

NFL

Seahawks' Wagner having perhaps best season of his career

By **TIM BOOTH**
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — When Seattle linebacker Bobby Wagner was younger in his career and still lacking some recognition, it was teammate Richard Sherman that was regularly touting Wagner's talent.

With Sherman out for the season, maybe he'll be able to find time to lead Wagner's campaign as his name is getting mentioned as a potential defensive player of the year candidate.

"(Sherman) needs to be in the building pumping us up," joked fellow Seahawks linebacker K.J. Wright.

Now in his sixth season, Wagner might be playing better now than at any point of his career. That's notable since Wagner has already been an All-Pro, a multiple-time Pro Bowl selection, and is generally considered one of the best middle linebackers in the NFL.

But Wagner has crept into a different conversation as a possible defensive player of the year candidate. It's always been a goal for Wagner, yet seemed unlikely with the award usually going to the most disruptive defensive lineman or a player in the secondary having a standout season. Luke Kuechly



Seattle linebacker Bobby Wagner (54) celebrates after intercepting a pass with teammate Byron Maxwell (41) during Sunday's game against the San Francisco 49ers in Santa Clara, Calif.

AP Photo/John Hefti

and Brian Urlacher are the only middle linebackers since 2003 to be honored with the award.

Yet, whether his season is being looked at from an analytical perspective or simply watching him play, Wagner has rightfully found his way into the discussion.

And he'll have another prime stage this week when the Seahawks host the 10-1 Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday night.

He's more than just a middle linebacker that makes tackles. Wagner understands that's what it takes to be noticed.

"I feel like they don't necessarily appreciate tackles as much though. You can't just get it off tackles. You got to do more," Wagner said.

"You got to do interceptions, you got to do sacks. A guy can have 10 sacks and he can win it. You definitely have to do more and I feel like the inside linebackers that have won it in the past understand that and have done more. And you know, I can do more, so I'll be fine."

The loss of Sherman and Kam Chancellor for the season has allowed Wagner to be viewed more in the spotlight and he's helping to make up for Seattle losing two of its defensive stars. Wagner is third in the NFL in tackles with 100 through 11 games.

He's fourth on the team in passes defended and he's tied for the team lead with Sherman with two interceptions, including a remarkable pick last week where he knocked the ball free from a San Francisco receiver and caught it against his body for an interception while he was on the ground.

"I told him I've never seen a play like that. It's like a fumble/interception. Just really impressive," Wright said. "That's showing how much he's paying attention getting after the ball. We talk about it every week."

Pass coverage is one area where Wagner has focused on improving. He's always been stout against the run and has benefited this season from the addition of defensive tackle Sheldon Richardson eating up offensive linemen and keeping Wagner clear to make tackles.

It was a conscious decision by Wagner that started with watching film in the offseason and going from there.

"I think you just go and watch film and kind of look at all the opportunities that you had that you might have missed out on and that's kind of what I did," Wagner said.

"I looked back and I felt like there were some opportunities in coverage for me to make either a quarterback hold onto the ball a little bit longer to get the rush there or create a play myself so I just kind of looked at that and picked that as the thing to improve."

NOTES: DE Cliff Avril underwent neck surgery on Tuesday and all indications were the surgery was successful. "As far as we've heard, everything went really well. So we are just waiting for him to get back," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. ... RB Mike Davis (groin) and CB Shaquill Griffin were both limited in practice on Wednesday after both missed Sunday's game.

MLS PLAYOFFS

Altidore scores, Toronto beats Crew to reach MLS Cup final

Associated Press

TORONTO — Jozy Altidore scored in the 60th minute and Toronto FC advanced to the MLS Cup final for the second straight year with a 1-0 victory over the Columbus Crew on Wednesday night in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference final.

Toronto will host the Seattle Sounders or Houston Dynamo in the Dec. 9 MLS Cup final. The Sounders, who took the title from Toronto in a penalty shootout last year, lead the Western Conference final 2-0 going into Game 2 in Seattle on Thursday night.

After a scoreless tie in Game 1 last week in Ohio, Columbus needed a win or



draw with goals to advance. But Altidore, limping on a bum ankle, came through for Toronto before a sellout crowd of 30,392 on a crisp night at BMO Field.

"I couldn't really move. I was hobbling around," Altidore said. "It's tough too in these conditions too when you get a knock like that, it's so cold, it's a little bit worse. I wanted to give a little bit of time for whoever was up next, and if a chance came down to it, I wanted it to fall to me. And it did."



