

# Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

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Seattle, Washington, USA

## Coach Mike Macdonald

Weekday Press Conference



MIKE MACDONALD: I'm sure you got a lot of great injury questions. Go ahead.

### Q. How is Charles Cross doing?

MIKE MACDONALD: Charles is good. We'll see how today goes. But we're optimistic for the game. But just working through his foot.

### Q. How did Sam look yesterday?

MIKE MACDONALD: Good. Good. In terms of the plan, we're still on the plan. So I wasn't part of the offensive walkthrough just now, but they said it went really well, and feeling good.

### Q. Does he need to throw (indiscernible) to have his arm in shape at this point?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I'm not sure if -- I don't know if I know the right answer to that. I mean, he feels better than he did going into the game, and he showed that he could throw then. So you'd like him to get some throws before Sunday.

### Q. What's going on with Amari Kight?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, Amari -- let's see here. What was it again? Either a knee or ankle. Yeah, just a knee from the game. But it's not -- I mean, kind of go day by day right now on how it's going. Him and Josh, for that matter. It's just how it goes going into Sunday.

### Q. (Indiscernible) day to day, Josh?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, mm-hmm.

### Q. (Indiscernible) able to go for some reason, is Logan next? Did you start looking at Grey at that left tackle at all? How did that work?

MIKE MACDONALD: We have a plan for it. You know, I

don't really want to say what we do. But we have a plan for it.

### Q. When you look at the -- you mentioned yesterday explosives are how you get all the points that the Rams had in the last game. I think it was 10 or something. Was there any theme there of how they got all those that you noticed?

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, let me clarify. It's not, like, exclusive to that game. I mean, that's kind of the normal recipe for not playing very good defense, is giving up explosive plays.

So, yeah, they did some good things where, I mean, Stafford made some great throws, you know, and you got to -- we can play them better.

And then the run game, I felt like it's probably more leaky yardages than explosives. They had some explosive runs in the first game. And then there's just things we need to be better aware of and be in position to play those plays, without kind of getting into all the details.

But better execution by us will help, and then better playing by us, and let's go play ball.

### Q. Coby back in the lineup for you last week, what did you think of his game stepping in there after the time he was out?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, well, didn't feel like he had been out in terms of how sharp he played. So he's doing a great job. He's playing fast, got energy, affected the ball, takes some great shots at the ball. Great to have him back.

### Q. You've talked about Jaxon and how his demeanor doesn't really change, even in a game where he's not making a bunch of catches or getting his stats. How do you see that, his demeanor doesn't change, or the way you see his effort on the field and things like that?

MIKE MACDONALD: I just think that's who he is, which is probably easy for him to be that way because that's just the type of guy he is, the type of player. So it's kind of like a nonissue, you know. He's out there trying to do what he can to help us win.



Like I said before, one of our best strategies to win the game is to get Jax the ball. Sometimes it doesn't work out the way we want or the ball doesn't find him, and you just got to keep chipping away at it, make some adjustments, maybe put him in different spots, get more down the line than game plan-wise.

But that's just who he is. So it's kind of a nonissue for us.

**Q. Jake Bobo mentioned after that game Cooper Kupp's run block. I think he jokingly called it Cooper's run blocking school or something. When you have a receiver who has accomplished he has, Super Bowl MVP, Player of the Year, all that, to be that focused on blocking and passing that on to a younger receiver, what does that do for a team?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Again, he's a force multiplier for us, especially in the receiver room. It's like his expertise of the game is fascinating to me. Great teachers can make all these different things very simple. So he has just a really great way to explain these things to our guys and a guy like me can understand, where that's not really my thing.

And so I can imagine what -- how that would help guys that actually can do that type of stuff. And so it's exciting. It makes it really come to life for those guys.

**Q. Has there been anybody else you've coached who has been like that, a veteran guy that has what understanding?**

MIKE MACDONALD: That's interesting. I think Eric Weddle was kind of ahead of his time just in terms of seeing the whole game. He would just be telling guys, like, in real time how to play plays because he knew it -- and at that point in my career, I wasn't -- I didn't know a lot of that stuff. So in my mind I'm like how in the heck does this guy know all this stuff that's about to happen? But he was very similar to Coop.

