



Eagles Lose More Than Just a Game; Crucial Offseason Coming

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After being defeated by Washington 38 to 24, the Philadelphia Eagles season was all but over, as they dropped to a 6-9 record. The Eagles blew their opportunity to attend the NFL playoffs. This is a team that hasn't won a playoff game since 2009...Seven years ago.

This season, the Birds have been fundamentally flawed, leaving Eagles fans with little to cheer about. Many are placing the blame on Chip Kelly completely revamping the roster and eliminating most of the talent from the team by trading away valuable players. Along with majority of Eagles fans pointing a finger at Kelly, Kelly himself even admitted during the postgame presser Saturday night that he deserves 100% of the blame for the year's struggles.

Fans are pushing for the removal of Kelly after only three seasons into his coaching reign and one year after becoming General Manager. It would be irresponsible to jump the gun and not give Kelly one more year to prove himself to be a suitable head coach. After all, the guy did guide the team to back-to-back 10-6 seasons.

If we want to see any change for this team, Jeff Lurie needs to step in and stop allowing Kelly to make all the calls and hire a new General Manager to revive this roster. Giving Kelly final say on personnel decisions is causing more damage to the team than it is good, but relinquishing that kind of power is something Chip Kelly most likely will not give up so quickly. Keep in mind, Kelly had full say over personnel during his time as an elite college football coach.

If the battle between Kelly and Lurie goes south, the Eagles should compromise by hiring a veteran personnel executive to lead Kelly in the right direction. Continuing down the same path he walked down last year will only lead Philly to their eighth consecutive year without a playoff win.

Along with the Chip Kelly controversy is the Sam Bradford argument. Does Chip want him back next season? Though Bradford may have shown improvement throughout the season, it wasn't nearly enough to give the team a fighting chance to make the playoffs and he definitely didn't pose a serious threat to any playoff team had the Eagles miraculously beat Washington this past week.

Bradford feels that he has grown in Philadelphia's scheme and this past Saturday, he went 37 of 56 for 380 yards and one touchdown. A problem from Jordan Matthews and other members of the receiving nucleus in Philly reared its ugly head Saturday night. Yet again, dropped passes from Bradford's receivers marred his statistical output.

With all the curiosity on whether or not Bradford will return to Philadelphia next season, we've heard him state on multiple occasions that he clearly wants the opportunity. "I'd like to be back here, but that's not my choice," Bradford stated. "Obviously, we are not at the stage where we have been talking about that, but if it does present itself and I do have the opportunity, this is where I want to be." Kelly has also spoken on the matter, saying, "We wouldn't have traded for him if we thought he was going to be here for a year." Kelly has earned the opportunity to continue building Bradford's skills if Philadelphia begins contract negotiations and blocks other teams from picking him up in free agency.

Overall, the Eagles have had a rough season starting with their 26-24 loss against Atlanta up to their recent loss against the Redskins, which eliminated them from playoff contention. Philadelphia was penalized for false starts three times, an illegal shift/formation, as well as a bevy of other penalties. I specifically highlighted these two, because as mentioned previously, the blame for the Eagles this season has been on Chip Kelly and Sam Bradford and they are primarily to blame for these penalty calls.

Adding onto the penalties, the Eagles had trouble catching passes leaving them with a drops percentage of 6.0, the highest out of all the NFL teams. With 29 drops throughout their entire season, the Eagles need to pay more attention to detail. Philadelphia's rookie receiver, Nelson Agholor made one of the most crucial mistakes in Saturday's game by dropping a touchdown pass that hit him in the hands and could have possibly led the Eagles to the lead they needed. Wide receiver Riley Cooper also contributed to this frustration by dropping a 37 yard attempt. To make things worse, Bradford was not very precise and was missing the aim on some of his passes. One such pass resulted in DeMarco Murray's fumble, which was returned 18 yards for a touchdown. Bradford was also not very good under pressure.

With a total of 56 throws this game resulting in 380 passing yards, it is apparent that the latter numerical value could have been increased if it weren't for all of the dropped passes and for him missing the mark on his throws.

Also of note: Left tackle Jason Peters, suffering from an ongoing back injury for much of the season along with an elbow injury, didn't help matters when he pulled himself from the game. His reasoning?

"I didn't want the risk of getting hurt for a team that is not going to the playoffs."

– Jason Peters

Despite all the frustration Eagles players have been facing due to their crippling mistakes, there have been some positives. For example, they are currently the only team in the NFL with two running backs with at least five rushing touchdowns. Ryan Matthews scored his sixth TD rushing and overall seventh, while Murray scored his overall sixth. This run attack is something they can hope to build on as they approach next season and try to find fixes for an offense that looked tattered all year long.

With the proper changes, there is still hope for the Eagles in the seasons to come, but their 2015 run is over and it's time for Chip Kelly to make some crucial decisions or step down and allow someone else to.

Written by Vicky Palacio