

NFL

Seahawks, Cardinals tune up for playoffs

By BOB BAUM
Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — On a Sunday night seven weeks ago, the Arizona Cardinals pulled off a 39-32 victory over the Seahawks in the din that is CenturyLink Field. They haven't lost since.

It was a turning point for the Seahawks as well. After the loss, they reeled off five straight victories to clinch a playoff berth before stumbling last week at home against St. Louis.

Possible playoff seeding is all that's at stake when the teams meet in their regular-season finale Sunday.

Arizona (13-2) has won nine in a row and, with its 38-8 blowout of Green Bay last Sunday, has clinched a first-round playoff bye. The Cardinals can get the No. 1 seed, and home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs, with a win on Sunday and a Carolina loss to Tampa Bay.

The Seahawks (9-6), two-time defending NFC champs, are the No. 6 seed as of today, but would move up to No. 5 with a win over Arizona and a Minnesota loss at Green Bay.

In that Nov. 15 win at Seattle, Arizona bolted to a 19-0 lead, then fell behind 29-25 before scoring two late touchdowns, the winner



• Sunday, 1:25 p.m.
• at U of Phoenix Stadium
• TV: FOX

coming on Andre Ellington's 48-yard run with 4:04 to play.

"To have a lead, give up a lead, and then just score 14 points in the (fourth) quarter there against that crew, just shows that we've got a very resilient group," Cardinals quarterback Carson Palmer said, "and we believe in ourselves, and we believe in each other."

Neither Arizona coach Bruce Arians nor Seattle coach Pete Carroll entertained any thought of resting players for the playoffs.

"It's not a finished product, and then you go and play in the playoffs," Carroll said. "We keep working to improve every week, and that's what we're trying to do this week. It's such a good opponent and they're so loaded up in so many areas that they make us have to play well."

Arians said the Seahawks have changed since that mid-November meeting.

"A bunch more empty backfield sets. Throwing the ball a lot more," he said.

Arians has never beaten



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson, File
In this Nov. 15, 2015, file photo, Seattle Seahawks running back Marshawn Lynch (24) is tackled by a host of Arizona Cardinals players in the first half of an NFL football game in Seattle. On a Sunday night seven weeks ago, the Cardinals pulled off a 39-32 victory over the Seahawks.

the Seahawks in Arizona.

Here are things to look for when the Seahawks face the Cardinals:

STAT LEADERS: The Cardinals and Seahawks are the only teams that rank in the top five in offense and defense.

Arizona has the No. 1 offense at 422.9 yards per game; Seattle is No. 5 (380.3). The Seahawks have the No. 2 defense, giving up 295.5 yards per game; the Cardinals are No. 5 (319.5).

The Cardinals lead the league in scoring (32.2 points

per game) and touchdowns (57). Seattle is third in fewest points allowed (18.1) and third in opponent TDs (27). Arizona is tied for third with 30 touchdowns allowed.

Wilson (109.3) and Palmer (106.8) are 1-2 in quarterback rating through 15 games.

R U N N I N G COMMITTEE: The Cardinals won't have to see Marshawn Lynch because the Seahawks running back will miss his seventh straight game due to an abdominal injury that required surgery. Seattle was initially hopeful Lynch might return this week, but he was not ready.

That leaves Christine Michael and Bryce Brown to handle the running load for the third straight week. The first week of the committee approach went great for Seattle with 182 yards rushing against Cleveland. But last week against St. Louis, it fell apart. The Seahawks had just 59 yards rushing and Wilson led the way with 38 of those. That snapped a streak of 25 straight games with Seattle rushing for at least 100 yards as a team.

A P P R O A C H I N G RECORDS: Palmer, who turned 36 this week, needs 73 yards passing to break the franchise record set by Neil Lomax 31 years ago. Arizo-

na's Larry Fitzgerald needs one catch to break his franchise mark of 103 receptions in a season set a decade ago.

P R O T E C T I N G RUSSELL: For most of its five-game win streak, Seattle did an exceptional job of keeping Wilson adequately protected and with enough time in the pocket to find wide receivers downfield. He faced increased pressure against Cleveland two weeks ago and was completely under siege last week against the Rams. Wilson was sacked four times and hit a season-high 13 times by St. Louis as the Seahawks struggled with protections.

