

Pro Football

In copycat NFL, Seattle's defensive scheme keeps spreading

By MARK LONG
Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Seattle didn't make the playoffs, but its defense essentially did.

The scheme that carried the Seahawks to consecutive Super Bowls (2013-14) has become increasingly popular around the league. It helped Atlanta get to the big game last year and was the catalyst for Jacksonville's stunning turnaround this season. It also got rave reviews down the stretch in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

In a copycat league, this is the one being emulated right now.

And for good reason. The Seahawks rode the scheme to six straight playoff berths between 2012 and 2016, and as more of Pete Carroll's defensive assistants moved on to become coordinators and head coaches elsewhere, they brought it with them.

Now, it spans coast to coast. "It really takes on the flavor of the coaches that are doing it, so they have their uniqueness," Carroll said. "But there are a lot of similarities."

Similar results, too. The Jaguars ranked second in the NFL in yards and points allowed this season, relying on their defense to mask offensive deficiencies. The Chargers ranked third in scoring defense, allowing just two opponents to top 21 points in their final 11 games. The Falcons (eighth) and the injury-riddled Seahawks (13th) weren't far behind. The 49ers finished 25th at 23.9 points a game, but were considerably better over the final five weeks of the regular season. They allowed 19.9 points during a five-game winning streak that included victories against three playoff teams.

Los Angeles Chargers defensive coordinator Gus Bradley, Atlanta defensive coordinator Marquand Manuel, San Francisco defensive



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren, File

In this Sept. 2013, file photo, Seattle head coach Pete Carroll, left, and then-Jacksonville head coach Gus Bradley talk in the rain before an NFL football game in Seattle. The scheme that carried the Seahawks to consecutive Super Bowls (2013-14) has become increasingly popular around the league. It helped Atlanta get to the big game last year and was the catalyst for Jacksonville's stunning turnaround this season.

coordinator Robert Saleh, Atlanta head coach Dan Quinn and Jacksonville defensive coordinator Todd Wash all spent time in Seattle under Carroll.

Bradley, Manuel, Saleh and Wash were on the same staff in 2012. Former Oakland defensive coordinator Ken Norton also was there and had the Raiders playing the Seattle scheme until he was fired in late November.

"It's good. It's nice," Carroll said. "I love that the guys are getting the opportunities and they are doing stuff."

Seattle players don't seem as ready to credit anyone for doing it as well as they did while picking up the "Legion of Boom" nickname in 2012.

"There is only one Seattle Seahawks," linebacker Bobby Wagner said.

Maybe so. Seattle allowed the fewest points (14.4) and yards (273.6) in the NFL during the

2013 season and forced a league-high 39 turnovers. The Seahawks emphatically stated their case as a generational defense — right up there with the 1985 Chicago Bears and the 2000 Baltimore Ravens — with a 43-8 drubbing of Denver in the Super Bowl. The Broncos shattered an NFL record with 606 points during the regular season but were overmatched on the NFL's biggest stage.

That same season, thousands of miles away, Bradley and Wash were building the foundation for Jacksonville's current defense.

Two years later, Quinn was implementing it in Atlanta with some help from Manuel. Quinn's offensive coordinator at the time was Kyle Shanahan, who saw the defense every day in practice and knew he wanted it to be part of his rebuild with the 49ers this season. He hired Saleh. And former Jaguars head coach Bradley resurfaced with the Chargers.

"It's a very sound scheme that starts with stopping the run," Shanahan said. "It makes you work all the way down the field, so it's extremely tough to get explosives on. It's tough to go against. They make you work for everything, and it's something that you don't have to reinvent the wheel every week. It's something that if you just do over and over and over again, it's hard not to get better at it."

The premise of the Seattle defense is that it uses an eight-man box to stop the run (one safety positioned close to the line of scrimmage) and a single-high safety who can get sideline to sideline in "cover three" (a three-deep zone in which defensive backs split coverage areas into three sections). Cornerbacks play a lot of aggressive, bump-and-run coverage that works best when the four defensive linemen are pressuring quarterbacks. Linebackers are usually undersized and fast.

