

Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

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Seattle, Washington, USA

Coach Mike Macdonald Postgame Press Conference



Seahawks - 41, 49ers - 6

MIKE MACDONALD: All right. First, what an atmosphere. Holy smokes. The 12s, just our organization putting on a great setting. You do try to actually try to take some time and look around and just understand how incredibly blessed we are with the best fans in the world.

It definitely made an impact definitely to start the game. I just want to appreciate this. That was awesome, freakin' awesome.

In terms of our team, I mean that's probably the most complementary game we've played up to this point, and obviously starting the game out with the kickoff return for a touchdown was tremendous. Again, excited to see the blocks on that play, but a great return by Rashid.

And then just kept stacking plays, the takeaways on defense. Kept playing. The quarterback's a hard guy to contain and he makes plays and you can't get frustrated; you gotta keep playing.

And then offensively to be able to control the ball, ball never being in jeopardy, being able to run it, scoring in the red zone, all those things we've been trying to do finally coming to life. And you just keep stacking those things. And it was a heck of a win, man.

It's funny, in the locker room it's, like, we're really excited, we're very proud of the effort. And the guys understand that there's still a mission at hand. We got another week coming up here that we need to take care of business every day, and that's the focus. Proud of the group. We'll celebrate today, guys will be off tomorrow and be back on Monday.

Q. When did you know for sure that Sam was going to play? And what was kind of the process there with that?

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, I mean from what we told you

how it was going down. There was a, hey, he could come out here and throw it and feel terrible, and then we would have to pivot.

But from what he was saying and what the guys were saying, what the medical team was saying, it seemed like he was going to be able to give it a go. So that's basically what happened.

You felt like he was -- based on his communication with us, it felt like he was confident. So that's where we're at.

Q. What did you think about the way he played?

MIKE MACDONALD: Tremendous, tremendous. Couple of plays early that I think to get in the swing of things. But I say "manage" the game as a very high-powered compliment. Just throwing it on time, taking care of the ball, making the plays when we need to.

I think there's going to be some explosives out there that maybe we could get to. But, shoot, I thought there's a lot of operation stuff that he did that really helped us as well.

Q. Talk about field position and third downs and the last time you played the 49ers. What was it tonight that (indiscernible).

MIKE MACDONALD: Our kickoff team was tremendous. This is probably one of the best kickoff return teams in the league. Mike Morris had some tremendous plays. Tyrice Knight had some great plays. That really helped us start those drives. That was awesome.

And then we gave up some more third downs this game than we did last game, but the guys were able to really kind of regroup, go to the next play. I think some of those we ended up in some takeaways. That was awesome. The fourth-down stops, flipped field position, so that was huge.

Q. In the way this league goes with people running on fourth down so much more, for a defense, kind of almost more than a turnover of the ball, (indiscernible) did you get the field position benefit out of it?

MIKE MACDONALD: Right, they don't count them as takeaways, but that's really what they are. We started the year kind of slow on fourth downs on defense. So to our



coaches' credit and our players' credit, we identified it's something we want to improve on. It kind of worked the problem, and the guys just, they come to life on fourth down. It's pretty cool.

Q. What specific aspect on fourth down did you work on (indiscernible)?

MIKE MACDONALD: I think you get what you emphasize. We talked about it, we prepped it more in practice, created more situations. It's that simple.

Q. Rashid has made a big difference. You acquired him in season, you're the head coach; you've got a million things going on, I'm sure you're in consultation with personnel, but what did you think you were getting, how much did you know?

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, he was someone that I know that we were targeting throughout the process. And I mean that's John and the personnel folks that made it come to life. So, shout-out to him.

Turns out, it was a luxury, initially, because of our receiver situation, but with Tory going down it ended up being a great move. It was a great move initially.

But from my perspective and the coaches' perspective he's a player that we really respect. When he's catching the ball in kickoff return, you're like, oh, here we go, we've got to contain this guy. When he's on the field on offense, you can't let him get behind you as well.

The receiver run game is something you have to account for as well. It really does help the team big time. So, shout out to John.

Q. You talk about rosters all year long. Now that you've seen that process work in in the playoffs, what kind of confidence does that build?

MIKE MACDONALD: It's nice to get confirmation in how you do stuff, but we're going to do the same thing. We're going to do what we do game after game and try to nail the heck out of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and just keep stacking it.

