



PLAYBOOK

+

WELCOME TO

OUR NEW HOME

INAUGURAL TRAINING CAMP
IN EAGAN, MINNESOTA

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2645 Vikings Circle | Eagan

TrainingHAUS.com



DEAR VIKINGS FANS:

Welcome to the 2018 Verizon Vikings Training Camp, the first to be hosted at the team's new practice facility and headquarters – Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center.

Covering 33 acres and standing twice the size of its Winter Park predecessor, TCO Performance Center is designed to provide our players and coaches with the best environment to succeed. For the first time in decades, the Vikings front-office staff is consolidated under one roof, improving continuity, efficiency and collaboration in a technologically advanced environment.

We also built this complex with a strong community focus. With the brand-new Vikings Museum and Vikings Locker Room Store, our goal is to make this a fan and family friendly Vikings destination. The partnership with TCO led to a medical office building and sports medicine center open to the public, and we are further strengthening the connection to Eagan and the surrounding communities through plans to host multiple youth and high school sporting events inside the 6,500-seat TCO Stadium. And, of course, our vision of bringing nearly 90,000 fans to Eagan throughout Training Camp is incredibly exciting.

We firmly believe the proximity to Minneapolis-St. Paul, as well as the synergy created through the increased plaza space, the team store and museum, and the new fan activations, will bring an elevated energy to Vikings Training Camp. Members of our organization have spent significant time and effort to ensure a best-in-class fan experience, and we sincerely hope you and your family will create many new memories in the coming years in Eagan.

On behalf of the Wilf family and the entire organization, welcome to our new home and thank you for your continued support of the Minnesota Vikings.

SKOL VIKINGS!

Mark Wilf *Eric Wilf*

CONTENTS

2018 TRAINING CAMP

- 3 Training Camp Events
- 7 Areas of Interest
- 11 CenturyLink Autograph Zone & Training Camp FAQ
- 12 Eagan Map & Attractions
- 18 2018 Vikings Headshots
- 48 Viktor the Viking

FEATURES

- 22 Comforts of Home
- 27 Offseason Additions
- 28 State of the Vikings
- 33 Vikings Rookie Roundup
- 34 2018 Draft Class:
18 Words or Fewer
- 36 Vikings Museum:
5 Must-See Things
- 40 Letters to Bud
- 45 Randy Moss: 2018 Hall
of Fame
- 46 Dennis Green: 2018 Ring
of Honor

EDITOR: Craig Peters

WRITERS: Craig Peters, Eric Smith,
Lindsey Young and Kabrione Coleman

COPY EDITOR: Lindsey Young

ART DIRECTION & DESIGN:
Alicia Dreyer, Taylar Sievert and
Elizabeth Bazany

PHOTOGRAPHY: Andy Kenutis and
Travis Ellison

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info@gamedaysportsmarketing.com

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES:
advertising@vikings.nfl.net

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NIGHT PRACTICE | SATURDAY, AUG. 4

Saturday, Aug. 4 is the annual night practice, held for the first time in TCO Stadium. Join us for performances by the SKOL Line, MVC and a team introduction following practice! The night practice will be capped off with a thrilling fireworks show.



NIGHT PRACTICE
7 p.m.



TEAM INTROS
9:45 p.m.



FIREWORKS
10 p.m.



JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS PRACTICES

DATE: Wednesday, Aug. 15 and Thursday, Aug. 16
TIME: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

The Vikings will host the Jacksonville Jaguars for two joint practices on Aug. 15 and 16. Practices will take place on the Land O'Lakes, Inc. practice fields on both days.

FREE FAN EVENTS

VIKINGS WOMEN'S DAY

DATE: Tuesday, Aug. 14
TIME: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Vikings Women will be partnering with local non-profit MATTER to connect and make a local impact together. Stop by the packing station located on the lower plaza to pack a MATTER box or snack pack and help us bring an end to hunger in our community! More information about Vikings Women is available at www.vikings.com/vikings-women.



VIKINGS KIDS CLUB KICKOFF

DATE: Monday, Aug. 6
TIME: 2 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Club Cambria

Join Viktor and Vikings Cheerleaders for an afternoon of food, fun and football. Visit vikings.com/kidsclub or stop by the Kids Club Booth located on the upper plaza for details. *Space is very limited for this event.





PLAY 60 YOUTH TRAINING CAMPS

DATE: Saturday, July 28; Friday, Aug. 3; Thursday, Aug. 9

TIME: 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.

LOCATION: TCO Stadium

Join the Minnesota Vikings for one of three Youth Football Clinics during Training Camp at Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center. Learn the fundamentals of football on the field of TCO Stadium from Minnesota high school football players and Vikings staff. Registration is based on a first-come, first-served basis and will be limited to the first 200 kids. Visit the U.S. Bank Kids Zone on the day of the event to register. If there is inclement weather, the clinics will be canceled.



MOVIE NIGHT

DATE: Friday, Aug. 10

TIME: 8:30 p.m. - 10 p.m.

The Minnesota Vikings are hosting a free screening of *Moana* in TCO Stadium for Vikings Kids Club and Vikings Explorers Members. Visit the U.S. Bank Kids Zone to register your child for one of these exclusive clubs and to gain access to the movie night.

YOUTH FOOTBALL TEAM OF THE DAY

DATE: July 29, July 30, July 31, Aug. 2, Aug. 3, Aug. 7, Aug. 8, Aug. 9, Aug. 13, Aug. 14

TIME: 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Join the Minnesota Vikings to watch local youth football teams scrimmage in TCO Stadium after practice. Why get caught in traffic, when you can watch potential future Vikings in action? For more information on the teams, visit the U.S. Bank Kids Zone.

