

Seattle Seahawks Media Conference

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John Schneider

Mike Macdonald

Jaxon Smith-Njigba

Weekday Press Conference



JOHN SCHNEIDER: I have to be cognizant of who the person is. I'm so proud of who Jaxon is as a person. Your parents did a great job raising you. It's just so fun to -- people forget how young you are.

We can talk about the player. Obviously a great player. I mean, he scored 82 touchdowns in 42 games and six to eight (indiscernible), like best football arguably in the country.

His head coach would argue that it would be 84. Had two taken away from him. But obviously a young foundational piece.

Offensive Player of the Year. We're super excited, everybody in the building. We're all here for you, Jax. Have been from day one. I know you'll be great moving forward. You're a great teammate, great person.

The city of Seattle has to be jacked that he'll be with us for a long time here. With that, I want to thank Jody for her support, Chuck Arnold and Joey Laine for all those long hours on the phone with Joel Segal.

MIKE MACDONALD: One of the great things that paints a great picture about what Jax means to us being a foundational piece of our football team and our organization is we've got a full house here. This is pretty awesome. We've got dang near the whole Seattle Seahawks organization supporting Jax on this day.

Just want to emphasize how excited we are. He's going to be here and he's a foundational piece, he's a cornerstone of our team. Just being able to see his growth over the two years that we've been here. I mean, the sky's the limit.

This is the beginning. This is another iteration of our football team, and Jax is obviously going to be a huge part

of it and where we want to go and where we want to take our team, and I know it's early in his career, but he's already a leader on our team and will be for a long time. So we're really excited.

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: God is great. I'm super blessed. Like John said, the whole organization, from top to bottom, it's a beautiful thing where God puts you in a place to succeed, and this is home for me.

For me to be extended here for a few more years, I'm just excited and blessed and I understand where my feet are and understand the opportunity that's at stake, and just like always, I'm ready to attack.

Have to thank my family, my father, my mother, just how they raised me. I'm here to serve others, serve the Lord, and whatever these guys need from me, they know I'm willing to do.

There's not enough words to show my excitement and show my love for the city and this organization, but you'll see it on Sunday. Thank you.

Q. Have you figured out how many Cowboy hats you can buy with that contract?

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: We'll buy a few more, a few more. Just a few.

Q. John and Jaxon, this happened relatively quickly from what your norm is for this type of a deal. What do you attribute that to, and no drama and how seamless it seemed to be?

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: I mean, it definitely just feels good. Like John said, ever since I got drafted, I just felt the love and just really just understanding me. It's an honor to feel that confidence come from your teammates and come from the third floor and your head coach, and for us to get this deal done speaks volumes. Definitely just a little weight off my shoulders just to go out there and let it fly.

Q. What's it mean, highest paid receiver in the league and all that, what does that mean to you?

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: For me, it's always more work to be done. There's always another level to reach. But it is a



blessing. This is a business. I want to do good business. And that's where we're at right now.

Q. There's always another level to reach. Offensive Player of the Year, won a Super Bowl, highest paid receiver, what's next for you?

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: The only thing better than one Super Bowl is two. So just working to get there, whatever my team needs from me, I make sure I get it done.

Q. Mike, you said that he's already become a leader. What are some of those traits you've seen? And Jax, what unfolds now as your leadership potential?

MIKE MACDONALD: I think it's unique to see that type of dominating performance on a consistent basis but also the humility, what Jax was saying, his servant leadership that he provides to our team. He's not the guy that's breaking every huddle, every team meeting and everything like that, but what he does every day, what type of teammate he is, to the guys in that locker room, I mean, that speaks volumes, and that's where he does his talking.

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: Yeah, I think relationships is a huge thing, and I think my teammates know, building relationships with them one-on-one, they can come to me and we can talk about anything. Just want to be there for my teammates.

