

Rams eager to rebound from 1st loss, sweep Seahawks series

By GREG BEACHAM
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES — Although the Los Angeles Rams hadn't lost a game until last week, their spectacular season has featured several close calls.

Not many were closer than their 33-31 victory just five weeks ago in Seattle, where the Seahawks racked up 190 yards rushing, intercepted two passes by Jared Goff and came agonizingly close to a huge NFC West win.

With the second-place Seahawks (4-4) visiting the Coliseum on Sunday for the rematch, the Rams (8-1) have a chance to essentially end the division race with seven weeks to go. The Rams aren't looking that far ahead, but Aaron Donald hopes Los Angeles will learn from that narrow win in Seattle — and a 45-35 loss at New Orleans last week.

"We're in a good place, and we're locked in," said the Rams' superstar defensive tackle, second in the NFL with 10 sacks. "We play these guys twice a year, so we've got respect for them. We've just got to get after them."

The Rams have never lost back-to-back regular-season games in their 1½ seasons under Sean McVay, but they've thrived primarily on the strength of an offense that has been able to out-score nearly every opponent, including the Seahawks. NFL scoring leader Todd Gurley rushed for three TDs in Seattle, and the Rams kept the ball out of Russell Wilson's hands in the final 3:38 by running out the clock.

The Seahawks also are coming off a loss after the Chargers won in Seattle last week, but the Seahawks know they can beat the Rams because they did it last sea-



In this Oct. 7 file photo, Los Angeles Rams running back Todd Gurley celebrates after scoring a touchdown during the second half of an NFL football game against the Seattle Seahawks in Seattle. With the second-place Seahawks (4-4) visiting the Coliseum on Sunday for the rematch, the Rams (8-1) have a chance to essentially end the division race with seven weeks to go.

AP Photo/Scott Eklund, File

NFL	
	
Seattle Seahawks (4-4)	L.A. Rams (8-1)

Sunday, 1:25 p.m., at L.A. Memorial Coliseum, Los Angeles, TV: CBS

son at the Coliseum.

Even if the division race might already be out of hand, they've got a chance to begin their playoff rally with a statement victory.

"We can't allow them to score as many points as they put up," Seattle linebacker Bobby Wagner said. "We feel like we did a really good job

against the run for the most part. We have to find a way to do that, make them one-dimensional, make sure Todd doesn't get into the end zone as many times as he did."

More things to watch in this NFC West showdown: **Tough check**

Donald has sacked Wilson eight times in their careers, more than any other quarterback. But Donald and the Rams didn't manage to sack Drew Brees last week, and they still have something to prove to the Seahawks — particularly to guard D.J. Fluker, who wasn't impressed by the toughness of the Los Angeles defense in the clubs' previous meeting.

The Seattle offensive lineman said the Rams "want to be pass rushers," but hadn't "seen a team go out there

and actually take it to them." Donald had no interest in starting a public discussion this week: "We're just going to go out there and play a game and let our play speak for us."

Gurley goes

Gurley has scored a touchdown in a franchise-record 12 straight games, and his 868 yards rushing are the NFL's most by a whopping 162 yards over Pittsburgh's James Connor.

Gurley's 16 TDs this season are the most in the league and the second-most in NFL history through nine games, trailing only Jim Brown's 17 in 1958. That's the challenge facing Seattle's run defense, which is giving up 4.8 yards per attempt — tied for fourth-worst in the league — but has been effective in stretches.

Bufs could get star receiver back for Saturday vs. Cougars

By ARNIE STAPLETON
AP Sports Writer

BOULDER, Colo. — Star sophomore Laviska Shenault Jr. indicated on Instagram that he'd be back on the field Saturday when slumping Colorado hosts No. 10 Washington State.

His return would provide a big boost for the banged-up Buffaloes (5-4, 2-4), who were once the last remaining unbeaten team in the Pac-12 but now face the possibility of missing out on a bowl berth that was in their grasp two weeks ago before they blew a 28-point second-half lead to lowly Oregon State.

"The return of 2Live..." Shenault posted Sunday night.

Buffaloes coach Mike MacIntyre was more cautious, saying Shenault "did a little bit" in his return to practice Monday but labeling him "still day to day."

"Hopefully we'll get him back sometime before the year is over," MacIntyre said.

The Bufs were 5-0 when Shenault got hurt at USC, and Colorado lost that game and the next three without the superstar receiver who had six TD receptions and five TD runs before getting injured.

Shenault was a Heisman hopeful as he piled up 780 yards on 60 receptions and 87 yards on 15 rushes, and his return

took on more urgency when Buffaloes receivers Jay MacIntyre (concussion) and K.D. Nixon (hip) got hurt last week at Arizona.

So, Shenault's social media post was an encouraging sign as the Buffs prepared for the Cougars (8-1, 5-1, No. 8 CFP) who are the Pac-12's last remaining hope for a College Football Playoff berth.

Coach MacIntyre doesn't want to make excuses, but acknowledges Shenault's injury was a

backbreaker.

"I think when you take a Heisman Trophy candidate out of the picture, it's a big deal," MacIntyre said.

"If you had taken Rashaan Salaam off the '94 team, I don't know they might still have been really good, they had a lot of great players. But you take a Heisman Trophy candidate out at the time he left, he was leading the country in every category kind of like (Washington State QB Gardner Minshew)."

"If you take Minshew out, it might change Washington State. We haven't had our best football player on the field since halfway through the USC game, so he only played five and a half games."

Another subplot in the 12th meeting between the Cougars and Buffaloes:

Magic Minshew: Minshew is the nation's leading passer with 3,517 yards, 27 TDs and seven interceptions.

PAC-12 FOOTBALL



Colorado Buffaloes
(5-4, 2-4)



Wash. St. Cougars
(8-1, 5-1)

Saturday, 12:30 p.m., at Folsom Field, Boulder

TV: ESPN

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