

NFL

# Wilson eager to return to site of Super Bowl loss

## Seattle plays at Arizona in regular season finale

By **TIM BOOTH**  
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — The Seattle Seahawks' last trip to Glendale, Arizona, is not a popular conversation topic inside the locker room.

Understandably so considering the outcome.

For the first time since the heartbreak of the Super Bowl in February, the Seahawks will return to University of Phoenix Stadium on Sunday to take on the Arizona Cardinals. But the Seahawks are downplaying any flashbacks or thoughts of February's loss to New England.

"That's in the past. I don't think anybody on the team thinks about that," said cornerback DeShawn Shead. "We're playing a whole different team, it's a whole other atmosphere. This is what is right here in

front of us and this is the next opportunity."

Quarterback Russell Wilson, who made the fateful throw from the 1-yard line that was intercepted by Malcolm Butler in the closing seconds and clinched the Patriots' victory, is the only one who has been open about looking forward to being back there this week. In the midst of his postgame availability after losing to St. Louis last Sunday, Wilson dropped a little nugget regarding the season finale against the Cardinals.

"Going to Arizona, the last time we were there, it didn't work out our way. I know for me, I'm looking forward to being on that turf again," Wilson said.

Asked about that comment on Thursday, Wilson again brought up the challenge of getting past a difficult moment in his career.

"I think it builds you up. I think it helps you understand the ball doesn't always bounce your way.



AP Photo/John Froschauer

**Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson walks on the field against the St. Louis Rams in the first half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 27, 2015, in Seattle.**

We've had it bounce our way a lot and hopefully we can keep that going," Wilson said. "But I think this game is so much bigger than just a game. Winning is what it's all about. We all come here to win. .... But when it doesn't work out, how can you use that? How can you use that for encouragement

for others? How can you use that for yourself? How can you continue to build and evolve and progress? It's been a constant progression, this journey."

During training camp and leading into the season, how Seattle would get past the Super Bowl disappointment was the main topic of conver-

sation. But as the season progressed, there were other issues that surfaced so any Super Bowl hangover took a backseat. Whether it was Kam Chancellor's holdout to begin the regular season, to starting 2-4, to the injury problems of Marshawn Lynch, it's been a newsy enough season for Seattle that the Super Bowl was somewhat forgotten.

It's been brought up on various occasions. Offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell — who called the famous slant pass that went horribly wrong for Seattle — spoke earlier in December about still having that play in the back of his mind but understanding the team had to move on.

"There's really not time that doesn't go by where you still think about it. I know how I feel about it and I know the feelings that it conjures up inside of me when I think about it," Bevell said. "But it's one play, and I have to look at it that way, and I was able to put it behind me. That doesn't

mean that it didn't happen. That doesn't mean that I don't still have a reaction to it."

The topic of returning to Glendale popped up this week in part because of Wilson's initial comment. There is very little for the Seahawks to play for. They are already in the playoffs as a wild card and the only remaining question is whether they are the No. 5 or No. 6 seed and if they'll open the postseason at Green Bay, Washington or Minnesota.

Jermaine Kearse, who made one of the most memorable catches in Super Bowl history that almost immediately became an afterthought, said the Super Bowl won't cross his mind when he walks in the stadium. And coach Pete Carroll dismissed the idea that going back to that stadium was any sort of issue.

"Just that it's not a big deal. It's not a big deal for us going back," Carroll said. "That's where we're playing, that's all."



AP Photo/Michael Perez  
**This Dec. 26, 2015 shows Philadelphia head coach Chip Kelly watching from the sidelines.**

# Mariota confident Kelly will win again

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Quarterback Marcus Mariota is focused only on the Titans' season finale, not a reunion in Tennessee with his former Oregon coach Chip Kelly.

Mariota said Thursday he obviously has a connection to Kelly who recruited him to Oregon where he was the quarterback's coach for two

seasons. The Eagles fired Kelly on Tuesday night, and the Titans (3-12) must hire a permanent coach after firing Ken Whisenhunt on Nov. 3.

"It's unfortunate that coach Kelly is in this situation, but I'm sure whatever team he ends up going to he'll find success," Mariota said.

Mariota already has been declared out of Sunday's season finale at Indianapolis, because

of a sprained right knee. Mike Mularkey is 2-6 as the Titans' interim coach. A new coach would be the quarterback's third before starting his second NFL season, which Mariota conceded is a bit daunting.

"It's part of the business, and you got to do your best to handle it and whatever happens, you only control certain things," Mariota said. "You have to do the best to

handle whatever's thrown at you and always take everything with a grain of salt."

Mariota credited Kelly for a lot of his development at Oregon and said his former coach proved he could win in the NFL, especially with his first two seasons.

"To win 10 games his first two years says a lot about what he's able to do and a lot about his coaching," Mariota said.

