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Augustyna Brestar
Seattle University

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Will Russ Cook?

Augustyna Brestar, Sports and Opinion Editor

Nine games into the NFL season, the Seattle Seahawks had one of the hottest offenses among the league. Averaging 34.4 points per game (PPG) and 415 yards per game (YPG), Russell Wilson was “cooking,” throwing 300 or more yards in five of the first nine games.

The drop-off in remaining games is what led to the team’s decision to part ways with offensive coordinator Brian Schottenheimer Jan. 12, citing philosophical differences.

Schottenheimer was the offensive coordinator for three seasons, ending his career in Seattle on a successful route. During his time with the Seahawks, the team ranked in the top

ten in scoring each season, and this year, the team had a record-breaking offense, scoring 459 points—the most in franchise history.

Seattle finished the regular season with a 12-4 record, winning one more game than what was predicted by ESPN in May when the schedule was first released. However, after a wild card round exit in the playoffs to the Los Angeles Ram Jan. 9, Seattle fans were left disappointed and confused by the downfall they witnessed.

Ben Baldwin of The Athletic emphasized that while there are many theories as to what caused Seattle to fall apart the second half of the season, the reality is, the answer is probably not as easy as firing their offensive coordinator.

“Whatever the problem is, I don’t think it will be solved solely by replacing the offensive coordinator... This might be a situation where we have all these initial theories and as people go through it more, it’s going to be a long offseason diagnosing exactly what happened as more information and analysis trickle out,” Baldwin said.

During a press conference Jan. 11, Pete Carroll made it clear what he believes is the solution to Seattle’s offensive woes.

“We have to run the ball better. Not even run the ball better, run it more,” Carroll said via Gregg Bell of The News Tribune.

After speaking with Bell, he reiterated the likelihood that Seattle’s offensive identity will return to their run game.

“They’re going to run the ball more than most teams because Pete Carroll is their coach. He is the boss and ultimately his way wins,” Bell said.

Two weeks have passed since Seattle parted ways with Schottenheimer, and they still remain without an offensive coordinator, despite rumors that the team was interested in former New York Jets head coach Adam Gase and former Philadelphia Eagles head coach Doug Pederson.

“From coaching alone, especially Sean McVay and Kyle Shanahan, both young guys who are not going anywhere. If both teams [Los Angeles Rams and San Francisco 49ers] can ever get quarterbacks, then it is going to be hard for Seattle to compete with them,” Baldwin said.



Hiring a creative mastermind who can compete with the other teams in the NFC West should be a top priority for the Seahawks, as their window to win championships becomes smaller with each passing season. There may be hope for Seattle, however, as ESPN's NFL Insider Adam Schefter broke the news that they are planning to hire Shane Waldron, the Rams' passing game coordinator, via Twitter.

Throughout the search for a new offensive coordinator, Wilson made it clear that he wanted to be involved in the search process. While nothing has been made official by the Seahawks or Waldron, Waldron seems to be the perfect fit for the system Carroll and Wilson hope to play next season.

"Their time to make a Super Bowl run is not over, but it is closing. Seahawks fans should be worried that this isn't going to last forever. Russell Wilson is not going to be 32 forever. They need to build off the core that they have now while they can. They are not going to have Bobby Wagner at linebacker forever, K.J. Wright may or may not come back next year," Bell said.

Beyond hiring an offensive coordinator, the Seahawks must prepare for the NFL draft, which is set to begin April 29. Other than free agency, this is the biggest opportunity for Seattle to improve their roster, making their four picks crucial.

"They don't have a lot of picks to do a lot of versatility. [John] Schneider will get more, he always trades for more picks, so they will have more than four. I would think offensive line, corner and running back would be the first priority," Bell said.

Additionally, Baldwin felt that after a season where their offense seemed to fall apart, perhaps Seattle should focus all their efforts on becoming a true offensive threat.

"They need another receiving threat besides Metcalf and Lockett. Whether that's a wide receiver or an actual tight end, Seattle needs someone else who can actually scare defenses. They also really need to figure out the left guard situation, because that was really one of the things that killed them in the playoffs," Baldwin said.

With core members of the Seahawks aging and surrounding teams only improving, the window for Wilson to lead the Seahawks to another Super Bowl in the Carroll era is only closing. Hope does not have to be completely lost considering the talent that exists within the roster, especially at the quarterback position. However, the pressure is on Schneider and Carroll as they work together to build the Seahawks into a Super Bowl contender, once again.