

Matt Hasselbeck
January 18, 2006

(On Shaun Alexander's practice...) "I really don't think anyone is overly concerned about it. Obviously the medical staff, they are the ones who are supposed to worry about it and I am sure they are. We as players, we are just going on. Business as usual. We have another game and it is not something we are thinking about."

(On the biggest challenge the Carolina defense will pose for them...) "I don't know. There is really not a weakness that I see right now. Their secondary is great. Ken Lucas is having a great year. I haven't watched them much on film all season but he has had a Pro Bowl year. I am actually shocked that he is not in the Pro Bowl this year. Their secondary is obviously very, very good. Their linebackers are fast, they are making plays. Then the defensive line is probably the strength of their team. Julius Peppers might be the best athlete in the game of football. You have a guy like that then the other guys are really good as well. I don't know that there is a weakness. Their scheme is fundamentally sound. It is going to take our very, very best effort to be successful."

(On being familiar with Ken Lucas and vice versa...) "I don't know. We have had to change all of our hand signals this week because of him and whether he remembers them or not, I don't know. It wasn't worth the risk so the coaches came in and we have changed all our signals. That is no big deal. They were kind of stale any way. They needed to be changed. We are good. I think he is going to have an advantage because he does know our offense really, really well. Either way, he has played great all year against teams he has known and teams he hasn't really known. It is unfortunate he is not on our team anymore because of the kind of player he is but that is the hand we have been dealt."

(On the people around the country giving Seattle more respect after winning without key players...) "When you start worrying about what people outside this building think, I think that doesn't help you as a football player. The times that I have been most successful are when I've really tried to please one person and that is my position coach. My position coach is on the same page with my offensive coordinator and my head coach. If you have 11 guys just buying in to everything that their position coach asked them to do, you are going to have a successful team I think. That is the approach I have tried to take."

(On how much different this week is...) "I would say aside from doing the press conference under the tent instead of the rain over there, it is about the same for me. It is a football team against a very, very good team and it is 11 on 11. Hopefully it is a little louder than it was last week. It was awesome last week. Set the bar a little higher, see if we can make it even better. I don't have much experience playing the championship games. I am just going to go out there and try to play this one like I did last one."

(On everything being more scrutinized...) "Again, I don't get too caught up in that. The officials probably have the toughest job of anybody on that field, players included. I can just worry about myself."

(On if he has talked with Joe Jurevicius this week with all the championship experience...) “I don’t know if we have talked to those guys as much as we see how they conduct themselves. Joe has just been going about his business like he has all year. He is going out and working hard. He is practicing hard. He is taking care of himself. It seems like he is getting a lot of rest and eating right. He is continuing to work out in the weight room. There are other guys that are in the same boat as him. They are kind of doing the same thing. You just continue to be professional.”

(On how much more confident he is because of the offensive line compared to two years ago...) “Our offensive line, I can’t say enough about how they played. We all talk about the left side but the middle and the right side has done a great job as well. Those guys on the right side especially, they are true offensive linemen. Under appreciated, over worked, and over looked. They have done a great job all year. All five of those guys.”

(On comparing his mental state to what it was during the Green Bay playoff game two years ago...) “I would just say that our team and myself included going into that Green Bay, I would say that in our locker room, we felt like we could probably win. Part of me just feels like we were just happy to be there back then. If we won, it would just be like an added bonus. I don’t think that is the case on this team. I think this team talks about it less and in a funny way I think we believe it more. Back then we talked about it more, believed it less. I like it better this way.”

(On if they have believed all season...) “I think so. The tough part is getting everybody to believe. There have been times this year where things are rough. When Bobby Ingram and Darrell Jackson went out, I know that we had to go to St. Louis that week. I don’t know that everyone really believed. The coaches kind of grabbed everybody and said, ‘hey, you better believe because we are going to do it.’ We got it done that week and haven’t really looked back.”

(On his playing style at Boston College...) “It is not who I was. I think Dan Henning was a phenomenal influence on me. He is a great coach. Great quarterbacks coach. When I got to college he wanted to change my mechanics as a thrower. That is tough. It is hard to do. It is like changing your golf swing. Your brain can’t figure out how to change. You have done it one way your whole life and I wasn’t really willing to change. Consequently I didn’t play. Coach Henning, Dan and I have had many conversations about why I wasn’t chosen as the starting quarterback at that point. One of the things he said to me when he informed me that the other kid was going to play was, ‘Hey, you are the kind of guy I would want to be the President of the United States and this other kid is the kind of guy that I would want to be the general.’ I was always just the peace-maker guy. I just wanted everyone to get along. I am guessing but I think he wanted me to step up the leadership a little bit and step up the aggressiveness and the fight and really listen and buy into some of the things. Bottom line is, when I said it, he kind of smiled at me like he was proud of me. Not that I got it right away but I definitely learned a lot from him and there is no way I would be in the NFL right now if I had never been coached by him.”