Toronto FC forward Jozy Altidore (17) scores on Columbus Crew goalkeeper Zack Steffen (23) as Crew defender Lalas Abubakar (17) looks on during Wednesday's Eastern Conference final playoff game in Toronto.

The goal started with Alex Bono's goal kick that found Sebastian Giovinco deep in Columbus territory. The diminutive Italian held off several defenders

and backheeled the ball to Altidore, who stabbed it to Victor Vazquez. The Spanish midfielder paused and then dinked a pass to Altidore for a right-footed shot past Zack Steffen.

"That's heart," goalkeeper Alex Bono said "That's all that is. That's heart."

It was Toronto's first goal in 258 minutes. The last score came almost a month ago — on Oct. 30, via Giovinco's free kick in the 72nd minute of a 2-1 victory at Red Bull Arena.

Columbus striker Ola Kamara nearly tied it in the 87th minute, but couldn't get a boot to the ball on a raking cross. Bono then beat Kamara to a cross in stoppage time.

"We were inches away from scoring the tying goal, we gave up one chance, they score," Columbus coach Gregg Berhalter said. "Zack makes a huge play on the penalty. It's a game of inches. We play all year for inches. Ball doesn't go under Ola's foot, we score. And we're singing a different tune now."

Altidore had seemed destined for an early night after suffering an ankle injury in the 50th minute in a collision with Crew wingback Harrison Afful. The big man needed treatment on and off the field and Toronto prepared to send in substitute Armando Cooper.

But Altidore stayed on, finally limping off eight minutes after the goal.

SCOREBOARD

Local slate

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Thursday
Irrigon at Stanfield, 7:30 p.m.
Touchet (WA) at Helix, 7:30 p.m.
Friday
Stanfield vs. TBD (at Sherman), TBD
Umatilla vs. TBD (at Vernonia), 1:30 p.m.
Rivendale vs. Umatilla (at Vernonia), 4:30 p.m.
Grant Union vs. Culver (at Sherman), 4:30 p.m.
Heppner vs. Chemawa (at Western Mennonite), 4:30 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Echo, 4:30 p.m.
Irrigon at Weston-McEwen, 4:30 p.m.
Riverside vs. College Place (WA) (at Mac-Hi), 5:00 p.m.
Hermiston vs. Mountain View (at Wilsonville), 5:30 p.m.
Pendleton vs. Eagle Point (at Wilsonville), 7 p.m.
Enterprise at Ione, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday
Pendleton vs. TBD (at Wilsonville), TBD
Hermiston vs. TBD (at Wilsonville), TBD
Riverside vs. TBD (at Mac-Hi), TBD
Heppner vs. TBD (at Western Mennonite), TBD
Irrigon vs. TBD (at Ione), 1 p.m.
Ione vs. TBD, 2:30 p.m.
Echo at Condon/Wheeler, 3:30 p.m.
Umatilla vs. TBD (at Vernonia), 5:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

Thursday
Irrigon at Stanfield, 6:00 p.m.
Touchet (WA) at Helix, 6:00 p.m.
Friday
Sherman at Stanfield, TBD
Helix vs. TBD (at Mac-Hi), TBD
Weston-McEwen at Irrigon, 3:00 p.m.
Umatilla at Rivdale, 3:00 p.m.
Pilot Rock at Echo, 3:00 p.m.
Riverside vs. College Place (WA) (at Mac-Hi), 3:30 p.m.
Heppner at Chemawa, 4:30 p.m.
Enterprise at Ione, 6:00 p.m.
Griswold at McLoughlin, 6:30 p.m.
Helix vs. at Mac-Hi, 6:30 p.m.
Wilsonville at Hermiston, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday
Mac-Hi vs. TBD, TBD
Riverside vs. TBD (at Mac-Hi), TBD
Helix vs. TBD (at Mac-Hi), TBD
Umatilla vs. TBD (at Vernonia), TBD
Heppner vs. TBD (at Beau Classic), TBD
Stanfield vs. TBD (at Sherman), TBD
Irrigon vs. TBD (at Ione), 1 p.m.
Summit at Pendleton, 2:30 p.m.
Lewiston (ID) at Hermiston, 5:45 p.m.
Weston-McEwen vs. TBD (at Ione), 7 p.m.

COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL

Thursday
EOU vs. Viterbo (Wis.), NAI
National Championships in Sioux City, Iowa, 3 p.m.
COLLEGE WRESTLING
Friday
EOU at Battle of the Rockies (Grant Falls, Mont.), TBD
Saturday
EOU at Battle of the Rockies (Grant Falls, Mont.), TBD
COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL
Friday
BMCC at the Walla Walla Classic, TBD
Saturday
BMCC at the Walla Walla Classic, TBD
EOU at Southern Oregon, 6 p.m.
Sunday
BMCC at Clackamas CC, 1 p.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Friday
BMCC at Linn-Benton CC, 6 p.m.
Saturday
BMCC at Portland CC, 2 p.m.
EOU at Southern Oregon, 4 p.m.
Prep Scores
Wednesday
BOYS PREP BASKETBALL
Blanchet Catholic 72, Rivendale 35
Burns 72, Crane 39
Central 54, North Eugene 45
Century 70, Dallas 49
Columbia (White Salmon), Wash. 68, Riverside 65, OT
Columbia Christian 91, Molalla 48

Western Conference

Tuesday: Seattle 2, Houston 0
Nov. 30: Houston at Seattle, 7:30 p.m.
MLS CUP
Dec. 9: Toronto vs. TBD, 1 p.m.

Football

Week 13 Schedule
Thursday
Washington at Dallas, 5:25 p.m.
Sunday
Tampa Bay at Green Bay, 10 a.m.
Minnesota at Atlanta, 10 a.m.
San Francisco at Chicago, 10 a.m.
New England at Buffalo, 10 a.m.
Detroit at Baltimore, 10 a.m.
Denver at Miami, 10 a.m.
Indianapolis at Jacksonville, 10 a.m.
Houston at Tennessee, 10 a.m.
Kansas City at N.Y. Jets, 10 a.m.
New England at Buffalo, 10 a.m.
Cleveland at L.A. Chargers, 1:05 p.m.
Carolina at New Orleans, 1:25 p.m.
L.A. Rams at Arizona, 1:25 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Oakland, 1:25 p.m.
Philadelphia at Seattle, 5:30 p.m.
Monday
Pittsburgh at Cincinnati, 5:30 p.m.

NCAA Top 25 Schedule

Friday
No. 14 Stanford at No. 11 USC, 5 p.m. (ESPN)
Saturday
No. 16 Memphis at No. 12 UCF, 9 a.m. (ABC)
No. 10TCU at No. 2 Oklahoma, 9:30 a.m. (FOX)
No. 6 Georgia at No. 4 Auburn, 1 p.m. (CBS)
No. 7 Miami at No. 1 Clemson, 5 p.m. (ABC)
No. 8 Ohio State at No. 3 Wisconsin, 5 p.m. (FOX)

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Baker 56, Pendleton 47
Blanchet Catholic 44, Santiam Christian 27
Bonanza 47, North Lake 27
Burns 59, Crane 24
Central 85, North Eugene 20
Century 56, Reynolds 25
Chemawa 62, Regis 40
Colton 40, Portland Christian 33
Coquille 47, Bandon 13
Creswell 42, Siuslaw 30
Culver 51, La Pine 16
Dallas 40, North Salem 29
DeSales, Wash. 58, Weston-McEwen 49
Douglas 57, Myrtle Point 5
East Linn Christian 35, Lowell 23
Elkton 49, Reedsport 7
Elmira 58, Newport 48
Illinois Valley 42, Hidden Valley JV 41
Jefferson 59, Waldport 37
Kennedy 75, Amity 25
Lebanon 61, Redmond 34
McDermitt, Nev. 49, Jordan Valley 48
Mohawk 42, Yoncalla 31
Monroe 60, Harrisburg 34
New Hope Christian 25, Prospect 12
North Douglas 55, Siletz Valley 24
North Medford 60, Henley 34
Ontario 48, Nyssa 42
Oregon Episcopal 30, Sheridan 24
Pleasant Hill 68, Santiam 26
Portland Adventist 70, Westside Christian 46
Rainier 63, Toulte Lake, Wash. 19
Riverside 49, Columbia (White Salmon), Wash. 16
Roseburg 50, Ashland 34
Sandy 36, Hood River 31
South Albany 77, Sweet Home 37
South Eugene 57, Thurston 37
St. Paul 47, Scio 22
Stevenson, Wash. 58, Horizon Christian 43
Hood River 43
The Dalles 43, Centennial 38
Triad School 55, Butte Valley, Calif. 30
Umpqua Valley Christian 40, Canyonville Christian 16
Valley Catholic 45, Gladstone 25
Walla Walla, Wash. 40, Hermiston 29
Willamette 59, McKay 33
Yamhill-Carlton 52, Willamina 35
Bill Spelgatti Memorial Tournament
Sutherlin 51, South Umpqua 36

Soccer

MLS Playoffs
Conference Championships
Eastern Conference
Tuesday: Toronto 0, Columbus 0
Nov. 29: Toronto 1, Columbus 0 (Toronto advances)

Western Conference

Tuesday: Seattle 2, Houston 0
Nov. 30: Houston at Seattle, 7:30 p.m.
MLS CUP
Dec. 9: Toronto vs. TBD, 1 p.m.

