

NFL

Backups running wild for Steelers, Seahawks

Rawls, Williams making most of opportunities

By TIM BOOTH AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE — Just as everyone expected before the season began, two of the NFL's most productive running backs will be on display when Pittsburgh makes a rare visit to the Pacific Northwest to face Seattle.

Marshawn Lynch and Le'Veon Bell, right? Nope. Hopefully they're somewhere comfortable while watching their backups — the Seahawks' Thomas Rawls and the Steelers' DeAngelo Williams — on Sunday.

The Steelers will visit Seattle for the first time since 2003 and both teams could use a victory to help their playoff standing. Pittsburgh (6-4) currently holds one of the two wild-card spots in the AFC, while Seattle (5-5) is one game behind struggling Atlanta for a wild-card spot.

Bell and Lynch will be spectators due to injury, leaving Williams and Rawls as the workhorses for both teams. Bell was lost for the season on Nov. 1 to a knee injury, while Lynch underwent abdominal surgery earlier this week and is out at least three or four weeks and possibly longer.

Rawls has rushed for 604 yards

Football Seattle Seahawks (5-5) Pittsburgh Steelers (6-4) Sunday, 1:25 p.m. at Century Link Field TV: FOX



Seattle Seahawks running back Thomas Rawls, right, rushes against the San Francisco 49ers during the first half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Nov. 22, 2015, in Seattle.

while stepping in at various times with Lynch slowed by injuries. Rawls ran for 209 yards last week against San Francisco, the second-most in Seahawks history. Williams has run for 534 yards and scored five touchdowns, filling in when Bell was suspended at the start of the season and taking over following Bell's injury.

Rawls is averaging 5.98 yards per carry, leading all running backs; Williams is eighth at 4.99 yards per carry.

"He certainly gives us a chance to run the ball like we like to and our hopes are very high that he's going to do very well," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said of Rawls.

Unlike two weeks ago against Cleveland, the Steelers will have Ben Roethlisberger under center from the start. Roethlisberger got a week of rest thanks to the bye to let a foot sprain heal, but he'll continue to wear a brace on his left knee due to an MCL sprain earlier in the season.

The fact Roethlisberger will start should give plenty of opportunity for Seahawks fans to continue expressing their displeasure over

the outcome of the Super Bowl 10 years ago.

"Since (the Seahawks) won their Super Bowl and went back to back, I think I haven't heard nearly as much as I did early on," Roethlisberger said.

Here's what else to watch as the Seahawks and Steelers meet for just the 18th time:

TRAILING AROUND: Seattle cornerback Richard Sherman has followed the likes of A.J. Green, Torrey Smith and Dez Bryant this season.

The Seahawks may not be able to do that against the Steelers because Pittsburgh's passing attack

is more than just Antonio Brown. Martavis Bryant is coming off the best game of his career with 178 yards receiving two weeks ago against Cleveland. Brown is going to get his catches — he has 27 in the past two games — but limiting Bryant and others such as tight end Heath Miller will be the challenge for Seattle's secondary.

"They like to take their shots, so it's going to be a fun game," Sherman said.

EYES FRONT: The AFC North race appeared to be over when the Bengals rallied for a 16-10 win in Pittsburgh on Nov. 1. Heading into Thanksgiving, however, Cincinnati's lead over the Steelers is down

to two games, with a rematch set in The Jungle on Dec. 13. Just don't expect Pittsburgh to get caught looking ahead.

"We can't really worry about what (the Bengals) doing," defensive end Cam Heyward said. "It's a little bit like whatever is going on over there doesn't apply to us. We have to take care of our business to even have that apply to us."

TOUCHDOWN JIMMY:

In his last 11 games against AFC opponents, Seattle tight end Jimmy Graham has 12 touchdown catches. That might just be a statistical quirk, but Graham may have something to prove against the Steelers. The last time Graham faced the Steelers, he was the most important decoy on the field. He had zero catches against the Steelers last season while still with New Orleans. It's one of three games since 2011 where Graham didn't have a catch.

BRACING FOR THE 12TH MAN:

The Steelers have played in Seattle just once since 1994 and haven't won in the Northwest since 1983. Roethlisberger isn't exactly worried about the environment, even though Pittsburgh is just 5-9 in games played in the Mountain and Pacific time zones over the last decade.

"Every place we go is hostile," Roethlisberger said. "So we're going to treat this like it's a great football team, which it is, and go in there to a great environment and try to play our best."