And I'll tell you what, our players' demeanor and attitude has really just made that whole philosophy come to life. And they've been tremendous.

Q. Going off the question on Rashid, John's made trades at the trade deadline each of the past three years. Looking big picture, what you guys are building, seeing Ernest get the two turnovers today, a

trade-deadline acquisition, ended up getting the sack --

MIKE MACDONALD: Two All-Pros in trade, that's pretty good.

Q. What does that say, (indiscernible) just see that coming to life here in a game of this magnitude, those buttons being pushed right?

MIKE MACDONALD: I mean obviously, trading for Leonard was, like, before that we were here, but I think it's just the same attitude like we're relentless. I mean, what do you want to call it? You want to call it chasing edges? That's the language that we use. But I feel that's our philosophy is we're just constantly chasing it.

What are the things that we can do to make our team better all the time? Whether it's through acquisition or a period in practice or maybe it's something pregame, scheme, personnel. All those things, it's a relentless attitude to try to always make the team better.

Q. From Thursday's practice till pregame, how many times did Sam throw the ball? Did he even try?

MIKE MACDONALD: That's a question for him. Wasn't many.

Q. What's the early indication on the Charbonnet and Cross, their injuries?

MIKE MACDONALD: Optimistic with Sharbs. You know, we gotta get an image and stuff, but early indications are hopefully it's okay structurally. But you never know with these things, but he wasn't able to come back, obviously.

And Charles was really out of a caution. We were in a position where we didn't need him to come back, but still we're going to have to work through it with his foot. I don't have an indication of what that's going to look like.

Q. Ernest Jones, has been a big leader for you guys since he got here, just for him to come through two takeaways, just everything he did in this game?

MIKE MACDONALD: No, it was great. He was, like, look, this guy was not in a good spot on Thursday. Football Thursday, Wednesday. So for him to kind of get up to speed, get ready to play. The guys follow his lead. Two tremendous plays to really change the course of the game with those takeaways.

Q. (Question about game plan)

MIKE MACDONALD: Not to my knowledge.



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Q. Cooper Kupp has been a guy that's meant so much to this team all season. Ball's not always finding him in a playoff game to lead you guys in receiving and receptions.

MIKE MACDONALD: I didn't know that, but that's awesome. That's really great. Every catch that he makes seems like it's in some sort of high-leverage situation. I mean, this guy's made absolute massive impact on our team. Add that to a Hall of Fame career is pretty cool. Glad he's a Seahawk.

Q. Was there something you saw then or did you think you were getting a timeout?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah. I think I called time. They called it.

Q. You got to see quite a bit of Amari Kight here in the past few weeks. What did you see him progress during the course of the season, big block there?

MIKE MACDONALD: An example of a guy getting an opportunity, and it's cool to hear it on the headset where you feel like we've got a play called. And J.B., our line coach, is, like, I can't wait to see Amari on this play. What else needs to be said? You're just excited for him to show what he can do. He's earned the opportunity. Just done a great job. He's been working his tail off for an opportunity to show up and took advantage of it.

Q. What was the vibe in the building the last couple of days? Your quarterback gets hurt two days before a playoff game. Was that kind of a jolt?

MIKE MACDONALD: I mean, it was just like, let's work the problem, let's figure it out. The guys were steady. We were confident. I felt like everybody but the players were the ones that were worried about it. It's kind of cool.

Q. You've had four straight games with over 160 yards rushing. That's something you guys have been working on all year. What are you seeing on the offensive line?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, tremendous. It's everybody. Our coaches deserve a ton of credit. K-9 (phonetic) obviously had a great game. A lot of it is coming on wide zone, you know that's something that we've been having to work all year and that's where we hang our hat on, so it's great to see it come to life.

Q. So many young players for you guys playing in their first playoff game. How do you think they

approached it (inaudible)?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, been the message, looking at a guy this is my first playoff game, we weren't going to let that be an excuse, though, hey, we're a young team, or we've got a young coach. It's a first whatever. It's like, no, it's like this is the next game. It's week 19. We've treated literally every game every practice every workout every walk through the same about we're trying to we're trying to nail it whatever's put in front of us. We're trying to nail it. So we had a great opportunity here at home. But that's what it was, you know, and our guys did it, and that's what we're going to focus on, so we're going to handle it from here on out.

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