

Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

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Seattle, Washington, USA

Coach Mike Macdonald

Weekday Press Conference



MIKE MACDONALD: Speak every day this week, so only a select crowd. Respect for showing up.

Q. I know you talked about it earlier, but the situation with Zach and he's going to be out and moving forward there.

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I mean, really it's just pretty sure it's ACL. Figuring out what kind of the extent of the injury is and we'll get all the details on when he's going to get it fixed and all that.

You know, you just feel for the guy, for the person. This guy is just an absolute stud, so he's around and in good spirits. We got his back.

Q. What have you thought of Ken's season to this point? Over 1000 yards; played in every game.

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I think Ken has done a heck of a job. I think you're seeing the results in the past X amount of weeks now of result of like -- we always use the term, but really like stacking all those reps.

I thought this was the most decisive he's ran up to this point, and as expected. You just keep getting better and finding ways to improve, especially in the run game. He's done a great job.

Q. When you said the most decisive he's ran, you mean in that last game or just the last...

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, this past game. I thought that was a heck of a performance.

Q. Had the one run I think I think maybe third quarter where it was like the whole offense basically pushed another five yards.

MIKE MACDONALD: Right.

Q. I am guessing that's a play you like and you

highlight.

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, he showed that one today. That was awesome. Every yard matters. Guys were fired up to watch that one.

Q. Velus and Cam, what have you seen out of them?

MIKE MACDONALD: That's part of the reason we brought them here, is to provide great running back depth. Both are really good players in their own right, and they got a great opportunity in front of them.

You hate it to be under these circumstances, but it is what it is. We got to move forward. So they'll be ready to go.

Q. Zach's pass protection is one of his really high traits.

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah.

Q. What have you seen out of other guys behind him, how they stack up in that situation?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, that's something we depend on with Zach, and other guys are definitely capable of doing it as well. Just Zach has just really been excellent at it. That's why he's got the majority of those reps.

Q. Do you see George Holani as someone could come back and help out?

MIKE MACDONALD: George is an option, yeah. See how it goes this week.

Q. Is he physically like ready to go?

MIKE MACDONALD: I think we'll just let it play out this week on how everything goes. Probably hear from that over the next few days.

Q. Justin Outten has stepped into the running back room when Kennedy left. Curious your thoughts on the impact he's had in helping with the running game?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, JO has done a great job. With those guys taking over that room, you know, helping -- like his role and how we game plan and then what he's

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done with helping out with the offensive line as well, he's our eat guy. Kind of all hands on deck in kind of all the different ways, which from my perspective is something I really appreciate.

Just whatever you kind of dig into, just kind of make that area sweet. Take it to the next level. He definitely has that mindset and has great presentations for the players. I know our running back room has really enjoyed working with him.

Shoutout to JO. He's done a great job.

Q. Hey, Mike, can you clarify something for me. You said this morning if you're getting blocked you're not doing your 1.9 percent?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, 1.09. Times 11 is what, 12? 12 is more.

Q. Okay.

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah.

Q. Then to drill down a bit, you talked about the influence in the run game, stopping the run game.

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, it's just -- I mean, you're going to get blocked. If you stay blocked, you know, that's really not holding up your end of the bargain. We have to get off blocks and get to the ball.

I mean, I know it's nerdy and dorky, but you got to do your job and then some. You have to defeat guys in front of you and get to the ball.

So if you want to make it feel like 12 guys out there, you can't just be doing -- can't be average.

What was the second part of the question?

Q. That was it. The way the players are able to channel their emotions and then bring it when they need to, stay within your --

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, really proud of how we handled the game. Guys were poised and physical and played extremely hard. That's exactly what we're looking for. It was great. The guys did a phenomenal job. They been doing great job all year.

Q. What were your thoughts watching and keeping an eye on the Bears-Rams game yesterday?

MIKE MACDONALD: Honestly, like I break down the

game as it's going. Kind of tell myself the formation, what they're doing, you know, kind of take like an academic approach to it I guess.

That's it. I mean...

Q. Is that --

MIKE MACDONALD: Looked cold.

Q. Is that all games? Can you just watch a game as a fan?

MIKE MACDONALD: I always try to guess the play, pull a Tony Romo and guess all the plays. Sometimes I'm right.

Q. Are there any benefits when you're watching an opponent play a different team like who they're playing in terms of coordinator and how they're attacking in terms of what you can learn versus just general tape?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, you're always watching plays through the lens of what that other team is known for doing and what their stuff is. That includes the coordinator and how they build stuff. That's always part of the thinking. Not necessarily in the breakdown, but you kind of know what other defenses do, so that gives you a clue to what that offense might be doing.