PRACTICE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25 -

THURSDAY, JULY 26

ROOKIE PRACTICES

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. | Walk-thru

2:45 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Practice

FRIDAY, JULY 27

ROOKIE PRACTICE

9:05 a.m. - 10:50 a.m. | Practice

SATURDAY, JULY 28 -

TUESDAY, JULY 31

FULL-TEAM PRACTICES

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. | Walk-thru

2:45 p.m. - 5:10 p.m. | Practice

THURSDAY, AUG. 2 -

FRIDAY, AUG. 3

FULL-TEAM PRACTICES

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. | Walk-thru

2:45 p.m. - 5:10 p.m. | Practice

SATURDAY, AUG. 4

FULL-TEAM PRACTICE

(NIGHT PRACTICE)

7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. | Practice

MONDAY, AUG. 6 -

THURSDAY, AUG. 9

FULL-TEAM PRACTICES

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. | Walk-thru

2:45 p.m. - 5:10 p.m. | Practice

SATURDAY, AUG. 11

Preseason game at Denver

MONDAY, AUG. 13 -

TUESDAY, AUG. 14

FULL-TEAM PRACTICES

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. | Walk-thru

2:45 p.m. - 5:10 p.m. | Practice

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 15 -

THURSDAY, AUG. 16

PRACTICES WITH JAGUARS

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. | Walk-thru

2:45 p.m. - 5:10 p.m. | Practice

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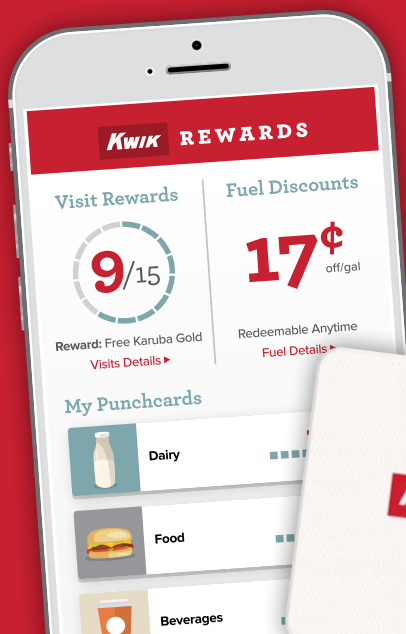
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2018 TRAINING CAMP

AREAS OF INTEREST

VIKINGS LOCKER ROOM STORE

Get your new Vikings jersey or apparel, as well as many other souvenirs, at the Vikings Locker Room Store!

The newly opened Vikings Locker Room Store features tons of Vikings merchandise, including jerseys, T-shirts, hats and many items that can be used in the CenturyLink Autograph Zone. Stop by to pick something up for that avid Vikings fan in your family and for yourself!



U.S. BANK KIDS ZONE

Stop by the Kids Zone, presented by U.S. Bank, and put your football skills to the test!

The U.S. Bank Kids Zone will be held on the TCO stadium field each open day of training camp practices.



ANDERSEN WINDOWS

Stop by Andersen Windows and Doors to create a commemorative Training Camp memento with their penny press! Andersen Windows and Doors will be on site Aug. 6-9.



EAGAN CVB

Stop by the Eagan CVB booth to learn about the community surrounding the new TCO Performance Center. Spin the wheel to win great prizes from bars, restaurants and attractions around the Eagan area.



XCEL ENERGY

Check out the Xcel Energy tiny house and learn how to become more energy efficient in your home. Use your Vikings Rewards points for a chance to win an autographed football! Xcel Energy will be on site Aug. 2-4 and Aug. 6-7.



SLEEP NUMBER LOUNGE

Sleep Number will be upgrading two fans to watch practice from a Sleep Number bed! Enter through Vikings Rewards for a chance to win this experience. Sleep Number will be on site on Aug. 13-16.





TCO “SHOW YOUR STANCE”

Move your body like a pro and match the stance of your favorite Vikings personalities. Think you can achieve a 100-percent accuracy score? Prizes and giveaways for everyone who plays! TCO will be on site July 30-31 and Aug. 2-4 and Aug. 13 - 14.



TRAINING HAUS VERTICAL JUMP CHALLENGE

Step up your game and test your vertical jump against the best of the best. Think you can jump higher than the average NFL player? Prizes and giveaways for everyone who takes the leap! Training HAUS will be on the plaza July 29, Aug. 8-9 and Aug. 16.

TRAINING HAUS TOURS

Welcome to the future of sports performance training, where iron meets ice and sweat meets science. Tours are first-come, first-serve at noon and 1:30 p.m. daily. Join us and receive five free fitness classes.



FAN MOSAIC

Visit the Fan Mosaic to have your picture added to a piece of Vikings history. Fan photos will be combined over the course of Verizon Vikings Training Camp to reveal an image that will be displayed in the Vikings Museum.

VIKINGS MUSEUM

The Vikings Museum is a place for Vikings fans and Legends alike to experience the comprehensive history of the Minnesota Vikings and football in Minnesota. With a 360-degree video theater, multiple interactive exhibits and hundreds of historical artifacts, fans can learn the fascinating stories and insider details of the franchise's first 50-plus years in fun and unique ways.

Fans who have tickets for the Verizon Vikings Training Camp can purchase tickets to the Vikings Museum for the same day, based on availability. Learn more at vikings.com/museum.

FIRST AID

If you require any medical assistance while at Verizon Vikings Training Camp, please go to the Ambulance / First Aid Station located on the lower plaza near the camp entrance or on the TCO Stadium concourse near Section 106.

GUEST SERVICES

Have questions about camp? Stop by the Guest Services window located in the TCO Stadium ticket office. Verizon Vikings Training Camp representatives will be available to assist fans.

VIKINGS REWARDS

Join Vikings Rewards to earn points for activities you already do as a Vikings fan. Redeem your points for unforgettable experiences and great prizes. Stop by the Vikings Rewards Gazebo to learn more!



KIDS CLUB

Visit the Kids Club kiosk outside the entrance to the practice fields to sign up today!

Membership includes a Kids Club kit as well as access to great events and contests throughout the year.

You can also be eligible to meet players each day!



2ND
CHANCE

MAKE YOUR NEXT PLAY

AT MNLOTTERY.COM



MUST BE 18+

2ND CHANCE TO WIN SEASON TICKETS!

Stop at your nearest Lottery retailer
for your chance to win up to \$100,000.

A Minnesota Vikings player in a purple uniform and helmet is shown in action, catching a football with his right hand. The player has tattoos on his right arm and is wearing a white glove on his left hand. The background features diagonal white and grey stripes. The text "JOIN THE WAITLIST" is overlaid on the image, with "JOIN THE" in purple and "WAITLIST" in white. At the bottom, a purple banner contains the URL "VIKINGS.COM / WAITLIST" in white.