Football

Week 13 Schedule
Thursday
Washington at Dallas, 5:25 p.m.
Sunday
Tampa Bay at Green Bay, 10 a.m.
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New England at Buffalo, 10 a.m.
Detroit at Baltimore, 10 a.m.
Denver at Miami, 10 a.m.
Indianapolis at Jacksonville, 10 a.m.
Houston at Tennessee, 10 a.m.
Kansas City at N.Y. Jets, 10 a.m.
New England at Buffalo, 10 a.m.
Cleveland at L.A. Chargers, 1:05 p.m.
Carolina at New Orleans, 1:25 p.m.
L.A. Rams at Arizona, 1:25 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Oakland, 1:25 p.m.
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No. 6 Georgia at No. 4 Auburn, 1 p.m. (CBS)
No. 7 Miami at No. 1 Clemson, 5 p.m. (ABC)
No. 8 Ohio State at No. 3 Wisconsin, 5 p.m. (FOX)

Hockey

NHL
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division
GP W L OT Pts GF GA
Tampa Bay 25 17 6 2 36 90 65
Toronto 26 16 9 1 33 92 78
Boston 23 11 8 4 26 63 68
Detroit 25 10 10 5 25 70 74
Montreal 26 11 12 3 25 62 82
Ottawa 23 8 9 6 22 68 76
Florida 24 10 12 2 22 72 83
Buffalo 25 6 15 4 16 55 85
Metropolitan Division
GP W L OT Pts GF GA
Columbus 25 16 8 1 33 72 60
N.Y. Islanders 24 15 7 2 32 89 76
New Jersey 24 14 6 4 32 78 74
Washington 25 14 10 1 29 74 75
Pittsburgh 26 13 10 3 29 74 90
N.Y. Rangers 25 13 10 2 28 82 77
Carolina 23 10 8 5 25 68 70
Philadelphia 25 8 10 7 23 70 78
Western Conference
Central Division
GP W L OT Pts GF GA
St. Louis 25 17 7 1 35 86 66
Winnipeg 25 15 6 4 34 82 67
Nashville 24 15 6 3 33 76 68
Dallas 24 13 10 1 27 70 69
Chicago 24 12 9 3 27 76 63
Colorado 23 12 9 2 26 76 73
Minnesota 24 11 10 3 25 72 74
Pacific Division
GP W L OT Pts GF GA
Vegas 23 15 7 1 31 81 69
Los Angeles 25 14 8 3 31 73 57
San Jose 23 13 8 2 28 61 51
Calgary 24 13 10 1 27 70 76
Anaheim 25 11 10 4 26 68 75
Vancouver 25 11 10 4 26 68 73
Edmonton 25 10 13 2 22 67 81
Arizona 27 6 17 4 16 66 98
NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.
Wednesday's Games
Montreal 2, Ottawa 1
Boston 3, Tampa Bay 2
Anaheim 3, St. Louis 2
Colorado 3, Winnipeg 2, OT
Thursday's Games
Los Angeles at Washington, 4 p.m.
Montreal at Detroit, 4:30 p.m.
Vancouver at Nashville, 5 p.m.
Vegas at Minnesota, 5 p.m.
Dallas at Chicago, 5:30 p.m.
Toronto at Edmonton, 6 p.m.
Arizona at Calgary, 6 p.m.

