

# Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

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Seattle, Washington, USA

## Sam Darnold

### Weekday Press Conference



SAM DARNOLD: Obviously another big week for us. Carolina's a great football team, great defense, really good scheme, really good players that make it all work. We're excited about this challenge, as always, headed on the road to the East Coast again, and we're looking forward to it.

**Q. I'm sure you have bigger goals in mind than being a Pro Bowler, but what does it mean to get that recognition and that honor?**

SAM DARNOLD: I think I've told a few guys this, but it's a team award. Just to have that honor, it really reflects the hard work that everyone's put in starting when we got here in April. So total team award.

**Q. Every game's a big game. That one, last one seemed a little bit more special. How did you spend the last couple days kind of savoring that game?**

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, it was a really good win. Like I said at the end in the press conference, I think there's a lot to clean up offensively at least. So we looked at that yesterday and kind of figured out the details and stuff, how we can get better that way.

Yeah, obviously it's a great win and a great team win. When offense wasn't necessarily playing well, the defense stepped up and vice versa, and then special teams stepped up in a huge way. As we know, there's a lot that we can all get better from in that win. We'll leave it at that.

**Q. How beneficial was the weekend off?**

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, obviously getting ready for a short week, it's tough on a lot of guys, obviously mentally but also physically. So to be able to get that Friday, Saturday, Sunday, few days off is always nice.

**Q. We hear players and coaches always talk about the process each week and not letting the past games affect you. Is it easier or harder to kind of move past a**

**really emotional win or loss, or is it kind of the same process no matter what?**

SAM DARNOLD: I think it's the same process for us. Getting a win is great. Obviously you hate losing, but at the end of the day, you just move on to the next week. That's how it always is in this league because, if you savor in that loss for too long, it will come back to bite you, and the opposite way is true when you lose. If you get too down on a loss and carry it into next week, it can always affect you.

**Q. Looking at past mistakes isn't easy for really anybody, but you seem to be really capable of that. Is that something you always had, or did someone or some experience help develop that for you?**

SAM DARNOLD: I think it's something I've learned through experience. I've always -- you always come out on the other side of football games no matter what happens. Obviously you don't want to make mistakes, but it's a part of the game. Mistakes happen. So when they do, you just, you move on. You understand that there's things in life in general aren't always going to go your way.

So when you get an opportunity to just, all right, learn from the experience. It sucks that that happened. What coverage did they run? How did they get me on that? And look at it more as a lesson of how can I get better? I think just looking at it from that perspective and being able to move on makes it a little bit easier.

**Q. You talked a lot about what your time in San Francisco meant to you and all that, but what about your year in Carolina during the time you were there? What did you get out of that?**

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, the couple years in Carolina were huge for me. First of all, I think just being around really good players, being around really good guys in the locker room, those are moments that I remember forever. Some of those guys are still some of my best friends to this day.

Then just learning football. I think that first year I learned a lot about myself, just going through adversity and learning that way, and then that second year battled through an injury throughout the first really first half of the season. Then came out on the other side and was able to play

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some pretty good football towards the end of that season. I feel like that kind of gave me momentum going into that next year.

So I learned a lot of good football in that last year in Carolina especially.

**Q. You have excelled in late game situations, game-winning drives in the fourth quarter and in overtime. Was there a quarterback you studied for that or characteristics of certain quarterbacks that you looked at?**

SAM DARNOLD: I think the one that always comes to mind is Tom, Tom Brady. The way that I always admired him growing up, watching him play, and I was able to actually watch him play quite a bit even still as I was in the league. Watching him kind of do his thing in the two-minute drill, I never felt like -- his body language never changed whether he was in the first quarter of a game or the last two minutes. So that was something that I always admired.

**Q. The sequence at the very end of that game where you get the touchdown and then you line up for the two-point drive, they call timeout, you call timeout, what was that few minutes like?**

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, it's just kind of just how we -- it's how things go in those situations. When you have a play that's all or nothing, both teams want to try to figure out what the other team's in, use all their timeouts because you can look back on a moment like that and think to yourself -- especially as a coach, I feel like -- like dang, I should have used that timeout to see what they were in.

We understand as players that sometimes those situations are going to take a little bit longer to get to and the buildup can be a little bit bigger.

**Q. Were you expecting L.A. to call a timeout?**

SAM DARNOLD: It's not something I'm expecting. It's just, when it happens, regroup and understand what we're thinking as an offense.

**Q. Was that three different play calls?**

SAM DARNOLD: I'm not going to disclose that information, but it's definitely something that see what they're in and maybe rethink things.

