

SUPER BOWL XLIX



AP Photo/John Froschauer, File

Seattle Seahawks general manager John Schneider watches the second half of a preseason NFL football game against the Chicago Bears in Seattle Aug. 22.

Manager Schneider has been architect of Seahawks success

PHOENIX (AP) — Give Pete Carroll the opportunity to campaign for someone or something he believes in and he'll gladly jump at the chance.

Usually it's for a player, or a cause. But Carroll's drive this year was getting recognition for general manager John Schneider, the co-architect of the Seattle Seahawks' rise who usually tries to avoid the spotlight.

"He has just worked tirelessly to continue to compete, to find guys to make this a healthy, competitive roster," Carroll said. "I mean the hundreds of changes in the first year was just trying to find guys. The continuation of that, it changed in terms of the numbers, but the attitude, the approach, John just continued to battle for it."

"I don't know how he couldn't be recognized with the drafts that he's had, with the free agency success he's had, with the success of our lower draft picks that have come through."

Five years after being selected by Carroll to be the second piece of the Seahawks hierarchy, Seattle is in a second consecutive Super Bowl thanks largely to a roster constructed by Schneider. He's received little recognition for what Seattle has accomplished during his tenure and while Schneider doesn't care, Carroll would like to see him honored.

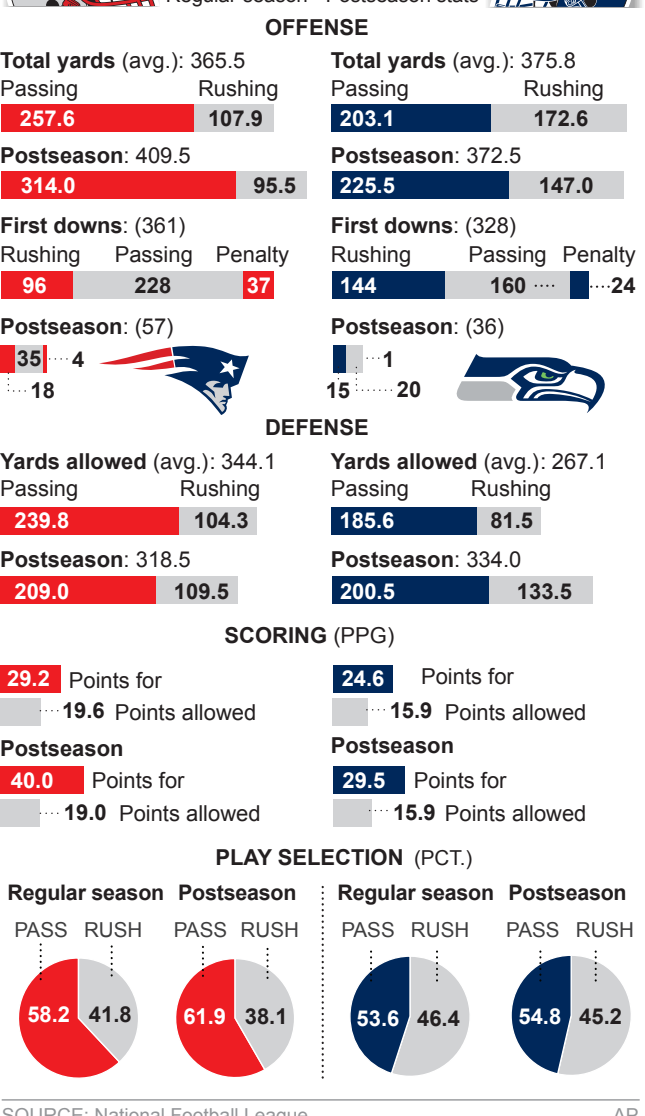
"His insight and his ability and really the creativity that he brings couldn't have been more obvious," Carroll said. "But the rest of us, I don't know. We're just playing a game and we're a team. But I think his situation here really should stand out and should be recognized."

The 43-year-old Schneider has not rested on what Seattle has accomplished during his tenure, to the point where the Seahawks were holding pre-draft meetings this week in Arizona leading up to Sunday's game against New England. Asked recently if he could have imagined Seattle's success after five years, Schneider said he can't look at two conference titles and four playoff appearances from a broad perspective.

"We are so focused and consumed about getting better in every area on a daily basis that it has just built like that over the years," Schneider said. "I know you guys have heard me talk about being a consistent championship-caliber team. And with that comes really tough decisions, like, every day. Obviously, it's what you strive for. Everybody just kind of knows that. We don't talk about it. Yeah, of course everybody wants to be a world champion, everybody wants to win Super Bowls. But the manner in which we did it was a blast, the whole group. The

New England Patriots vs. Seattle Seahawks

Feb. 1 • 6:30 p.m. EST • NBC
Regular-season • Postseason stats



SOURCE: National Football League

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culture that we are in is just awesome."

