

## SPORTS

# Seahawks hold off Vikings, grab share of lead

Minnesota falls a game behind Green Bay

**SEATTLE, Dec 3, (AP):** By the time the playoffs arrive, the Seattle Seahawks are going to feel just fine in a close, tight game.

Even when they're comfortably ahead, the Seahawks have a way of making the final minutes more than a little unnerving.

"Close games are cool, aren't they? I like them," Seattle coach Pete Carroll joked. "Maybe the 17 points was too much. Maybe we shouldn't have been ahead by that much." Thanks to the combo of Rashaad Penny and Chris Carson, and one big strike from Russell Wilson, the Seahawks built a big second-half lead before holding off the Minnesota Vikings for a 37-30 win Monday night.

Penny scored one touchdown rushing and one receiving, and Wilson hit David Moore on a 60-yard touchdown pass as the Seahawks scored 24 straight points to take control before needing to hold on late as the Vikings tried to rally.

## FOOTBALL

Seattle (10-2) moved into a tie with San Francisco atop of the NFC West but holds the tiebreaker. The Seahawks have the inside track to the division title with four games left.

"Just couldn't be more excited to have that kind of win and put us at 10 wins, that's a nice spot for this time," Carroll said. "We kick it into the fourth quarter and now it's finish time." Minnesota (8-4) fell a game behind Green Bay in the NFC North and is only one game ahead of the Los Angeles Rams in the wild-card race. They lost star running back Dalvin Cook to a shoulder injury when he fumbled midway through the third quarter in what became a major turning point.

Cook said he believes he should be able to play next week and took responsibility for the fumble.

"Everybody acts like this is the end of the world, we lost one game tonight," Minnesota coach Mike Zimmer said. "We're 8-4 we have four games left, three division games. This isn't the end of the world, we still have a lot of good football left to play." Wilson wasn't great, but he came up with key plays as Seattle won its fifth straight. He had a forgettable first-half moment trying to bat down a deflected pass only to watch Anthony Harris intercept the ball and return it for a touchdown. Wilson was 21 of 31 for 240 yards.

The key was the running of Penny and Chris Carson. Seattle rushed for 218 yards, the most allowed by Minnesota this season. Carson had 102, including a 1-yard TD. Penny added 74. The Vikings were giving up just 94 yards per game rushing.

"Our running game has been a staple of our offense. That's our foundation and both of those guys are amazing backs. They're really coming on," Seattle offensive lineman Duane Brown said.

Minnesota quarterback Kirk Cousins was 22 of 38 for 276 yards but couldn't connect with Irv Smith Jr on fourth-and-3 at the Vikings 42 with 2:31 left. Jason Myers' 36-yard field goal with 21 seconds left provided the final margin for Seattle.

"I think we have a football team that can go on the road in a tough environment and get a win. I think this is an opportunity we missed. It's disappointing," Cousins said.

It was a wild second half featuring 40 combined points and four key turns-



Seattle Seahawks' Chris Carson (32) is brought down by Minnesota Vikings' Eric Wilson on a 26-yard carry during the second half of an NFL football game on Dec 2, in Seattle. (AP)



Green Bay Packers' Kenny Clark (97) celebrates after a tackle during the first half of an NFL football game against the New York Giants, Dec 1 in East Rutherford, N.J. (AP)

overs - three by Minnesota.

Seattle pulled even at 17 on Penny's 1-yard TD run. On Minnesota's first play of the next possession, Cook was stripped by Rasheem Green, and Bradley McDougald recovered. It was the first of two critical turnovers that led to 10 points for Seattle.

The Seahawks were held to a field goal following Cook's fumble but took a 27-17 lead on their next possession when Moore ran free through the Vikings secondary and Wilson hit him in stride. Minnesota cornerback Xavier Rhodes appeared to think he had safety help over the top, but no

one was there as Moore sprinted for his second TD catch of the season on the next-to-last play of the third quarter.

The first play of the fourth quarter was forgettable for the Vikings as well. Cousins' pass for Stefon Diggs was intercepted by Tre Flowers, who may have gotten away with pass interference, but deflected the pass and made a juggling interception at the Minnesota 25. Three plays later, Wilson found Penny on a screen pass and Seattle had a 17-point lead.

Minnesota's rally started with Seattle's own blown coverage as

## NFL Standings

WASHINGTON, Dec 3, (RTRS): Standings from the NFL on Monday.