**Q. On that two-point play, when you repped that play in practice, how many times have you made it there, to the tight end on the back side? Have you ever thrown**

**that one in practice, or is it just the way it played out?**

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, we have. Not necessarily on that play, but just going up against Mike's defense all the time in training camp and OTAs, you have to tend to get to those third and fourth progressions pretty quickly.

**Q. What kind of guy is Eric like in the locker room?**

SAM DARNOLD: He's a great guy. He's someone who's been around the block a little bit, been on a few teams, and just understands what this whole thing is about. So it's a great guy to have in that locker room for guys to look up to.

Not necessarily a vocal leader. Sauby is -- he can be a vocal leader for us, but more so just kind of seeing how he moves throughout his day and how he does things. It's always that presence that's good to have.

**Q. What does it say about a team where a lot of people don't really know who he is?**

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, that's our team. There's a ton of guys that can step up no matter what the situation calls for, no matter what the situation is. Whether it's a two-point play to win the game or it's a play like in the Colts game where he just same kind of route, ends up coming open and he's going to get nine yards for us.

**Q. (No microphone)? Can you talk about in the pocket and going through the progressions?**

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, it's always something that I'm looking to get better at. It's something that's really hard to simulate throughout an off-season because there's nothing like playing 11-on-11 football. You can simulate it a little bit with certain drills you work in the off-season, but that's why the off-season is so important when you get here for the OTAs and training camp as quarterbacks is because you want to be able to feel that rush and get as much work as you can playing 11-on-11 football because there's nothing that simulates that.

**Q. Going back to Carolina for a second, when you got traded there, it was sort of characterized as being a fresh start opportunity for you. Is that a fair way to describe it? Did you feel like after New York you kind of needed something like that?**

SAM DARNOLD: For me, the way I looked at it, it was just another opportunity for me to go play good football. I didn't really think about it as a fresh start or anything like that. It was just going to another team. To be honest, there was too much going on in my life at that time when I got traded to Carolina to worry about what it was in my life or what



time was going on.

It was more so just getting there, learning the offense, meeting the guys, and that was really it that was on my mind. For me it was just another experience that has kind of paved the way for who I am and kind of what I've become.

**Q. Used to be that motion would help you identify man versus zone presnap, and now you've got three corners pressed up, and that also usually ends up being zone coverage on that first pick. What's a quarterback supposed to do nowadays to kind of identify it?**

SAM DARNOLD: You know, it's tough. Defenses are making it really hard. But that's -- like as a quarterback, I love that part of the game. To be able to recognize zone coverage, which I feel like I did -- I thought I did a good job of recognizing it. I just thought the nickel was going to stay inside on that play and carry that slant.

He made a really good play on it. And that's just something that, again, like I mentioned, I kind of pride myself in seeing that look or those looks, but again like I said, he made a really good play on it.

**Q. Josh Jones' first start in a couple years against a really good defense obviously. What did you think about the job he did?**

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, Josh was amazing. He was amazing all day, just doing his job. I don't think it's any more than that. He's been doing it in practice when we've needed it. Even throughout the season, guys go down, and he's able to step in even if it's for a play or two.

Even in our goal line package throughout the season, he just does his job every single play. We're just going to continue to look to him to step up whenever we need him to.

**Q. Given all the different ways he can get open at all different levels, how nice is it to have Jax, who is also a Pro Bowler along with you?**

SAM DARNOLD: Jax is awesome. I can't say it enough. He's been a really good player all year. I've known how good he is. It's fun to be able to work with him.

**Q. Christmas week with the schedules, is it unusual in your NFL career for a coach to let you take off the first of the week?**

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, some coaches do it different. I've

been places where we don't. I've been places where it is like it is here. It just kind of depends on the coach and kind of what the group really needs and what we feel like is right.

With the Thursday night game, it really makes sense to come in here, move around a little bit on a short -- get going on a Tuesday. We've had a few days off. So there was a lot obviously that Coach Mike and his staff and some of the guys really thought about and put together this schedule, and I think it's great.

**Q. How much do you guys appreciate just that?**

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, it's huge. Whenever you have a coach that's willing to listen to players and just do what's best for the team, at the end of the day, we can all respect that.

**Q. I can't remember if we asked you this after the game, but the design of the second two-point try, the kind of wild play, is that pass supposed to go backwards?**

SAM DARNOLD: Yeah, it was asked, and I don't think I answered it.

(Laughter).

I think I'm going to keep it the same, yeah. It went backwards, and I'll leave it at that.

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