SACK FEST: The Cardinals, meanwhile, are hoping their pass rush picks up where it left off against Green Bay. Arizona sacked Aaron Rodgers eight times and his backup Scott Tolzien once. Rodgers fumbled twice, and both were returned for Arizona touchdowns.

Dwight Freeney tied his career best with three sacks and was chosen NFC defensive player of the week. He earned \$100,000 per sack under incentives in the contract he signed when he joined the team in early October.

AP Sports Writer Tim Booth in Seattle contributed to this report

Mariota, Winston wrap up rookie seasons in different fashion

By TERESA M. WALKER
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Jameis Winston will finish his rookie season doing something that Marcus Mariota simply couldn't: Playing in all 16 regular-season games.

Still, both managed at times to show the skills that made them the No. 1 and 2 picks, respectively, in the 2015 draft.

Winston enters Tampa Bay's season finale Sunday having taken every snap for the Buccaneers. Mariota, who will end up missing four games this season after spraining both knees, will sit out Tennessee's last game — his second in a row.

Tied together by their draft status and as back-to-back Heisman Trophy winners, Winston doubled up Mariota in victories (Buccaneers are 6-9; Titans are 3-12) and a handful of other stats.

Their next challenge comes this offseason.

"A year is great, but when you come in that second year, really, any rookie that comes in their second year, you do kind of take a deep breath like, 'OK, I fit. I belong,'" Titans interim coach Mike Mularkey said. "It's not new, the newness is gone."

Here's a look at how Winston and Mariota fared as rookies:

PRODUCTION

WINSTON: The Buccaneers quarterback is 283 yards shy of joining Cam Newton and Andrew Luck as the only rookie quarterbacks since the 1970 NFL/AFL merger to throw for 4,000 yards. Winston has thrown for 3,717 yards, which is fourth-most among rookies since the merger. He needs only 23 yards Sunday to pass Peyton Manning (3,739 yards in 1998) for third.

He also is Tampa Bay's third-leading rusher, running for 199 yards on 51 carries with five touchdowns. He's completed 58 percent of his passes with 22 touchdowns and 13 interceptions with an 86.1 passer rating. Better yet, the Bucs



AP Photo/Mark Zaleski, File
In this Dec. 6, 2015, file photo, Tennessee Titans quarterback Marcus Mariota passes against the Jacksonville Jaguars during the first half of an NFL football game in Nashville, Tenn. Jameis Winston will finish his rookie season doing something that Mariota simply could not: Playing in all 16 regular-season games.

helped the Bucs win four of their next six to reach 5-5 before losing four of the last five. This is the fifth straight losing season for the Bucs.

"Definitely, this is a growing process," Winston said. "Just one year, I'm not going to be able to stay there. I have to keep getting better, I've got to keep being a better person and a better teammate."

MARIOTA: The Miami Dolphins sacked Mariota five times by half-time, forcing him into four turnovers. Mariota also lost his starting center in that game when Brian Schwenke dislocated his left ankle. Worse? Mariota sprained the MCL in his left knee and played until inside the final two minutes. Mariota missed the next two games with his coach, Ken Whisenhunt fired before he returned.

BEST MOMENTS

WINSTON: With the Bucs trailing Atlanta 19-16 with less than three minutes to go, Winston kept the game-winning TD drive alive with his legs. On third-and-19 from the Falcons 43, Winston scrambled 20 yards for first down breaking three tackles. He appeared stopped at the 33 only to slide off the pile, break another tackle and run 10 more yards for the first down.

He capped the drive with a 6-yard TD pass to Mike Evans for a 23-19 win, lifting Tampa Bay to 6-6.

MARIOTA: His debut in Tampa Bay against Winston was perfection. He posted a perfect passer rating and became the first NFL rookie to throw four TD passes in one half. But Mariota topped himself Dec. 6. He finally showed off his legs, breaking off an 87-yard TD run to rally the Titans to a 42-39 win over Jacksonville, snapping an 11-game home skid.

The Titans quarterback became the first in NFL history with at least 250 yards passing, 100 yards rushing and three TD passes in the same game.

AP Sports Writers Fred Goodall and Steve Reed contributed to this story.



