

# Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

Friday, January 23, 2026

Seattle, Washington, USA

## Coach Mike Macdonald

### Weekday Press Conference



MIKE MACDONALD: I'm sure you're all willing and eager to know how Sam did this week.

Did great. Everything is going to plan, let's put it that way.

He's going to play. Take it day by day.

**Q. Looked like he was throwing before practice today. Is that an indication he's feeling better than he was last week?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, without getting into all the details, all part of the plan, so...

Feels good. Gets better every day.

**Q. How much closer to normal is he?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I don't know. (Smiling.) I honestly don't. If I told you I would be lying. I don't know.

**Q. How is Charles?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, Charles practiced today, and same thing, he's getting better. He should be able to play.

**Q. What about Josh Jones? First practice in a while.**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, he's how we listed him, you know...

**Q. The running backs, with George, is that an indication or is it the backup or kind of what...**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, like I would love to tell you exactly every play we're going to run and who is going to be doing what for the whole entirety of the game.

It is what it is right now. Yeah.

**Q. How was George's week?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, George did great. All those guys that have been practicing to get ready to come back have done a great job.

**Q. How did the players embrace the week?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, they've been great. They've been great. We just do what we do. There are some things today in practice that were great and some things that we're going to go back to it and make sure we get it cleaned up.

That's par for the course on Friday. Go have a heck of a Saturday tomorrow. The guys have been great.

**Q. What happened with Amari to have his knee be an issue?**

MIKE MACDONALD: That's just what happened. Happened in the game.

**Q. Coming out of the game?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah.

**Q. Has it been a normal week for you?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Outside of talking to you fine people every day, everything else has been about the same.

**Q. Seems like you're really enjoying that.**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, it's great.

**Q. You joke about how you kind of focus on and overthink things, try to do too much, however you want to put it.**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yep.

**Q. Is there any extra element of that that you're trying to calm down this week or feel like everything is normal?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I mean, believe me or not, this is just like -- once we get to the stadium and there is the atmosphere, we're pretty insulated here. It's just where we go to work. This is what we do.



You understand like -- definitely understand the stakes. Of course you do that. But just like what we told the team: Let's be great and relentlessly chase like refocusing, coming back to center when your mind wanders.

It's okay. It's going to happen. All that stuff is out of your control, so just let's do the stuff we can control right now.

**Q. This will be the first NFC Championship at Lumen Field in 20 years. What do you think that atmosphere will feel like on Sunday?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Wow. I mean, that's pretty -- hopefully -- that's a pretty cool.

**Q. Excuse me. (Indiscernible.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: Okay, I was going to say.

**Q. I think it's 11.**

MIKE MACDONALD: All right, Bob. I see you, Bob. Fact checker. Bob the Seahawk AI bot over here.

**Q. I was thinking of the '05 championship.**

MIKE MACDONALD: It's awesome. This place will be rocking. It will be electric. 12s will be or their stuff. It's going to be awesome, man. I mean, last week was incredible so I'm imagining it's going to be kicked up a notch.

I don't know how that's possible but, again, this is why we do what we do. It's for weeks like this, for our community, for our city, for the 12s, for our guys to have this opportunity. Doesn't get any better than this. Not a cloud in the sky. It's middle of the January. Light out past 4:00.

I mean, it's incredible.

**Q. In terms of getting the first round bye, maybe you need to see this play out over a longer period of time, but can you tell the benefit of that in terms of fresh legs or anything.**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, if I gave you something I would just be making it up. Probably got to think about it when we have time to kind of digest everything.

**Q. We talk about the importance of having varied skillsets on the field. What's the value of the different personalities that you have in the locker room?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, it's great. I think it just bodes

to people picking each other up when they need it. Certain days you need certain personalities to shine through, and you're right, we have a lot of great personalities. I think a cool thing is they can be those personalities. We love them for it.

So we also have a common thread that we love and care about our team. You know, we have a high standard, but we're trying to create, too. It's kind of cool.

**Q. When it comes to the things you were talking about, keeping it the same, keeping this natural, Cooper Kupp has down this road before a couple times back in the day with the Rams. How much is that applicable to what you're talking about in terms of...**

MIKE MACDONALD: Using his experience?