JOIN THE

WAITLIST

VIKINGS.COM / WAITLIST



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHEN ARE THE JOINT PRACTICES WITH THE JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS?

Wednesday, Aug. 15 and Thursday, Aug. 16

CAN I LEAVE AND COME BACK?

Re-entry is allowed due to tickets being valid for a full day during training camp. You must have digital tickets scanned out if you plan to re-enter Training Camp that day.

WHAT HAPPENS IF PRACTICE IS CANCELED DUE TO WEATHER?

The Vikings will refund any reserved seats and parking passes purchased on days when practice is canceled or moved inside due to weather concerns.* General admission tickets unfortunately cannot be replaced for a different day.

**Refunds will only be issued if practice is canceled prior to or within an hour of starting.*

WILL FOOD AND BEVERAGE ITEMS BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE?

Yes, food and beverages are available for purchase from concession stands and a variety of food trucks.

WILL I HAVE ACCESS TO PLAYERS BETWEEN PRACTICES?

The only opportunity to collect autographs will be during the autograph sessions.

ARE WHEELCHAIRS AVAILABLE?

Yes, see any guest services representative or visit the Guest Services booth to get a wheelchair.

WHERE ARE THE ATM, MAMAVA LACTATION SUITE AND LOST & FOUND LOCATED?

ATM: Lobby of the Vikings Locker Room Team Store

Mamava Lactation Suite: West shared lobby of the SMC building (between the Training Haus and Museum)

Lost and Found: In the Guest Services booth (Ticket Office on south main concourse of TCO Stadium)

FOR ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, CONTACT ANY GUEST SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE OR THE GUEST SERVICES BOOTH AT 952-918-8420.

CenturyLink® AUTOGRAPH ZONE

LOCATION: CenturyLink Autograph Zone is located on the west concourse of TCO Stadium.

TIME: Autograph sessions follow the morning walk-thru. Autograph lines will open when gates to practice open at 9 a.m. Sessions will be scheduled to last 25 minutes.

DATE	PLAYERS
SUN, 7/29	DEFENSIVE TACKLES
MON, 7/30	TIGHT ENDS
TUE, 7/31	RUNNING BACKS
THU, 8/2	OFFENSIVE LINE
FRI, 8/3	DEFENSIVE ENDS
MON, 8/6	CORNERBACKS
TUE, 8/7	QUARTERBACKS
WED, 8/8	WIDE RECEIVERS
THU, 8/9	LINEBACKERS
MON, 8/13	SAFETIES
TUE, 8/14	SPECIALISTS

PROCEDURES: Proceed to the entrance of the CenturyLink Autograph Zone at the main entrance to TCO Stadium and the Land O'Lakes, Inc. Practice Fields. Please proceed in an orderly fashion to one of the open lines for that day's session. Players will be brought to the CenturyLink Autograph Zone once their portion of the morning walk-thru has completed. The session will last for 25 minutes, and the clock will start once the player sits down. **Only one (1) item per person will be allowed for autographs.** No personal photos are allowed. Fans are welcome to proceed to the back of the line for another trip through the CenturyLink Autograph Zone if time allows.

**Autographs are not guaranteed, and each session is subject to change without notice.*



MAP KEY

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|----------------|
| | CONCESSIONS | | TEAM STORE |
| | MILLER LITE BAR | | GUEST SERVICES |
| | RESTROOMS | | FIRST AID |
| | MAMAVA LACTATION SUITE | | ATM |

POINTS OF INTEREST

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 U.S. BANK KID ZONE | 4 EAGAN CVB | 7 CENTURYLINK AUTOGRAPH ZONE |
| 2 FAN MOSAIC | 5 VIKINGS REWARDS | 8 VIKINGS KIDS CLUB |
| 3 PEPSI COOL ZONE | 6 KFAN BOOTH | |



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1335 Town Centre Drive.....651-686-7022

