

Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

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Q. Last time we talked to you was after the DK trade and the Geno trade and not being able to sign a guard. Do you ever think about the butterfly effect of those decisions and DeMarcus Lawrence and Cooper Kupp and Grey Zabel?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: No, it's really more like what we're dealing with every single day, and it's never really changed. Actually it's never changed since 2010 when Pete and I came here. It's like, what are we doing every single day, what are our contingency plans, how are we improving in every aspect of our operation. I think that's why Pete and I totally hit it off.

I understand the angst. I definitely feel it. But it's not how we operate. It's like, okay, what are we doing every single day to get better. It's really as simple as that. Work on it, pray on it, and how can we improve every day.

Q. When you talked with Sam Darnold and DeMarcus Lawrence, what was your sell pitch to them? What did you tell them about the franchise at that point?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Well, AD had a relationship with DeMarcus, and then Clint had a relationship with Sam. So when you're bringing people into your building, especially in free agency, you want to make sure that the quality of the person, do we know exactly what we're getting. So we had a great background with those guys, like great -- like the character, the person, the work ethic, love of the game, the grit, all the things you've heard for years and years or whatever.

But then it was about, hey, there's so many foundational pieces here. Yeah, I think I've told you guys before, in 2005, the Seahawks hired Tim Ruskell. I had worked here in 2000. I was working for the Packers, and I wanted to come back here so bad because I knew Dave Pearson is here, Eric Kennedy, Sam Ramsden, Mo Kelly, all these awesome foundational people in the organization. I'd worked for Paul Allen before. It's really, like, the organization kind of sells itself.

Q. When you look at it from the way of the culture and the fits and the everything like that and to see it work out in this way where it has gotten to this stage, where we see how close the team is even from the outside, when you see it work out that way, how special is it?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It's special. I mean, just it's the ultimate team sport, and that's obviously the players and the coaches and whatever we can do to support them. But to see Mike's emphasis on connecting the guys in the off-season and really what that means and how important it is, and it's not just like Xs and Os. It's like, hey, man, you're literally playing for the guy next to you.

I think that's why we all loved growing up playing the game, especially when you play at a high level like myself -- that's a joke.

But I think that's just the love of the game, and I think that's been really cool to see Mike and his staff and then the players, like the vets, really buy into it.

Q. You had a run there where you were either picking late in the first round or didn't use a pick at all. You look at the last few drafts, Charles, Spoon, Jax, Grey, Murph. What have you thought of the way your first-round guys have really helped you get to where you guys are right now?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Checks and balances I would say, so Nolan Teasley, Trent Kirchner, Matt Berry, Aaron Hincley, Jason Barnes, all these people that we spent a ton of time with at this time of the year figuring out where we're going to go and then learning from our mishaps and how do we constantly improve on that, and we do it every year, and I think those guys have done a great job of, all right, what's a Seahawk, and we just keep pounding at it.

To go through it with a new staff is just a natural reset. So now you have a new tight ends coach -- you have a whole group of new people that you're learning and trying to evaluate, so all those people coming together, it's kind of a cool reset, figuring out how you sharpen your skills.

Q. This is the third youngest roster in the league. How set up do you feel like you are for sustained success?



JOHN SCHNEIDER: Oh, man. Honestly, this is a year to year. We've got to look two, three years out from a planning standpoint, but I've never -- this is not an arrogant thing to say at all, but I've never felt like we haven't been set up for success.

Again, getting back to the people in the building, you come to Seattle, we can support you, nutrition, sleep studies, we've got you. So I've always felt like we are set up for success.

How far can you take it every year? It's a different -- look, we just played like San Francisco, the Rams. You're talking about great organizations, great teams, and it's like, this play here or that play there. So to say set up for sustained success, I can't answer that.

Q. Mike was one of the last 10 coaches hired in 2024. When you look at what made him the guy, has he even exceeded your expectations?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: With Mike, it was the clarity of -- I'm sure you guys know this speaking with him, it's this really clear, thoughtful, intense, intelligent messaging, and then when you sit down with somebody, it's like, okay, how can I see myself partnering up with this person.

We did it in the same manner that Pete and I did. It's like, all right, can we sit down and be, like, simpatico and are we going to be able to work through our ugly times together, because there's going to be a lot of them. That was what was very clear about Mike.

Exceeded expectations? I think that's hard to gauge because you're so into the moment every single day. It's hard. It's like the man-in-the-arena thing. You step back -- like we're not able to step back like everybody else is and view. It's like, you're just constantly going. It seems like yesterday that he just walked through the door and said hi to everybody in the building.

