

# Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

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Seattle, Washington, USA

## Coach Mike Macdonald

### Weekday Press Conference



MIKE MACDONALD: Great to see everybody. We've got a lot of updates to go, so, I can't think of all of them, so I'll let you ask.

**Q. The number of roster moves that were made today, bringing back Quandre and some of the other decisions that were made.**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, bringing back Diggs, it's pretty cool because him and I talked when we first got here last year and had a great conversation. And obviously things worked out the way they did.

Excited for him to be back. I know the building's really excited. I think he's excited. I know a lot of our guys are really fired up.

So just see how it goes, but we're just doing a walk-through and he's spitting out calls. We'll see how it shakes out. But excited to see him practice today.

**Q. Was there enough overlap what he was doing with (indiscernible)?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I think so. You're looking at similar things with E.J. last year. And he's been, you know, doing it a while at a high level. We're not doing anything he's never heard of.

**Q. (Inaudible) played so recently the past couple of weeks. Does that make it last of a ramp-up here?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I kind of put it in the bucket like that, he has been playing. If we were just acquiring him in a different fashion, that's how I'm looking at it.

**Q. How does Julian look, and how is Ty (inaudible)?**

MIKE MACDONALD: So Ty's -- day-by-day with Ty. Not going to practice today. We'll see tomorrow. Julian is still in the same process we're talking about. So he's not going to practice -- he's not going to practice this week. He's not

going to play.

**Q. Cam Akers, bringing him in, and with him and George obviously going out --**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, a lot of respect for Cam, has a lot of relationships with him from prior stops. System familiar to ours. Expect him to step right in and do a great job.

**Q. Eric Saubert, is he in the same position as Julian, not going to practice this week?**

MIKE MACDONALD: As of now, yeah.

**Q. When you first met with Quandre, what did you like about how his football acumen and skill set fit in with your system?**

MIKE MACDONALD: He wasn't in town. We talked on the phone. The conversation was really just about -- it's funny, you go back and think about where my mind was in that moment. There was a lot going on. I don't think we had it as dialed in terms of describing how we wanted to operate.

So, it was just kind of getting to know each other and understand where he's coming from in his career, how he wants to operate. And then the same thing from my perspective, too. It was a great conversation. I have a lot of respect for him.

**Q. Rylie Mills, (indiscernible) practice open?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, glad you brought that up. Told the team this morning too and they're fired up. Rylie's been working extremely hard, and he's been locked in. And I know he's been anticipating this moment for a long time.

And just gotta go out there play the game you've played his whole life. It's been a minute since he's played. It's going to be great to see him out there in uniform, with a helmet on. It'll be really cool.

**Q. With Julian, do you have an idea, will he be back this year? Is there concern he won't be back?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I expect him to be back this year,

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and we're hoping for next week, that's what we're shooting for. But I've been wrong before.

**Q. D'Anthony Bell jumped into that spot when Ty went down. How do you feel he's done in the game on Sunday and (indiscernible) year?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Feels like we have conversations like this every week with guys who had an opportunity. When we had an opportunity to get D-Bell in the building, Jeff Howard had a lot of history with him. And we knew what type of player he was on special teams.

He's a physical player out on defense as well. I think he's shown those things. Working to be as decisive as those guys. And he did a great job coming in and operating without a lot of reps, which is not that easy thing to do from what we ask our safeties to do, so that was really cool.

**Q. Putting Shaquill on the 53 and waiting, what went into that with Shaquill?**

MIKE MACDONALD: We hope to get DK back. Just Shaq's been doing a great job. And felt like that was the right move. It wasn't just like a 1-for-1, just subbing out DK for Shaq. There were other things going on roster-wise is what helped drive that decision.

**Q. Follow up to the 53, I know he's a guy you (inaudible). What has he done over the course of the time you've been here building himself where he is now?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I describe him as steadfast. He gets here at, I see his car more often than not when I'm getting here. So 6:00 a.m. or whatever. He's just here every day working on his body, preparing.

Then he's a guy that's always been available. He takes a ton of reps. He practices 100 miles an hour all the time.

And it's not like he's been -- nobody's perfect in those moments, but as a coach you respect the effort and the competitor. And the guy keeps coming back after he's gotten into some situations where he's got not really the best news that reflects the effort that he's put forward, which is a tough situation.

When you play well enough to be on an NFL team and you don't make the team, that's a hard thing to do. And so it speaks a lot for him to go back and just keep attacking it like he did. That's why you're so happy for him because you know -- Cody White is another example of that, of guys that just have stuck to it and had a great attitude.

And that goes a long way with our team because the guys realize, too. They see them making plays all the time. They realize they're really good players. And then they see how they handle those types of situations, which is -- you can't help but respect those guys for that.

**Q. He and (indiscernible) got a ton of reps in camp when he got hurt?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Good point.

**Q. Obviously those reps are big for them to development, but what did it do for coaching staff to see them in that role and how they handled it?**

MIKE MACDONALD: That's a great point. We're going to get a lot of plays. It's just sometimes there are different speeds and different tempos, but we want to give guys opportunities, especially guys down the line on the roster to develop and get better.

When you do have guys that aren't available that are your first- and second-stringers, that's a great opportunity for those guys. To your point, us seeing them do it for that amount of time probably gave them -- what we've been seeing since then, but it's a little bit more competitive in camp. To see him in those situations gives us confidence as well.