## College Basketball

# Pac-12 deeper, more balanced than previous seasons

By **JOHN MARSHALL**  
Associated Press

PHOENIX — Arizona has been the runaway favorite to win the Pac-12 the past two seasons and lived up to those expectations by winning the conference by three games each year.

The Wildcats are again the team to beat this season, but the gap has closed.

The teams at the top end of the conference have gotten better and so have the ones at the bottom, making it one of the deepest in the country.

"From top to bottom, the depth of our league from all 12 teams with so many having improved from a year or two ago, this is the deepest conference we have competed in as a coaching staff," Arizona coach Sean Miller said. "It is strong at the top and equally strong in the middle and whoever finishes at the bottom, I think will be among the better bottom teams in the Pac-12 in recent seasons."

Despite losing four starters from a year ago, Arizona (12-1) is the Pac-12's top-ranked team at No. 8 in The Associated Press poll. The Wildcats' only loss was to No. 12 Providence and



Arizona guard Kadeem Allen (5) muscles his way around Long Beach State guard Branford Jones (14) during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2015, in Tucson, Ariz.

Kelly Presnell/  
Arizona Daily Star via AP

they've played the past eight games without 7-foot center Caleb Tarczewski, who's recovering from a stress reaction in his foot.

After that are four 11-2 teams: No. 21 Utah, Colorado, Oregon and surprising Southern California.

Oregon State is 9-2, Arizona State, another surprising team, is 10-3 with California. UCLA (9-4) moved back into the poll at No. 25 this week.

The Pac-12 has 10 teams in the NCAA RPI Top 100, tying the Big Ten and ACC for most in the nation, and

conference teams have combined for seven wins over Top 25 opponents.

"There is not an easy team on the schedule," Utah coach Larry Krystowiak said. "I talked to some folks out east who know college basketball and they all thought that top to bottom, this is as strong of a league as there was in the country."

A few more things to look for as the Pac-12 season gets ready to start:

**TROJANS RISE:** One of the season's biggest early surprises has been the rebound by USC. The

Trojans went 3-15 in the Pac-12, 12-20 overall last season and were picked 10th in the preseason poll. USC hasn't exactly played the most difficult schedule in the nation, but did knock off Wichita State and has the kind of talent on its roster — particularly in the backcourt — to be competitive most nights in the Pac-12.

**POELTL SHINES:** The Pac-12 is loaded with talented players. Utah's Jacob Poeltl may be the best of the bunch. The 7-foot sophomore was a nightmare matchup last season and has been even

more difficult to defend so far this year. Poeltl was a preseason All-American and played like it through the Utes' nonconference schedule, averaging 17.8 points and 9.7 rebounds while shooting 71 percent from the field.

**CAL'S TALENT:** Cal opened the season at No. 14 in the AP Top 25, thanks to a talent-laden roster that included All-Pac-12 point guard Tyrone Wallace and five-star recruits Ivan Rabb and Jaylen Brown. The Bears didn't live up to expectations early, losing consecutive games in Las Vegas to San Diego State and Richmond. With coach Cuonzo Martin emphasizing toughness and defense, the Bears played better as they headed into conference play, their only loss in overtime to No. 5 Virginia.

**INJURED DUCKS:** Though Oregon has gotten off to an impressive start, coach Dana Altman spent most of the preseason juggling lineups as the Ducks suffered injuries to key players. Senior guard Dylan Ennis, a graduate transfer from Villanova, suffered a preseason foot injury and forward Jordan Bell took a while to get back from his

offseason foot injury. The Ducks had a healthy lineup for the first time in a win over Western Oregon on Tuesday and should be a team that gets better as the conference schedule continues.

**BRUINS' SCHEDULE:** UCLA moved back into the Top 25 this week after beating a team it was expected to beat, McNeese State. The Bruins' schedule may have had something to do with it. UCLA's resume includes wins over Kentucky and Gonzaga, while it has losses to North Carolina, Kansas and Wake Forest. There's a lot of talent in Westwood, so don't be surprised to find them battling for the top spot by season's end.

**SUN DEVILS RISING:** Arizona State was expected to undergo a transition in its first season under Bobby Hurley. So far, the excitement on the court has matched the buzz that came with the hiring of the former Duke point guard. The Sun Devils play hard and fast, just like Hurley, and have picked up some solid wins since opening the season with a home loss to Sacramento State. Expect them to make some noise during the Pac-12 season.

## SCOREBOARD

### Local slate

#### PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

**Saturday**  
Riverside at Mac-Hi, 12:30 p.m.  
Pilot Rock at Echo, 1 p.m.  
Dayton vs. Irrigon (at The Dalles), 2 p.m.  
Ione at Helix, 5:30 p.m.  
Kennewick (WA) at Hermiston, 7:30 p.m.

#### PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

**Saturday**  
Pilot Rock at Echo, 1 p.m.  
Riverside at Mac-Hi, 2 p.m.  
Ione at Helix, 4 p.m.  
Kennewick (WA) at Hermiston, 5:45 p.m.

#### PREP WRESTLING

**Today**  
Hermiston at The Clash (Rochester, MN), TBD.  
**Saturday**  
Hermiston at The Clash (Rochester, MN), TBD.

### Prep Standings

#### BOYS BASKETBALL

Columbia River Conference (5A)					
Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Hermiston	0-0	5-5	614	643	24
Pendleton	0-0	4-5	463	493	8
The Dalles	0-0	2-8	540	793	26
Hood River	0-0	1-9	572	679	33

#### Greater Oregon League (4A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Baker	0-0	5-6	584	637	27
Mac-Hi	0-0	4-7	544	503	29
Ontario	0-0	3-7	553	655	13
La Grande	0-0	2-2	221	194	30

#### Eastern Oregon League (3A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Umatilla	1-0	6-7	683	722	17
Nyssa	0-0	4-7	544	554	12
Riverside	0-0	3-7	427	35	
Vale	0-0	2-8	417	547	33

#### Columbia Basin Conference (2A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Hepner	0-0	10-1	612	484	5
Irrigon	0-0	8-2	554	424	4
Stanfield	0-0	6-1	430	345	16
Culver	0-0	4-6	430	469	37

#### Big Sky League (1A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Arlington	0-0	7-4	474	322	29
Horiz. Christ.	0-0	3-3	195	265	15
So. Wasco	0-0	3-3	195	246	20
Ione	0-0	3-3	261	259	37
Mitch/Spray	0-0	3-5	244	254	49
Dufur	0-0	1-7	240	387	47
Sherman	0-0	0-7	168	397	59

#### Old Oregon League (1A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Helix	2-0	8-2	417	327	10
Powder Val.	2-0	5-5	473	356	27
Nixyaawii	1-0	11-1	636	362	12
Echo	1-1	6-5	423	364	21
Joseph	0-1	4-5	422	363	33
Wallowa	0-2	1-10	171	536	40
Pine Eagle	0-2	0-8	128	427	52

#### Old Oregon League (1A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Powder Val.	2-0	7-2	493	334	6
Echo	2-0	4-7	482	492	38
Nixyaawii	1-0	11-1	888	606	2
Wallowa	1-1	2-8	310	495	35
Joseph	0-1	4-5	375	425	12
Helix	0-2	2-8	317	460	63
Pine Eagle	0-2	1-7	287	476	50

#### GIRLS BASKETBALL

##### Columbia River Conference (5A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Hermiston	0-0	9-3	652	535	7
The Dalles	0-0	6-4	457	401	11
Pendleton	0-0	3-7	451	516	26
Hood River	0-0	1-7	278	412	33

##### Greater Oregon League (4A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
La Grande	0-0	7-3	602	469	4
Mac-Hi	0-0	6-4	389	410	15
Baker	0-0	5-5	426	435	13
Ontario	0-0	1-7	234	387	29

##### Eastern Oregon League (3A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Umatilla	0-0	9-4	632	461	16
Nyssa	0-0	8-4	515	447	15
Vale	0-0	7-4	476	461	12
Riverside	0-0	2-7	294	383	36

##### Columbia Basin Conference (2A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Pilot Rock	0-0	8-5	583	497	6
Culver	0-0	6-4	403	319	32
Stanfield	0-0	4-3	299	244	19
W-M	0-0	3-5	334	323	26
Irrigon	0-0	3-7	354	399	25
Hepner	0-0	2-9	306	464	31

### Big Sky League (1A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
C/W	0-0	9-1	432	312	5
Horiz. Christ.	0-0	7-4	474	322	29
So. Wasco	0-0	3-3	195	246	20
Ione	0-0	3-3	261	259	37
Mitch/Spray	0-0	3-5	244	254	49
Dufur	0-0	1-7	240	387	47
Sherman	0-0	0-7	168	397	59

### Old Oregon League (1A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Helix	2-0	8-2	417	327	10
Powder Val.	2-0	5-5	473	356	27
Nixyaawii	1-0	11-1	636	362	12
Echo	1-1	6-5	423	364	21
Joseph	0-1	4-5	422	363	33
Wallowa	0-2	1-10	171	536	40
Pine Eagle	0-2	0-8	128	427	52

### Old Oregon League (1A)

Conf.	Ovr.	PS	PA	Rnk	
Powder Val.	2-0	7-2	493	334	6
Echo	2-0	4-7	482	492	38
Nixyaawii	1-0	11-1	888	606	2
Wallowa	1-1	2-8	310	495	35
Joseph	0-1	4-5	375	425	12
Helix	0-2	2-8	317	460	63
Pine Eagle	0-2	1-7	287	476	50

### AMERICAN CONFERENCE

#### East