It's a 4-3 base defense that incorporates many elements of the popular 3-4.

"We are all different in our own ways," Manuel said. "But ... just the understanding of methodically making a team have to go 13, 14 plays to score and play with great red-zone defense and understand that taking the ball away is the most important thing. Plays are going to happen that are big, but if you eliminate the ones that you know are about to happen, offenses have to do something else."

"You call plays that guys understand. You can get exotic (and create) paralysis by analysis; guys are overthinking on the field. That's part of what you see in this defense. I guarantee you in each one of these (Seattle-influenced) defenses, guys are flying around and playing fast because they're not thinking."

Regardless of the schematics and subtleties, the common thread is solid — more like star — players.

Seattle has Wagner, cornerback Richard Sherman, free safety Earl Thomas and strong safety Kam Chancellor, among others.

The Chargers boast disruptive pass-rushers Melvin Ingram and Joey Bosa, linebacker Denzel Perryman and cornerback Casey Hayward. They tied for fifth in the NFL with 43 sacks.

The Jaguars had the second-most sacks (55) in the league thanks partly to Pro Bowl defensive linemen Calais Campbell and Malik Jackson and budding star Yannick Ngakoue. Cornerbacks Jalen Ramsey and A.J. Bouye also were the league's top coverage tandem, and linebackers Myles Jack and Telvin Smith are two of the fastest around.

The Falcons are built around linebackers Vic Beasley and Deion Jones, defensive end Adrian Clayborn, cornerback Robert Alford and safety Keanu Neal.

All of those guys nearly made the playoffs. Los Angeles and Seattle were among the final few teams eliminated from postseason contention Sunday.

The Seahawks are out of the playoffs for the first time since 2011. The Seattle defense, meanwhile, continues its postseason run, albeit in the form of copycats Atlanta and Jacksonville.

"It's a difficult scheme to go against because it limits you on some of the things you can do. They specifically take certain things away. You just have to be creative and find some of those basic things and be OK with some easy checkdowns and some easy, quick 5-yard completions because that's what you have a chance for," Jaguars offensive coordinator Nathaniel Hackett said.

Added 49ers quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo: "A lot of teams are running this defense. It's become pretty popular in the NFL. That Seattle scheme, it's a good one."

BRIEFLY

Hermiston AD Usher chosen as district's Administrator of the Year for 2017-18

HERMISTON — The Hermiston School District announced on Wednesday that Athletic Director Larry Usher was selected as its 2017-18 Administrator of the Year, a well-deserved selection.



Usher

In Usher's second school year as the AD, he most notably led Hermiston's efforts to secure membership in the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association to better suit the student-athletes in amount of travel time and time missed from the classroom. In a press release, the district also cited other accomplishments by Usher, including helping increase student attendance at athletic events, starting a student pre-game tailgate party at select athletic events, improving the schools' 'Boomer' mascot, and increasing the use of social media to promote events and emphasize the school's brand.

Usher has been with the district since 2002 when he was first hired as a high school social studies teacher and coached the varsity boys basketball team from 2002-2010. Then from 2010-2014, Usher moved to Sandstone Middle School where he held titles of dean of students, assistant principal and principal

Prep Basketball

Dawgs drop third straight game on the road

Hermiston gave up 26 points in fourth quarter to continue skid

East Oregonian

BOYS BASKETBALL	
Hermiston	AC Davis
60	74

YAKIMA — After a forgettable weekend at the Crescent Valley Invitational — where Hermiston went 0-2 — the Bulldogs opened 2018 on the road once again.

On Wednesday, the Bulldogs made a trip across the border to face AC Davis and suffered a 74-60 loss at the hands of the Pirates.

"(I) saw better things tonight," head coach Casey Arstein said, "but you're not going to win games by giving up 26 points in the fourth quarter."

Despite the loss, Hermiston did some things well. The Bulldogs (4-7) held Davis' studs to only 32

combined points.