While Schneider and Carroll are 20 years apart in age, they often act like brothers. That relationship developed in the first few months of their partnership when Seattle went through hundreds of roster transactions trying to remodel its team. They often pull lines from movies like "Step Brothers" in meetings to lighten the mood.

"It's a cool relationship because John will come through and check with coach all the time, every move he's going to make. Coach will go ahead and say 'I agree with you,' but at the same time they'll have their differences and they always come to an agreement and they're always on the same page," said Nate Carroll, an assistant coach for Seattle and Pete's son. "It's very powerful. It's a comfortable setting to work in. Those guys are great."

What Schneider has constructed relies on a mix of elements: Hitting on gems in the draft more often than not; discovering undrafted free agents

that can contribute; and sprinkling in key free agents when it fits the Seahawks' financial structure.

Schneider knows time is running out for having so many key contributors playing for cheap by NFL standards. Richard Sherman, Earl Thomas, Kam Chancellor, K.J. Wright and Michael Bennett are all taken care of for at least a few more seasons. But looming is an expected new deal for quarterback Russell Wilson this offseason.

"It presents challenges, there is no question. We haven't sat down with his representatives," Schneider said. "We are still going to be drafting young players and playing young players, so we might not be able to dip into free agency like you may want to here and there or compensate somebody else that you want to compensate that is already on your team. But just the fact that we're going to continue to keep drafting players and playing young players should help us compensate for whatever level of compensation (Wilson's contract) is."

Hoodie and scowl hide coach Belichick's impact

PHOENIX (AP) — He's been called the Evil Genius, and he's been fined for spying on an opponent. And now there are questions about deflated footballs.

Any visual portrait of Bill Belichick likely has him wearing a hoodie — and a scowl. Many of his media duties are marked by terse answers or outright stonewalling.

All of which masks the impact and longevity of the New England Patriots boss, the winningest coach in postseason NFL history.

Belichick is about to lead his team into its sixth Super Bowl in 14 seasons. No one, not Chuck Noll or Tom Landry or Marv Levy or Bill Walsh — all Hall of Famers — managed that. Since Belichick took over the Patriots in 2000 after a five-season flop as head man in Cleveland, there have been 119 coaching changes. In the AFC East alone, which the Patriots have won 12 of 14 seasons, 17 coaches have come and gone, according to STATS.

Belichick is the constant. "I think Coach is always pretty consistent with how he's dealt with our team," Tom Brady said. "You don't ride the highs and lows of the season. Whether it's one win or one loss, you just try to get better and make improvements, and you've got to play your best at the end."

"It's hard to make our team. Coach Belichick puts a lot of pressure on guys in training camp. If you make the team, you know that you have the confidence of the coaches that you can help us win. Everybody's got a skill. Everybody's got a skill set. Whoever is on the field has to be able to go out there and perform their job."

In the face of the controversies and criticisms the Patriots have faced during his tenure, Belichick's approach remains the same. Yes, he often comes off as ornery, but that's because he'd rather be coaching, rather than teaching, rather than dissecting film.

But according to Vince Wilfork, other than Brady the longest-tenured Patriot, Belichick has changed somewhat. Out of necessity.

"Yeah, I've seen the difference in Bill in the 11 years that I have been here, and I tell him he is getting soft," the defensive tackle joked. "But this is a different era of football now with how the team is shaped up, and how a lot of guys are younger guys. You don't really have that veteran team that he used to have. When I first came in the league, he had a veteran team that didn't take much to get those guys going."

"But he's more understanding now. I think when you get so used to having



AP Photo/Elise Amendola, File

New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick walks the sidelines during the second half of an NFL divisional playoff football game in Foxborough, Mass., Jan. 10.

a certain quality of players and it changes, it's hard for you to adapt to change. And I think Bill had to do a good job of that ever since I've been in the league because we've changed so much."

Pretty much every successful Super Bowl coach had to follow that path. Certainly Noll did as Pittsburgh evolved from the Steel Curtain-dominated squads to a high-scoring bunch. So did Landry, several times, depending on if he had a Doomsday Defense or a potent attack built around Roger Staubach.

Belichick's first Super Bowl team back in 2001 was fundamentally sound on both sides of the ball, but far more aggressive on defense, his specialty. Indeed, Brady was almost a caretaker that season.

