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Morgan Keller

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# Tempering Seahawks Expectations Amidst Fan Overreactions

Morgan Keller, Volunteer Reporter

The Seattle Seahawks bye week came at a good time, as they stand at the bottom of the NFC West after two frustrating home losses to the Buffalo Bills and Los Angeles Rams. The manner in which they have lost games this season has led to harsh reactions from fans and analysts.

The Seahawks welcomed the Bills to Lumen Field in week eight, and let the Bills Mafia leave with a rather comfortable 31-10 victory. Buffalo walked away with the game in the second quarter after consecutive mistakes in the red zone cost Seattle 14 points. The Seahawks had to settle for a field goal after Seahawks center Connor Williams snapped the ball several yards over quarterback Geno Smith's head. They turned the ball over on downs the next drive when Smith was tripped by one of his linemen. The offensive line had a rough game all around, as Seattle ended the game averaging a measly 1.9 yards per carry on offense. This was contrasted with allowing 164 rushing yards among 445 total to Buffalo.

If this loss wasn't frustrating enough, they followed it up with an overtime loss at home to the Rams. Seattle's defense saw an improved performance in this game, holding the Rams offense to 2.8 yards per carry and forcing seven three-and-outs thanks to efforts from former Rams linebacker Ernest Jones IV, who joined Seattle via trade from the Tennessee Titans.

Geno Smith was the main talking point from this game, as he threw for 363 yards and three touchdowns—though he also threw three interceptions including a 103-yard pick six. Smith bounced back and led a game-winning drive at the end of the fourth quarter, but after turning the ball over on downs in overtime, they lost as the Rams sealed the game 26-20.



Morgan Wong

Seattle's offensive struggles in the trenches were amplified this game as the unit let Smith get sacked a season-high seven times. The 12 penalties across the team didn't help either—Seattle ranks second and third in the league for the most offensive holding and false start penalties.

The need to fix these mistakes was emphasized by head coach Mike Macdonald in a recent press conference.

"The operation and the self-inflicted penalties is the most frustrating," Macdonald said. "We need to play cleaner football. That's obvious, and it's our responsibility as coaches to make sure our guys are playing clean football."

Seahawks fans on social media were evidently upset by these two losses, as the team's performances had people calling for jobs—specifically Geno Smith and Mike Macdonald's. The reality in any case is that people are going to be upset when your starting quarterback is at the top of the charts for interceptions thrown. However, he hasn't been poor this season—more like the opposite. Smith has been consistently amongst the passing yard leaders in the league this season, an important point when considering the struggles in the run game. You can argue that every interception hasn't been his fault either, as the first against the Rams came after a good throw bounced off the hands of Seahawks wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba. The players have acknowledged these mistakes on offense, and they still have confidence in their quarterback, as both Smith and Smith-Njigba shared in press conferences after the game.

"I know if we give him the ball and do what we're supposed to do, he's going to put the ball where it's supposed to be," Smith-Njigba said. "We have total confidence when we go out there, we just gotta stop beating ourselves."

While Seattle's defense has looked far from the dominant one Macdonald led in Baltimore, hiring him was not necessarily a mistake. The roster that Macdonald inherited needed a lot of work, and so far, has just gone through one offseason with the team. Not to mention the team's cap space issues, which will worsen next year. Seattle lost both of their starting linebackers in the offseason, and were limited to sign Jerome Baker and Tyrel Dodson to prove it deals. Baker was included in the trade for Ernest Jones, and Dodson was waived on Monday. Yes, the team needs to improve, but Macdonald needs time to construct a team that completely fits his style, as stated by NFL Analyst Daniel Jeremiah on Seattle Sports 710 radio.

"Let's have some patience," Jeremiah said. "Let's let them go through a draft cycle, bring in more guys and kind of get the right fits for how they want to play."

The Seattle Seahawks sit at 4-5 and look to build as they head into the rest of the season, this weekend away at San Francisco.