The Pirates (8-2) were led by sophomore Earl Lee III (18 points) and senior Alexander Delgado (14 points) on their way to their third consecutive victory.

Down only six points at the half and trailing 31-25, Hermiston came out of the break scoring 16 of its 60 points. The early second half efforts were thanks to a seven-point third-quarter performance from junior Ryne Andreason.

Andreason finished with 12 points on the night behind junior Cesar Ortiz, who had a team-high

16 points.

The Bulldogs entered the fourth quarter only down 48-41 but some mental mistakes led to a handful of turnovers that Davis was easily able to take advantage off.

Hermiston will not prepare for its first home game of 2018, a 7 p.m. Friday matchup with Silverton.

HERMISTON	15	10	16	19	—	60
AC DAVIS	13	18	17	26	—	74

HERMISTON — C. Ortiz 16, R. Andreason 12, A. James 10, J. Ramirez 10, A. Earl 4, C. Smith 3, A. Mendez 3, B. Davis 2.
AC DAVIS — E. Lee 18, A. Dilgado 14, I. Evans-Kimble 12, C. Kelley 11, B. Williams 10, J. Reyes 9.
3-pointers — HHS 9, DHS 6; Free throws — HHS 13-18, DHS 4-4; Fouls — HHS 11, DHS 13.

College Football

Likely top picks Rosen, Darnold declare for NFL Draft

Associated Press

Within 30 minutes of one another, UCLA quarterback Josh Rosen and Southern California quarterback Sam Darnold announced they will enter the NFL draft.

The Los Angeles rivals have a chance to be the first two quarterbacks taken and possibly among the first few players off the board in April. Joining Rosen and Darnold in announcing NFL intentions Wednesday was Oklahoma offensive tackle Orlando Brown, another possible top-10 pick.

Rosen's decision was no surprise. He has started for UCLA since his freshman season, though injuries cost him most of his sophomore year and this season he did not play in the Bruins' Cactus Bowl loss

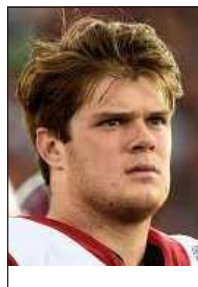
against Kansas State because he was being treated for a concussion.

He passed for 9,301 yards with 59 touchdowns passes and 26 interceptions in his college career, but UCLA

never even so much as won a bowl game during his time there. He was close to fired UCLA coach Jim Mora. but Rosen said he discussed his decision with new Bruins coach Chip Kelly. After playing for three offensive coordinators in three seasons at UCLA he decided to move one. In his statement, Rosen said attending UCLA was "the best



Rosen



Darnold

decision of my life." He also promises his mother that he'll return to Westwood to finish his degree.

There was more uncertainty about Darnold. He was a third-year sophomore this past season after sitting out as a redshirt as a freshman.

Darnold took over as the Trojans' starting quarterback four games into last season as a redshirt freshman. He won the Rose Bowl in his first season with a record 453-yard, five-touchdown performance against Penn State, and he led the

Trojans to their first Pac-12 championship since 2008 this season. He passed for 7,229 yards with 57 touchdown passes and 22 interceptions in 27 games behind center for the Trojans.

Brown is the son of the late former NFL player Orlando Brown, who was nicknamed Zeus and played for the Baltimore Ravens. The younger Brown is 6-foot-8 and 345 pounds, and an All-American this season.

Auburn cornerback Carlton Davis, linebacker Jeff Holland and tailback Kamryn Pettway announced they are skipping their senior seasons to enter the NFL draft.

Also, WSU's Hercules Mata'afa, and Florida State's Ryan Izzo said they are passing up their final college seasons to enter the draft.