Yeah, it's not like -- offenses nowadays are so good. They're not going to just run -- like pull plays out of thin air. It's all for a reason. If you go in thinking every play is for a reason you can start to kind of string together some logic.

Q. Going back to training camp, we've seen offensive, defensive lineman help each other out, give each other tips. Then we hear from Leo Saturday night that he credits that sack to what he heard from Grey Zabel. What does that tell you about the connection this whole team has?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I mean, it's an awesome -- I just heard about it this morning. I mean, what a great microcosm of what I feel like our team has gotten to this point. It's really symbolic of those relationships we've built.

Like I said this morning, for Leo to be like -- to have the humility to seek out that type of advice and realize and take it from a rookie, kind of just initially to kind of like from a layman's perspective it's like, why would he do that? You dig in and you start to realize that those guys have been working together for a long time and they've developed a cool relationship.

So I think it's really, really cool.



Q. When you looked at the film, what's the (indiscernible) from the defensive performance on Saturday?

MIKE MACDONALD: Our effort was tremendous. We just -- guys were playing really hard, really convicted. You know, we played sound football, which is imperative against that team. We attacked the ball consistently, and I felt like the guys were very, very intentional on attacking the football, so that was great.

Q. Feel like we been hearing that efforts answer out you week after week. To be saying that about your defense in week 17, 18, playoffs, what does that tell you about these guys?

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, I don't think I would be standing here right now talking to you guys if our team hasn't decided to play with that type of effort. That's really all three phases. That's a decision they've made that they want to play to. I think our coaching staff has done a great job showing them why and developing -- you know, it's like I've said this before, it's like, okay, I'll play hard, but if I don't know what to do and how to do it and what to expect and have all the reps underneath me all the time and how it fits, where the guy next to me is going to be, it's really hard to just run straight ahead into the wall and not know really all the context behind it.

You kind of have to have that understanding so you can take great angles and take aggressive angles and know what to look at, all those things to let you play on time.

So I think you're just looking at the result of just a ton of great stacked reps over the course of time. It's really that simple.

Q. Do you already have an idea how you're going to balance keeping Sam sharp versus protecting him against reinjury or is that something you have to wait to figure out?

MIKE MACDONALD: Something we're just going to work through day to day. You know, balancing, making sure we get enough reps at the proper tempo with the proper looks, you know, and getting Sam the reps that he needs. I think that will be day to day right now.

Q. Going back to Saturday, when you see him take that sack early and come back the next play and rip that out to Cooper, does that tell you that he had everything he needed that day?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, that was a great -- I was

nervous him going down there and taking off. Yeah, then he ripped the seven cut to Coop. That was awesome. At that point, I think I exhaled a little bit.

Q. The practice of showing plays that are shocking effort, you mentioned just showing the one of Ken, did you do that last year, too?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah. Yeah. Like I don't know, if I was a receiver, like I'd kind of want to know -- I think it's a great opportunity for the guys that really don't understand like how everything -- not that they don't understand, but show how it all fits together. Show that those little things are big things to us.

The other person that does a great job of that is Nico. He comes up here and we have fun ways to do it, like giving out belts. We have all sorts of stuff we do.

He has a great energy to him. He comes up here at least twice a week. Guys love it. He's always highlighting those little things that go a long way. We have a great time doing it.

I feel like it paints a great picture to the guys of what we're looking for and what matters. He's really headed that up and he's done a great job.

Q. When guys have talked about why you guys are here at this point in the year, they mention the expectation is clear of them. Do you think there are other examples of how you show guys what the expectation is every day?

MIKE MACDONALD: Man, I think like if you say it's going to be about intent, then I think you have to back it up. That's not just me. That's our coaches and like the vets on the team. Hey, look, if you come up and you're prepared and have a great attitude and you get after it and you go practice and go let it rip like we say all the time -- you know, you have to see like, okay, I'm not going to get killed for doing something, for making a mistake.

So that way we can have the intention all those times. To me it's the coach's responsibility to make sure we make the most out of those reps by how we design things, how we coach it up, and improve from rep to rep.

Feel like as a team we've done a great job of that. I know we've fallen short sometimes and that's going to be inevitable, but as long as you realize it and make it right and nobody is bent out of shape about it, you just say, hey, look, we realized it; we screwed this up; now what are we going to do to move forward? It's no harm, no foul; let's rock and roll from there.

