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A Pivotal Moment in Seattle Sports History? The '22 Seahawks Exceed Expectations with Homegrown Crew

Qasim Ali, Sports & Opinion Editor

The Seattle Seahawks have a winning record in December.

When they decided to part ways with franchise quarterback of a decade, Russell Wilson, in March, after a 7-10 (win-loss) campaign, that was not a sentence many expected to hear. But with a 6-5 record and six games to go, the Seahawks have arguably had a better season than they did in 2021.

Wilson, who was traded to a more promising Denver Broncos team, was instead projected to be the quarterback of a playoff contender. Seattle would receive the Broncos' next two first and second-round picks along with three players for Wilson, setting the stage for an asset-driven rebuild of the team.



Luca Del Carlo

But the Seahawks would need to get through 2022 first. They would start Wilson's 2021 backup Geno Smith at quarterback, who was projected as one of the worst quarterbacks in the league to start the year.

For lifetime fan and second-year Seattle University Communications major Eric Tufts, expectations for the young Seahawks in 2022 were a far cry from the high hopes the team usually garners.

"It was just like, 'as long as I've been a Seahawks fan they've been good, and now I need to settle into the rebuild,'" Tufts said. "I had to be ok with us rebuilding because I didn't want us to just settle for mediocrity. You're going to have to be bad for a bit and then you get good through drafting well."

Tufts was referring to tanking, a common practice in the world of professional sports, where a team plays worse with the hope of moving up in the subsequent draft thanks to their lower record.

The Broncos, on the other hand, were projected to be among the league's elite offenses; some even saw Denver as a top 10 team in the league.

When the season began, the Seahawks defeated Wilson and the Broncos in a Week One stunner and jumped out to a 6-3 start through nine weeks.

The Broncos, who scored just 16 points in the loss, are yet to right the ship. At 3-8, Denver's defense has been elite while the offense has been historically bad, despite moving to acquire the 9-time Pro Bowler in Wilson. In fact, Denver is last in the NFL in points scored and third-best in points allowed. In their latest loss, Broncos defensive lineman Mike Purcell could be seen yelling at Wilson while the Broncos trailed 23-3.

Meanwhile in Seattle, Geno Smith has played the best football of his career by far. With a 19-to-5 touchdown to interception ratio and a completion percentage of over 70% thus far, Smith has gone from being looked down upon to being viewed as one deep-ball passers in the NFL.

For third-year University of Washington Biology major and Seahawks fan Beto Sala, Smith has been the difference.

"We literally got paid to upgrade our quarterback," Sala asserted. "Last year watching the Seahawks, they would go 'three-and-out' almost every single time we got the ball with Russell... What gets me the most excited to watch now is just Geno doing his thing."

The rookies have been the story. Although the prospect of starting two first-year offensive tackles may seem risky, rookies Charles Cross and Abraham Lucas have allowed just eight sacks on Smith. They have also contributed to the run game, paving the way for another rookie, running back Kenneth Walker III, to make the Seahawks a top-10 team in yards-per-carry in the NFL this season.

On defense, rookie cornerback Tariq Woolen is already among the league's best with a league-leading five interceptions and his first-year counterpart Coby Bryant leads the league in fumbles forced at four. Their efforts have been a big reason for the Seahawks' status as a top-five team in turnovers forced, with 19.

The energy around the team is what drew in first-year University of Washington Biochemistry major Siraj Ahmad.

"From what I've seen, they play for each other and it seems like they're having a lot of fun out there," Ahmad said. "That's one of the key things when building a team, the culture."

With Denver's current fourth-overall draft pick in Seattle's possession, the team is still trending upwards.

"The only weakness for us on defense is the defensive line," Tufts suggested. "Since the Broncos pick is going to be [high], we're probably going to get an elite defensive prospect as well."

The Seahawks have dropped their last two games and currently sit at 6-5. For fans and experts alike, their performance in 2022 has already exceeded expectations. Furthermore, this roster may just be scraping the surface of its potential thanks to the timely Wilson trade.

For the Broncos, 2022 has been a shocking disappointment. They will need to navigate their roster woes without their next two first or second-round picks, as Denver's fans are left to wonder whether they should have made the fateful deal for Wilson.