

COWBOYS, PRESCOTT vs WILSON, SEAHAWKS

By SCHUYLER DIXON
AP Pro Football Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas — Russell Wilson won a wild-card game with Seattle as a rookie, a Super Bowl in his second season and another NFC championship the third time around.

The best Dak Prescott can hope for with the Dallas Cowboys is to join Wilson on that list of title winners in his third year, a quest that will start with the first playoff meeting of quarterbacks with quite a bit in common.

Both were mid-round draft picks who became instant NFL success stories. The difference is that Prescott lost his first playoff game after guiding the Cowboys to the top seed in the NFC two years ago, then had to wait two years for his second chance. It comes in a home wild-card game Saturday night.

“When you say success of a quarterback or a quarterback’s success depending on what they do in the playoffs, I think that’s where the checks are written and they make their money,” Prescott said. “Our job is to win no matter what happens, no matter how you played individually. At the end of the day, it’s to get the job done.”

When Wilson finally missed the playoffs in his sixth season last year, the Seahawks were eliminated on the final weekend — after they bounced Prescott and the Cowboys from contention with a road win in Week 16.

Seattle was 0-2 this year when the season turned on a 24-13 win over the visiting Cowboys (10-6), with the Seahawks following a familiar formula from their Super Bowl days: an efficient Wilson, strong running game and playmaking defense.

The Seahawks (10-6) kept it up despite overhauling the roster, mostly



DAK PRESCOTT



RUSSELL WILSON

AP Photos/File

notably dismantling key pieces of the “Legion of Boom” defense. An important exception has been linebacker Bobby Wagner, who was just selected an All-Pro for the fourth time in five seasons.

“The great thing about this team is the fact that everybody was telling us we couldn’t,” Wilson said. “It shows the heart of this team and it shows the mindset of this team to be able to think the way that you want to think and the places that you want to go. To think big, to believe big.”

Wilson was a third-round pick out of Wisconsin in 2012 and won the job in his first training camp. Prescott was drafted in the fourth round out of Mississippi State four years later and became the starter after preseason injuries to Tony Romo and backup Kellen Moore.

In his first three years, Wilson won more games than any other NFL quarterback with 36. Prescott just finished tied for fifth on that list with 32. Two quarterbacks have an NFL-leading 24 games with at least a 100 passer rating in their first three seasons: Wilson and Prescott.

Now it’s time for their third — and most meaningful — meeting, with Prescott looking to beat Wilson for the first time.

“Dak had a phenomenal year to get started and get rolling and has just been solid since,” Seahawks coach Pete Carroll said. “I think it’s the dynamics of the mobility that when you add that together, and of course they can both throw the ball way down the field. You’ve got the same kind of problems.”

Run first

Both teams figure to try to control the pace with their running games. Ezekiel Elliott just won the NFL rushing title for the second time in his three seasons, and Chris Carson heads a group of Seattle backs that led the NFL in rushing. The Cowboys were 10th, fueled by Elliott, and have had a top-10 defense most of the season led by pass rusher DeMarcus Lawrence and young playmaking linebackers Jaylon Smith and Leighton Vander Esch. Dallas was fifth against the run.

“We’re feeling great,” Elliott said. “I believe we have the best defense in football and a pretty good offense, a lot of weapons. I think we have the right recipe to make some noise.”

Wild-card streak

Seattle has won six straight wild-card games, a streak that started when Romo, a first-year starter and still the holder, fumbled the snap on a potential go-ahead field goal in the final two minutes of the Seahawks’ 21-20 home win during the 2006 season. Oddly enough during this streak, Seattle has lost every time in the divisional round.

Original line

With left guard Xavier Su’a-Filo listed as doubtful because of an ankle injury, the Cowboys are likely to have this season’s original starting offensive line before Su’a-Filo replaced injured rookie Connor Williams and kept the job.

The starters are left tackle Tyron Smith, Williams, center Joe Looney, All-Pro right guard Zack Martin and right tackle La’el Collins. Looney has filled in all year for four-time Pro Bowler Travis Frederick, who was diagnosed with a nerve disorder during the preseason.

Settled in Week 3

The Seahawks settled their offensive line in the first Dallas meeting with their best rushing game to that point. A key addition was right guard D.J. Fluker, who sat out Week 17 to nurse a nagging hamstring injury but will play. Left guard J.R. Sweezy is questionable with a sprained foot.

Both teams have had issues protecting their mobile quarterbacks. Prescott (56 sacks) and Wilson (51) were among the four QBs dropped at least 50 times this season.