Belichick knew he had something very special in Brady, though, and when the quarterback rapidly developed, the coach loosened the reins. When they won their consecutive titles for the 2003 and 2004 seasons, Brady was a budding star.

When Belichick recognized that, he built an unstoppable offense around Brady. In some ways, he was ahead of the game, again. While the NFL was evolving into pass-crazy league, the Patriots already were there with Brady throwing to Randy Moss and Wes Welker.

By 2007, Brady was the best quarterback in the league, breaking records

and guiding New England to a perfect regular season.

Don't think other coaches around the NFL haven't paid attention. His counterpart in this Super Bowl, Seattle's Pete Carroll, actually was replaced in New England by Belichick.

"I know that when (owner Robert Kraft) was making his choice to hire coach Belichick, I had one opportunity to say something to him about that," Carroll said. "And I thought that was really a unique hire, a special hire and a guy that would really fit in well if (Kraft) let him do what he was capable of doing. I think Bill is a very open, free-thinker and a guy that needs that kind of control to be at his best."

"It's worked historically and in extraordinary fashion."

To Wilfork, nothing has changed, yet so much has changed.

"We were a veteran team, (then) it was a younger team; at one point we were the youngest team in the league," said. "So I think he had to try to find the identity in what works for that team. And I think he's done a great job over the years of doing that."

"But at the end of the day, he is still Bill. He coaches the same way. He demands everything the same way. But I think he's got a little soft heart now. Over time, he got a little softer, though."

Even if he is loath to show it publicly.

SUPER BOWL XLIX

Establishing supremacy between No. 1 seeds

The Patriots seek their fourth championship in the Brady-Belichick era. Seattle (14-4) is after a second straight crown, the first team since New England to manage that in a decade. Of course, the Patriots (14-4) also lost their last two trips to the big game, both to the Giants. The oddsmakers have no team being the favorite, and that seems logical for the top two seeds.

MATCHUP/PICK		STORYLINE		AVG. YARDS PER GAME (reg. season)			
Patriots 27 vs. Seahawks 24 OT		This is a classic matchup: potent offense for the Patriots, stingy defense for Seattle. The Seahawks manhandled Peyton Manning and the Broncos last year. They'll need to be just as efficient this time against Brady. With New England's ability to rally, the Seahawks recognize they can never relax.		Patriots		Seahawks	
Sunday 6:30 p.m. EST, NBC				Total yards: 365.5	Passing	Total yards: 375.8	Passing
				257.6	107.9	203.1	172.6
				Yds. allowed: 344.1	Passing	Yds. allowed: 267.1	Passing
				239.8	104.3	185.6	81.5

Griffitt, Tapio lead Ilwaco over Naselle

Ilwaco 53, Naselle 40

NASELLE, Wash. — Ilwaco's Nick Griffitt and Zac Tapio combined for 35 points to help lead the Fishermen past Naselle, 53-40, in a nonleague boys basketball game Wednesday night. Griffitt scored 21 points and grabbed 13 rebounds, while Tapio scored 14 with eight boards.

Cole Bergeson had 13 points and Conner See added eight for Naselle.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE		BASKETBALL	
TODAY	Boys Basketball — Livingstone Adventist at Jewell, 7 p.m.; Ilwaco at South Bend, 7 p.m.	HIGH SCHOOLS	Ilwaco 53, Naselle 40
FRIDAY	Boys Basketball — Livingstone Adventist at Jewell, 5:30 p.m.	Boys	ILW (53): Nick Griffitt 21, Tapio 14, Bannister 8, Sheldon 8, Schenk 2.
	Boys Basketball — Astoria at Seaside, 5:30 p.m.; Oregon Episcopal at Warrenton, 7:45 p.m.; Knappa at Vernonia, 7:45 p.m.	Girls	NAS (40): Cole Bergeson 13, See 8, Carter 6, Corona 4, Edwards 3, Pine 3, Gudmundson 2, Wulff 1.
		Wrestling	Ilwaco Beach
			Brawl, 10 a.m.
			Ilwaco 11 13 1613—53
			Naselle 9 4 1215—40
			Tuesday's result
			Scappoose 59, Astoria 46
			AST (46): Kyle Strange 15, Fruith 12, Jarrett 6, Palek 5, Scroup 2, Johnson 2, Fremstad 2, Keating 2.
			SCP (59): Chase Johnson 12, Ford 11, McNabb 11, Lohman 8, Wendelschafer 6, Marcantonio 6, Backus 3, Bird 2.
			Astoria 13 10 1313—46
			Scappoose 18 15 9 17—59