

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Coach Mike Macdonald

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Seahawks 27, Panthers 10

MIKE MACDONALD: All right, good to see everybody all the way across the country.

Look, great win by our guys. You know, feel like it's the same story every week: Didn't flinch. Big emphasis this week was like can we stack plays in all three phases.

Took us a half to do it, but I felt like in the second half we did a great job responding to the takeaway.

Demarcus Lawrence had a phenomenal play; then able to punch it in. And AJ Barner was really a spark plug for us on offense. And then come back with another takeaway with Julian in a phenomenal play, and then just go finish in the fourth quarter.

I feel like it was cool to end of the game in a four-minute touchdown, but I thought that was something that we have been wanting to get done all year, and the guys did a great job.

You know, fly back home and get ready for next week.

Q. Mike, Lawrence and Love, how big -- relatively young team, but for the veterans stepping up at this time of the year how big is their presence?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, it's big time. It's big time. I mean with D-Law you feel like it's a play waiting to happen and Julian it's -- he has a playmaking ability about him. There is also a poise about him as well.

So two great players that we love and love having them here.

Q. ... yard game of the season. On the key third down conversion, what did you see from Zach today?

MIKE MACDONALD: It was probably Zach's best game as a Seahawk I would imagine. Definitely in the last two

years. You know, just sometimes -- like I was telling (indiscernible), played a great game, too. Sometimes that's the way the game goes on some of those creases and things.

And then the third down conversion was incredible. Some of those black zone runs are -- like 95 was a block in the hole and makes the guy miss. It's a two-yard game. That's a big time two yards, so it's not just the explosive runs. It's all those tough yards as well.

And then obviously finishing out in the four-minute was big time.

Q. The run game two weeks in a row now, had 170 last week, 160 something this week. Feel like it's...

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, it's good. It's right where we want to be at this point. Got to keep going. San Fran is a good run defense and go put a great plan together and rock and roll.

Q. Going back to last year you feel like you have two starting running backs?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah.

Q. Past two games really illustrate that with one guy going 100 last week?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, it's great. I mean, that's the thing with Kenneth. Hey, man, he's playing great football. He's an integral part of our operation, just like Zach has been when Ken has been getting the bulk of the carries.

So it's great. We got two really great backs, and sometimes -- it's just like when sometimes when the offense needs to pick up the defense and vice versa. Could be the same thing in that position group.

Q. You guys have had several games where you gave up fewer points than you did today. Seemed like from the outset you guys' tackling was as good as it's been all year. Ty setting the stage. What were your thoughts on the way the team tackled today?



MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, I'm glad you brought that up. You're absolutely right. I thought our guys -- this a good offense. They been moving the ball and they been creating explosives and been doing a great job recently.

It's because they got great players, great scheme, the whole nine. Those are some open-field tackles as well that those guys were making, and those were critical yards.

I mean, you miss that tackle, now you're in a third and two, this is a great fourth down team. Kind of the shape of that drive really takes a turn when you're able to (indiscernible) guys.

I felt like it was all three levels, so I'm glad you brought that up.

Q. Mentioned responding to the takeaway after Darnold's INT. Your defense kind of bounces back on the field. 'Spoon is trying to get people going, Leonard Williams. To be able to flip momentum like that, how much pride do you think they take in that?

MIKE MACDONALD: That's what they do. That's what they do. They take pride in it. It's not like I'm the one telling them to go out -- I am, but they respond to each other. It's a special group.

Q. ...what did they tell you on that play where it looked like his hand is going forward?

MIKE MACDONALD: They said it wasn't enough to overturn, so I disagree. I think -- thought we got to the spot on the fourth down. There are some things that -- this is par for the course. You're not going to come out of a game in the NFL and say, hey, look, every break went our way and I'm very excited. Things aren't going to go your way, calls aren't going to go your way, and obviously you're not going agree with everything.

I think you got to also go to the next play, so...

Q. ...on Rashid Shaheed?

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, it was a concussion and wasn't able to come back.

Q. Cody White?

MIKE MACDONALD: Cody was a groin. Yeah, groin. Yeah, we'll see. Probably going to be some time with Cody, yeah.

Q. End of the first half with the sneak you mentioned,

kind of with that whole sequence...

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, we're trying to get into our two-minute mode and push the ball forward. We were trying; just weren't doing it.

