

SPORTS

Seahawks Super Bowl Bound Seattle keeps it close to win NFC Championship

(AP) - Richard Sherman did a CenturyLink Leap.

Golden Tate grabbed a 12th Man flag and circled the field with it.

Even team owner Paul Allen made an appearance and gave a victory speech.

The Seattle Seahawks are headed to the Big Apple for the Super Bowl.

"To see all our work that we put in - the mornings, the nights, the weights, all your life, as a young player and in the NFL," Malcolm Smith said after his end zone interception with 22 seconds remaining clinched the 23-17 victory over the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday. "It's amazing."

Seattle's top-ranked defense forced three fourth-quarter turn-

overs, and Russell Wilson threw a 35-yard touchdown pass on fourth down for the winning points. Seattle will meet Denver (15-3) for the NFL title in two weeks in the New Jersey Meadowlands. It's the first trip to the big game for the Seahawks (15-3) since they lost to Pittsburgh after the 2005 season.

The conference champs had the best records in the league this year, the second time the top seeds have gotten to the Super Bowl in 20 seasons. It also is a classic confrontation of Denver's record-setting offense led by Peyton Manning against the NFL's stingiest defense. Denver opened as a 1-point favorite over Seattle on the Glantz-Culver Line.

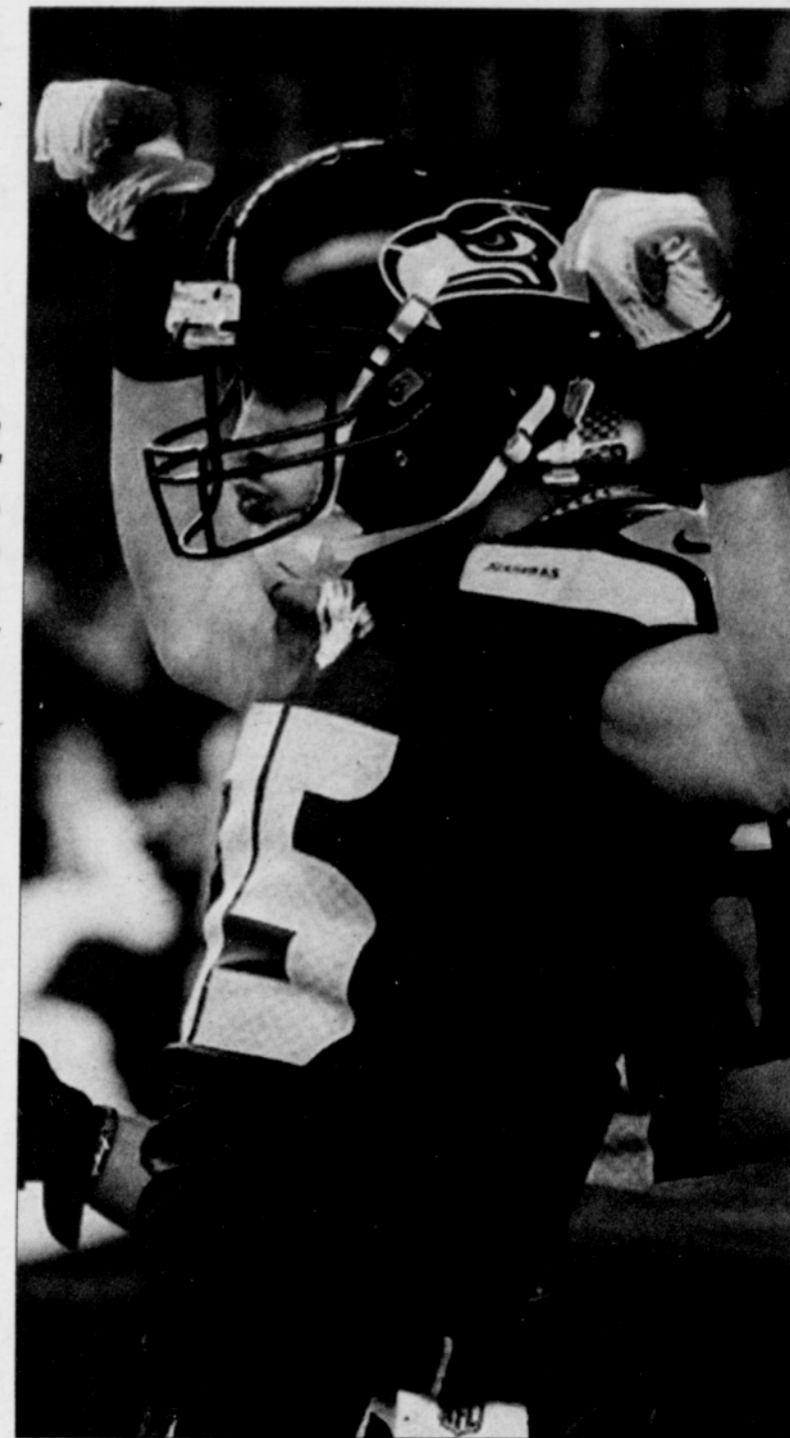
"It will be a great matchup," coach Pete Carroll said. "I think it's an extraordinary opportunity to go against a guy that set all the records in the history of the game."