Q. It's almost exactly 16 years ago this week you were hired here. Could you have imagined still being here 16 later?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: No. Yeah, super blessed to be able to raise our boys here, Ben and Jack, and everything Traci has done for the autism community. It's a total blessing. And then to have our vision of -- I read this really cool article the other day about culture is an artifact of relationships, so it's like, is it that hard to just treat people the right way, work your ass off and do it the way you want to do it. We've been blessed to be allowed to do it the way we want to do it, and that's Paul Allen and Jody.

Q. I believe you're the only GM that has had two different coaches get to the Super Bowl that you worked with. What are the differences you feel between that build and this build, and how do you reflect on it through yourself, as well?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: You're making me reflect on it right now? I'd better get ready for these questions. Oh, man.

Very different people. I would say competitors, yeah, same. But like different. Like those guys were edgy, man. They were us against the world: John, you should have drafted me higher; Marshon MF'd me one day because I didn't trade for him earlier. Those guys were more edgy.

This is a different generation. These guys have bought into -- I'm not saying those guys didn't play for each other. That's not it. These guys are really together. They've bought into the 12-is-one mentality.

Q. I'm sure it's like picking between your favorite children, but is there something different about this roster against all the ones that you've built?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I can't do that. Like I said earlier, you're playing San Francisco, the Rams, you've got to play here, play there. Believe it or not, when you go 7-9 or 7-10 now, it's not that different than going 9-7. All these teams are -- we've had some teams that underachieved and we've had some teams that have overachieved.

It's hard to say, like, the specific build because like I said, it has been the same mentality. While we're working on our corrections and trying to fix, like what Michael was asking about earlier, you're just constantly tweaking as you go. So every year is totally different, and we're in that process right now. We're getting ready for next year. We're going to have meetings down in Santa Clara. We're going to have draft meetings down there.

Q. You and Mike shared an embracing moment on the field after the game. After a couple years working together, what was that like, sharing that celebration?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Just blessings. A lot of prayer, a lot of hard work, a lot of tough conversations, tough decisions that he's embraced right away. Yeah, it was amazing.

Then like the fans, to have the 12s and how the stadium was just lit up, place is going crazy, and like I talked about earlier, the vision of wanting to get back here, produce a consistent championship-caliber football team for amazing fans, the 12s and how loud it was, I had told him, dude, when we get this rocking, you're going to be shook. And I think he was.

Q. The season Sam had, what have you thought of that, and just the guy he's been behind the scenes and also what he's done the past few weeks coming off injury?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, everything that Clint had talked about, Kevin, all the guys that we had done our research with, just the person, the competitor, the way he treats his teammates, the leader, he hasn't flinched. It's kind of like I think we were all more panicked at what was going on than he was. He was kind of looking at us like we had three heads, like what's everybody so worried about. He's like, I'll be good. I haven't seen a lot of quarterbacks not throw a ball and then go out and play like that. We've been blessed to be around some pretty damned good ones.

Q. Going back to the Rashid trade, did you know Tory's issue was as big of a deal, or was it a little bit of serendipity that it happened to work out that way?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, serendipity, God's work. We had been talking to the Saints, and when I say talking, like begging for a while. It wasn't like a big negotiation. They were kind of like, all right, this is what it's going to take. We were like, all right, we're going to do it. We had planned on having Tory and Rashid as like top, top-end take-the-top-off-guys speed threats, and literally that week, Tory was like, man, I'm not feeling real good, something is going on.

Sam and Strick and those guys, they seemed pretty worried so then we started doing more scans. But Tory is in a great spot. That guy is going to be an amazing player, and he's a great guy. I don't know how much time we spent with him, but he's an amazing person.

Q. You just did the deal with Charles a couple weeks ago. How important was that to get that done?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Huge. Huge. We have a lot of work to do coming up. Investing, getting Jody's approval to be able to invest in the person was big for us, so we were able to work out Joey. Joey Laine did an amazing job with that, and kind of just day-to-day. It probably went on for maybe like four or five weeks. Yeah, so to be able to -- left tackle --

Q. You got Abe, too, the last time we talked to you. Talk about the importance of getting these guys signed up.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, cornerstone dudes, but the people and the competitors, and they're two totally different

animals, two totally different athletes.