SCOREBOARD

Local slate

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Thursday
Grant Union at Weston-McEwen, 3:00 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Echo, 7:00 p.m.
Stanfield at Umattila, 7:30 p.m.
Riverside at Nyssa, 6:30 p.m.
Silverton at Hermiston, 7:00 p.m.
Joseph at Echo, 7:00 p.m.
Imbler at Pilot Rock, 5:30 p.m.
Hepner at Union, 7:30 p.m.
Condon/Wheeler at Mitchell/Spray, 7:30 p.m.
Ione at Dufur, 7:30 p.m.
Powder Valley at Nixyaawii, 7:30 p.m.
Griswold at Cove, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday
Baker at Mac-Hi, 4:30 p.m.
Irrigon at Vale, 4:30 p.m.
La Grande at Nyssa, 5:00 p.m.
Union at Pilot Rock, 5:30 p.m.
Elgin at Heppner, 5:30 p.m.
Imbler at Weston-McEwen, 5:30 p.m.
South Wasco County at Condon/Wheeler, 5:30 p.m.
Powder Valley at Helix, 5:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

Thursday
Mac-Hi at Enterprise, 5:30 p.m.
Stanfield at Umattila, 6:00 p.m.
Grant Union at Weston-McEwen, 6:00 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Echo, 6:00 p.m.
Riverside at Nyssa, 5:00 p.m.
Imbler at Pilot Rock, 6:00 p.m.
Ione at Dufur, 6:00 p.m.
Helix at Cove, 6:00 p.m.
Joseph at Echo, 6:00 p.m.

Powder Valley at Nixyaawii, 6:00 p.m.

Saturday
Baker at Mac-Hi, 3:00 p.m.
Irrigon at Vale, 3:00 p.m.
Elgin at Heppner, 4:00 p.m.
Union at Pilot Rock, 4:00 p.m.
Imbler at Weston-McEwen, 4:00 p.m.
South Wasco County at Condon/Wheeler, 4:00 p.m.
Powder Valley at Helix, 4:00 p.m.

PREP WRESTLING

Friday
Echo, Heppner at JO-HI
Riverside, Irrigon, Heppner duals
Mac-Hi JV at Mountain View JV Invitational
Mac-Hi at Rollie Lane Invitational
Mac-Hi at Northwest, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday
Pendleton at Brunner Invitational
Riverside, Irrigon, Heppner at Riverside Rumble

PREP SWIMMING

Saturday
Pendleton at The Dallas

COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Friday
EOU at Evergreen, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday
BMCC vs. Big Bend CC, 4 p.m.
EOU at Northwest, 7:30 p.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Friday
EOU at Evergreen, 5:30 p.m.

Saturday
BMCC vs. Big Bend CC, 2 p.m.
EOU at Northwest, 5:30 p.m.

Basketball

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Boston	31	10	756	—
Toronto	26	10	722	2½
Philadelphia	18	19	486	11
New York	18	20	474	11½
Brooklyn	15	23	395	14½

Southeast Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Washington	22	16	579	—
Miami	20	17	541	1½
Charlotte	14	23	378	7½
Orlando	12	27	308	10½
Atlanta	10	27	270	11½

Central Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Cleveland	25	13	658	—
Detroit	20	16	556	4
Milwaukee	20	16	556	4
Indiana	19	19	500	6
Chicago	13	25	342	12

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Houston	27	9	750	—
San Antonio	26	13	667	2½
New Orleans	19	18	514	3
Dallas	13	26	333	15½
Memphis	12	26	316	16

Northwest Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	24	15	615	—
Oklahoma City	20	17	541	3
Denver	20	17	541	3
Portland	19	18	514	4
Utah	16	22	421	7½

Pacific Division

W	L	Pct	GB	
Golden State	30	8	789	—

L.A. Clippers 17 19 472 12
Phoenix 15 25 375 16
Sacramento 12 25 324 17½
L.A. Lakers 11 25 306 18

Wednesday's Games
Houston 116, Orlando 98
Philadelphia 112, San Antonio 106
Washington 121, New York 103
Brooklyn 98, Minnesota 97
Miami 111, Detroit 104
Boston 102, Cleveland 88
Milwaukee 72, Indiana 101
Toronto 124, Chicago 115
Golden State 125, Dallas 122
New Orleans 108, Utah 98
Denver 134, Phoenix 111
Oklahoma City at L.A. Lakers, late finish

Thursday's Games
Golden State at Houston, 5 p.m.
Oklahoma City at L.A. Clippers, 7:30 p.m.