**Q. As glowingly as guys talk about his impact in the room, though, how impressed have you been by Cooper, just with his availability after a few injury-plagued years and his production, what he can still do at this stage of his career?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Are you surprised that the guy has put himself in position to play great football? Not one bit. I mean, we've had a plan for him. I think probably earlier in his career the amount of workload that he would put in on a daily basis, I think that has taken a toll on him.

But he's been really smart on -- Sam and the guys have

done a great job of managing his reps. And when he's out there, he's going a hundred miles an hour. So I'm not surprised.

**Q. You talked about John and his impact. He did actually win the award today for Executive of the Year.**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, Dave told me. That's awesome. Yeah, congrats. It's great. Well deserved.

**Q. I guess just thoughts in general on kind of the job he's done --**

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, I mean, name the thing -- name a thing that we've done since we've walked in the door two years ago, and especially this year. And we've gotten great returns, I mean, in terms of action items.

But I think I've talked about this at length before, but to me it's like the leadership probably needs to get talked about more with him on how he operates daily and how he treats everybody and the environment that we've been able to create around here is just -- I think that's helped our development of our people. That's helped guys take the next steps in their career.

And you can go down the list of coaches, personnel, players, that have taken another step in their career. And you trace it all the way back, it's like, well, John has got a lot of responsibility in that.

And I'm sure, if he was standing right here, he would be the first to thank all of our personnel staff, just everybody being bought into the same thing. That's the type of guy he is. I'm really happy he won. He deserves it.

**Q. What do you remember about your first interactions with John? I don't think you had crossed paths before the interviews, right?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, we had an interview at the hotel. Sit at the hotel, I got a text if wanted a coffee. I used to live right there, so I knew where he was. Hopped across the street, and it was like we'd known each other forever. It was pretty cool.

But that's how -- that's how he is. He has this ability to put you at ease and take the edge off and let you relax and feel like you can be yourself. And that's not an easy quality because I'm sure I don't do that.

**Q. What were your first impressions of him when you sat down with him? What stood out to you right away?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think that was it. I mean, we took a



-- we were walking back, so we got to spend some time, him and I, and he was explaining, like, really the thought behind how the process went, who was part of it, what the thinking was. Kind of gave me the whole deal on just where they were coming from.

And just to hear him talk about our people was just really cool, like talking about Nolan, I think Nolan had just got promoted, so he was fired up about that. I remember him talking about Nolan becoming the assistant GM, the other people, Jody's excitement of the whole thing. Par for the course. Really set the tone.

**Q. You've gotten a lot of attention for the vision video that got sent out yesterday. And for somebody who wants to stay in the now all the time, visioning is future. What was that process for you like to look ahead, and did that vision go beyond the NFC championship?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I think the goal of what I was trying to portray to the guys was the feeling of what we're trying to create, of that it is about us and it's about our connectedness and what we're striving to become as a football team.

The NFC championship is really just context of where we could go. Of course, there's more goals to be had, but that was really the thought behind it. Yeah, I think it's that simple. But it's good to have visualization. That's a powerful tool, and I'm glad it worked, if it did.

**Q. Sean lived in an 11 personnel for so long as a coach, and then the three tight end thing has been such a big thing about what they're doing this year. How have you seen that particular piece, the 13 kind of evolve for them as the season has gone along and how they've done it and where they're using and deploying it?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think this is a great example of how they evolve from year to year. You can kind of take several things over the last three to five years from kind of when they've been making these playoff runs, and they're a team that evolves and adapts and grows throughout the season. I think that's why they've been able to make these runs. So this is an example of that.

I don't want to put words in their mouth, but they've got great tight ends, and they found something that was a weapon for them, and they've been able to kind of activate it.

It's not like they're running the same stuff. That has evolved as well over the course of the year, which is the

same thing they did when they were in 11. And they still do that in 11. Yeah, but it's a great -- it's an easy example to see how they operate, and makes you definitely respect how they do it.

**Q. When you see offensive play callers, how often do you see that their play calling is predicated on down distance and field position versus sequencing of what they've done?**

MIKE MACDONALD: It's both. It's both. It's just, hey, what's the context. So both of those things are context. And play callers have personalities and things that they like to do. And I think it's our job to try to identify those the best we can so we can help our guys be in good situations.