BALD MAN BREWING COMPANY

2020 Silver Bell Road.....651-600-3164

BAY LEAF INDIAN CUISINE

1260 Town Centre Drive.....651-688-8686

BONFIRE WOOD FIRE COOKING

1555 Cliff Road.....651-452-0200

BUFFALO WILD WINGS

1280 Promenade Place.....651-414-6200

BURGERS AND BOTTLES

1278 Lone Oak Road.....651-340-7175

CAFÉ ZUPAS

3340 Central Park Village Drive.....763-412-1514

CARBONE'S PIZZERIA

1665 Yankee Doodle Road.....651-452-6000

CASPER'S CHEROKEE OF EAGAN

4625 Nicols Road.....651-454-6744

CHINA GOURMET

1095 Diffley Road.....651-686-8886

CIELITO LINDO MEXICAN RESTAURANT

1981 Silver Bell Road.....651-688-0811

CLASSIC SAIGON RESTAURANT

1272 Town Centre Drive.....651-675-0564

COOPER'S

4185 S Robert Trail.....651-452-3061

CRYSTAL JADE CHINESE RESTAURANT

1965 Cliff Lake Road.....651-905-7777

DOOLITTLES WOODFIRE GRILL

2140 Cliff Road.....651-452-6627

EL LORO

1428 Yankee Doodle Road.....651-405-8244

EL PARIAN MEXICAN RESTAURANT

1960 Cliff Lake Road #117.....651-454-3234

FARMER'S GRANDSON EATERY

1286 Lone Oak Road.....651-452-0476

FIESTA CANCUN GRILL & BAR

4250 Lexington Ave S.....651-797-4135

FITZ'S BAR & GRILL

3883 Cedar Grove Parkway.....651-452-7520

GOLDEN STAR RESTAURANT

1565 Cliff Road #3.....651-683-1185

GRANITE CITY FOOD & BREWERY

3330 Pilot Knob Road.....651-452-4600

GREEN MILL

1940 Rahnclyff Court.....651-686-7000

HIKO SUSHI

1466 Yankee Doodle Road.....651-452-6888

HO TING RESTAURANT

1380 Duckwood Drive #4.....651-686-2911

HOBAN KOREAN RESTAURANT

1989 Silver Bell Road.....651-688-3447

HOULIHAN'S

1294 Promenade Place.....651-452-1001

Hovie's GRILL

1450 Yankee Doodle Road.....651-452-2753

HY-VEE MARKET GRILLE

1500 Central Park Village Dr.....651-405-3672

ITALIAN PIE SHOPPE

1438 Yankee Doodle Road.....651-452-4525

JAKE'S CITY GRILLE

1288 Promenade Place.....651-287-8784

JENSEN'S FOOD AND COCKTAILS

3840 Rahn Road.....651-688-7969

JUNIOR'S GRILL

1340 Duckwood Drive.....651-686-5100

KYOTO SUSHI AND HIBACHI

1250 Town Centre Drive.....651-994-8880

LA FONDA DE LOS LOBOS

3665 Sibley Mem. HWY.....651-452-0334

LIBERTY GYROS AND KABOBS

1965 Cliff Lake Road.....651-340-1515

LONE OAK GRILL

3010 Eagandale Place.....651-789-2081

NAF NAF GRILL

3340 Central Park Village Drive.....651-347-1119

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1278 Town Centre Drive #195.....651-797-3142

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1282a Town Centre Drive.....651-330-8099

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3380 Central Park Village Drive.....651-340-4166

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3345 Central Park Village Drive #130.....651-207-8836

R TACO

3345 Central Park Village Drive.....651-756-1786

RACK SHACK BBQ

2141 Cliff Road.....651-202-3604

SOTAROL

2000 Rahnclyff Court.....651-493-2167

STARKS BAR & GRILL

3125 Dodd Road.....651-454-8251

TERESA'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT

1008 Diffley Road.....651-440-9147

THE MASON JAR

1565 Cliff Road #1.....651-340-7809

THE VOLSTEAD HOUSE

1278 Lone Oak Road.....651-340-7175

THE YANKEE TAVERN

3385 Sibley Mem. HWY.....651-756-8748

TRAIL STOP TAVERN

525 Diffley Road.....651-493-3035

UNION 32 CRAFT HOUSE

2864 Highway 55.....952-807-9777

ZE'S TOWN CENTRE DINER

1220 Diffley Road.....651-454-9412

ZZQ SMOKEHOUSE

3390 Coachman Road.....651-452-9900

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DAYS INN BY WYNDHAM

4510 Erin Drive
651-681-1770

EXTENDED STAY AMERICA NORTH

3015 Denmark Avenue
651-905-1778

EXTENDED STAY AMERICA SOUTH

3384 Norwest Court
651-681-9991

HILTON GARDEN INN

1975 Rahnclyff Court
651-686-4605

HOLIDAY INN

2700 Pilot Knob Road
651-454-3434

HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS

3434 Washington Drive
651-452-3400

MICROTEL INN & SUITES BY WYNDHAM

3000 Denmark Avenue
651-405-0988

QUALITY INN & SUITES

1950 Rahnclyff Court
651-681-9266

SONESTA ES SUITES

3040 Eagandale Place
651-688-0363

SPRINGHILL SUITES BY MARRIOTT

3635 Crestridge Drive
651-686-0600

STAYBRIDGE SUITES

4675 Rahnclyff Road
651-994-7810

TOWNEPLACE SUITES BY MARRIOTT

3615 Crestridge Drive
651-994-4600

ENTERTAINMENT

CAPONI ART PARK

1220 Diffley Road
651-454-9412

CASCADE BAY WATERPARK

3830 Pilot Knob Road
651-675-5577

GOOD TIMES PARK

3265 Northwood Circle
651-454-5736

LEBANON HILLS REGIONAL PARK

860 Cliff Road
651-554-6530

ROCKIN' JUMP

2015 Silver Bell Road
651-419-9020

TWIN CITIES PREMIUM OUTLETS

3965 Eagan Outlets Parkway
612-444-8850

GENERAL INFO

CITY OF EAGAN

cityofeagan.com
651-675-5000

EAGAN CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

eaganmn.com
651-675-5546



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OR SHOP ONLINE AT
VIKINGSLOCKERROOM.COM





1 Kyle Slotter QB



2 Kai Forbath K



3 Trevor Siemian QB



4 Ryan Quigley P



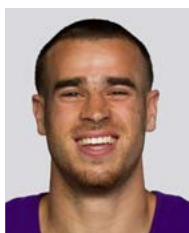
6 Peter Pujals QB



7 Daniel Carlson K



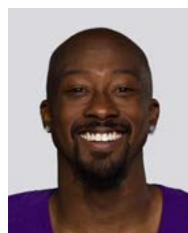
8 Kirk Cousins QB



9 Jake Wiencek WR



11 Laquon Treadwell WR



12 Tavarres King WR



13 Stacy Coley WR



14 Stefon Diggs WR



15 Brandon Zylstra WR



16 Cayleb Jones WR



17 Kendall Wright WR



18 Korey Robertson WR



19 Adam Thielen WR



20 Mackensie Alexander CB



21 Mike Hughes CB



22 Harrison Smith S



23 Terence Newman CB



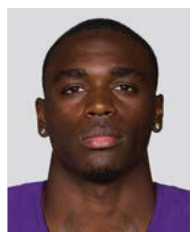
24 Horace Richardson CB



25 Latavius Murray RB



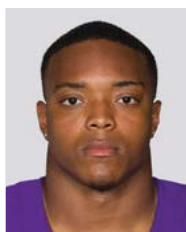
26 Trae Waynes CB



27 Jayron Kearse S



29 Xavier Rhodes CB



30 C.J. Ham FB



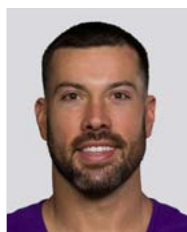
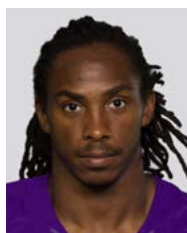
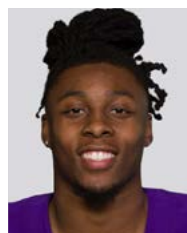
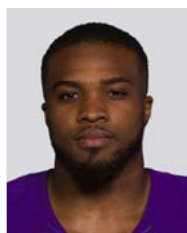
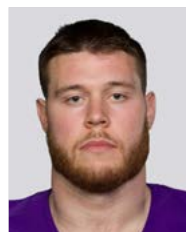
31 Mack Brown RB