Q. We see a lot in the NFL where deals of this size, they often drag out and sometimes they get messy. This one seemed like it happened pretty quickly. Didn't seem like it had any of that. What can you say about the process of getting the deal done?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Just give Joey Laine a ton of credit. We've had a great relationship with Jax's agent, Joel Segal, for a long, long time. We were able to just keep things in-house, keep it respectful.

When you're on the hiring end of these deals, that are actually -- I don't want to say they're easier -- but everybody recognizes Jax's talent and his work ethic. And like I said the person.

I remember being an intern in 1992, and we signed Reggie White, he was the first biggest free agent in NFL history and the Packers had \$24 million in the bank and they gave him 14. You know?

So I've got to get with the times a little bit now. It's like, okay, and Joey Laine and Joey Schneider helped me out a ton with that.

Q. John, you've historically invested in the receiver position over the years. DK and Doug Baldwin and Tyler Lockett deal. When you look at the contracts that you guys have signed with Jaxon and bringing back Rashid and Jake Bobo coming back, matching that offer, do you view a receiver as a premium position, and what makes it so important to not just sign the stars, but the role players as well of that position?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Great question. We value people, not necessarily the position -- so people, the competitor, how they fit into our organization. And it's our constant quest to be a consistent championship-caliber football team.

We don't really get into like position specifics. We just know we want to be smart in the people and the competitor we're investing in.

Q. Mike, you obviously coached Jax last year as well. Whether it's coming into training camp, OTS, was there a point in practice that you recognized he's in for a really big year here?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yes. It was pretty early. It was pretty early. Just to see -- there's never like just one play because of the constant growth that's required, but I thought our defense was playing at a high level throughout camp and throughout the offseason program. We had a really hard time covering them.

To Jax's credit, his ability to not just stand in one place and only be able to do one thing, to be able to move him around, understand how to run the whole route tree, the chemistry that's required with Sam, that's a lot of work that it takes. And you could see it coming to life every day, and that was really exciting.

Q. Jaxon, your brother spends more time helping you with stuff off the field this year. What did that mean to you? How did that help you this season?

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: It takes a village. My brother plays a big role in getting stuff done and allowing me to focus on things I want to focus on and build on things. And he's my right-hand man.

So just getting started too. Got a long ways to go on the field and off the field. So to have him is a blessing and something I don't take for granted.

Q. You probably have a long list, but what are a couple of traits your dad taught you?

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: Traits, first and foremost, hard work, hard work. Just seeing him, anything that I wanted, I saw him get up early for us to go get that and for us to have.

He's been training, throwing footballs at me since I was 3 years old. I mean, he is the reason I'm here today, just the leader and how strong he is physically and mentally, for us to live out our dreams.

Definitely a lot of love for him. And I don't take that for granted as well.

Q. We've seen in these first few years how much you've done in the community, different charities and things. What does it mean for this organization but the community around it that really endeared itself to you and made you want to be here for a while to come now?

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: I think it's a special place and a place for growth. And me growing as a young man, I just fell in love with the city. I want the best for my community, especially if I'm going to lay my head here.

So anything I can do to help, I will. And John just gave me some more opportunity to do so. So definitely appreciative of that and the city. I can feel the love here. So just want to repay it back.

Q. Obviously a couple of guys have signed elsewhere, but generally, it seems like you've really made a priority of re-signing a lot of guys, kind of dating back to Charles in January and things like that. Just how important has that been this offseason, just retaining?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, we have talked about it before. Obviously, we want to keep as many guys as we possibly can. However you look at it. Fortunately or unfortunately, it's just part of the business, it's part of the job that we've all jumped into.

And we're going to miss the guys that have left. And we're going to dive in even more to the guys that are still on our team.

And we had planned for this. Like I said, Joey Laine and our group upstairs, we've been, as you approach free agency, free agency meetings, what that looks like, getting through the combine, speaking to everybody down there, seeing what the landscape's going to look like.

But obviously draft and retain, I mean, this is a great example of drafting and developing and keeping it in-house. And that's been our priority since we got here in

2010.

