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# XFL Returns: Sea Dragons Defend the City

Sean Campbell, Staff Reporter

With a complex past dating back to 2001, the Xtreme Football League (XFL) returned to Seattle on Thursday, Feb. 23 at Lumen Field. The game pitted the Seattle Sea Dragons against the Saint Louis BattleHawks in the season's fifth game and the first home game for the Sea Dragons this season.

The game started off promising for the Sea Dragons with the team scoring 12 points in the first quarter. However, this momentum was not maintained, with the second and third quarters seeing no scores from the Seattle home team. With a minute thirty left on the clock, the score sat at 12-17, with the BattleHawks in the lead. Then, receiver Jordan Veasy caught the ball with both feet on the edge of the end zone.

The crowd erupted as the Sea Dragons had reclaimed the lead with a minute twenty-two left on the clock. One such fan was Jim Stuart Allen, otherwise known as Broccoli Man, a reverent fan of the Sea Dragons.

"I've been to every home game, which is three," Allen said. "This game has been really engaging with different scoring options [than the NFL], there's a lot more of a chance you can come back."

Allen showed his support for the team by dancing in the stands for the entire game with a head of broccoli in each hand, cheering and working on getting everyone hyped for the game. When not supporting the Sea Dragons, he substitute teaches working for the Puyallup School District.

This little victory was short-lived. During the BattleHawk's next possession, they drove the ball far enough to be in field goal range. Then, in the last minute of the game, Donnie Hageman made a 44-yard field goal securing a two-point lead and giving the victory to the BattleHawks.

This BattleHawks victory marked the second consecutive loss for the Sea Dragons where they lost in the last minute of the game. Former NFL linebacker and Head Coach of the Sea Dragons Jim Haslett felt the defeat strongly.

"[We've never] lost one in the last second, and now [we are just doubling up on it]," Haslett said. "We are going to keep working and emphasize ball control... and hopefully learn from it."



Sean Campbell

Seattle Sea Dragon's quarterback Ben DiNucci scans the field.

The XFL has many prior NFL players including Coach Haslett, wide receiver Josh Gordon and the Sea Dragon's starting Quarterback Ben DeNucci, who was the third string quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys in 2020.

"The last two weeks have been our achilles heel," DeNucci said. "Kind of a loss for words when you play two games in a few days [and] both games come down to the last play and both not in your favor. We have got to figure this out."

The XFL has seen many changes since its origin in 2001 and rebuild in 2018. Most recently, the XFL was purchased from founder Vince McMahon by Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and his manager Dahy Garcia this season. The two bought the league because they both have a wealth of sports experience to turn it into a viable sports league. Johnson also believes that by having the XFL as a viable league it can help to make more people's dreams of playing professional football a reality.

The XFL consists of eight teams and has a 43-game season from Feb. 18 until May 13. The choice to have the season during this time is to not interfere with the more popular National Football League (NFL) and also capitalize on the football fans who want to continue to watch the sport after the NFL season concludes.

The Sea Dragons next home game will be Saturday, March 11th.



Seattle Sea Dragons defenders push back against the St Louis Battlehawks. (Sean Campbell)