

Coach Hall at your service

Bill Hall/Lewiston Tribune

The Seattle Seahawks are a massively competent football team but their supporters, it turns out, are fair-weather fans - naive Monday morning quarterbacks desperately in need of better brains.

Just because one play didn't work one moment during the Super Bowl doesn't mean that the play wasn't a potential masterstroke.

By now, most of the millions who watched this year's Super Bowl have tried Seattle coach Pete Carroll and found him and his crew guilty of choosing a final play that didn't work - this time.

I speak to you today, my fellow fans, from the perspective of someone who is also a Monday morning quarterback, but my slant on the lost game is probably correct if you stop to think about. My learned advice is to quit sobbing and stamping your little feet.

Mind you, it's possible that you whiners are correct and that I am wrong, but I am punishing your unnecessary roughness directed at Carroll, even if your opinion is correct. Have the good sense to realize that what happened at the Super Bowl this year was something like a doctor whose patient died but whose operating technique was sheer genius.

Coach Carroll and I (Coach Hall) know something most of the rest of you apparently don't, which wouldn't be difficult. I sat there the other day watching what turned out to be the final play and the loss of the game for Seattle. I have yet to hear from Carroll on precisely how he and his quarterback and offensive coordinator saw the situation, but I believe I understand their thinking that day.

Just before that final play, the Seahawks' gifted running back, Marshawn Lynch, was once again almost unstoppable, as he usually, but not always, is. He ran to within a yard of the goal line and the victory.

It was at that point that a huge percentage of Seattle's tens of thousands of Monday morning quarterbacks came to an almost universal conclusion: All we had to do was push Lynch's button.

Touchdown!

Or maybe not.

I sat there in front of our quivering flat screen awaiting the final play and remembered that I have seen Lynch stopped short of the goal line on several occasions (forgive my truth telling if it makes you cry). Lynch isn't 100 percent perfect.

Consequently, it would be just like that clever Pete Carroll to look out at that stadium crowd and realize how predictable running the ball across the goal line would be. What a surprise if, in that

situation, he would have let quarterback Russell Wilson run the ball for a touchdown - or maybe toss a short pass to a receiver. Hardly anybody would be expecting that.

I admit, like all those fans, how tempting it would have been to give the ball to Lynch and let him try not to be stopped short of the goal line as all great running backs fairly frequently are. Another run at the goal line by the great ball carrier might have been my recommendation, but I now understand the surprise that Carroll had in store for the New England defenders.

But it didn't work this time.

However, that's no cause to cry your little eyes out and curse Carroll, your own coach, the way some Seattle fans have in the past. I'll never forget a game at Seattle one year when the fans began booing their young quarterback (Rick Mirer) before the game even began. What kind of crazy coffee guzzlers would try to improve a player by booing him?

But yes, Carroll actually did preside over a hideous error. That doesn't mean that he isn't the best coach the lucky Seahawks have ever had and are ever likely to have.

This is a chronically optimistic and mostly brilliant coach who is not abusive to his young players like so many NFL coaches over the years. Carroll is a kind and understanding leader of his young charges - part genius, part cheerleader and part father figure.

The biggest error of the Seahawks is depending on their 12th man when the gratitude and loyalty chips are down.

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