NCAA

Men's Basketball

Top 25 Schedule

Wednesday's Games
No. 24 Florida State 81, No. 12 UNC 80
No. 25 Clemson 74, Boston College 70
No. 13 Purdue 82, Rutgers 51
No. 17 Kentucky 74, LSU 71
Georgia Tech 64, No. 15 Miami 54
No. 8 UVA 78, Virginia Tech 52
No. 7 Oklahoma 109, Oklahoma State 89

Thursday's Games
Houston at No. 9 Wichita State, 4 p.m. (ESPN)
Maryland at No. 1 Michigan State, 5 p.m. (FS1)
No. 4 Arizona State at Colorado, 5:30 p.m. (PAC12)
No. 29 Cincinnati at Temple, 6 p.m. (ESPN2)
No. 14 Arizona at Utah, 6 p.m. (ESPN)
No. 19 Gonzaga at Pepperdine, 8 p.m.

(ESPN)

Pac-12 Schedule

Wednesday's Games
No games scheduled.

Thursday's Games
No. 4 Arizona at Colorado, 5:30 p.m. (PAC12)
No. 14 Arizona at Utah, 6 p.m. (ESPN)
UCLA at Stanford, 7 p.m. (FS1)
USC at Cal, 7:30 p.m. (PAC12)

Women's Basketball

Top 25 Schedule

Wednesday's Games
No. 1 UConn 96, ECU 35
Kansas State 60, No. 12 West Virginia 52
No. 6 Baylor 89, Iowa State 49
No. 8 Texas 84, No. 20 Oklahoma State 79

Thursday's Games
No. 18 Iowa at No. 13 Maryland, 3 p.m.
Auburn at No. 7 Tennessee, 4 p.m. (SECN+)
Kentucky at No. 19 Texas A&M, 4 p.m. (SECN)
No. 4 South Carolina at Ole Miss, 4 p.m. (SECN+)
No. 22 Michigan at Wisconsin, 4 p.m.
Minnesota at No. 10 OSU, 4 p.m.
No. 11 FSU at Clemson, 4 p.m. (ACCNE)
No. 17 Duke at No. 3 Louisville, 4p.m. (ACCNE)
Miami at No. 2 Notre Dame, 4 p.m. (ACCNE)
LSU at No. 15 Missouri, 5 p.m. (SECN+)
Arkansas at No. 5 Miss St., 6 p.m. (SECN)

Chicago 5, N.Y. Rangers 2

Thursday's Games
Florida at Boston, 4 p.m.
Carolina at Pittsburgh, 4 p.m.
San Jose at Toronto, 4 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Philadelphia, 4 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Montreal, 4:30 p.m.
Buffalo at Minnesota, 5 p.m.
Vegas at St. Louis, 5 p.m.
New Jersey at Dallas, 5:30 p.m.
Los Angeles at Calgary, 6 p.m.
Anahaim at Edmonton, 6 p.m.
Columbus at Colorado, 6 p.m.
Nashville at Arizona, 6 p.m.

Football

NFL

Wild-card Playoffs

Saturday's Games
Tennessee at Kansas City, 4:35 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)
Atlanta at Los Angeles Rams, 8:15 p.m. (NBC)

Sunday's Games
Buffalo at Jacksonville, 1:05 p.m. (CBS)
Carolina at New Orleans, 4:40 p.m. (FOX)

Golf

PGA TOUR

SENTRY TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

Site: Kapalua, Hawaii.
Course: Kapalua Resort (Plantation Course). Yardage: 7,452. Par: 73.
Purse: \$6.3 million. Winner's share: \$1,134,000.
Television: Thursday-Friday, 6-10 p.m. (Golf Channel); Saturday, 3-7 p.m. (Golf Channel); Sunday, 6-10 p.m. (Golf Channel).
Defending champion: Justin Thomas.