32 Roc Thomas RB



33 Dalvin Cook RB

**34** Andrew Sendejo S**35** Marcus Sherels CB**36** Craig James CB**37** Holton Hill CB**38** Tray Matthews S**39** Jack Tocho S**40** Kentrell Brothers LB**41** Anthony Harris S**42** Ben Gedeon LB**43** Reshard Cliett LB**44** Mike Boone RB**45** Brett Taylor LB**46** Trevon Mathis CB**47** Kevin McDermott LS**48** Johnny Stanton FB**49** Mike Needham LB**50** Eric Wilson LB**54** Eric Kendricks LB**55** Anthony Barr LB**56** Antwone Williams LB**57** Devante Downs LB**58** Garret Dooley LB**59** Chris Gonzalez G**61** Ade Aruna DE**62** Nick Easton G**63** Danny Isidora G**64** Josh Andrews C**65** Pat Elflein C**66** Curt Cothran DT**67** Cornelius Edison C



68 Cedrick Lang T



69 Rashod Hill T



71 Riley Reiff T



72 Storm Norton T



72 David Parry DT



73 Colby Gossett G



74 Mike Remmers T



75 Brian O'Neill T



76 Aviante Collins T



78 Dieugot Joseph T



78 Jonathan Wynn DE



79 Tom Compton G



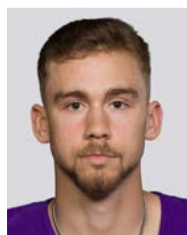
81 Blake Bell TE



82 Kyle Rudolph TE



83 Tyler Conklin TE



84 Chad Beebe WR



85 Jeff Badet WR



86 Tyler Hoppes TE



87 Josiah Price TE



89 David Morgan TE



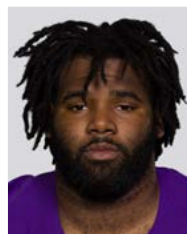
90 Tashawn Bower DE



91 Stephen Weatherly DE



92 Jalyn Holmes DT



93 Sheldon Richardson DT



94 Jaleel Johnson DT



95 Ifeadi Odenigbo DE



96 Brian Robison DE



97 Everson Griffen DE



98 Linval Joseph DT



99 Danielle Hunter DE

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THE VIKINGS are venturing into uncharted waters again.

For the first time in Vikings history, the team is hosting training camp at its own facility, Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center, which opened in March.

TCO Performance Center provides convenience to Minneapolis and St. Paul, as well as modern amenities for players and coaches who received an ample preview of the new facility during Minnesota's offseason workout program.

"This is amazing," said cornerback Trae Waynes, who is beginning his fourth season. "Just from comparing what we were at before (at the team's former Winter Park headquarters), this is like 10-times better, and I think everybody loves this new facility."

Longest-tenured Viking Brian Robison, who has returned for his 12th season, said "I think we've got a lot more stuff around here" than at Winter Park.

"We've got the nutritionist here full-time,"

Robison said. "The weight room allows us to not have time restraints. Everything is right here, the way we need it. It flows a lot easier. There really are no excuses. We've got everything we need to be successful, and we've got to use it to our advantage."

Danielle Hunter, who signed a contract extension on June 27, and 2016 second-round selection Mackensie Alexander noted architectural elements of TCO Performance Center.

"The thing that I've noticed is there's more lighting here," Hunter said. "At Winter Park, it was definitely darker. You go in there, and you wouldn't see light unless you went outside. But pretty much all around the building, there's more lighting, and I like that. It keeps you awake."

The weight room features large windows and garage doors that open to the outside, the "Super Highway" runs the length of the building under a soaring skylight, and the Indoor Practice Facility even invites natural

light through translucent windows.

"It is beautiful, the space, the creativity," Alexander said. "It was just a, 'Wow' moment, just seeing the facility and the way it's structured for us to lift weights, go out into the field. It's beautiful indoors and outdoors."

Running back Dalvin Cook began rehab work on his surgically repaired ACL at Winter Park and continued it at TCO Performance Center, where he made it on to the practice fields by the end of the offseason program.

"All of the resources that we need are in this building," Cook said. "I put all of my trust into the [training] staff that we've got. We did a great job in this facility, so everything that we needed is here. We've just got to come in and put in the work, so that was all I needed to keep doing on my part. They put me in a position to do that."

Here are five aspects of TCO Performance Center that could help the Vikings in 2018 and beyond:

COMFORTS of HOME

BY CRAIG PETERS AND ERIC SMITH

1

NUTRITION

TCO Performance Center features a full-service, 6,900-square-foot cafeteria known as the Huddle and the Gatorade Fuel Bar, stocked with nutritious and convenient snacks near the Vikings locker room.

According to Director of Sports Medicine/ Head Athletic Trainer Eric Sugarman, the Gatorade Fuel Bar located inside TCO Performance Center is the largest in existence.

"The average male is supposed to consume about 2,500 calories [per day]. Our players are usually over 6,000," Sugarman explained this offseason. "Nutrition is something that's very, very important to us. We want to provide our players with the absolute best possible nutritional items and guidelines that we can."

2

PRACTICE FIELDS

The Vikings headquarters feature Land O'Lakes, Inc. Fields, which provide four full-size gridirons that can be rotated to prevent overuse, as well as TCO Stadium, a 6,500-seat venue with a permanent video board.