**Q. Yeah.**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, absolutely. Of course you're going to lean into what Coop says or his experience and what he thinks.

We really like -- we've consulted him every step of the way, so this is kind of keeping it that. It's not any different. It's par for the course on how we operate.

That's how he sees it, sees it the same way. So, look, I always phrase to this way, if you said, okay, if you put yourself in the shoes of us, wouldn't you want it to operate like that, you know?

I think that just takes pressure of the guys so we can focus on doing what's best for us.

**Q. ...used to be an asset in this regard; did that surprise you at all?**

MIKE MACDONALD: No, he had suggestions the second we signed him. It was awesome.

**Q. You guys didn't have three weeks at home all season. Only time you had back to back was a Thursday night against the Rams. Have you felt like the benefit of just being in one place for three weeks?**

MIKE MACDONALD: It's funny, I didn't realize that. It's just really just like today is a Friday. You know, this is our cadence. This is what we do. It's nice not to hop on a plane and fly across the country, which sometimes we do on Fridays.

Those trips aren't bad either. We get to spend a bunch of

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

time with the guys and everything has its kind of trade-offs. Yeah, it's been great to be at home, but haven't really thought about it.

**Q. You're getting Elijah back this week. What can he add to the mix?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I thought with Elijah, the things that he's done throughout the season is what he brings to the table. It's exciting that he's put himself in this position.

**Q. ...told us Demarcus Lawrence has transformed the defense. In what ways do you think that's true?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Man, there is a lot of aspects. Like I think how -- really that room and the relationship with that room that they've decided to play this way is like setting a great example for the rest of our team.

Look, D-line is really driven majority of the time off production and stats and sacks. I mean, that drives prices and guys get paid off that type of stuff. For guys to make that collective decision, hey, we're going to play this way. Rising tide raises all ships. It's the best for the team; it's the best for us. We're going to sharpen each other this way.

D-Law is right there leading the charge. Definitely a game changer. By the way, plays great football, too.

**Q. When you said that you -- maybe you're playing defense differently than you thought you would, is some of that because of that?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, yeah.

**Q. Most of it?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I don't know. Definitely contributes to it, yeah.

**Q. Jesse Minter, what did you think of him getting the head coaching job? What kind of coach do you think he's going to be?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, it's like Twilight Zone. I'm in Seattle, Harbs is in New York and Jesse is in Baltimore. That's the NFL for you. Really happy for Jess. He's deserving. He's a great coach, phenomenal coach, great person. Obviously friend of mine, so really, really happy for him.

**Q. Grey Zabel, his qualities as a leader has what surprised you at all bringing him in as a rookie?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I don't really play like the surprise game, but you just trust the decisions of our personnel folks, and they felt strongly about it, about just who he was as a person.

And then it's kind of all gravy after that. So been a lot of gravy. He's been phenomenal.

**Q. You mentioned practicing outside. Not easy to maintain a grass field this time of year.**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, shoutout to the field guys. I mean, I don't think anybody slips, when it rains we're out there and the guys do a great job. Appreciate you bringing that up.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: No.

**Q. Are you expecting (indiscernible.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: How are we listed him?

**Q. Questionable?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, questionable. (Smiling.)

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: Oh, yeah, man, player-wise, shoot, you name it, 'Spoon, EJ, Leslie, AD, John, Dave.

**Q. What about it about 'Spoon?**

MIKE MACDONALD: I think it goes back to like, hey, we didn't have a handbook on, hey, it's March 25th, go to page five, paragraph three. This is what we're doing today. We're all in this experience together of where we're trying to go.

So if you do that, then like we're in it together. It's all our jobs to make sure we're all kind of pushing in the same direction. It's been great. Love those guys, man. We got a great team.

You think about like who do you love on the team, we love everybody. They're just phenomenal.

**Q. (Regarding Leslie.)**

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah.

**Q. How much of a resource is he?**

MIKE MACDONALD: Tremendous. Critical part of how we operate. He's more right than I want him to be. (Smiling.)

**Q. Is there a story there?**

MIKE MACDONALD: It's just like, dang it. Turns out you're right. So, yeah, he's awesome. Love Les.

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