

Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

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Leonard Williams

Weekday Press Conference

LEONARD WILLIAMS: (In progress) ...into the NFL, but, you know, either way I feel like we always focus on ourselves regardless of who is playing. We want to rush and get to the quarterback regardless of who the quarterback is.

Q. ... talked the other day about the Tennessee game, they way that ended, the way you finished the game. How much does that carryover?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: It's definitely carried over. I think it showed up big last week against the Falcons. We didn't start the way we wanted to. We went into the half pretty much tied with that team and we came out finishing the way we wanted to.

There are some sometimes, just some games where we don't want it to be close and we want to be able to pull away and finish the way we know we can. I think Tennessee showed us -- and luckily, you know, sometimes you learn lessons with a loss, luckily we learned lessons that week with a win.

Q. How hard is it late in the season to sustain the focus on stopping the run game and the physical nature that that requires?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: I think this is where it has to show up the most honestly, making this final push in the fourth quarter of the regular season, going into the playoffs. I think that old school style of hard ball kind of matters most at this point. That's something we been harping on since OTAs, something Mike puts a lot of emphasis on, is stopping the runner running the ball.

Q. What kind of challenge does Taylor present as a running back?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: I mean, again, back to back weeks we faced some of the best backs in the league. I feel like we did a decent job, which still wasn't up to our standard last week with Robinson. This week we're facing Taylor,



who is another great back.

I think the challenge with him is his contact balance. I think it's going to just take a swarm of us to get to the ball and gain tackle this guy, because he's going to break tackles and make plays. He's a great running back.

But I think we just have to keep swarming and keep lining up and hitting him over and over.

Q. What kind of accomplishment is it that this team has not allowed a 100-yard rusher for 22 straight games?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: I think that's a big deal. I talk about it every week, that it allows us to operate the way we want to as a defense when we're able to stop the run. If we allow offenses to run the ball, we're putting the keys in their hands and obviously we don't want that.

Our defensive line takes pride in stopping the run.

Q. What have you seen out of the guys in the secondary, 'Spoon, those guys flying around...

LEONARD WILLIAMS: To me it's beautiful. We talk about the tip of the spear all the times. There is weeks when the D-line has taken over the game, weeks like the linebackers have taken over the game. There is weeks like last the week the DBs are. It just breeds competition in our room.

Now that we seen the DBs take over the game last game, it's creating hunger in the other position groups to get to that tip of the spear.

Q. Your guys' depth on defense has been tested this year, all three levels. To see now that your guys are back healthy on that side, to know you got Ty in the background, Tyrice hasn't played in a few weeks; last time he did he had (indiscernible). All of that, seeing your depth, what does that mean for you guys for the rest of the way knowing you have that behind you?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: I think that's big time. They stepped up when we really needed them. They played great and they gained trust in the defense the coaching staff, and we trust them. We're happy that the guys are getting healthy and coming back into their role.

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But like you just said, great to have that depth and just know we have great players at backup positions. It's good to see our team getting healthy towards the end.

Q. You've known Julian for a while. How have you seen him handle this...

LEONARD WILLIAMS: Just like a professional. Just how I would expect him to. I think everybody sees Julian as a great leader, great man, and I think he did a great job of still being involved. I've heard some injured guys say it's just as much on them to make sure they're included with the team. It's easy to sometimes fall to the wayside when you're not practicing or not playing, but it's on the team to make sure we're bringing them in and on them to make sure they're involving themselves, and I think Julian did a good job of that.

Q. Jarran, seemed like he was around a lot. How big a role has Jarran Reed had maintaining that leadership?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: I mean, I think these one of J-Reed's biggest strengths honestly. I think he's a force on the field. He's a big playmaker and enforcer on our defense.

I think just his leadership and the way he communicates and gets the team together is one of his biggest strengths in my opinion.

Q. When you look at the Colts, they're really good on first down. What trends have you seen that led to those yards?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: Yeah, I mean, I see they're really good on first down and I also see they're really good in the first quarter. This is a team that shows that they start fast. I think it's, you know, all predicated off the run game.

They like to get the ball rolling on the ground. They have a great running back, a good O-line that works well together. We have a great D-line that works well together and enjoys stopping the run, so this is going to be a fun battle.

Q. Home record has been better this year. What was the point of emphasis to defend that home field better? Any idea of finishing strong these last two?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: You know, big emphasis, especially early in the beginning of the year, you know, just to show respect to our fans and bring it them. They show up every week regardless if we're winning or losing, and I think we owed it to them as an organization, as a team, to bring home the wins, and I think we been doing a good job

of that.

Q. You guys are such a close knit group. As a team and a D-line, what does it mean that other people outside the building are talking about you, whether it's former players, national media, that people are paying attention?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: I think it's great. It's great to get recognition. You know, week in and week out you've been seeing guys get player of the week here and stuff like that. I love to see it.

But just like the bad talk that we hear outside that we want to shut off, we also have to shut off the praise and good things people are saying as well. You know, at the end of the day nobody knows our team besides us. If you start to let that stuff seep in and listen to it too much, it's probably going to slow down your work ethic, you're probably going to start feeling yourself a little bit.

I think we just have to continue to shut out the outside noise whether it's good or bad.

Q. You've been telling us all season how connected this group is and how that's making you guys a better team.

LEONARD WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

Q. When did you get a sense of it's different, this group?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: I honestly saw it throughout OTAs. I think Coach Mike Macdonald has been doing a great job of just -- his leadership I think has gained a lot of respect from the team. You can see people respect him and listen to him.

I think a part of it is he points out when he has flaws, which allows players to feel comfortable when they have flaws pointed out as well.

So I think it just starts with him. It kind of just bled into the rest of the team.

Q. Did you wonder what that was going to look like with him coming in being a first-year head coach, being as young as he was?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: Yeah, you always wonder what it's going to be like for a first-time head coach and stuff like that. I knew of Mike. I think a lot of people have known of him. He had great defense at the Ravens and stuff like that, so as a defensive player I was obviously excited



about a head coach coming in that cares so much about the defense.

You know, he's been (indiscernible.)

Q. You played Rivers before, yeah?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: I don't think so, no.

Q. From what you've seen of him, what's he good at?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: I mean, it's been a long time, but from I remember of him he was a great leader. He played in the league for a long time, understands football and coverages, pretty much seen it all. He can make all the passes. I think regardless who plays on Sunday, we can't overlook anybody.

I don't care how old he is or how long he's been out of retirement and all the other things. We have to attack them how we would any other quarterback.

Q. What tape are you looking at?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: Some old Chargers stuff.

Q. Black and white? (Laughter.) You played with Daniel Jones. Saw his resurgence this year and then the injuries he dealt with. Thoughts on what you saw?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: To me, I always respected DJ. Just knowing him from the inside out, being in the locker room with him, seeing his work ethic and knowing what type of guy he is, I've always had a lot of love and respect for that guy.

To see him doing well this year was amazing for me to see and sad to do a guy go out like that.

Q. 2022 season was your first time in the playoffs, right?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: Yeah, yeah.

Q. How motivated are you -- how much did that add motivation to get back?

LEONARD WILLIAMS: I mean, I'm definitely motivated. I'm in year 11 now. Only been to the playoffs once. Had two seasons we had ten wins and didn't go to the playoffs. One was here last year. One was my rookie season on the Jets.

So I've been putting a lot of emphasis and letting the young guys know how hard it is to get to the playoffs. I think

everyone knows that and we're honed in and ready to just take it one game at a time still.

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