

NFL

# Buccaneers focused on Seahawks, not playoff prospects

By FRED GOODALL  
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Tampa Bay's Dirk Koetter wants no part of a discussion about playoff prospects or aspirations.

The Buccaneers (5-5) have won two straight to climb back into contention for what would be their first berth in nearly a decade. However, the coach says his team can't afford to think about anything other than what's staring them in the face right now. And, that's a matchup against the first-place Seattle Seahawks (7-2-1).

Koetter bristled when he was asked if he detected a "playoff intensity" from the Bucs in practice this week.

"I want to feel a Seattle Seahawk-type of intensity because it's going to take the most intensity we've got to be with Seattle on Sunday," the first-year coach said. "That's all that really matters right now."

Jameis Winston also shrugged off questions about the playoff race.

"We've got to get a 'W' before we even talk about a 'P,'" the second-year quarterback said, mindful that the Bucs were in a similar position a year ago, when they started 6-6 only to lose their final four games.

Winston had one of the best performances of his career in last week's confidence-bolstering 19-17 road win at Kansas City. The Seahawks have won three straight,



Seattle Seahawks cornerback Jeremy Lane (20) and free safety Earl Thomas, center, break up a pass during a game, Sunday, Nov. 20, 2016, in Seattle. Thomas will miss Seattle's game at Tampa Bay on Sunday due to injury.

including beating New England on the road, but figure to be far from full strength health-wise.

Nine players on Seattle's injury report, including safety Earl Thomas and cornerback DeShawn Shead, missed at least two days of practice in preparation for the Bucs.

Russell Wilson wasn't one of them, though. He's played through a string of injuries and has been one of the hottest quarterbacks in the league during the Seahawks'

winning streak with 902 passing yards, six touchdowns and zero interceptions in victories over the Bills, Patriots and Eagles the past three weeks.

"There's been some significant injuries to a lot of the guys, and we've been able to overcome those situations and those injuries and still find ways to win, still find ways to play in the game and play at a high level," Wilson said, adding the focus is on doing "whatever it takes to win and continue to play



Seattle Seahawks (7-2-1)  
Tampa Bay Buccaneers (5-5)  
• Sunday, 1:05 p.m.  
• at Raymond James Stadium  
• TV: FOX

great football."

Some things to know heading into the 13th meeting between franchises that entered the NFL as expansion mates in 1976:

**THANKS, RUSSELL:** Winston and Wilson had a long conversation at last season's Pro Bowl, and Tampa Bay's young quarterback came away impressed with his Seattle counterpart and Minnesota's Teddy Bridgewater. "Russell is a true professional, and he does his job the right way. I learned so much from him as far as what to eat, what a Pro Bowl quarterback should be like," Winston said.

**DEPLETED DEFENSE:** The Seahawks will be without defensive end Michael Bennett for the fifth straight game, unable to get him back from minor knee surgery in time to face his former team. Losses in the secondary likely will be more impactful. The Seahawks will be without Thomas and are expected to be without Shead, after both suffered hamstring injuries in last week's win over Philadelphia. It will be the first game Thomas has missed in his career, snapping

a streak of 106 consecutive starts. Steven Terrell likely will fill in for Thomas at free safety, while the combo of Neiko Thorpe and Jeremy Lane would take Shead's role opposite Richard Sherman.

**BACK ON TRACK:** Tampa Bay rookie PK Roberto Aguayo has rebounded from a shaky start to his pro career to begin show why the Bucs drafted him in the second round. Since misfiring on four of his first eight field goal tries, Aguayo has made nine of his last 10, including going 4-for-4 in last week's win at Kansas City. "This is what I do best. I've done it for a long time. Sometimes you've got to realize that," Aguayo said. "With the transition into the NFL, you try not to put an excuse on anything. You've just got to get through it. People can say, 'Was it this? Was it that?' At the end of the day, you've got to grind through it."

**FOLLOW ME:** Don't be surprised to see Mike Evans added to the list of wide receivers shadowed by Sherman. With the injuries in Seattle's secondary and how often Winston looks toward Evans, it makes sense for the Seahawks to put Sherman on Evans. Already this season, Sherman has followed the likes of Brandon Marshall, Julio Jones and Jordan Matthews for long stretches. "It gets you more action," Sherman said. "You get more targets. You get a chance to be more involved in the game. You get a chance to get into a rhythm."

