

Big-name losses: Seahawks defense again among best

By **TIM BOOTH**
AP Sports Writer

RENTON, Wash. — The players the Seattle Seahawks lost off their defense over the past year became synonymous with being considered among the best at their position and creating an elite unit that was tough to have success against.

And yet, the current batch of Seahawks sit near the midseason point with a defense that statistically is back among the elite of the NFL.

“I’m not surprised at all. We knew coming into the season we had a great group of guys and we knew the outside was sleeping on the leadership we had in the building and the people that we had in the building. ... We knew that people didn’t see that. They wouldn’t see that,” Seattle linebacker Bobby Wagner said.

“If you listened to us talk, we were very confident in what we were going to get accomplished and what we were going to be doing. What we are seeing is good, but I think there is a level where we can get better.”

Heading into Week 9, the Seahawks have the No. 5 total defense (327.3 yards per game), No. 4 in pass defense (219.0) and No. 4 in points allowed per game (18.7). Those numbers include six games playing without starting linebacker K.J. Wright because of knee surgery and three games without Earl Thomas after he suffered a broken leg in the Week 4 win over Arizona.

Wagner was around before the overhaul started. So was defensive end Frank Clark and defensive tackle Jarran Reed. But the rest of Seattle’s defense has been largely retooled over the past two seasons. And instead of Seattle taking a major step back, it has returned to being among the NFL’s best in less than half a season.

“The first few games, even up until now, we were still trying to learn how to play with one another, learn how to have fun with one another,” Wagner said. “Now, you’re seeing the product of that last game and I think it’s still room to get better.”

Seattle is coming off one of its



In this Sunday, Oct. 14, 2018, file photo, Oakland Raiders quarterback Derek Carr (4) is sacked by Seattle Seahawks defensive end Frank Clark (55) during the second half of an NFL football game.

Old coaching colleagues meet as rivals

By **JOSH DUBOW**
AP Pro Football Writer

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — When Kyle Shanahan was looking to get into the NFL as an assistant coach more than a decade ago, his father, Mike, called Jon Gruden and asked him to hire his son for an entry-level job in Tampa.

Shanahan joined the Buccaneers as a quality control coach in 2004 on Gruden’s staff and got his introduction to pro football on a staff that featured five assistants who have gone on to get head coaching jobs in the NFL.

“It was such a good place for me to go to because Jon was doing everything,” Shanahan said. “It wasn’t just his stuff. He was always on top of it with the film, which everyone is now because of the computers and everything, but he was one of the first guys doing that stuff, probably being a little bit younger than most guys at that time and just introduced me to pretty much every play known to man.”

Now 14 years later, Shanahan gets his first

chance to coach against his old boss when the San Francisco 49ers (1-7) host Gruden and the Oakland Raiders (1-6) on Thursday night.

Gruden said he took great pride in that staff that featured Mike Tomlin, Rod Marinelli, Jay Gruden and Raheem Morris during Shanahan’s two seasons there in 2004-05. The Bucs won just five games the first season before winning the NFC South with an 11-5 record in 2005.

“We had a lot of fun back in those days. The woodshed, I called it,” Gruden said. “People are going to take me to the woodshed here pretty soon, if we don’t get this thing going.”

Both the Raiders and 49ers are struggling heading into this matchup, with Oakland losing three straight and San Francisco on a six-game skid.

Shanahan has struggled without starting quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo, while Gruden’s return to the NFL has been rocky after nine seasons as a broadcaster at ESPN.

But Shanahan believes Gruden will turn the Raiders around if given time and sees no signs that the game has passed him by.

better defensive performance of the season when it limited Detroit to 34 yards rushing in a 28-14 win over the Lions last week. Matthew Stafford still had a big day throwing the ball, but the Seahawks ability to make Detroit one-dimensional on offense was critical con-

sidering the Lions ability to run the ball in recent weeks.

It was the fourth time Seattle held an opponent under 100 yards rushing, and the Seahawks forced three turnovers bringing their season total to 16.

The Seahawks were hope-

ful this kind of defense would develop but knew it could take some time with new players, such as Tre Flowers, Shamar Stephen and Barkevious Mingo joining the lineup, and Tedric Thompson, Bradley McDougald and Shaquill Griffin stepping

NFL



Seattle Seahawks (4-3)

Los Angeles Chargers (5-2)

Sunday, 1:05 p.m., at Century Link Field, Seattle
TV: CBS

into more prominent roles.

“There is so much football that they don’t know you can’t be upset by what they’re doing. Because they’re working really hard, they’ve had success, they’ve had failure,” Seattle defensive coordinator Ken Norton Jr. said. “They’ve learned from their successes and failures, so it’s really fun to watch the development of the young players.”

The competition Seattle has faced should be noted and will get significantly tougher in the coming weeks, beginning with Sunday’s game against the Los Angeles Chargers. Three of Seattle’s wins have come against teams ranked in the bottom half of the league in total offense.

That changes this weekend. Led by Philip Rivers, the Chargers have the sixth-best offense in the NFL averaging 402.7 yards per game, and nearly 28 points. That’s followed by a matchup with the Los Angeles Rams and their second-ranked total offense; then back home to face Green Bay and Aaron Rodgers on a short week after that; and finally a trip to face Cam Newton and Carolina to close out November.

If there’s a concern that Seattle’s defense has yet to be truly tested, the examination will happen over the next four games.

“We all treating them the same and that’s the best quarterback we’ve played against,” Griffin said. “That’s the type of mentality we have to bring to that, no matter what quarterback we’re facing. We’re going to bring the same mentality and play our best ball. You name some great guys and I’m looking forward to playing against all of them.”





REALTOUGH

I like the way they’re built.
I like the way they fit in my hands.

JUSTIN MILLER

REAL PEOPLE.
STIHL PEOPLE.

ARBORIST

JAMESTOWN, NY

SAVE \$20!



BG 56 C-E
HANDHELD BLOWER

NOW JUST \$159⁹⁵

WAS \$179.95

SNW-SRP

STIHL

Easy2Start

BUILT IN USA

Offer valid through 11/30/18 at participating dealers while supplies last.

★★★★★

“The total ease of operating this equipment is far superior.”
— user jack65

BUILT IN USA



MS 271
FARM BOSS®

\$429⁹⁵

★★★★★

20" bar!

“I have owned other saws in this class and the MS 271 has the best power to weight ratio that I have owned.”
— user Tommy80

FOR NATURAL Caring

STIHL

FREE

WOODSMAN CARRYING CASE, LOOP OF CHAIN & STIHL CAP



WITH PURCHASE OF SELECT CHAIN SAWS

Up to a \$79.00 SNW-SRP value!

Offer valid through 11/30/18 at participating dealers while supplies last. See Dealer for details.

RMA 460
BATTERY-POWERED
LAWN MOWER

\$469⁹⁵

Includes AK 30 battery and AL 101 charger.

Lightweight, walk-behind mower with 19" deck width



AK SERIES

FOR NATURAL Caring

STIHL

Check out these reviews and others on the product pages at [STIHLdealers.com](https://www.stihldealers.com).

All prices are SNW-SRP. Available at participating dealers while supplies last. *The actual listed guide bar length may vary from the effective cutting length based on which powerhead it is installed on. © 2018 STIHL SNW18-1122-140810-6

Hermiston

Smitty's  Hardware

1845 North 1st

541-567-6816

SmittysEquipment.us

Pendleton

D & B Supply

850 Southgate Road

541-276-0102

dbsupplypendleton.com

BUILT IN USA

Indicates products that are built in the United States from domestic and foreign parts and components.

STIHLdealers.com