American Football Conference						National Football Conference							
AFC East						NFC East							
W	L	T	PF	PA	PCT	W	L	T	PF	PA	PCT		
NE Pats	10	2	0	322	145	.833	Dallas	6	6	0	310	236	.500
Buffalo	9	3	0	257	188	.750	Philadelphia	5	7	0	274	284	.417
NY Jets	4	8	0	204	280	.333	Washington	3	9	0	173	290	.250
Miami	3	9	0	200	377	.250	NY Giants	2	10	0	230	339	.167
AFC North						NFC North							
W	L	T	PF	PA	PCT	W	L	T	PF	PA	PCT		
Baltimore	10	2	0	406	219	.833	GB Pacs	9	3	0	289	255	.750
Pittsburgh	7	5	0	236	225	.583	Vikings	8	4	0	319	242	.667
Cleveland	5	7	0	246	272	.417	Chicago	6	6	0	212	208	.500
Cincinnati	1	11	0	179	298	.083	Detroit	3	8	1	280	315	.292
AFC South						NFC South							
W	L	T	PF	PA	PCT	W	L	T	PF	PA	PCT		
Houston	8	4	0	293	271	.667	Saints	10	2	0	298	248	.833
Tennessee	7	5	0	276	234	.583	TB Bucs	5	7	0	340	346	.417
Indianapolis	6	6	0	261	257	.500	Carolina	5	7	0	280	320	.417
Jacksonville	4	8	0	220	292	.333	Atlanta	3	9	0	260	323	.250
AFC West						NFC West							
W	L	T	PF	PA	PCT	W	L	T	PF	PA	PCT		
KC Chiefs	8	4	0	348	265	.667	Seattle	10	2	0	329	293	.833
Oakland	6	6	0	237	324	.500	SF 49ers	10	2	0	349	183	.833
Denver	4	8	0	198	237	.333	LA Rams	7	5	0	283	250	.583
LA Chargers	4	8	0	244	241	.333	Arizona	3	8	1	255	351	.292

Cousins hit Laquan Treadwell for a 58-yard TD. Seattle seemed poised to add on, helped by a fake punt that Travis Homer took for 29 yards, but DK Metcalf fumbled and the Vikings recovered at their 28 with 9:34 left.

It took barely 2 minutes for Minnesota to pull within 34-30 as

Cousins connected with Kyle Rudolph for a 3-yard touchdown and another brilliant one-handed catch by the Vikings' tight end. But that was as close as Minnesota would get.

"We're in control and that's a great thing. We like having that," Wilson said.

Moore and Flowers were both among a group of Seattle players that missed time this week as a flu bug circulated through the locker room. Tyler Lockett was another who was slowed by illness and was held without a catch for the first time since the 2017 season.

## Chelsea striker Abraham faces late fitness test

# Mou aims to keep 100% start going on return to Old Trafford

ENFIELD, England, Dec 3, (RTRS): Jose Mourinho aims to continue his 100% start as Tottenham Hotspur manager when he returns to Old Trafford for the first time as a coach since being sacked by Manchester United and believes he will be shown respect on Wednesday.

The Portuguese won the Europa League and League Cup in two full seasons at United but was sacked midway through the last campaign with the club sixth in the Premier League.

He re-surfaced at Tottenham a fortnight ago after the club parted company with Mauricio Pochettino, and he has overseen three consecutive victories to take Spurs up to fifth.

Mourinho's United reign was a rocky one but as well as delivering two trophies he also finished runners-up to Manchester City in 2017-18 - a feat the two-time Champions League-winning coach claimed was one of his best achievements.

"Tomorrow I go back as a coach of the team that is going to try and beat Manchester United and that maybe gives a different perspective," the Portuguese said on Tuesday.

"Going back to Old Trafford is to go back to a place where I was happy. I can say that I have a great relation with the Manchester United supporters.

"I expect there is respect shown towards me, but I understand what they want is exactly the opposite of what I want - I want Tottenham to win. During the match of course I expect them to forget me and I expect them to support their team." Mourinho's return to Old Trafford has dominated the build-up to the game but he says his time at United is

now 'in my history book' adding: "At United I won and I learned. My time after I left was a good time for me." United are in ninth spot two points behind Tottenham, and pressure is mounting on Mourinho's successor Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, whose initial stunning impact is now long forgotten.

Mourinho would not be drawn on Solskjaer's situation.

"I am Tottenham. Again, if you want to speak about United as an opponent, let's speak about them as an opponent," he said.

"It is not for me to analyse United now. I analyse them as an opponent, how they play. How can we beat them? How can they beat us? For me that is the important thing." Tottenham will be without Ben Davies, Erik Lamela, Michel Vorm and Hugo Lloris for the match.