George has 37 and Thunder hold off Blazers 111-109

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Paul George scored 37 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder snapped a six-game losing streak to the Portland Trail Blazers with a 111-109 victory on Friday night.

Russell Westbrook added 31 points for the Thunder, who had also lost eight straight games at the Moda Center dating to February 2014.

Damian Lillard led the Trail Blazers with 23 points and eight assists.

The Thunder trailed by as many as 11 points in the

first half but pulled in front late in the third quarter and pushed the lead to 107-97 with just over 4 minutes to go on a basket by Westbrook, who scored 20 points came in the second half.

CJ McCollum’s jumper got Portland within 109-105 and Lillard made two of three free throws to cut the deficit with 42.8 seconds left.

George made free throws with 4.3 seconds left and the Blazers fell short on Al-Farouq Aminu’s basket at the buzzer.

Oklahoma City, sitting in second place in the Western

Conference behind the Nuggets, has won three straight, including a 107-100 victory over the Lakers on Wednesday.

The Blazers had won two straight overall and were coming off a 113-108 overtime victory in Sacramento on New Year’s Day. The game against the Thunder was the first of a five-game homestand.

George got off to a fast start with 13 points in the opening quarter, including a pair of free throws that pulled the Thunder into a 28-all tie.

The Blazers went up

47-39 after Jake Layman’s 3-pointer, and extended the lead to 58-47 after Maurice Harkless’ 3.

Jusuf Nurkic had 16 first-half points and Portland went into the break with a 62-57 lead.

The Thunder closed within 80-78 on Steven Adams’ layup then took an 83-82 lead on George’s 3-pointer. Aminu answered with a 3 for the Blazers but George made another 3 and the Thunder went into the final period with a 93-87 lead.

Nurkic finished with 22 points and eight rebounds.

Woodland birdies his way into lead at Kapalua

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

KAPALUA, Hawaii — Gary Woodland wasn’t making any putts until he chipped in for birdie, and then he couldn’t miss.

Woodland broke away from a five-way tie for the lead Friday by running off five straight birdies, and then finishing with one more for another 6-under 67 that gave him a three-shot lead going into the weekend at the Sentry Tournament of Champions.

None of his birdie putts were longer than 10 feet, which helped. But this was more a measure of his confidence, which dates to his work with putting guru Phil Kenyon during the British Open last summer at Carnoustie.

“The big deal was just staying patient on the greens,” Woodland said. “It’s very tough putting with the crosswinds and I didn’t see anything go in early, but nice to see the chip go in on 11 and kind of got me going, propelled me for the rest of the round.”

Woodland was at 12-under 134.

Rory McIlroy had

another good finish with three birdies over his last five holes for a 68, leaving him three shots behind along with Bryson DeChambeau (68) and Kevin Tway, who didn’t make his first bogey at Kapalua until the 17th hole of the second round. He shot a 71.

Defending champion Dustin Johnson had a 74, the first time in 33 rounds at Kapalua that he was over par. He could think of one shot he’d like to have back, out of the hazard left of the fourth fairway. The shot was fine. The trouble was it wasn’t his ball, and Johnson was assessed a two-shot penalty.

It was a bit of a fluke, as most things are with Johnson. A volunteer marshal marked where his ball had gone into the hazard, and Johnson could see it was his brand. Only when he walked about 20 yards toward the green did he see another ball, and the light came on.

It didn’t involve the new rules, although they might have played a role. If the ball moves while trying to identify it, there is no penalty.

U.S. women to open camp ahead of World Cup

CHICAGO (AP) — Two goals away from reaching 100 for her career, forward Alex Morgan is on the roster for the U.S. women’s national team as it opens training camp ahead of the World Cup in France this summer.

Morgan was among 26 players named to the roster by coach Jill Ellis on Friday. The defending champions leave for Portugal on Saturday and will play a pair of exhibition matches against France and Spain later in the month.

Tierra Davidson, Kelley O’Hara and McCall Zerboni have returned to the team following injuries. Davidson broke her ankle in September while playing for Stanford. Zerboni fractured her elbow in a match for the U.S. team against Chile, and O’Hara is coming off ankle surgery.

Ellis brought four goalkeepers in the camp, including Adrianna Franch, of the Portland Thorns. Franch is still looking for her first cap.

Three other Thorns players made the roster.