Basketball

NBA
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division
W L Pct GB
Boston 18 4 818 —
Toronto 13 7 650 4
Philadelphia 12 8 600 5
New York 11 10 524 6½
Brooklyn 8 13 381 9½
Southeast Division
W L Pct GB
Washington 11 10 524 —
Miami 10 11 478 1
Orlando 9 13 409 2½
Charlotte 8 12 400 2½
Atlanta 4 16 200 6½
Central Division
W L Pct GB
Detroit 14 6 700 —
Cleveland 14 7 667 ½
Indiana 12 10 545 3
Milwaukee 10 9 526 3½
Chicago 9 16 158 10½
WESTERN CONFERENCE
Southwest Division
W L Pct GB
Houston 17 4 810 —
San Antonio 14 7 667 3
New Orleans 11 10 524 6
Memphis 7 13 350 9½
Dallas 5 17 227 12½
Northwest Division
W L Pct GB
Portland 13 8 619 —
Minnesota 13 9 591 ½
Denver 11 9 550 1½
Utah 10 11 476 3
Oklahoma City 8 12 400 4½
Pacific Division
W L Pct GB
Golden State 16 6 727 —
L.A. Clippers 8 11 421 6½
L.A. Lakers 8 13 381 7½
Phoenix 8 15 348 8½
Sacramento 6 15 286 9½

Wednesday's Games

Detroit 131, Phoenix 107
Orlando 121, Oklahoma City 108
Philadelphia 118, Washington 113
New York 115, Miami 86
Toronto 126, Charlotte 113
Houston 118, Indiana 97
Minnesota 120, New Orleans 102
Brooklyn 109, Dallas 104
San Antonio 104, Memphis 95
Golden State 127, L.A. Lakers 123, OT
Thursday's Games
Cleveland at Atlanta, 4:30 p.m.
Philadelphia at Boston, 4:30 p.m.
Chicago at Denver, 6 p.m.
Milwaukee at Portland, 7 p.m.
Utah at L.A. Clippers, 7:30 p.m.

NCAA Men's Basketball

Top 25
Wednesday's Games
No. 1 Duke 91, Indiana 81
No. 4 Villanova 90, Penn 62
No. 10 Miami 86, No. 12 Minnesota 81
No. 13 North Carolina 86, Michigan 71
No. 15 Gonzaga 105, Incarnate Word 68
No. 23TCU 87, Belmont 76
No. 24 Alabama 77, Louisiana Tech 74
Thursday's Games
No. 22 Texas Tech vs. Seton Hall, 3:30 p.m. (FS1)
NJIT at No. 19 West Virginia, 4 p.m.
No. 5 Notre Dame at No. 3 Michigan State, 4 p.m.
UT Rio Grande Valley at No. 9 Texas A&M, 5 p.m.

Women's Basketball

Top 25
Wednesday's Games
No. 3 Notre Dame 83, Michigan 63
No. 6 Miss. State 94, Louisiana 37
No. 13 Florida State 94, Iowa 93
No. 15 Maryland 60, Virginia 59
No. 16 Stanford 89, San Francisco 66
No. 18 Texas A&M 82, Rice 76
No. 25 Villanova 62, Princeton 59
Thursday's Games
Seattle at No. 24 Cal, 11:30 a.m.
Western Carolina at No. 5 South Carolina, 4 p.m.
No. 8 Ohio State at No. 14 Duke, 4 p.m. (ESPN)
Central Arkansas at No. 12 Tennessee, 4 p.m.
Louisiana Tech at No. 2 Texas, 5 p.m.
No. 4 Louisville at Indiana, 5 p.m.
No. 20 Kentucky at No. 9 Baylor, 5 p.m.
Kansas State at No. 19 Missouri, 6 p.m.

Warriors outlast Lakers in overtime thriller

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — After struggling from long range all night, Stephen Curry hit two quick 3-pointers to open overtime and the Golden State Warriors outlasted the Los Angeles Lakers 127-123 on Wednesday.

The victory prevented the Warriors from losing two straight games for the first time this season.

Kevin Durant led Golden State with 29 points, while Curry added 28 and Klay Thompson 20. Curry had 13 points in overtime.

Brandon Ingram scored a career-high 32 to lead the Lakers. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope and Jordan Clarkson had 21 each, and Julius Randle scored 20.

Curry was 1 for 7 on 3-point attempts in regula-



tion. Los Angeles had a chance to win at the end of regulation when Randle rebounded Durant's miss with 5.3 seconds to play. The Lakers set up a play for Ingram, but he missed a driving 8-footer.

The Lakers trailed by 10 at the end of the first quarter, but charged back by shooting 71 percent in the second to take a 54-50 lead at halftime.

UP NEXT
Warriors: Play at Orlando on Friday
Lakers: Travel to Denver on Saturday.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK
Dayshawn Neal
Hermiston High School • Senior - Football

Neal caught five passes for 80 yards and two touchdowns, including the game-clinching score in the fourth quarter to help Hermiston win the 5A state championship.

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