**Q. Offenses have the lowest percentage of run plays against the Vikings defense, but the Vikings have been giving up a ton of rushing yards. What do they do to discourage teams from running the ball?**

MIKE MACDONALD: That's a good question. They give you a lot of looks. They play a lot of different personnel packages. Guys aren't always in the same spots. They like to pressure certain formations and things like that.

So, probably adds some doubt to game plans where you might not be getting what you might expect. That might deter you from things. If they're going to be so positive towards the run, teams might feel like there are more opportunities, similar to the third-down question you asked last week. The same idea; if they are going to commit to the run teams might feel they have more pass opportunities.

**Q. There have been a number of guys tackle for loss, I think third most in the NFL, maybe the most in the NFL. That would lead you to believe it's an aggressive defense, but what else is it about being able to make those plays?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, our front is just playing at an



incredibly high level. And, so, it starts with them and how they play. If you're going to play in shell defense all the time, you're short on gaps. So guys have to account for multiple gaps on certain plays.

One, it takes a lot of chemistry and reps so you can understand how we're going to play certain plays. But also guys up front have to be disruptive and they have to do it in a team fashion.

It's easy to just rip up the field and say you were aggressive. But it's another thing saying, well, I can anticipate that I'm going to get a certain block based off certain blocking service. And then I can take a more calculated chance to be disruptive. We prefer the latter in that situation.

**Q. Ernest Jones, will he be able to practice this week?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, E.J. is on his normal workload, but still going to be our ramp. I don't think we're out of the woods yet. I think he has to go test it out see how it feels in full speed for us to start making decisions.

**Q. Brian Flores blitzes, like, at almost a 60 percent rate the last few weeks. You tend to blitz less often. What is it about Brian Flores' defense that allows him to take these risks and not necessarily give up a lot of explosives?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Methods and principles. I think someone like Todd Bowles' defense is, they play aggressive, they play physical, they play smart. He calls an aggressive game. So, the principles are -- I like to think we call an aggressive game. We're just not necessarily sending bodies at the problem. So, the principles are there, but how they want to get it done is a little different.

They do a good job -- one, they do a good job tackling in space. That's going to go a long way. They're not necessarily selling the farm on every pressure. So there's some sort of roof on what they're doing.

And it's calculated; they're running premier looks and they're in good calls. It means it's structured the right way and designed well. And the players are really smart where they can get in and out of certain plays, I'm assuming, is what's going on. It's a high-level operation they've got going.

**Q. How do you call an aggressive game without blitzing?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think you can -- it's like you're attacking what you feel like they're trying to do. So how

you allocate people and where you put everybody and things like that.

**Q. (Indiscernible) centennial tape for max (indiscernible)?**

MIKE MACDONALD: It's funny, small world, huh? Kind of crazy. It's weird that you went to the same school but the separation -- like I feel like I'm young. I feel like I'm 25 years old. Now here he comes, I don't know what year he graduated, but kind of cool.

**Q. (Indiscernible) he does go, there's NFL tape on him, what preseason or --**

MIKE MACDONALD: We got a question like this a while ago. I forget who we were playing. But when they're like little tape, it was a new coordinator, so what do you do? Want to understand how they try to operate. Like, and J.J. might still play, so we have to be ready for him as well.

But you're going to watch preseason tape, watch some of their college stuff, talk to our scouts, things like that, guys that have watched him coming out and followed his path.

But do the best you can, really, with the tape you have of what's out there. He played pretty extensively in preseason, so that's pretty good tape to have.

**Q. When you played defense last year, Sam was obviously the quarterback on the other side. To think back, what stood out to you about him that day going back against seeing him?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Coming back, down four, and ripping a nine ball, that was, to Justin. Last guy in his progression. That's what I remember. How many did he throw?

**Q. Four.**

**Q. The end of the season wild card what else did you see last year?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think it's a little like narrow minded, just going to go off a two-minute sample. It's a shot on our guys -- it's like getting rid of a guy after the first OTA. It's got to be the full experience.

But when we're looking into possibly trying to get Sam, to a person, the type of person and teammate he was on a daily basis was really cool.

And then Clint having worked with him for a full year and understanding what type of practice player he was and the things he could do ability-wise went a long way.

And when you watch the totality of the tape, there was a lot of great things going on, like in the red zone, third down, two minute. On the move, we knew he was a great player on the move. All those things shine through.

**Q. Did you ever talk to Kevin O'Connell about him? Seems like they were committed to JJ?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Kevin and I had conversations over the last year or so just catching up like at owners meetings, stuff. He's a great guy. He loves Sam. Spoke highly of him.

**Q. You've been saying Byron Murphy has been playing like since you got here. What's the difference?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I do think his game has stepped up a notch, yeah. I think it's just coming in with more reps and experience and him realizing he can make certain plays. I think he's moving more decisively and in the pass rush game, I think it's just a function of snaps and that continual improvement.

**Q. There are two lines of thought with how good (indiscernible) has been playing. One is it would be crazy to not keep targeting him. The other would be maybe you wanted to start getting other players involved to help in a variety. Curious where you fall in that spectrum?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Both. Yeah, Both. We've got a lot of great skill players on our offense that do a lot of great things that we can continue to find ways to get them the ball.

And how would you not want to target Jax as much as you possibly can as well. It's not really that simple of a thing for Clint to do that. But I felt we did a great job balancing up to this point and we've got to continue to do that.

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