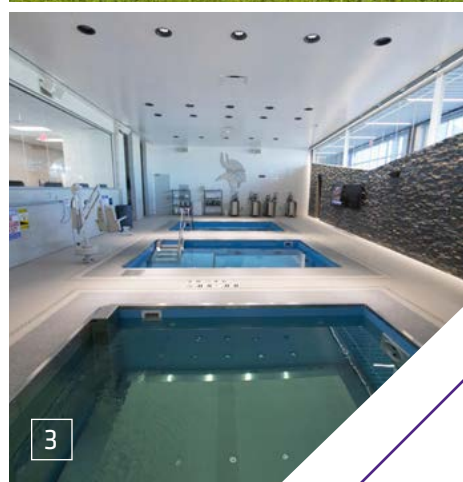
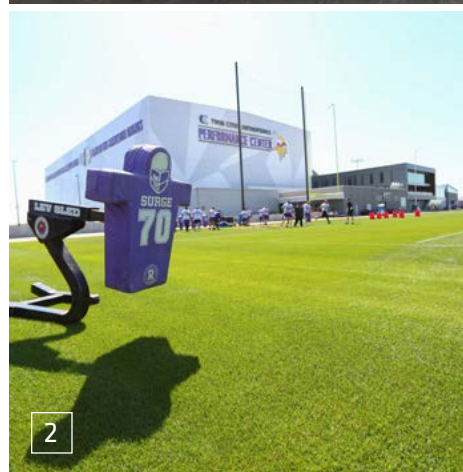
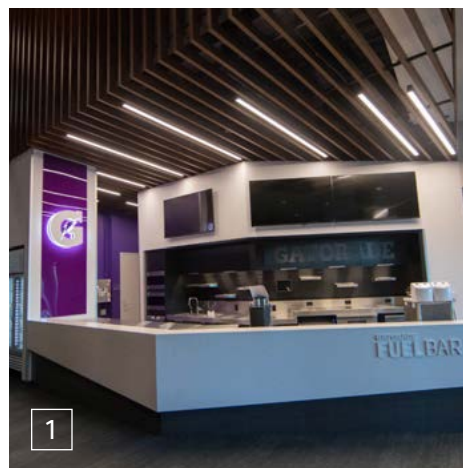
TCO Stadium will be the setting for the Vikings night practice, an annual tradition.

3

ATHLETIC TRAINING AREA

At 8,000 square feet, the Vikings new training room and recovery areas feature the following amenities:

- Orthopedic exam room, medical exam room and concussion room
- 10 treatment tables
- 12 stations for players to occupy with foam rollers or compression devices before and after practices
- Hydrotherapy room, which features a hot tub (104 degrees), cold tub (55 degrees) and underwater treadmill
- Electronic cryotherapy room, in which players remain for anywhere from 2.5 to 3.5 minutes, and the temperatures can dip as cold as minus-196 degrees Fahrenheit
- Chiropractic room
- 2 massage rooms



4

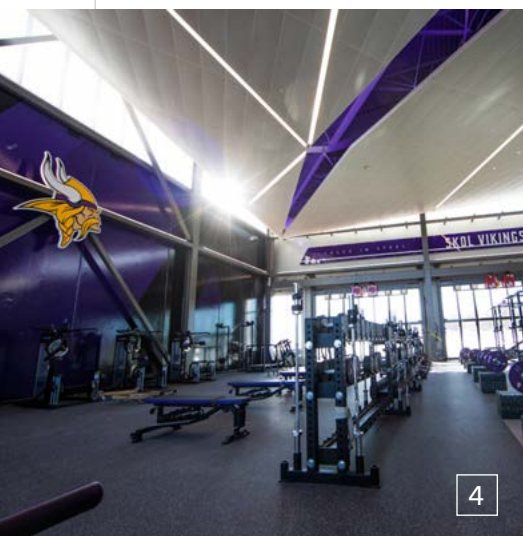
WEIGHT ROOM

Vikings players now will be able to work out in an expansive new space with plenty of windows and a set of garage doors that open up adjacent to the outdoor practice fields.

The weight room at TCO Performance Center spans more than 6,100 square feet and features scores of weight racks and various machines. A cardio mezzanine also overlooks the weight room.

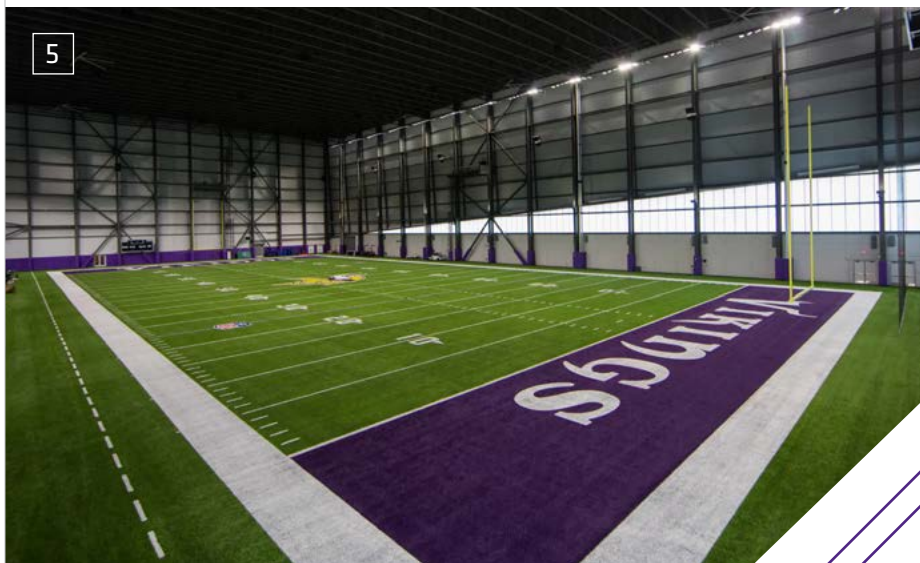
“We spared no expense here, and that’s a tribute to the support of ownership as well as our general manager and head football coach,” Vikings Head Strength and Conditioning Coach Mark Uyeyama said during a spring media tour. “We’ve got the best of the best.”

Uyeyama added: “It’s important that we have an understanding that everything is preparation. Whether it’s in the weight room, in the Indoor [Practice Facility], on the field ... it’s all preparation.”



4

5



5

INDOOR PRACTICE FACILITY (IPF)

The ceiling of the Indoor Practice Facility at TCO Performance Center is 98 feet above the playing surface, and the IPF houses a full-size field with the same turf that is at U.S. Bank Stadium. The ceiling clearance also will be beneficial in the season. When the Vikings were at Winter Park, the clearance of 65 feet wasn’t enough to allow full punting drills.

“The biggest thing is ... the ability to be able to punt in here and not have to run down to [U.S. Bank Stadium],” said Vice President of Operations and Facilities Chad Lundeen. “It’s going to be very functional for us.”

The IPF also features scoreboards at each end in addition to retractable uprights that are suspended from the ceiling rather than grounded by a post.

“The concept is just player safety,” Lundeen said. “If you don’t need a post there to run into, why not eliminate it?”

