

Seattle University

ScholarWorks @ SeattleU

The Spectator Online

Newspapers

1-13-2021

Wasted Talent

Augustyna Brestar

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online>



Wasted Talent

Augustyna Brestar, Sports and Opinion Editor

Three days after the Seattle Seahawks suffered a playoff loss to the Los Angeles Rams, the team announced that they have decided to part ways with offensive coordinator, Brian Schottenheimer. Around 4 p.m. PST the team Tweeted that while Schottenheimer is a fantastic person and coach, there were philosophical differences that ultimately led to the end of Schottenheimer's time with the Seahawks.

Without much processing, I felt exhilarated, simply because over the span of the last month I witnessed Seattle's offense regress significantly. While they scored 459 points in the regular season, the most in franchise history, the second half of the season felt as though they were hanging on by a thread. For reference: they scored more than 30 points in seven of their first nine games. Opposed to only scoring over 30 once in the final eight games, against the winless New York Jets.

Seattle was at one point one of the hottest teams in the NFL, a surprising Super Bowl contender for many analysts, due to the offensive play. In the first nine games, Seattle averaged 34.3 PPG, leading the NFL and 415 YPG. In their remaining games they averaged 23.1 PPG and 324 YPG, a significant drop-off.

Perhaps the most disappointing downfall was that of Russell Wilson. Little did the Seahawks know that they would be getting a generational quarterback with the 75th pick of the 2012 NFL Draft. Since Wilson was drafted in 2012, Seattle has made a playoff appearance in every season except the 2017 season. While Seattle's run game and "Legion of Boom" took credit for the team's success from 2012-2014, the team's latter success is credible to, and only to, Russell Wilson.

Despite Wilson being one of the best quarterbacks in the league for the past five years, he has not received a single MVP vote. Seahawks fans were pleasantly surprised by the first seven games of the season when Schottenheimer finally "Let Russ Cook".

During this span of seven games, Wilson had thrown for 2,151 yards and 26 touchdowns, clearly separating himself as an MVP candidate. However, in the next nine games he threw for only nine touchdowns and seven interceptions. Unfortunately, this will be another season where Wilson does not receive an MVP vote.

I am extremely grateful that Schottenheimer gave fans those first seven games where we got to witness our QB1 play lights out, torching defenses and throwing absolute dimes. I applaud him for play-calling to enhance Wilson's game, not putting a lot of emphasis on establishing the run. However, I am relieved to see him go. The back-half of Seattle's season went downhill because defenses eventually figured out Schottenheimer's offense.

The reality is, Schottenheimer had no creative element in his play-calling abilities. Seattle continued throwing deep, never changing their style of play even after defenses dropped two safeties deep. A solution to this offense: take notes from Big Ben in Pittsburgh, I had to do this for our Editor-in-Chief Myrea, a devoted Steelers fan. Get rid of the ball faster and throw short passes.



Relief only lasts so long when you remember that two of the head coaches in the NFC West are Sean McVay and Kyle Shanahan. Two smart, young coaches that encapsulate creativity. Then there's the Seahawks, coached by 69-year-old Pete Carroll.

Carroll received a contract extension on Nov. 9, 2020 that will likely keep him in Seattle thru 2025. While Schottenheimer was a part of Seattle's problem, he was not the sole problem. I do not want to blame Carroll because like many Seahawks fans, I adore him. However, I never saw him make any offensive adjustments despite him saying multiple times that he wished his offense would have adjusted better.

That's where the concern kicks in. On Jan. 11 during a press conference, Carroll openly stated that Seattle needs to run the ball more. The next day, the offensive coordinator was let go because his philosophy did not fit what the team wanted. Perhaps Schottenheimer wanted to work on his offensive scheme while still ensuring the ball stayed in Wilson's hands, opposite of what Carroll is hoping to do with this offense.

Now, fans should not be surprised. In the fourth quarter during their playoff loss to the Rams, Seattle was down ten with 9:33 remaining. On their own 34 yard line, Seattle's offense stayed on the field to attempt a fourth down conversion. Schottenheimer had called the play which Carroll was unhappy with, and after wasting crucial time, finally got his way. After debating with his offensive coordinator for practically the whole play clock, Seattle took a delay of game.

What little hope was remaining for Seahawks fans was instantly taken away as we watched Michael Dickson punt the ball back to the Rams. It was Carroll who essentially caused the delay of game that ended Seattle's season.

While using the eye-test, many might say Carroll has been a successful head coach in Seattle. During the nine seasons that Carroll and Wilson have been together in Seattle, the duo has made the postseason eight times, had two Super Bowl appearances and one Super Bowl championship.

However, I would like to argue that this team has underachieved given the talent that they have had on both the defensive and offensive side of the ball, especially at the quarterback position. Seattle missed the playoffs in the 2017 season and in the three seasons after, exited the playoffs in the wild card round twice and the divisional round once.

The last time Seattle made it to the NFC championship was in 2014, the year they made it to the Super Bowl only to come within a yard of becoming just the eighth team to win back-to-back Super Bowls.

Russell Wilson is 32 years old and realistically only has 2 or 3 more seasons left in his prime. With teams in the NFC West only becoming better and the league becoming offensively elite, I worry that Seattle may be left in the dust. The window for winning another championship is becoming smaller as each season with Wilson ends in the first or second round of the playoffs.

Seattle fans, we must not settle. It is not enough for a quarterback like Russell Wilson to end his career with only two Super Bowl appearances, one championship ring and no MVP awards.

Pete Carroll, your stubbornness is going to waste Wilson's talent. You owe him more than that. Us Seahawks fans owe him more than that. Now is your opportunity, hire an offensive mastermind, allow them to take the reigns and please for the love of God, do not run the ball more next season.