up and make it look different and take advantage of matchups that way.



I don't know if that makes any sense, but I thought that was a pretty good answer.

Q. I don't know if you want to talk about Adrian?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, we'll see with Jenna. All the timetable stuff is funky right now.

Q. Jalen Milroe, where have you seen him grow the most since rookie mini-camp, do you know?

MIKE MACDONALD: Man, a lot of growth. The whole team is growing. Shoot, I'm growing. You see the poise, the fundamental stuff that we're asking, footwork and timing and reads. I just said to him today, Routes on error, man, how much different does it feel compared to two months ago? He gave me a big smile. Man, I feel great.

But you don't just do that by showing up every day. You have to be intentional and on record with his work ethic and stuff. That's really impressive. He's earned kind of that feeling of confidence right now. He's earned that feeling going into the summer.

Q. 4:30 a.m., that's accurate?

MIKE MACDONALD: I'm not here at 4:30, so I can't tell you that specifically.

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