Manchester United will be focused on getting their campaign back on track when former boss Jose Mourinho arrives with Tottenham Hotspur on Wednesday night, said manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, adding that reports of his own managerial demise made him laugh.

British media reported Solskjaer had told his players he risked losing his job if United were to lose to Tottenham on Wednesday and Manchester City on Saturday.

"Sometimes you laugh when you read stories about what I've said. At least I know sources everyone is talking about aren't sources - they're made up, blatant lies," Solskjaer said.

"Three or four days isn't going to change a lot, but these games are a good chance for us to prove things." Mourinho, who United dismissed last

December and replaced with Solskjaer, returned to management with Tottenham last month and has guided them to two league victories ahead of his return to Old Trafford.

By contrast, United have struggled for consistency and sit ninth on 18 points. But Solskjaer backed his players to turn things around, saying they did not need extra motivation in the form of Mourinho.

"I don't think whoever the manager or the opposition team is will change their motivation," Solskjaer told reporters. "When you put that shirt on, it doesn't matter who you're going to play against, you've got to give it your all."

Chelsea striker Tammy Abraham faces a late fitness test before Wednesday's Premier League match

against Aston Villa as the 22-year-old recovers from a hip issue, manager Frank Lampard said on Tuesday.

England international Abraham, who is Chelsea's top scorer this season with 11 goals in all competitions, sustained the injury after falling awkwardly in his team's 2-2 Champions League draw at Valencia last week.

Although Abraham played down concerns over the injury, he missed Chelsea's 1-0 defeat by West Ham United last Saturday, with his replacement Olivier Giroud looking rusty.

"We're giving (Abraham) every opportunity to play tomorrow," Lampard told a news conference. "We will make the call tomorrow, he has a bit of pain."

"You can't isolate it to one player and game. He can't just be the reason

for losing the game (against West Ham)." Midfielder Ross Barkley (illness) will miss the match while defender Antonio Rudiger (groin)

**Man United vs Spurs beIN SPORTS 2HD, 11HD**

22:30 local

**Chelsea vs Villa beIN SPORTS 3HD**

22:30 local

**Leicester vs Watford beIN SPORTS 4HD**

22:30 local

**Southampton vs Norwich beIN SPORTS 5HD**

22:30 local

**Wolves vs West Ham beIN SPORTS 7HD**

22:30 local

**Liverpool vs Everton beIN SPORTS 1HD**

23:15 local

**Sheff Utd vs Newcastle beIN SPORTS 3HD**

22:30 local (Thursday)

**Arsenal vs Brighton beIN SPORTS 2HD, 11HD**

23:10 local (Thursday)

23:10 local (Thursday)

could return in the next 10 days.

Wednesday's match will mark the first time former Chelsea captain and current Villa assistant manager John Terry returns to Stamford Bridge as an opponent.

Former Derby County boss Lampard, who faced his former team mate in the Championship (second tier) last season, said he had great respect for Terry's work under Villa manager Dean Smith.

"It's more about John and the reception he'll quite rightly get from Chelsea fans - greatest captain, won everything," Lampard said.

## Ex-official 'banned' for failing to report abuse

ZURICH, Dec 3, (Agencies): Former Afghan football official Mohammad Hanif Sediqi Rustam has been banned from the sport for five years and fined 10,000 Swiss francs after being found guilty by FIFA's ethics committee of violations relating to the abuse of female players.

Sediqi is the third official to be sanctioned in the case which saw former Afghanistan Football Federation president Keramuudin Karim banned for life in June following complaints lodged by several female Afghan players.

FIFA said its ethics committee had established that Sediqi Rustam, who worked as an assistant to Karim, was "aware of such abuse and had the duty to report and prevent such abuse."

In failing to do so, Sediqi Rustam breached two articles of the FIFA code of ethics, relating to "duty to report" and "protection of physical and mental integrity", FIFA said.

The AFF's former general secretary Sayed Aghazada was given the same penalty as Sediqi Rustam in October, also for failing to prevent or report the abuse which allegedly took place between 2013 and 2018.

Three leaders of the extreme-right Forza Nuova political party were stopped by police Tuesday for putting up a racist banner aimed at Brescia striker Mario Balotelli.

The banner, which read "Mario you're right, you're an African," was posted on a fence outside Juventus' Allianz Stadium in Turin last month. The words "Mario" and "African" were written in red, with the other words in black.

The banner also featured a logo for the neo-fascist Forza Nuova party.

The three Forza Nuova members face accusations of spreading racial hatred and were banned from Italy's sports stadiums.



Manchester City's Raheem Sterling has a shot on goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Newcastle United and Manchester City at St James' Park, Newcastle, England, Nov 30, 2019. (AP)