

# Seahawks shake up: Seattle trades Wilson, releases Wagner

## Last remaining starters from Super Bowl-winning team

BY TIM BOOTH

Associated Press

SEATTLE — With two brush strokes over the span of about 10 hours, the Seattle Seahawks said goodbye to giant foundations of their Super Bowl history.

Gone is quarterback Russell Wilson, traded to Denver in a blockbuster move. Gone is Bobby Wagner, the defensive stalwart and likely future Hall of Famer, released as part of a salary cap squeeze.

So long history. Hello, rebuild.

That is the apparent direction the Seahawks are headed after a Tuesday, March 8, that won't be forgotten by their fans. The team agreed to send Wilson to Denver early in the day, according to two people familiar with the negotiations who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the trade can't be announced until after the start of the new league year next week.

Hours later, Wagner confirmed to the AP that the Seahawks had informed him he was being released, his \$20 million salary cap hit for 2022 deemed too much for Seattle to absorb.

And with that, the final two starters still around from Seattle's Super Bowl winning team from 2013 — ones that seemed destined to be lifelong players for the team — were no longer Seahawks.

Their situations differed. Wilson had to waive a no-trade clause to accept the move to Denver. Wagner spoke at the end of the season of wanting to return but also knew the weight of his contract.

"I understand there is a business side to this, but there's a lot of optimism on my end that I'll be back," Wagner said in early January. "I'm not worried about it. Obviously, I can't control everything. I can only control my part."



Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson throws a pass against the Philadelphia Eagles on Nov. 30, 2020, in Philadelphia.

No matter the reasons behind their departures, it's a massive change for the Seahawks.

For the majority of 10 seasons, the leaders on both sides of the ball for Seattle were never questioned. Taken in the same draft one round apart in 2012, Wagner and Wilson walked into Seattle's practice facility and almost immediately laid claim to spots they never relinquished other than for injury.

Wagner was a six-time first-team All-Pro selection, building a resume that no matter the next phase of his career is likely good enough for a gold jacket and induction to the Hall of Fame.

Wilson will forever be the starting quarterback of Seattle's first Super Bowl championship team, and for a decade gave the Seahawks a franchise QB and one of the most exciting players in the league.

Just days after coach Pete Carroll and general manager John Schneider indicated at the NFL combine that Seattle

wasn't open for business regarding Wilson, the duo made arguably the most impactful trade in franchise history.

In some ways, they are staking their reputations to being able to find Seattle's next quarterback, and the additional move to release Wagner only added to the major questions about where the franchise goes next.

Is this the start of a full rebuild for the Seahawks with a head coach that will turn 71 in September?

Do the Seahawks believe quarterbacks Drew Lock — reportedly part of the trade — or Jacob Eason have the chance to be the starter this fall?

Did Seattle fall in love with one of the quarterbacks at the combine and is hoping to land another Wilson-like home run in the draft?

Or will the Seahawks use the capital obtained in the Wilson deal to try and find another veteran quarterback available either in free agency or via trade?

Those answers will come beginning with the start of the new league year. None may be able to satisfy Seattle's fans stinging from the trade.

The news of Wilson's trade and Wagner's release evoked painful reminders for those fans of the past when some of the top players in their respective sports called Seattle home only to be dealt away.

Ken Griffey Jr. was seemingly in the prime of his Hall of Fame career and arguably the best player in baseball when he was traded by the Mariners to the Cincinnati Reds before the 2000 season. Gary Payton was a Seattle SuperSonics lifer and the face of the franchise when a spat with ownership led to his trade to Milwaukee in 2002. The Seahawks went down this road of saying goodbye to fan favorites in the previous years with the likes of Richard Sherman, Earl Thomas and others that were keys to that Super Bowl team.

And now it's Wilson and Wagner added to that list.

## Baker girls, boys open play at Class 4A state tournament

The Baker girls and boys basketball teams, competing in the state tournament in the same year for the first time since 1998, open tournament play Thursday, March 10, at Coos Bay.

The Baker girls (20-5), who won the last state tournament, played in 2019, will take on Corbett (21-3) in a quarterfinal game at 7 p.m. at Marshfield High School. If the Bulldogs win, they will play the winner of the Madras-Cascade game in a semifinal on Friday, March 11, at 8:15 p.m. at Marshfield. If the Bulldogs lose, they would play either Madras or Cascade on Friday at 10:45 a.m. at North Bend High School.

The Baker boys, 19-6 on the season, will take on top-seeded Junction City (22-3) Thursday at 2 p.m. at North Bend High School. If the Bulldogs win, they would play in a semifinal on Friday, March 11, at 1:30 p.m. at Marshfield High School against the winner of Thursday's quarterfinal between Philomath and Seaside. If Baker loses Thursday, it would play the loser of the Philomath-Seaside game on Friday at 9 a.m. at Marshfield High School.

The girls championship game is set for Saturday, March 12, at 8:30 p.m. at Marshfield. The boys title game will be Saturday at 5:45 p.m. at Marshfield.

All tournament games will be broadcast live on the NFHS network, nfhsnetwork.com., a paid subscription service. Score updates will be posted at www.bakercityherald.com and on the Baker City Herald Facebook page.

## No. 1 Gonzaga outlasts No. 17 Saint Mary's, wins WCC tourney

BY JOHN MARSHALL

AP Basketball Writer

LAS VEGAS — Chet Holmgren spent most of his night frustrated as he got banged around and shots clanged away. Drew Timme, except for a spurt early in the second half, found little room to pull off his variety of drop steps and up-and-unders.

Gonzaga still found a way to pick apart one of the nation's toughest defenses and win another West Coast Conference title.

These Zags are deep, dangerous and may be poised for another extended March run.

Andrew Nembhard scored 19 points, Rasir Bolton added 18 and top-ranked Gonzaga outlasted No. 17 Saint Mary's 82-69 Tuesday night to win its eighth WCC tournament title in nine years.

"Their offense is as good as any in the country," Saint

Mary's coach Randy Bennett said. "There's a lot of things you have to do right to have a chance and we did that for a while, but you have to do it for 40 minutes."

Gonzaga (26-3) spent a good portion of its 25th straight WCC title game trying to shake the gritty Gaels. The Zags had a hard time getting out in transition, had to work through multiple options to get decent looks and found passing lanes clogged with Gaels.

None of it slowed them down.

Gonzaga shot 58% and hit nine straight shots during a stretch in the second half to pull away after Saint Mary's had cut the lead to two. Nembhard and Bolton led the way, combining for 17 straight points to all but lock up a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament for the Zags.

"We had to dig very, very deep," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said.

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