It's that consistent attitude from day to day.

Q. Jake Bobo had two catches all year through the regular season. (Regarding third and ten, 16 yard catch.)

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, that was a critical part of the game where we were able to finish that drive out and really not give them an opportunity, a great opportunity at least, with the ball back and finishing with a touchdown.

That was a critical play in that game and that was a heck of a play, so not surprised. More just happy for him that the preparation met the opportunity and we made it happen.

But decisive throw on Sam's part, great run after catch, and put us in position to not be in jeopardy of getting doubled up at half, so that was big time.

Q. On your pregame radio show you had a quote about when -- if I have it right -- about gratitude erases anxiety, something like that.

MIKE MACDONALD: Something like that.

Q. Where did you get that?

MIKE MACDONALD: Mike Gervais-ism. I'm getting coached, too. Yeah. You know, like there is some study out there that he cites that that's what it does, and it makes sense. Just count your blessings. Didn't have to worry as much, so that's a good life lesson as well.

Q. But you kind of -- seemed like the context was making it this far so I guess the bigness of this could be something that could get to you and...

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I mean, that's a practice that I do. You look around and you're worried about -- look, I'm guilty. Hey, they got this play, they got that play. We got to defend this, blah, blah, blah.

You walk in the locker room and you're like, we got some great players and they're ready to go. You know, like okay, I feel a little bit better now. So happens all the time.

Q. What does it do to a defense when the players take ownership in your see-ball, get-ball mentality?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I think that's just a function -- look, if we can make it so it's simple and clear for the guys so they can go play the right way, if you want me to go out there and do seven things based off if the sky is blue or gray and then if it's 70 degrees out or less, I'm just going to

be standing out there.

If you can put it in terms where I can go play the right way -- and it's different for different players. Some guys it resonates more by giving more detail and getting into the weeds with them. Some guys they play their best ball when you make it a one-track mind and go wreck stuff.

That's how we choose to operate.

Q. On that note, Ernest Jones, what is he like in terms of what you're saying processing and how much you give them and getting players in the right position?

MIKE MACDONALD: He's got a lot on his plate and he's really great at it. If he wasn't as good as he is we couldn't be doing some of the stuff that we're doing. He's right there at the forefront.

Q. With the way the division played out, does it feel like it was inevitable that this was going to the path to potentially the Super Bowl, to go through two NFC West teams?

MIKE MACDONALD: I think it's cool how great our division is. You know, really wouldn't want it any other way.

Q. Zach, among other things, was effective in short yardage goal line situations. How beneficial is it to have the Tush Push to lean on?

MIKE MACDONALD: That's a great point. Yeah, haven't really thought about it like that. That's going to be something we continue to lean on. These other guys will be good in some of those situations as well.

Q. Talking about the tight ends, I think Eric Saubert had quite a few notable ones in the game.

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, Sauby had a great game. AJ had a great game. Thought our receivers continue to block really well in the perimeter. Takes all 11 to get the run game going. It's not just running backs, not just the line. It's even the quarterback making sure we're in the right plays, making sure you're carrying out your fakes. It's all connected.

A lot of times those tight ends are at the point of attack to get the play started and they've been able to do that.

Q. What did you think about (indiscernible) tackle, when he jumped in there?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, did a great job. Guys were fired up about him. Again, great play on one of K9's

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touchdown runs and some other really good ones there as well. Yeah, should be proud of himself.

Q. Do you expect Josh Jones to come back to practice this week, and anyone else other than Charles and Zach come out with any nicks?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, some things we're working through right now in terms of guys being banged up. We'll play that day by day. Josh is a candidate to come back this week.

It's just like we got to see how it is on Wednesday. If he's good enough to practice, great. If not, we got to go to third. That's kind of where we are right now.

Q. Ken told us over the summer that he had changed up some of his eating and I think he said his sleep routines with an eye towards availability and all that. How have you seen that help him this season?

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, he's been -- I mean, I know he was working through his foot over the course of the offseason. That was frustrating for him because of the amount of work that he was putting in.

Hopefully he realizes the dividends that's paid, that work he put in to really get himself in a good spot up to this point. I've seen a guy that's gotten better through the season.

You can't say that about all runners, so that's a tribute to him and how he's taking I have taken care of his body.

Q. Does Charles need to -- do you need to see him practice to play?

MIKE MACDONALD: I wouldn't say necessarily. But I wouldn't say necessarily, yeah.

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