Q. What's Kenneth Walker shown you for his future?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: For his future?

Q. Yeah.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I mean, Ken has been awesome. Explosive. I would say maybe a little bit more decisive the last month and a half. Yeah, he's a free agent. We'd love to have him back.

Q. I'm sure you guys did a lot of (indiscernible) quarterback hire. What were your thoughts about him coming out, and what do you think (indiscernible)?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It's like, it is what all the guys thought that went into the school, the person, the competitor. He's literally like a running back that can throw, literally the guy can take off. It's like Brock Purdy but the guy can -- I think Brock would probably get pissed, but he's really fast. This guy can take off. Brock is so dynamic, like running around and the pump fakes and keeping people off balance, and he's got that, too. Yeah, two great quarterbacks. Thanks for that. We're going to have our hands full. They have two amazing running backs, their defense is amazing. It's like every week.

Q. You said coming out of every draft you make the joke it's like a doctor you never say you botched the surgery, but to look back on the '23 draft and come out with Jax and Spoon and what foundational pieces they've been, to get them in one round, what have those two done for you?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Man, Spoon is like a heartbeat guy, like the whole building feels him. They're just these completely different personalities, but in their own right. Everybody just totally respects Jax, the way he handles himself. Yeah, it was amazing to have two guys that we thought were top five to seven players in that draft, to be able to draft both those guys was pretty incredible.

Q. What did it mean for you to help Jody raise the flag for the NFC championship?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: To see her do it? Yeah, that was amazing. I thought it was awesome. And then Matt Hasselbeck was there, Cliff, Michael. It's cool to see that. I'm a huge football historian, so to see those guys up there with her and know how important it was to Paul raising the flag and the whole tradition, yeah, it was amazing to sit there and see -- we got in the owner's box, and I forgot that she was up there doing that, and I'm like, where is

everybody, we've got to get going here, where is she. Because we dap it up before the games and we hug it out and stuff. Yeah, it was really cool to see that. Thanks for asking that.

Q. Since you've been to a Super Bowl before, is there any wisdom or anything you shared with Mike as he goes through the next 10 days to get ready for the game?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, we have our private conversations, but he's done an amazing job already, talking to people that have been through it, the coaches, and he had an amazing meeting this morning. Hey, expectations, this is what it's going to look like. His messaging is really -- he is a very -- he's very clear with his messaging. He doesn't stammer around like I am right now, know what I mean? He can go right at it. So he hit the players, like hey, this is what it's going to look like, this is the team, the week, all that stuff. He'll continue to do that the rest of the week.

Yeah, he knows.

Q. Does it mean anything to you that it's a rematch with the Patriots in the Super Bowl?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: No, I've tried to have that like not -- thanks for that. Tried not to think about that too much. That was an amazing game, though. But no, it really doesn't. It's like, okay, what's the next team we're playing. It doesn't.

Q. You've mentioned you had some teams that underachieved, some teams that overachieved. Do you feel like this is one that overachieved based on your preseason expectations?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Great question. Paul used to ask me, what's our record going to be. I'm like -- he's like a data guy. You're trying to tell a guy that started Microsoft, I think we're going to be 9-7. You talk about the expectations.

But I think when we got into training camp, watching how Sam was like interacting with his teammates and then how everybody was like really buying into the walk-arounds and Mike's making it about the continuity and the connectedness, I was kind of like, man, these guys are -- but I'm Catholic and I'm a warrior, too, so it's like, all right, well, where are we deficient, so I always think like that. What are we missing. My brain is always revving like that.

Q. You got named Executive of the Year for the first time in 16 years. What does that mean to you at this

point? Does it mean anything to you at this point to get an honor like that?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I always give -- Ryan Grigson is a good buddy of mine, and I'm always like, yeah, Andrew Luck, that was a pretty hard to pick, huh? Thanks for the flash, Gordon. No, it's really the coolest thing about it, getting back to those foundational pieces I was talking about, in my opinion it's one of the coolest organizational awards. It's like the people that -- like I said, Eric Kennedy and Rob Porteus and James upstairs, the guys are constantly working on all this stuff to help us operate. It's like, to me, that's the coolest part about -- it's an organizational award. It's not like, yeah, we're always going to have very tough decisions to make, good and bad, we're blessed to be doing that every single day.

But the part about the people that help us make those decisions, I'm sure James Churchill puts together all this stuff for us in video and then is like, I hope these guys -- he cares as much as we all do, and I'm sure he goes home at night like man, I hope those guys don't screw it up. That's why I think it's like a really cool organizational award.

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