

NFL PRESEASON CONTINUES

Smith, error-prone Seahawks struggle in 27-11 loss to Bears

BY TIM BOOTH

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Geno Smith's chance to gain an edge over Drew Lock for Seattle's starting quarterback job was hindered by his team's sloppy performance.

Smith and the Seahawks were overwhelmed in a 27-11 loss to the Chicago Bears on Thursday night, Aug. 18 in the second preseason game for both teams, which was mostly a dud from Seattle's standpoint.

"He did OK," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said of Smith. "We needed to come through. We needed to help him a little bit. We needed to make the plays around him, too."

Second-year Bears quarterback Justin Fields made a brief appearance and led a field-goal drive. Backup Trevor Siemian threw a touchdown pass, and Elijah Hicks recovered a muffed punt for a Chicago TD.

"I thought operation was good, his preparation was great. He handled the offense the way we wanted him to," first-year Chicago coach Matt Eberflus said of Fields. "Had a nice drive and scored the field goal. So I think it's progress."

The Seahawks had planned to start Lock but turned to Smith when Lock tested positive for COVID-19 on Tuesday. That meant another opportunity for Smith, who started last weekend at Pittsburgh, but his uninspired performance suggests Lock still has a chance to win the job.

That may depend on how quickly Lock can return from his illness and if he'll be ready to play by the preseason finale in Dallas next week. Carroll said Lock was still feeling "really sick."

"I talked to him this morning and it hit him pretty hard," Carroll said.

Smith finished 10 of 18 for 112 yards and was hampered



Seattle Seahawks quarterback Geno Smith drops back to pass during the second quarter against the Chicago Bears on Thursday, Aug. 18, 2022, at Lumen Field in Seattle.

Jennifer Buchanan/Seattle Times-TNS

by teammates' mistakes while playing the first half. His only drive where Seattle threatened to score ended when Jason Myers missed a 47-yard field goal attempt.

Smith was slated to play into the third quarter but banged his knee in the first half. He was icing the knee while Jacob Eason took all the snaps after halftime.

"We again just started a little slow, had some self-inflicted wounds. Some things that we can control that really set us back," Smith said. "And that's the reason for the pre-season is for us to get those things out. Obviously, there's a ton of room for improvement and a lot of things that we have to improve on very fast."

The Bears led 24-0 before Seattle finally got on the board on Darwin Thompson's 8-yard TD run with 2:08 left.

Penalties and dropped passes made the Seahawks' offense choppy and listless. Rookie first-round pick Charles Cross was flagged four times in the first half at left tackle, three of those for

false start. Bo Melton, Freddie Swain and Dareke Young had drops.

Exacerbating Seattle's offensive troubles was a right ankle injury suffered by starting left guard Damien Lewis early in the second quarter. Lewis was inadvertently rolled up by Bears defensive lineman Angelo Blackson.

Lewis was down for several minutes and eventually had an air splint put on his lower right leg before being loaded on a cart and taken off the field. But Carroll said X-rays were negative and Lewis has an ankle sprain. Still, it's a hit to Seattle's interior offensive line, which isn't the deepest part of the roster.

"We're very fortunate there. He was upbeat about that a little bit, maybe surprised by the results. We're thrilled," Carroll said.

Siemian threw a 1-yard TD pass to Jake Tonges and Hicks corralled Cade Johnson's muffed punt at the goal line late in the first half to give the Bears a 17-0 lead. Third-stringer Nathan Peterman led

a drive in the third quarter that ended with Darrynton Evans' 1-yard TD run.

FIELDS' DAY

Fields played one series in the first quarter. He was 5 of 7 for 39 yards and led the Bears to a 35-yard field goal by Cairo Santos.

"I feel like every time I step on the field I can get something out of it," Fields said.

INJURY CONCERNS

Chicago lost a couple of players to injuries. Linebacker Matt Adams suffered a shoulder injury in the first quarter. He's been playing in the spot normally occupied by Roquan Smith, who is in a contract dispute with the team. Backup running back Trestan Ebner suffered an ankle injury in the second quarter and didn't return.

UP NEXT

Bears: At Cleveland on Aug. 27 to end the preseason.

Seahawks: Seattle closes out the preseason on Aug. 26 at Dallas.

USC, UCLA exits could cost Pac-12 schools \$13 million

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The departures of Southern California and UCLA from the Pac-12 Conference could mean an estimated loss of around \$13 million per year in media rights for each of the remaining schools, according to an interim report issued by University of California Office of the President.

The report was released Wednesday, Aug. 17 during a Board of Regents meeting held at UCLA to address its move to the Big Ten Conference in 2024.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom demanded an explanation from UCLA about the move when he attended last month's regents meeting in San Francisco. UCLA and USC announced on June 30 that the schools would be leaving the Pac-12 in two years. USC is a private institution and not part of the UC system.

Newsom, an ex officio member of the Board of Regents, did not attend Wednesday's meeting.

The report says USC's exit

from the Pac-12 would mean an estimated loss of \$9.8 million, or nearly 30%, of the conference's media rights, for each of the remaining schools. UCLA's departure would not be quite as drastic, with estimates of 10% or \$3.25 million. It did not factor in losses in ticket sales.

In 1991, campus chancellors were delegated authority by the UC Office of the President to execute their own contracts, including intercollegiate athletic agreements. The Regents though retain the authority to review decisions impacting the UC system.

The report is proposing new guidelines to prevent campuses from making major decisions that could impact sister campuses.

One proposal would require the UC president to give advance notice of a major athletic department decision to the board chair and committee chair that has jurisdiction. They would then decide if it should go before the entire Board of Regents.

WNBA PLAYOFFS

Ionescu leads Liberty to 98-91 upset win

CHICAGO (AP) — Sabrina Ionescu had 22 points, seven rebounds and six assists, Natasha Howard also scored 22 points and the seventh-seeded New York Liberty beat the defending champion Chicago Sky 98-91 on Wednesday night, Aug. 17 in the opening game of the WNBA playoffs.

New York scored the final 13 points of the fourth quarter as Chicago missed 10 of its last 11 shots.

Betnijah Laney added 17 points and Stefanie Dolson scored 13 points for New York, which set a franchise

scoring record in the playoffs.

Kahleah Copper led the second-seeded Sky with 21 points. Allie Quigley scored 18 points, and Candace Parker had 17 points, 10 rebounds and five assists.

Game 2 of the best-of-three series is Saturday, Aug. 20 in Chicago.

ACES 79, MERCURY 63

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Kelsey Plum had 22 points, Chelsea Gray scored nine of her 17 points in the fourth quarter and top-seeded Las Vegas beat short-handed Phoenix on Wednesday, Aug. 17.



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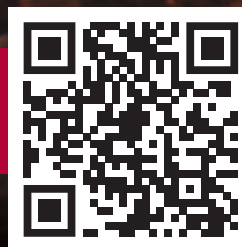
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