That's the way the drive went. Again, we have the ball coming out of the half and originally trying to go score a touchdown but weren't able to get it going. So at that point trying to get in field goal range and didn't get it, you know.

But we -- by doing that we also basically eliminated their ability to go score field goal as well, so that was the thought behind it.

Q. Easy to ask now in retrospect but on the sneak with Darnold, why not go with the Barner Tush Push?

MIKE MACDONALD: You got ti burn a timeout and then you got to put personnel on the field. We been good in those situations we've gotten in up to this point. We'll look at -- I don't know. Looked like to me and from the naked eye that we got it; they said we didn't.

Q. (Regarding replay of the Walker fumble.) Was that the factor in why the decision?

MIKE MACDONALD: No. We were just trying to convert the first and take a time out and then push the ball down the field more.

Q. The defense made it move, but the two more turnovers with Sam in the offense...

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, it's really just the ball being in this jeopardy. You know, so deflections, things like that, I mean, those things happen, but I think if we take care of like the front end of the plays better, it won't be as big of an issue.

So we call to eat. It's now you finish plays. We got to double down on that. It's critical this part of the year.

Q. To circle back on Demarcus Lawrence for a second, when you think about bringing a guy in like that, you know what you see on tape and maybe you know other things about him. Can you just describe what you have learned about him now that you've been around him for a season and see his potential?

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, AD deserves a lot of -- a shoutout here because he was with Demarcus for the time in Dallas and the alignment that AD and really the rest of everybody else and myself, like understanding about who -- what type of people we want to bring in the building and

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

the skillset that we need in our defense, it really was a no-brainer.

I think they just -- we knew who he was and then we take pride in creating an environment where guys love coming to work and you can play your best football. That goes for whatever year he is now, ten, 12 year vets. Happy about the spirit he has. You can feel his love for the game. That comes out on the field, so it's been great. It's been great. We love him. Doing a great job.

Q. The two plays AJ made, third down where he breaks the tackle and on the next series.

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, critical. Told the team he's a spark plug for us. Attitude-wise got an edge to him, got a swag. All those things, those are Seahawk traits and he's that guy and we feed off him. We need him. He's a great player.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, basically de facto goal line. Nowadays you don't go like goal line at the five if you're getting goal line type of plays at a certain point in the red zone.

Q. (Regarding receiving yards today and touchdowns.) Just how critical has it been for your offense for him to take that next step? (Indiscernible.)

MIKE MACDONALD: Well, I think it's similar to Jax. You know, you want to have visions for your players bigger than they have for themselves. Those two guys, to their credit, this is their vision for their game, where they wanted to take it from the day they stepped in the door or that we met them. All he's done is attack it and make it come to life.

I know we always felt like he could be a complete tight end in our league at an elite level, and he is on his way to being that. So especially in this offense, to have that threat where he's not just an extra tackle or whatever out there. That's big time. That's big for us.

Q. Ty Okada had a few of those. For him again to step in and do what he did, what can you say about him?

MIKE MACDONALD: Great. The weekly Ty Okada question. Give him crap for that. Yeah, look, it's remarkable. It really is. He's just -- his tackling all year has been phenomenal. Play in Atlanta, coming across, making a play. He's a tough son of a gun and takes great angles and trusts it. It's a shoutout to the rest of the team too. There were some open-field tackles that were big time, but also like every tackle needs to be some sort of vice. Like

you're never just going to be on your own out there.

So guys were running to the ball and populating the football even if the ball breaks.

Q. (Regarding Cooper) ...third down on the series right after.

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, big time catch. I know it wasn't Sam's best game of all-time and the stats reflect that, but there are some big time third down throws with pressure in his face. He threw the one to Jax, that route to Cooper. Those are some big time throws that in the face of pressure that we need to be able to make.

They're not easy to make. That was a big time catch by Coop. That was awesome.

Q. One more game and you guys get the top seed in the NFC. What does that mean for this team?

MIKE MACDONALD: I'm going to give you the boring answer. I think it's the same story. As we're hitting these benchmarks, it's going to be the same message to the team because that's what's got us to this point. We're going to do everything in our power to go win this one and we'll go play the next one.

You know, but that's the message. It takes 100% of everybody all the time every week, so nothing changes this week. One of our goals is to win the division. It's going to come down to if we win the game we win the division, so we'll hit the next goal.

Q. Did you see the play Sundell made on...

MIKE MACDONALD: Yeah, heard his first PBU. I didn't see it but they told me about it. Guys will love that one.

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