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1-25-2023

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Recommended Citation

Sheara, Genny, "2023-01-25 Reshaping the Narrative" (2023). *The Spectator Online*. 849.
<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/849>

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Seahawks Season Recap: Out With The Old, In With The New

Eliza Blythe, Volunteer Reporter

After trading away franchise quarterback Russell Wilson, many analysts predicted that the Seattle Seahawks would struggle mightily in 2022. A star turn from journeyman quarterback Geno Smith, and a defense that played greater than the sum of its parts led the Seahawks to a Wild Card berth. While they ended up losing to divisional rival San Francisco 49ers, the future looks bright for the Seattle faithful, who might completely avoid the long rebuilding process.

After a one-year absence from the playoffs, the Seahawks secured their spot by beating the defending Super Bowl Champions, the Los Angeles Rams, in the final week of their regular season for the first time since 2013. The last day of the NFL season had Seahawks fans glued to their TVs, hoping the Green Bay Packers would drop what seemed like an unlosable game against the Detroit Lions. Against all odds, the Lions defeated Green Bay at Lambeau, sending an upstart Seattle to a spot in the playoffs.

That optimism did not last long. The Jan. 14 divisional game was all downhill after a successful first half for the Seahawks. The 49ers offense turned on and did not give the Seahawks a fighting chance at victory. Led by rookie quarterback Brock Purdy, the 49ers dusted the Seahawks, winning 41-23.

Seattle left the field with an air of uncertainty regarding their future. This past season was the first time since 2011 that Wilson and linebacker Bobby Wagner were not on Seattle's roster. With Wilson being traded to the Broncos and Wagner signing with the Rams, a new approach was needed to tackle the missing links on the field.

Quarterbacks Smith and Drew Lock competed during the preseason for a starting spot in the opening game against the Denver Broncos in Week 1. Smith ultimately played in the opening game, completing 23-28 thrown passes for 195 yards, two touchdowns and a win. In Week 4, Smith threw for an impressive 320 yards and ran for 49 more as well as completing a rushing touchdown for a close 48-45 win over the Detroit Lions, earning him honors as the NFC Offensive Player of the Week. Towards the end of the season, Smith became the Seahawks' single-season passing leader, beating Wilson's record of 4,219 yards from 2016. Smith had one of the best quarterbacking seasons in Seahawks history, with undeniable stats that showed his ability to create harmony with his own talents and his team's. As Wilson had a disaster of a season under an albatross contract in Denver, the comparisons came fast and furious.

Second-year Business major Lachlan Soughan was impressed by the success of this Seahawks squad.



Luca Del Carlo

"The Seahawks season was nothing less than a pleasant surprise. This is not to say there weren't many silly mistakes, but the Hawks showed us there is a bright future ahead," Soughan said. "With the comeback emergence of Geno Smith and the breakout rookie stars, we can definitely look forward to a fun 2023-24 season. In addition to this, Russell Wilson's historically horrible season with the Broncos gives the Seahawks even more potential with a high draft pick this year. The defense, offensive line and run game have work to do, but I believe something special is brewing in Seattle."

Before fans realized the hidden gem they had in Smith, the city was hurt by the rift between Coach Pete Carroll and Wilson after he was traded to the Broncos. Jonah Malmon, a Seattle U first-year environmental studies major, had some harsh words to say.

"I hate Russell Wilson now. He had a terrible season with the Broncos and threw almost as many interceptions as he made touchdowns," Malmon said.

Where Wilson was once easily able to improvise plays and create on offense, Smith is a completely different type of player. Smith has a smooth, easygoing element to his game that allows for his teammates to make plays, not just making him the star of the show. Smith was able to bring together the talents around him and understood how to use them. Meanwhile, Wilson could hardly compete in his first season with the Broncos.

The playoff loss has left fans yearning for the glory days. First-year Pre-major studies student Zach Hochstein reminisced about the Super Bowl winning squad.

"I just like his [Carroll's] personality... He's always chewin' gum with his mouth open and calling plays. When they won the super bowl, I loved Pete Carroll, and I loved everyone on the team, but..." Hochstein shrugged then continued, "I went to the Seahawks parade after they won the Super bowl, and Marshawn Lynch was throwing out skittles, and I know someone who caught one, and they sold it on Ebay for 50 dollars. 'Marshawn Lynch thrown skittle.'"

These upcoming months bring a lot of new decisions to be made by Carroll and General Manager John Schneider. In the NFL Draft in April 2023, the Seahawks have the highest pick they've gotten in 13 years, with a fifth overall selection in the opening round as well as four picks in the top 60. The use of this draft capital will go a long way towards determining the optimism of the Emerald City hopefuls going into the next season.