ROSTER BY POSITION, WITH CLUB AFFILIATION
GOALKEEPERS: Jane Campbell (Houston Dash), **Adrianna Franch** (Portland Thorns), Ashley Harris (Orlando Pride), Danielle Colaprico (Chicago Red Stars), Julie Ertz (Chicago Red Stars).
Defenders: Abby Dahlkemper (NC Courage), Tierna Davidson (Stanford), Crystal Dunn (NC Courage), Emily Fox (North Carolina), Kelley O’Hara (Utah Royals), Becky Sauerbrunn (Utah Royals), Casey Short (Chicago Red Stars) and **Emily Sonnett** (Portland Thorns).
MIDFIELDERS: Morgan Brian (Chicago Red Stars), Danielle Colaprico (Chicago Red Stars), **Julie Ertz** (Chicago Red Stars), **Lindsay Horan** (Portland Thorns), Rose Lavelle (Washington Spirit), Samantha Mewis (NC Courage) and McCall Zerboni (NC Courage).
Forwards: **Tobin Heath** (Portland Thorns), Carli Lloyd (Sky Blue), Jessica McDonald (NC Courage), Alex Morgan (Orlando Pride), Christen Press (Utah Royals), Mallory Pugh (Washington Spirit), Megan Rapinoe (Seattle Reign).

SCOREBOARD

LOCAL SLATE

SATURDAY, JAN. 5

Boys Basketball

Mac-Hi at Baker, 3 p.m.
Stanfield at Knappa, 3:30 p.m.
Heppner at Weston-McEwen, 4 p.m.
Enterprise at Pilot Rock, 4 p.m.
Columbia Basin at Blue Mountain, 4 p.m.
Ione at Echo, 5:30 p.m.
Helix at Elgin, 5:30 p.m.
Wallowa at Nixyaawii, 5:30 p.m.
Hermiston at Kamiakin, 7:30 p.m.

Girls Basketball

Stanfield at Knappa, 2 p.m.
Columbia Basin at Blue Mountain, 2 p.m.
Ione at Echo, 4 p.m.
Helix at Elgin, 4 p.m.
Wallowa at Nixyaawii, 4 p.m.
Baker at Mac-Hi, 4:30 p.m.
Enterprise at Pilot Rock, 5:30 p.m.
Heppner at Weston-McEwen, 5:30 p.m.
Hermiston at Kamiakin, 5:45 p.m.

Boys Wrestling

Hermiston at Gut Check Invite (Seattle)

TUESDAY, JAN. 8

Boys Basketball

La Grande at Pendleton, 6:30 p.m.
Blue Mountain at Treasure Valley, 6:30 p.m.
Mac-Hi at Hood River Valley, 6:30 p.m.
Girls Basketball
Blue Mountain at Treasure Valley, 4:30 p.m.

Boys Wrestling

Hermiston at Hanford, 6 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 11

Boys Basketball

Weston-McEwen at Pilot Rock, 6 p.m.
Enterprise at Heppner, 6 p.m.
Stanfield at Union, 6 p.m.
La Grande at Mac-Hi, 6 p.m.
Umatilla at Burns, 6:30 p.m.
Pendleton at Hood River Valley, 6:30 p.m.
Ione at Mitchell/Spray, 7:30 p.m.
Echo at South Wasco County, 7:30 p.m.
Imbler at Helix, 7:30 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Cove, 7:30 p.m.
Kennewick at Hermiston, 7:30 p.m.

Girls Basketball

Umatilla at Burns, 5 p.m.

Kennewick at Hermiston, 5:45 p.m.

Ione at Mitchell/Spray, 6 p.m.
Echo at South Wasco County, 6 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Cove, 6 p.m.
Helix at Imbler, 6 p.m.
Weston-McEwen at Pilot Rock, 7:30 p.m.
Stanfield at Union, 7:30 p.m.
Enterprise at Heppner, 7:30 p.m.
La Grande at Mac-Hi, 7:30 p.m.
Hood River Valley at Pendleton, 6:30 p.m.

Girls Wrestling

Hermiston at Othello, 5 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 12

Boys Basketball

Horizon Christian at Ione, 3 p.m.
Wenatchee Valley at Blue Mountain, 4 p.m.
Union at Heppner, 4 p.m.
Grant Union at Weston-McEwen, 4 p.m.
Enterprise at Stanfield, 4 p.m.
La Grande at Mac-Hi, 5:30 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Helix, 5:30 p.m.
Condon/Wheeler at Echo, 5:30 p.m.
Hermiston at Chiawana, 7:30 p.m.