College Football



Boise State tight end Chase Blakley (86) starts to get up slowly after the Air Force defense recovers a fumble at the line of scrimmage late in the fourth quarter of Friday's game.

## Goal-line stand lifts Air Force over Boise State

By PAT GRAHAM  
Associated Press



AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Jeremy McNichols, one of the nation's leading rushers, was stuffed, stymied and stood up on three cracks from inside the 5. A quarterback sneak didn't work, either.

Wyoming certainly appreciated it.

Air Force had a late goal-line stand, Tyler Weaver returned a blocked punt 11 yards for a first-half touchdown and the Falcons beat No. 20 Boise State 27-20 on Friday, ending the Broncos' bid for the Mountain West title.

Wyoming will face San Diego State in the conference championship game Dec. 3.

Haji Dunn Jr. recovered quarterback Brett Rypien's fumble on fourth-and-goal from the 1 with just under 2 minutes remaining to help the Falcons (9-3, 5-3 Mountain West) knock off Boise State for a third straight season. They join Idaho (1982-93) and Nevada (1996-98) as the only teams to beat the Broncos in at least three straight years.

"Thank goodness they didn't run wide," said senior safety Brodie Hicks, who forced the fumble. "We put all our marbles inside."

The Broncos (10-2, 6-2, No. 19 CFP) needed a win at Air Force and for New Mexico to upset Mountain Division-leading Wyoming on Saturday to earn a spot in the conference's title game.

No reason to watch now.

"It's like an empty feeling," Boise State receiver Cedrick Wilson said. "We wish we could have pulled through like we practiced but sometimes you fall short."

McNichols rushed for 60 yards — and a score — on his opening two carries, but was held to 28 yards the rest of the way. He had three carries at the goal line on Boise State's last possession, but couldn't get in.

On fourth down, Rypien tried to sneak it in only to have the ball knocked free by Hicks. Dunn was there to recover it.

"It's a game I thought we prepared well for and our guys were looking forward to coming in here and playing our best football," Boise State coach Bryan Harsin said. "We didn't do that tonight, so a lot of disappointment in the locker room."

Off target most of the day, Rypien found his touch in the fourth quarter and led a spirited Broncos rally. He hit Wilson for a 75-yard TD pass to pull Boise State to 27-20 with 8:50 remaining. He wound up a yard shy of possibly tying the game.

Brett Baldwin gave the Falcons a big boost when he broke through and blocked a punt by Sean Wale just before halftime. Weaver caught the ball out of the air and ran it in to give the Falcons a 17-7 lead.

Air Force took advantage of a Boise State defense that was missing several starters by running it up the middle. Falcon fullbacks D.J. Johnson and Shayne Davern combined for 25 carries and 111 yards up the middle. Johnson scored on a 1-yard plunge in the first quarter and Davern on an 8-yard run in the third.

"You don't know how much it meant to go out and win this way," Hicks said. "We as seniors had to leave behind something to be remembered for."

**RANKED TEAMS**

This was Air Force's first win over a ranked team since defeating No. 21 Colorado State 27-24 on Nov. 29, 2014, at Falcon Stadium.

"We like being the underdog," Johnson said.

Women's College Basketball

## Mississippi State hands Oregon first loss

By KALANI TAKASE  
Associated Press



HONOLULU — Mississippi State is getting used to a new role these days.

Just five days after notching their biggest win under fifth-year coach Vic Schaefer, the seventh-ranked Bulldogs held off a pesky Oregon team, 75-63, in the first day of the Rainbow Wahine Showdown on Friday.

Victoria Vivians scored 17 points and Morgan William added 14 to pace Mississippi State (5-0).

Vivians, a 6-foot-1 junior guard and a first team preseason All-SEC selection, made 7 of 13 shots from the field despite being in foul trouble for much of the second half.

Oregon cut the Mississippi State lead from 39-30 at halftime to just two points following Sabrina Ionescu's 3-pointer from the right corner with 5:57 left in the third quarter.

However, Vivians drained a deep 3-pointer from the left wing on the Bulldogs' next possession and added a 10-foot pull-up to stretch their lead back to

49-42.

She picked up her fourth foul with 1:55 left in the third quarter and played just 10 minutes after halftime.

Mississippi State coach Vic Schaefer praised the play of reserve guards Blair Schaefer and Roshuna Johnson, who combined for 24 minutes of game time while relieving Vivians.

"I was real proud of Blair and Roshuna coming off the bench and giving us those quality minutes at that spot," said Schaefer, whose team posted a 79-68 win over then-No. 7 Texas Sunday.