Moments after Sherman tipped Colin Kaepernick's pass to Smith for the interception, the All-Pro cornerback jumped into the stands behind the end zone, saluting the Seahawks' raucous fans. With 12th Man flags waving everywhere, and "New York, New York" blaring over the loudspeakers, CenturyLink Field rocked like never before.

"That's as sweet as it gets," said Sherman, who also went into several rants about 49ers wideout Michael Crabtree, whom he called a "sorry receiver."

"This is really special," added Carroll, who has turned around the Seahawks in four seasons in charge. "It would really be a mistake to not remember the connection and the relationship between this football team and the 12th Man and these fans. It's unbelievable."

Seattle Seahawks' Jermaine Kearse celebrates after catching a touch-down pass during the second half of the NFL football NFC Championship game against the San Francisco 49ers, Sunday, in Seattle.



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PSU Players in Big Game

For the first time ever a pair of former Portland State football players will meet in the Super Bowl. Julius Thomas of the Denver Broncos and DeShawn Shead of the Seattle Seahawks will both play in Super Bowl XLVII on Feb. 2 at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J.

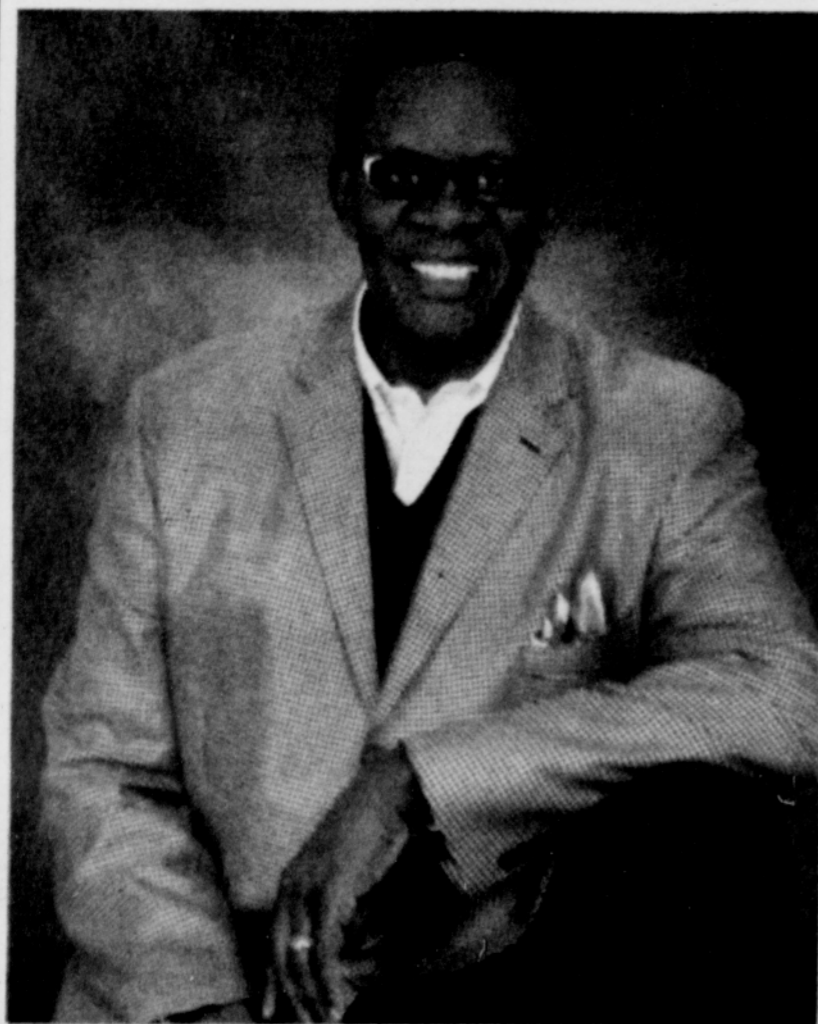
Thomas, a Pro Bowl tight end with the Broncos this season, was

a winner on Sunday as Denver beat New England, 26-16, in the AFC Championship. A 6-5, 250-pounder who played both football and basketball at Portland State from 2007-10, Thomas had a team-high eight receptions for 85 yards in the game.

Shead, a special teamer and backup defensive back for the Seahawks, was a winner as Seattle defeated San Francisco, 23-17.

Shead, at 6-2, 220-pounds, played for the Vikings from 2008-11. He did not record any statistics in Sunday's NFC Championship game but played on kick and punt return teams for the Seahawks.

The meeting of the former Viking teammates means one of them is guaranteed to be a Super Bowl Champion.



Dr. Billy R. Flowers

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