NFL

Romo done for year following 2nd collarbone injury

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Tony Romo knew he was risking another left collarbone injury by coming back eight weeks after breaking it.

The Dallas quarterback won't have to worry about another return. He's out for the season this time.

Cowboys owner and general manager Jerry Jones said on his radio show Friday that Romo would sit out the remaining five games with a small fracture in the same collarbone that had already sidelined him for seven games.

Romo will not need surgery after getting hurt in the third quarter of Thursday's 33-14 loss to Carolina. He didn't need surgery after breaking the collarbone in Week 2 at Philadelphia, either.

It's the third fracture in Romo's non-throwing shoulder in his nine-year career as the Dallas starter. He missed most of 2010 after getting hurt against the New York Giants.

"The hard part is playing when you're trying not to get hurt, which is silly," Romo said after he threw three interceptions and Carolina returned two of them for touchdowns before the injury. "I'm disappointed in costing our team a good chance to stay in the game early. Then on top of it, who knows how long after that. It's just a disappointing day."

Romo was in his second game back after the Cowboys (3-8) lost seven straight without him. The



Team staff escort Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo (9) off the field after Romo suffered a shoulder injury on a sack by Carolina Panthers outside linebacker Thomas Davis during the second half of Thursday's game in Arlington.

skid ended in his return at Miami, and the Carolina loss was his first of the season.

"We felt that the risk was worth the potential of having him be the impact he can be and he is on our team," Jones said on his radio show. "You shouldn't ever quit trying to do something that is extraordinary. The dream was if Tony could have come in, been the catalyst, played similarly and had results we had the week before against Miami ... that it would've been the beginning of maybe something special."

Matt Cassel, who started four games during Romo's first absence,

will be the starter as long as he's healthy. He lost all four of his starts after Brandon Weeden was 0-3 filling in for Romo. The Cowboys released Weeden the week Romo was activated, and he signed with Houston.

"You have to step in and try to fulfill that role," Cassel said after leading Dallas' only touchdown drive against the Panthers. "Hopefully the guys rally around you. You have to move forward. I have confidence in myself and confidence in this team."

The 35-year-old Romo is becoming injury-prone late in his

career. He's had two back surgeries since 2013, and a third back injury that sidelined him for a game last year. He also played through broken ribs and a punctured lung earlier in his career. He missed two games in 2008 with a broken finger.

"We wouldn't let Tony play if he wasn't ready to play physically," coach Jason Garrett said after the game. "There is no evidence we brought him back too soon."

Eagles stand by coordinator

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Philadelphia Eagles head coach Chip Kelly didn't have any answers, except for one.

"Yes," Kelly said simply when asked if defensive coordinator Billy Davis would stay put after the Eagles were blown out for the second time in less than a week.

Philadelphia lost 45-14 at Detroit on Thursday after losing 45-17 to Tampa Bay on Sunday.

That's 90 points in five days. Ten touchdown passes allowed and no interceptions in five days.

Tampa Bay quarterback Jameis Winston set at rookie record with five touchdown passes the same day Bucs running back Doug Martin ran for 235 yards. Detroit quarterback Matthew Stafford fed Calvin Johnson three TDs, continuing a turnaround with the Lions winning their third straight game.

The Eagles had gone a league-high 14 games with a forced

turnover but hasn't had one in three games.

Davis is taking the heat for a unit that has crumbled over the past month after showing marked improvement from the 2014 season earlier this year.

"I blitzed a lot more than I have in the last couple of weeks. We had doubles, we had brackets, we moved in and out of coverages," Davis said. "Everything, everybody, we'll look at all of it. There's not much to say here. I do believe in the group of men we have."

Davis said he has to get his players in better position.

"All of us got into the hole, all of us will get out of the hole. We just have to keep fighting," he said.

It doesn't get any easier for Davis and the Eagles defense. After making Winston and Stafford look like Tom Brady, they get the real Brady next week in New England when they take on the undefeated Patriots.

"The answer is there is no other option," Kelly said of what can be done. "We have five games left. We have to go and play. We have to get better."

NOTES: The Eagles lost cornerback Nolan Carroll for the rest of the season with a broken ankle suffered in the first half of Thursday's loss. Rookie Eric Rowe replaced him and struggled against Johnson. ... Left tackle Jason Peters, plagued by injuries all season, left the game with an ankle injury. It is not believed to be serious.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard table containing NFL, NBA, MLB, and Soccer results and schedules.