"We're learning that we're the hunted now. We've been the hunters for a long time, (but) we are now the hunted and that's a new role for this team, so we're learning how to accept that night in, night out," Schaefer said. "I thought tonight we took their best shot in the third quarter and

came back and answered it with my best player in foul trouble."

Mississippi State (5-0) shot 51.9 percent from the field.

Lexi Bando and Sabrina Ionescu each scored 14 points for the Ducks (4-1).

"In the second half we got back to what we like to do, which is get the ball side, top, side," Oregon coach Kelly Graves said. "We had a little bit more motion and flow to our game and that helped, but then we got away from it at the end. They clamped down and they're a good team."

Oregon was called for 27 fouls to 19 for Mississippi State and had three players finish with four fouls.

**BIG PICTURE:** Oregon: shot just 39.3 percent from the field in the first half, but kept it close by shooting 50 percent (12 of 24) after halftime. The Ducks were playing their first game away from home.

**HIGHLIGHT REEL:** Oregon got within six points of Mississippi State following a free throw by Morgan William that made it 53-47. The Ducks looked to cut the deficit even further

when Jayde Woods broke free for a transition lay-up, but Breanna Richardson soared from behind and blocked her shot with just seconds remaining in the period. The big defensive play was a four-point swing for the Bulldogs and helped them regain momentum heading into the final quarter.

**INFLUX OF YOUTH:** Of the 14 players that saw court time for Oregon, half of them are freshmen. The Ducks recruiting class, which is ranked third nationally behind Maryland and Baylor, features four players that were Gatorade state players of the year in high school, including Ionescu, last year's national player of the year.

"We grew up a lot tonight, there's no doubt," Graves said. "That's a senior-laden Mississippi State team. Those are veterans and a couple of times we had four freshmen on the floor for long stretches. They're just learning how to play the game. They're really talented, but physically, we're not ready for this yet. That being said, we hung with them for a long time."

Men's College Basketball

## Taylor leads Fresno State past Oregon State

Associated Press

CORVALLIS — Jahmel Taylor had missed three shots in a row, but he stayed focused and found open spaces on the floor. Then he made his next five shots from beyond the arc.

"Once I hit the first one, I was ready to hit the next one. It felt good and my teammates were getting me in the right spots," said the junior guard.

Taylor had 21 points, shooting 6-for-10 on 3-pointers, and three steals as Fresno State held on to beat Oregon State 63-58 on Friday night.

Fresno State coach Rodney Terry called Taylor a "marksman" who kept the team afloat when they were struggling early.

"He can really shoot the basketball. We don't win the Mountain West a year ago if he's not making big shots for us," he added.

Paul Watson added 13 points and nine rebounds and Jaron Hopkins had 10 points for the Bulldogs (3-2).

Tres Tinkle scored a career-high 31 points with 10 rebounds and six steals for the Beavers (2-4), who lost their fourth in a row. JaQuori McLaughlin added 12 points.

"We're not very united.



Oregon State's Kendal Manuel drives past Fresno State's Sam Bittner during the first half of Friday's game at Gill Coliseum in Corvallis.

Andy Cripe/Corvallis Gazette-Times via AP



Thompson Jr. missed his fifth game in a row with a foot injury. Wayne Tinkle said Thompson, last year's third-leading scorer, could be out another week. Drew Eubanks had five blocks for the Beavers.

**AFTER A LOSS**

Fresno State has responded to a loss with a win 10 straight times, and Taylor said Thursday's practice, which came after Tuesday's loss to Cal State Bakersfield, was "very intense." "After a loss, we make sure we buckle down," he added.

**PRESSURE**

Terry said the Bulldogs had to bring defensive pressure up the court against the Beavers to try and neutralize Oregon State's height. "They had a great size advantage and they had some really good players on the interior that we weren't going to be able to match up with consistently," Terry said.

**UP NEXT**

Oregon State hosts NAIA Division II foe Southern Oregon on Monday.

10:30 left.

Cullen Russo was fouled with 35.7 seconds left and he made both free throws to give Fresno State a 61-55 lead. On Oregon State's next possession, McLaughlin made a 3-pointer but Watson was fouled and made both free throws to seal it.

**BIG PICTURE**

Fresno State: Entering Friday, the Bulldogs were tied for ninth in the nation in steals, forcing 10.5 per game. They had 10 against Oregon State.  
Oregon State: Stephen