So that hasn't changed. But the strategy of it is trying to extend our guys as much as we possibly can.

We have a cool mix of guys that are just kind of hitting like their first time in free agency and veterans that have been through free agency before. And it's just a really cool mix of older and younger guys. It's pretty neat.

Q. Mike, how unexpected or pleasantly surprised are you bringing most of this team, a Super Bowl champion, most of it's coming back for you to coach next year?

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, it's great. Like John said, you want as many people back as possible. But also, like John said, these are things that we're trying to plan for in advance. It's going to deviate a little bit based off just the nature of the business. But this is something definitely we were hoping for and planning for.

Q. You talked about what Cooper meant to you. Then you guys re-signed Rashid and re-signed Bobo, your position group. I know you're close. Just how excited are you for that?

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: Excited to have the guys back. We know how special we are, what we contribute to the team, each single one of us.

Just like John said, just great people, love to work with them. I respect them on and off the field. We're excited to gear up and get ready for our second year together.

Q. Have you had a chance to chat with Brian McMurray yet, and what's your excitement about being able to work with a new coordinator this year?

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: I said hello. Definitely excited. Definitely ready to see what we're gunning towards and just get in the same language and get together. So I'm excited for new opportunities.

Q. Mike, what are some things about Jaxon as, like, a person and a competitor that you see all the time behind the scenes that maybe we don't see?

MIKE MACDONALD: I'll be careful with this one. (Laughter).

I think it's a unique combination of the ability, the competitive spirit, but also like the selflessness of who he is and how he operates and how he goes about his business. It's a rare combination outside of whatever

position you say, just in life. I mean, just having the respect for the operation, the people, your teammates, the love that he has for the people around him no matter their situation, but also being just an absolute high-level competitor when it's coming down to it, and the ability. It's just like this triple-headed monster of just a really cool combination.

Q. John, you love NFL history. Curious if you see parallels with the former great Seahawk in Steve Largent and great route runner, great hands, the person he was on and off the field and what you've got here in Jaxon?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: That's pretty awesome. Yeah, I mean, I didn't write a report on Steve Largent or anything. Thanks. I get it. Getting up there in age. But it's a great question.

I think that there's like a cool combination between Steve with the body control, the hands, being able to just be able to adjust the ball down the field, the late hands, all that. But also Tyler and Doug, I think there's a really neat -- it's the second time I used the word "neat". Like, where's that coming from?

It's just a really cool combination of just different talents. I just remember we were so blessed that he was there at 20.

I remember being at the Pro Day that day and we were like, there's no way we're going to -- why are we meeting with this guy?

We're sitting there asking if he's going to be -- can you feel the pause? He's looking at us, like, pretty good receiver too.

Great question. Thanks for it. The skill set is just really unique. And yeah, I'm excited to see where he's going to take this thing.

Q. You mentioned that draft. I remember coming out of it, you talked about how fortunate you felt to be able to get Spoon and Jax, kind of top guys in both those positions. What was that wait between five and 20 seeing him still out there?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, it took forever. I remember I was probably driving Trenton and Matt Berry and Nolan, those guys, probably driving those guys crazy. Do we go up? Should we go up? Should we go for him? Like, you get a little itchy.

But we had just kind of studied like, okay, where, like how, and it literally felt like I don't know three hours or something. Changed my shirt a couple times.

Q. Jaxon, in an interview before you said, "My whole life I've taken the stairs. I've had to prove myself." Is this contract extension enough proof for you?

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA: I've always had the belief, yes. This proves that I'm good for a long time. You know what I'm saying? I guess that's what it proves. And it makes me definitely feel good, and it's a blessing.

Q. You mentioned Jody at the top of your comments. Obviously the team's for sale and all that. But I know you guys have said business as usual and everything from then. This obviously seems like proof of it, approving a big deal like this.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Absolutely. She's like, let's go win another one; let's get after it. There's another world out there that is coming. We're getting ready for it. As of right now, we are just keeping it ripping like we always have.

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