But, yeah, I mean, like what information can you have on the front end before you make a decision? Well, I'm going to try to use all that to our advantage. I'm sure they're doing the same thing.

**Q. Stafford got you a couple times on no-look passes. Do you coach against that, or is that an in-the-moment, play-to-play type thing?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, it's hard to, like, simulate, you know. But he hasn't just got us, he's gotten everybody to this point. So it's going to take discipline in our drops to try to mitigate as best we can. But he's dang good at it. In the moment, it's hard to not go where he's looking.

**Q. So the coaching point is to stay to the assignment from the middle --**

MIKE MACDONALD: It depends on what we're in. It goes back to one of those things you can't let how they operate affect how we want to operate, kind of a core principle. So, again, easier said than done. Something that we're working on. But he's good at.

**Q. Are Drew and Jalen throwing no-look passes in practice this week?**

MIKE MACDONALD: We haven't really like -- it's kind of a hard ask. Just go play high-level football and play fast, play decisive. It's kind of like a tangent. We just don't believe in just running the card and then throw to where the route is circled or defensively bite on this route or like -- it's like, no, let's go play great Seahawks football, go play fast react, let our guys react in real time, make calls.

And we try to give the best looks we can in some of those scouted looks, but at the end of the day you can't -- there's a spot for getting like the perfect picture and stuff, but we don't -- we'd rather just go play great football and sharpen

each other that way.

**Q. Do you expect Uchenna Nwosu and Robbie Ouzts to be available?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think Robbie is going to be out there today in some capacity, and so is Chenna.

**Q. Coaches at every level are going to say they want to be good in all three phases and special teams is important. Yet you see a lot of disparity around the league. As somebody whose team now is having success on teams and who worked for a special teams guy in Harbaugh, what do you think the difference is in the teams that actually thrive there?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, I can just tell you from our perspective is just that's what we believe in. So we're going to try to back that up the best we can. I think it goes back to one of those just kind of how we want to operate. Look, we're going to tell you what we think is important and how we want to operate, like, principle-wise.

And then, again, how you build trust and how you develop things and how you grow, you got to back it up with your actions. It's how you invest in it, who you have out there, who you have coaching them. Jay and Fitz have done a tremendous job. And we've got great players that buy in and they love playing for those guys. And they've done a great job.

**Q. George Holani, how did he look in practice?**

MIKE MACDONALD: George did a good job. Doing a great job.

**Q. And I think Elijah practiced all week, but wasn't active. You mentioned some roster stuff --**

MIKE MACDONALD: Same situation this week. There's a possibility of him being up. Frankly, we're still working through the roster combinations of what's going to be best going into the game.

**Q. You've talked about trust. How do you build that, and how is that continuing with the players, coach --**

MIKE MACDONALD: It's just back to the integrity thing, are you going to do what you said you're going to do? If you keep doing that, it's going to build trust. You coach stuff that works, you know. If I tell you to do something and it helps you go play good football, I'm going to build trust. If it goes opposite -- and it's a fragile thing. You can build trust all the way up and lose it like that.

So it's something that we take really seriously. Yeah. And, look, the players know. They know who the good players are. They know who the good coaches are. They know if you're full of crap or not. They know all the things. So there's no tricking them. You've got to lay all your cards out on the table and work together and go get it done.

**Q. Does your messaging on regaining trust change or evolve when players kind of --**

MIKE MACDONALD: Look, you're looking at a guy that didn't play. So, you know, from my perspective, it was like, well, you better coach some stuff that works. Otherwise, they're going to look at you like, What do you know? So that's kind of where it started.

And then you just -- look, they want -- they have goals. They want to play a certain way. They want to play great football, and they want people that are going to be invested in them and believe in them.

If you show that -- you don't have to tell them. Just show it through your actions, and they'll see it. They'll feel it. And that's how you where build it.

But I don't think it's changed over the course of years. I mean, it's sharpened, it's evolved, but I don't think it's changed.

**Q. Have you noticed the forecast is getting closer to 37?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Interesting.

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