“All of the resources that we need are in this building. I put all of my trust into the [training] staff that we’ve got. We did a great job in this facility, so everything that we needed is here. We’ve just got to come in and put in the work...”

- RUNNING BACK DALVIN COOK



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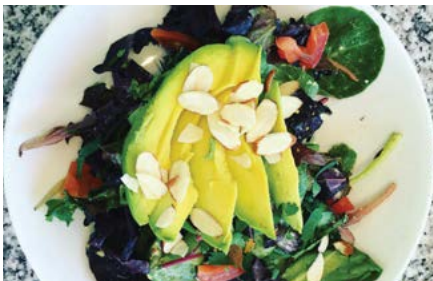
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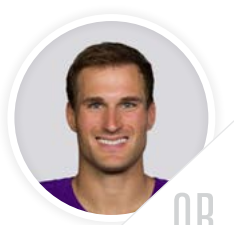


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QB

KIRK COUSINS

Started past three seasons for Redskins



OC

JOHN DeFILIPPO

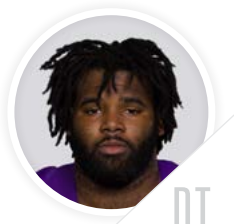
Coached Eagles quarterbacks in 2017



WR

KENDALL WRIGHT

Led Bears in receiving in 2017 season



DT

SHELDON RICHARDSON

Played for Jets (2013-16) and Seahawks (2017)



Kirk Cousins is the new face of the franchise in Minnesota.

The Vikings signed the Pro Bowl quarterback to a three-year contract in mid-March, snagging the top free agent prize of the NFL offseason.

Cousins and the Vikings tied a Purple knot in a move to provide each other with stability. The quarterback, a former fourth-round pick in 2012 out of Michigan State, threw for 13,176 yards and 81 touchdowns while compiling a passer rating of 97.6 in the past three seasons as Washington's starter.

Cousins, who has thrown for at least 4,000 yards and 25 touchdowns in each of the previous three seasons, quickly developed rapport with the bevy of skill players on Minnesota's roster, most notably tight end Kyle Rudolph and wide receivers Adam Thielen and Stefon Diggs.

"It is a process of saying, 'Hey, this is the way I've done it for six years. You've done it a different way for five years. Let's try to talk about why you've had success, why I've had success. Let's find some middle ground, let's decide whether I'm going to learn your way, you're going to learn my way,'" Cousins said in

June. "That's the process I'm talking about.

"Every route, every concept, really we could talk about each individual one," Cousins added. "The best part of the whole thing is you know you have a chance when the communication is as healthy as it is."

Cousins will work with new Vikings Offensive Coordinator John DeFilippo, who joined the franchise after winning a Super Bowl LII ring as Philadelphia's quarterbacks coach in 2017. The Vikings also signed Kendall Wright, who led Chicago with 59 catches for 614 yards this past season.

Defensively, Minnesota also beefed up a unit that ranked first in the NFL in yards allowed (275.9), points allowed (15.8) and on third down (25.2 percent).

The signing of defensive tackle Sheldon Richardson, the 13th overall pick in the 2013 NFL Draft by the New York Jets, adds another weapon on an already stout defensive line.

Richardson spent the first four seasons of his career with the Jets before playing for the Seahawks in 2017. He has 19 career sacks in 73 career games.

STATE OF THE VIKINGS



BY ERIC SMITH AND KABRIONE COLEMAN

Coming off a 13-3 season that included an NFC North title and an appearance in the NFC Championship Game, the Vikings have one of the deepest rosters across the league. Here's where things stand as Minnesota prepares for the 2018 season.

QUARTERBACKS

Welcome to Minnesota, Kirk Cousins. The Vikings may have landed the biggest prize in all of free agency by signing Cousins to a three-year contract in March. The former fourth-round pick spent the past six seasons in Washington, three of which he served as the starter. Cousins has thrown for at least 4,000 yards and 25 touchdowns in each of the past three seasons, and he is one of two quarterbacks to accomplish those feats during that span. Minnesota's new franchise quarterback is now tasked with taking command of an offense that features a bevy of skill players.

FRESH FACES: Cousins isn't the only new player in the position room; the Vikings also acquired backup Trevor Siemian in a trade with Denver. Siemian has 24 total starts and is 13-11 as a starter.

WHAT TO WATCH: Besides adjusting to a new organization, Cousins is also in a new system under first-year Vikings Offensive Coordinator John DeFilippo, who joined the organization in February. All eyes will be on the Cousins-DeFilippo relationship as Minnesota looks to make another deep postseason run.

RUNNING BACKS

Dalvin Cook is on track for a healthy return to the field after suffering a torn ACL in Week 4 of the 2017 season. The former second-round pick burst onto the scene as a rookie, rushing for 354 yards and two touchdowns on just 74 carries in three-plus games. Cook will team up with fellow running back Latavius Murray in the backfield. Murray performed admirably in Cook's absence, leading the Vikings with 842 yards and eight touchdowns this past season. C.J. Ham, who recorded his first career rushing touchdown in 2017, is back after making an impact in his first season at fullback.

WHAT TO WATCH: After Jerick McKinnon signed with the 49ers in free agency, there is plenty of competition for the third running back spot. Mack Brown is back with the Vikings after joining the team in October, while undrafted free agents Mike Boone and Roc Thomas look to battle for playing time.

TIGHT ENDS

The Vikings tight ends are looking to build on last year's success and capitalize on depth within the position group in 2018. Kyle Rudolph has hauled in 20 touchdowns over the past three seasons, which is the second-most among players at his position. Rudolph, who had 57 catches for 532 yards and tied for the team lead with eight touchdowns, is also well-known for his efforts in the community. David Morgan is entering his third season with the Vikings. He caught his first NFL touchdown in 2017 and is regarded as one of the best blockers on the team.

WHAT TO WATCH: The Vikings used a fifth-round pick in the 2018 NFL Draft on Tyler Conklin, who had 35 catches for 504 yards and five touchdowns in 2017 at Central Michigan.