Girls Basketball

Wenatchee Valley at Blue Mountain, 2 p.m.
Condon/Wheeler at Echo, 4 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Helix, 4 p.m.
Union at Heppner, 5:30 p.m.
Enterprise at Stanfield, 5:30 p.m.
Grant Union at Weston-McEwen, 5:30 p.m.

Boys Wrestling

Farm City Invitational (Hermiston)

Pendleton at Wilsonville, 10:30 a.m.

Girls Wrestling

Hermiston at Othello, 10 a.m.

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	28	12	.700	—
Philadelphia	25	14	.641	2½
Boston	23	15	.605	4
Brooklyn	19	21	.475	9
New York	10	29	.256	17½
Southeast	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	19	18	.514	—
Charlotte	18	19	.486	1
Orlando	17	21	.447	2½
Washington	15	24	.385	5
Atlanta	11	27	.289	8½
Central	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	27	10	.730	—
Indiana	26	12	.684	1½
Detroit	17	19	.472	9½
Chicago	10	29	.256	18
Cleveland	8	31	.205	20

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	22	15	.595	—
San Antonio	22	17	.564	1
Memphis	18	20	.474	4½
Dallas	18	20	.474	4½
New Orleans	17	22	.436	6
Northwest	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	25	11	.694	—

Oklahoma City	25	13	.658	1
Portland	22	17	.564	4½
Utah	19	20	.487	7½
Minnesota	18	21	.462	8½
Pacific	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	25	14	.641	—
L.A. Clippers	22	16	.579	2½
L.A. Lakers	21	18	.538	4
Sacramento	19	19	.500	5½
Phoenix	9	31	.225	16½

Thursday’s Games

San Antonio 125, Toronto 107
Denver 117, Sacramento 113
Houston 135, Golden State 134, OT&I

Friday’s Games

Utah 117, Cleveland 91
Boston 114, Dallas 93
Brooklyn 109, Memphis 100
Indiana 119, Chicago 116, OT
Miami 115, Washington 109
Minnesota 120, Orlando 103
Milwaukee 144, Atlanta 112
L.A. Clippers 121, Phoenix 111
New York 119, L.A. Lakers 112
Oklahoma City 111, Portland 109

Saturday’s Games

Charlotte at Denver, 2 p.m.
Utah at Detroit, 4 p.m.
Dallas at Philadelphia, 4:30 p.m.
New Orleans at Cleveland, 5 p.m.
Memphis at San Antonio, 5:30 p.m.
Toronto at Milwaukee, 5:30 p.m.
Golden State at Sacramento, 7 p.m.
Houston at Portland, 7 p.m.

Sunday’s Games

Brooklyn at Chicago, 12:30 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Minnesota, 12:30 p.m.
Orlando at L.A. Clippers, 12:30 p.m.
Miami at Atlanta, 3 p.m.
Washington at Oklahoma City, 4 p.m.
Indiana at Toronto, 4:30 p.m.
Charlotte at Phoenix, 5 p.m.

Monday’s Games

San Antonio at Detroit, 4 p.m.
Brooklyn at Boston, 4:30 p.m.
Denver at Houston, 5 p.m.
Memphis at New Orleans, 5 p.m.
Utah at Milwaukee, 5 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Dallas, 5:30 p.m.
New York at Portland, 7 p.m.
Orlando at Sacramento, 7 p.m.

NHL STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic	GP	W	LOT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	41	32	7	2	66	174
Toronto	40	26	12	2	54	147
Boston	41	23	14	6	50	120
Buffalo	41	22	13	4	50	119
Montreal	41	22	14	5	49	130
Florida	39	17	16	6	40	127
Detroit	43	16	20	7	39	122
Ottawa	41	15	21	5	35	129
Metropolitan	GP	W	LOT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	40	24	12	4	52	141
Pittsburgh	41	23	12	6	52	144
Columbus	40	23	14	3	49	131
N.Y. Islanders	39	22	13	4	48	117

Carolina	40	18	17	5	41	103
N.Y. Rangers	40	17	16	7	41	114
New Jersey	40	16	17	7	39	120
Philadelphia	40	15	20	5	35	114

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central	GP	W	LOT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	40	25	13	2	52	134
Nashville	42	24	15	3	51	127
Dallas	42	22	16	4	48	115
Colorado	42	20	14	8	48	144
Minnesota	39	19	17	3	41	114
Chicago	43	15	21	7	37	123
St. Louis	38	16	18	4	36	107