AP Photo/L.G. Patterson, File
In this Dec. 17, 2015, file photo, Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Jameis Winston drops back to pass during the second quarter of an NFL football game against the St. Louis Rams in St. Louis. Winston will finish his rookie season doing something that Marcus Mariota simply could not: Playing in all 16 regular-season games.

have allowed him to be sacked only 25 times.

MARIOTA: Sprained knees cost Mariota four games as a rookie, limiting him to 2,818 yards passing

with 19 TDs and 10 interceptions. He completed 62.2 percent of his passes and posted a 91.5 passer rating. Only seven NFL quarterbacks were sacked more than

Mariota who went down 38 times in his 12 starts.

"I'm my hardest critic, so I thought it's gone OK," Mariota said. "Obviously, would like a few more wins, but I mean all in all I wanted to come in and try to make an impact. I thought I've done that to some extent."

SUPPORTING CAST

WINSTON: He got more help from his teammates in Tampa Bay. Doug Martin is the NFL's second-leading rusher with 1,354 yards, while Mike Evans has 1,107 yards receiving on 70 receptions.

MARIOTA: The Titans' top receiver is a tight end, though Delanie Walker has 994 yards receiving on 85 catches. Nobody else has more than 36 receptions. The Titans even used Mariota as a receiver once, and that turned into a 41-yard TD catch Dec. 13 against the Jets.

LOW POINTS

WINSTON: His worst moment came in Week 4 when Carolina intercepted him four times and forced him to fumble. That loss dropped the Bucs to 1-3. Winston

SCOREBOARD

Local slate

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Today

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.

Monday

Century at Pendleton, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday

Nixyaawii at Sherman, 6:30 p.m.

Hermiston at La Grande, 7 p.m.

Stanfield at Riverside, 7 p.m.

Liberty Christian (WA) at Weston-McEwen, 7 p.m.

Mac-Hi at DeSales (WA), 7:30 p.m.

Helix at Touchet (WA), 7:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

Today

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.

Monday

Mac-Hi at Umatilla, 6 p.m.

Tuesday

Nixyaawii at Sherman, 5 p.m.

DeSales (WA) at Mac-Hi, 6 p.m.

Stanfield at Riverside, 6 p.m.

Liberty Christian (WA) at Weston-McEwen, 6 p.m.

Helix at Touchet (WA), 6 p.m.

LaGrande at Hermiston, 7 p.m.

Baker at Pendleton, 7 p.m.

PREP WRESTLING

Today

Hermiston at The Clash (Rochester, MN), 9 a.m.

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

493

493

8

The Dalles

0-0

2-8

540

793

26

Hood River

0-0

1-9

572

679

33

Greater Oregon League (4A)

Ovr.

Conf.

PS

PA

Rnk

Baker

0-0

5-6

584

637

27

Mac-Hi

0-0

4-7

456

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

1-0

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

W-M

0-0

3-4

340

392

36

Pilot Rock

0-1

5-8

538

562

28

Big Sky League (1A)

Conf.

Ovr.

PS

PA

Rnk

Arlington

0-0

6-5

510

446

44

So. Wasco

0-0

5-1

331

188

8

Mitch/Spray

0-0

5-3

311

325

27

Sherman

0-0

5-4

554

522

12

CW

0-0

4-5

391

420

32

Dufur

0-0

3-5

414

418

31

Horizon Chr.

0-0

2-4

259

312

10

Ione

0-0

0-6

141

378

54

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

Wailowa

1-1

2-8

310

496

35

Joseph

0-1

4-5

375

425

22

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

359

295

25

Heppner

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

Arlington

0-0

7-4

474

322

29

Horizon Chr.

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

5-6

473

356

27

Nixyaawii

1-0

11-1

636

382

12

Echo

1-1

6-5

422

364

21

Joseph

0-1

4-5

422

363

33

Wailowa

0-1

1-0

536

410

20

Pine Eagle

0-2

0-8

128

427

52

Football

NCAA

Bowl games

Friday

Outback Bowl

Tennessee 45, Northwestern 6

Citrus Bowl

Michigan 41, Florida 7

Fiesta Bowl

Ohio State 44, Notre Dame 28

Rose Bowl

Stanford 45, Iowa 16

Sugar Bowl

Mississippi 48, Oklahoma State 20

Saturday

TaxSlayer Bowl (Jacksonville, Fla.)

