Seattle Seahawks Embrace Digital Future With Tablet-based Playbooks

[1]For years, professional football players have been forced to lug around hefty playbooks. But the three-ring binders — stuffed with dozens of offensive plays and defensive schemes — are going the way of leather football helmets.

The Seattle Seahawks are now converting plays to PDFs and uploading to tablets, with the players using the devices not only to study plays but also to watch video highlights of games and practices.

Seattle Seahawks video director Brad Campbell notes in this report on Seahawks.com [2] that coaches previously spent hours stuffing notebooks with plays, a task now replaced by the new technology.

OK, so, here's the key question: What tablets are the Seahawks, owned by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, using? Would Allen stray from a non-Windows tablet?\

[3]*Tony Ventrella with a tablet and old playbook.*

In the video, it is a bit hard for me to determine. No brand names are mentioned, and no logos are shown. In most of the shots, the tablets are in leather cases, so it makes it difficult to determine. (They don't look like iPads to me, but maybe some tablet geek out there can piece together the mystery from the video clips [2]).

Update: Readers are pointing to 1:27 of the video, noting that the power adapters on the tablets certainly look like the ones used on iPads.

Whatever they're using, the Seahawks players and coaches appear to have embraced their new digital lifestyle.

"It is less paper, killing less trees," notes Seahawks strong safety Kam Chancellor. "It is very easy to get on and just flick the pages with your hands." But not everyone is convinced. In addition to using his tablet, Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson, who describes himself as "kind of old school," said he also takes notes on a notepad.

Coach Pete Carroll said he's a fan.

"Our ability to adjust and update stuff on a daily basis is fantastic, the graphics are so good," he said. "What is going on in technology, it is good to get out of those books, and get something that these kids can make sense of and all use."

Tony Ventrella of Seahawks.com notes that about half of the teams in the NFL now use tablets for playbooks. OK, now for the key question: What happens when someone loses their tablet?

Ventrella said that Seahawks' staff can easily wipe those lost or stolen devices once they are reported missing.

Good thing. We don't want our Hawks losing any games over some cybercrime. That's not the Seattle way.

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