

An interview with:

JOE JUREVICIUS

Q. Joe, what does this run mean for Mike Holmgren and the City of Seattle?

JOE JUREVICIUS: I think it's great. There's been a lot of question about us not being able to win the big game. I think there's still questions people have about us, and we're hearing that on television. The most important thing is we know what we can do in this room, in this facility. We know we've got a talented football team. I think it's great.

Seattle has been looking for a team to win and have a chance of to go to the big dance. **Mike Holmgren** has been there before. He's taken a group of guys and given us an opportunity to get to the big dance.

Q. Do you think the Seahawks get respect nationally? Are you being overlooked?

JOE JUREVICIUS: I think that's for you guys to write about. We've kind of done pretty well this year by being overlooked.

We're just going to continue to play football. We realize that the biggest game of our life is a couple days away from us. If we're not prepared, **Carolina** can hand it to us.

Q. What has Coach Holmgren brought to you guys just because of his experience in the Super Bowl? Has that helped at all with these games lately?

JOE JUREVICIUS: I think it has. He knows what it's like to be there and to win the big game. A few guys on his team have been there also.

I think kind of his knowledge of what it's going to take, what we need to do, are going to hopefully pay dividends for us. But we realize that **Carolina** has been in the same position that we have, maybe a couple more times than us. They realize they've got an opportunity to get to the big dance.

It's going to be a great game. There's two coaches and two great teams that are going to be pitted against each other.

Q. Are you a little less nervous than your teammates because you have played in Championship games before?

JOE JUREVICIUS: You know, I don't know. There's always a little bit of nervousness, no matter if it's a championship game or if it's a regular-season game. This is a game that we love playing. Until you get the first hit out of the way, it never goes away, at least for me particularly.

I have been there before. I feel fortunate to be there now with three different teams. I think once that game gets here, it's just going to kind of sink in.

Q. How big is it that this game is at home, you're 9-0 at home this season? At the same time, talk about the loss to St. Louis in the playoffs last year?

JOE JUREVICIUS: I wasn't here for the loss to **St. Louis**. Obviously, when you have to spend the whole off-season knowing you were one catch away or one play away from making it to the next round of the playoffs, that's a big thing.

I really can't talk on last season. As for this year, being 9-0, playing at home, it's huge. The fact that we don't have to travel across the country to go play **Carolina**, which is a hostile crowd over there, they have to come to us. Whether or not it's an advantage we don't have to travel, they've got to come here, that's what you ultimately play for, is home field advantage throughout.

Q. Do you consider yourself a secret weapon? You have 10 touchdowns on the season.

JOE JUREVICIUS: I don't know if I'd go that far. Maybe I've been in the right place at the right time this year. I think we have done a good job of giving the ball around, our runningbacks to our tight ends to our receivers. I think that's enabled us to be successful.

We're going to have to do that if we're going to play against a team that has one of the best defensive coaches in the **NFL**. They have a bunch of players that know how to fly around and make plays. We have to be on all our Ps and Qs this weekend if we plan on getting any further.

Q. In your mind, does post-season success revolve around more than one big-play

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guy? Do you have to have more than that to advance?

JOE JUREVICIUS: Well, big plays help. If one guy can consistently give them, you're not going to take those away. You do need a consistent team play in order to go far in the playoffs, and to the **Super Bowl**.

I think every team that's in the final four right now has shown they have big play-makers as well as they play well as a football team. Think we're all deserving of being where we are.

Q. How satisfying has the season been for you personally after the last couple years?

JOE JUREVICIUS: The injuries have been frustrating for me for the simple fact that I wasn't able to play as much as I like. **Seattle** gave me an opportunity. I can't sit here and hide it. Obviously, it's been a very enjoyable season for me. I feel that I've gotten over the hump and I'm now able to help the football team and I'm grateful to the **Seattle Seahawks** organization for giving me an opportunity.

Q. Have you noticed a lot of new football fans in Seattle?

JOE JUREVICIUS: Yeah. I think that's why it's so important. Everybody has to start somewhere. You ultimately have your diehard **Seahawk** fans, then you have some people that are just kind of getting on board. I think you probably have that in every city.

Seattle hasn't been too successful with the playoffs and with football teams out here. Now we are. You have to take them any way you can. I think they're starting to build a fan base around here, and things are taking a turn for the better.

Q. How important do you think it was for Matt Hasselbeck to get that win he had last week, especially the way he kind of carried the team with Shaun Alexander out?

JOE JUREVICIUS: I think he did a great job. Ultimately, when you lose to the MVP of the **NFL**, that's going to create a little bit of a problem. **Matt** took charge in the huddle. I think everybody from our offensive line to our running backs, tight ends and receivers, we did a really good job of responding.

Matt orchestrated all of it. I think you have to tip your hat to a guy who played the biggest game in **Seattle's** football history and we were able to come out like we did.

Q. Do you see Carolina as the underdog team in this series?

JOE JUREVICIUS: I don't know. That's for you guys to choose. We just go out and play it.

Q. When a player takes a field before a home game, and the crowd is extremely loud, do you actually feel your body reacting to it?