Penn St. (7-5) vs. Georgia (9-3), 9 a.m.

(ESPN)

Liberty Bowl (Memphis, Tenn.)

Kansas St. (6-6) vs. Arkansas (7-5), 12:20 p.m. (ESPN)

Alamo Bowl (San Antonio)

Oregon (9-3) vs. TCU (10-2), 3:45 p.m. (ESPN)

Cactus Bowl (Phoenix)

West Virginia (7-5) vs. Arizona State (6-6),

NFL

Sunday's Games

Jacksonville (+6.5) at Houston, 10 a.m.

Washington (+4.1) at Dallas, 10 a.m.

Detroit (+1) at Chicago, 10 a.m.

N.Y. Jets (-2.5) at Buffalo, 10 a.m.

New England (-10) at Miami, 10 a.m.

New Orleans (+5.5) at Atlanta, 10 a.m.

Baltimore (+9) at Cincinnati, 10 a.m.

Philadelphia (-10.5) at Cleveland, 10 a.m.

Tennessee (+6) at Indianapolis, 10 a.m.

Philadelphia (+3.5) at N.Y. Giants, 10 a.m.

St. Louis (-3) at San Francisco, 1:25 p.m.

San Diego (+9.8) at Denver, 1:25 p.m.

Seattle (+6.5) at Arizona, 1:25 p.m.

Oakland (+4.7) at Kansas City, 1:25 p.m.

Tampa Bay (+10.5) at Carolina, 1:25 p.m.

Minnesota (+3) at Green Bay, 1:30 p.m.

7:15 p.m. (ESPN)

Philadelphia at L.A. Lakers (n)

Saturday's Games

Brooklyn at Boston, Noon

Phoenix at Sacramento, 2 p.m.

Detroit at Indiana, 4 p.m.

Oklahoma City at Charlotte, 4 p.m.

Orlando at Cleveland, 4:30 p.m.

Milwaukee at Minnesota, 5 p.m.

Houston at San Antonio, 5:30 p.m.

New Orleans at Dallas, 5:30 p.m.

Memphis at Utah, 6 p.m.

Denver at Golden State, 7:30 p.m.

Philadelphia at L.A. Clippers, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday's Games

Chicago at Toronto, 12:30 p.m.

Atlanta at New York, 12:30 p.m.

Miami at Washington, 3 p.m.

Portland at Denver, 6 p.m.

Phoenix at L.A. Lakers, 6:30 p.m.

NBA

Pac-12

Friday

UCLA at Washington, (n)

Colorado at California, (n)

Stanford 70, Utah 68, OT

Southern Cal 90, Washington St. 77

Saturday

Arizona at Arizona St., 11 a.m.

Southern Cal at Washington, Noon

Oregon at Oregon State, 4 p.m. (FS1)

Utah at California, 4:30 p.m.

UCLA at Washington St., 6:30 p.m.

Colorado at Stanford, 7 p.m.

NBA

Friday's Games

Washington 103, Orlando 91

Toronto 104, Charlotte 94

Miami 106, Dallas 82

Chicago 108, New York 81

Hockey

NHL

Friday's Games

Montreal 45, Vancouver 1

Anaheim at Boston, (n)

Saturday's Games

Detroit at Buffalo, 10 a.m.

Arizona at Edmonton, 1 p.m.

Philadelphia at Los Angeles, 1 p.m.

St. Louis at Toronto, 4 p.m.

Minnesota at Tampa Bay, 4 p.m.

N.Y. Rangers at Florida, 4 p.m.

Dallas at New Jersey, 4 p.m.

N.Y. Islanders at Pittsburgh, 4 p.m.

Nashville at Carolina, 4 p.m.

Washington at Columbus, 4 p.m.

Calgary at Colorado, 7 p.m.

Winnipeg at San Jose, 7 p.m.

Sunday's Games

Dallas at N.Y. Islanders, 2 p.m.

Minnesota at Florida, 3 p.m.

Ottawa at Chicago, 4 p.m.

Winnipeg at Anaheim, 6 p.m.