JOE JUREVICIUS: You notice it. I think when you're down on the field, you hear that many people screaming their head off, that's what home field advantage is about. It is nice having your crowd behind you. I think it does disrupt the opposing team a little bit because it is hard to hear and there are points in game where you realize how loud that stadium is.

It's an advantage for us. We're going to need the crowd as well as we're going to need everybody on our roster in order to beat a tough **Carolina** team.

Q. You mentioned being grateful for the opportunity with the Seahawks. Do you sense when they brought you on board your big-game experience was something that was a big bonus for them trying to get this team to where it is now?

JOE JUREVICIUS: Well, I think that would be left up to **Tim Ruskell**, since **Tim** was a guy I was with in **Tampa**. He knew that I could play football and had the potential to help this football team out.

Throughout the season, all I have asked for is the opportunity. More times than not I grab the bull by the horns. Like I said, I'm very appreciative of the **Seahawks** giving me the opportunity. I just look forward to continuing trying to make plays and help this team get to their first **Super Bowl**.

Q. Have you noticed guys leaning on you for your experience?

JOE JUREVICIUS: You'll hear guys once in a while ask what it's like to be at the big game. "You played in two **NFC Championships**, two **Super Bowls**. Is it that much different?" You know, I'll hear it that way.

But it's not so much the game. I mean, the game of football is always going to be the game of football. It's just when you get this close to a **Super Bowl**, the game does mean that much more.

Q. Not a lot of guys can succeed in those big games. What is it about you that

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makes you so successful at stages like that?

JOE JUREVICIUS: Well, I just realize that you can't make big play after big play. Sometimes I'm going to get the ball, sometimes I won't. It's just about being prepared. You realize that during the game there's other guys that are going to get the ball. You've got to be patient and just keep doing your thing. If you're patient, good things will happen.

Q. How do you reflect on your years in Tampa? You did get the ring there. Are there any regrets?

JOE JUREVICIUS: No. I've actually -- I feel my years in **Tampa** were actually three of the best years I had, considering a year and a half of them were pretty much injury-plagued. It's nothing that I asked for. It's what happens when you run into **Mike Alstott**. (laughing)

But I do feel very grateful, particularly to the city, for the trials and tribulations that my wife went through and all the great players from **Keyshawn Johnson, Keenan McCardell, Derrick Brooks**, the **John Lynch**es of the world. I feel very grateful to be able to play on a team that was able to win a **Super Bowl**. It fulfilled a childhood dream of mine. Now I'm just on the other side of the country and have an opportunity to fulfill another childhood dream, which would be winning a second **Super Bowl** ring.

Q. How is your family doing?

JOE JUREVICIUS: Everybody is doing well. Thank you.

Q. Knowing what you went through and what your wife went through the last Super Bowl run, have you made it a focus this time to kind of enjoy this playoff run a little more?

JOE JUREVICIUS: Yeah. I mean, I think that we don't have -- we're not worrying all the time. But I do think my wife and I, if we're fortunate enough to get to the **Super Bowl** and play in **Detroit**, we're going to enjoy it. There's going to be a little bit of a different feeling, different atmosphere for us.

I wouldn't change anything that happened. I think it helped kind of mould me to be a better person, a better man, a better husband, a better football player. I'll just take what I've learned a couple years ago into this **NFC Championship** game and hope we have enough to get to the **Super Bowl**.

Q. Do players talk about it when you hear TV executives talking about maybe wanting different match-ups in games like this? Do players not even care?

JOE JUREVICIUS: Players don't care. I mean, we win a football game. You look at TV that night, at a jumbotron, you see that's who you're going to play next week. That's how it happens. I've never worried about -- I understand that sometimes that kind of stuff sells newspapers or gets people to watch TV. Ultimately, we're the ones that are playing on the grass on Sunday.

Q. The wealth of experience that Carolina has, is that a scary team when you consider what they can do on the offensive and defensive side of the football?

JOE JUREVICIUS: Absolutely. I think that's why they're playing in the **NFC Championship** game. That's why they've been to the **Super Bowl**. That's why they've been successful for the past couple years. We have our work cut out for us here.

They have big play-making ability on the offense with the running back, and with **Steve Smith**, (Jake) **Delhomme** being a great quarterback, That being obvious when you watch his games. On the defensive side of the ball, **John Fox** and everyone else, all the defensive coaching staff have those guys playing at an all-time high. We have our work cut out for us. We realize if we're not doing things the right way, this could be an ugly weekend.

Q. Can you describe Seattle to someone who has never been there?

JOE JUREVICIUS: Rainy, cloudy and they drink a lot of coffee.

Q. You played on some really good teams in Tampa, New York. Can you talk about the difference playing in Seattle, the way they're perceived nationally from other teams?

JOE JUREVICIUS: I don't think we get the respect that you do because I don't think people think of the West Coast as football. You've got some great college football teams out here, but as for the pros, I don't think you have what they always talk about on the East Coast. That's a little bit difficult because there's a lot of talent on this football team. Especially up here in the Northwest, we have a lot of talent on this football team. We've been doing great things all year, yet we still have doubters. That's frustrating. But on the other hand you realize, you know what, everybody who is

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saying we're not a legitimate football team, this and that, are being proved wrong. That's ultimately why you play this game. That's the competitive nature that comes out in 50 big guys on this team.

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