WIDE RECEIVERS

There might not be a better 1-2 punch among wide receivers in the NFL than Adam Thielen and Stefon Diggs. The duo combined for 2,125 receiving yards in 2017, a total that ranked second in the league among wide receiver teammates. Thielen produced his first Pro Bowl season with 91 catches for 1,276 yards and four scores while being named a Second-Team All-Pro. Diggs hauled in 64 catches for 849 yards and tied for the team lead with eight touchdowns. He was also on the receiving end of the Minneapolis Miracle, a play that no Vikings fan will soon forget.

FRESH FACES: The Vikings added former first-round pick Kendall Wright and veteran Tavarres King in free agency. Wright led Chicago with 59 catches for 614 yards in 2017 while also catching one touchdown. Minnesota also added Brandon Zylstra from the CFL.

WHAT TO WATCH: Who will step up behind Thielen and Diggs? Laquon Treadwell is expected to battle Wright for the third spot, but there are others to keep an eye on. Stacy Coley and Cayleb Jones will try to push for more playing time.

OFFENSIVE LINE

A revamped and rebuilt offensive line was a key reason for the Vikings offensive success in 2017. Minnesota essentially had four new starters up front, and the



reshuffling paid off in a big way as the Vikings jumped from 32nd to seventh in total rushing offense. New veteran starters such as Riley Reiff and Mike Remmers brought stability to the line after joining Minnesota during free agency. Center Pat Elflein produced a solid season and was named to PFWA's All-Rookie Team. With the majority of the starters set to return, the Vikings will look for continued success in 2018.

WHAT TO WATCH: Reiff (left tackle) and Elflein (center) are locked into their spots. Remmers spent the majority of the spring at right guard, and Rashod Hill was at right tackle. Nick Easton, who started at left guard in 2017, filled in for Elflein during the offseason program, and the Vikings took looks at Danny Isidora and Tom Compton at left guard during the offseason program.

DEFENSIVE LINE

There might not be a deeper position group on the Vikings than this one. A handful of returners make up the base of this ferocious unit. Everson Griffen was a Second-Team All-Pro selection after setting a career high with 13 sacks in 2017. Linval Joseph participated in his second straight Pro Bowl after recording 68 tackles last season. Danielle Hunter, who signed a contract extension in June, notched 7.0 sacks, and veteran Brian Robison had 4.0 sacks. In addition to pressuring the quarterback, the group helped the Vikings finish second in rushing defense (83.6 yards per game) in 2017.

FRESH FACE: *The Vikings also added a newcomer in defensive tackle Sheldon Richardson, and the former first-round pick is expected to enhance an already stout defensive line. Richardson had 44 tackles, a sack and an interception in 2017 with the Seahawks.*

WHAT TO WATCH: *The talk around this unit in spring practice was about building depth and developing a rotation behind the starters. While the aforementioned five players could get a bulk of the playing time, youngsters such as Jaleel Johnson, Stephen Weatherly and Tashawn Bower will also look to take some pressure off in the trenches.*

LINEBACKERS

Vikings linebackers are asked to do a little bit of everything in Vikings Head Coach Mike Zimmer's defense. They play the run, drop back in coverage and pressure the quarterback, usually while roaming the field from sideline to sideline. It's a good thing Minnesota's



top linebackers – Anthony Barr and Eric Kendricks – are talented and well-versed in the system. Barr made his third Pro Bowl in 2017, and Kendricks led the Vikings in tackles for the third straight season. Ben Gedeon started as a rookie in 2017 in the Vikings base defense.

WHAT TO WATCH: *There is an open competition for some playing time among this group. The trio above will likely start again this season, but players such as Eric Wilson, Kentrell Brothers and Antwone Williams will look to contribute on special teams.*

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Versatile safety Harrison Smith was nearly a unanimous First-Team All-Pro in 2017 as he led the team with five interceptions. Xavier Rhodes, who routinely shut down opponents' top receiving options, made two different All-Pro teams. Safety Andrew Sendejo and cornerback Trae Waynes are also back. Terence Newman is returning for his 16th NFL season and 10th in Zimmer's defense.

WHAT TO WATCH: *The Vikings have numerous options at the nickel cornerback spot. In addition to Newman,*

third-year man Mackensie Alexander will vie for playing time, too. And rookie Mike Hughes, a first-round pick in April, was solid in spring practices.

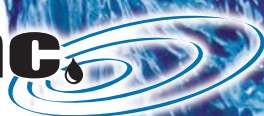
SPECIAL TEAMS

This group might sometimes go unnoticed, but its skill set often can be the determining factor for the outcome of games. Kicker Kai Forbath enters his second full season in Minnesota (and third overall). He hit on 32 out of 38 regular-season fields goals in 2017 and then came up clutch with a 53-yard make in the Divisional Round against New Orleans. Punter Ryan Quigley enters his second season in Minnesota after attempting 71 punts without a single touchback in 2017. Kevin McDermott is entering his fourth season with the Vikings and is one of the best long snappers in the league. He missed the final month of the season with a shoulder injury.

WHAT TO WATCH: *The hottest battle at training camp could be between the kickers. Minnesota drafted Auburn's Daniel Carlson in the fifth round, and the rookie impressed this spring. Carlson made 23 field goals last season for the Tigers and hit all 57 of his extra point attempts.*

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2018

ROOKIE ROUNDUP

BY CRAIG
PETERS

THE VIKINGS HAVE A NEW BATCH OF
DRAFT PICKS AND UNDRAFTED ROOKIE
FREE AGENTS TO DEVELOP AT 2018
VERIZON VIKINGS TRAINING CAMP.

A common link emerged with all eight draft picks made by General Manager Rick Spielman. It was to find uncommon athleticism at respective positions – but only if the players love football.

“Theme was, again, sticking with the athletic traits that we’re looking for and relying on this coaching staff to develop a lot of this young talent,” Spielman said at the conclusion of the 2018 NFL Draft. “Because a lot of the traits that they have, you can’t teach, you can’t coach, but you can sure develop them. So, we were a little active, going more up than back this year in the third day.”

Spielman and the scouts are able to filter through prospects and search for the best fit in the defensive system that Head Coach Mike Zimmer began installing in 2014. The Vikings nearly perfected the defense in 2017 when they led the league in yards allowed, points allowed and third-down success rate, but they consider their work incomplete until reaching the ultimate goal.

Zimmer said the Vikings liked the intellect that Mike Hughes showed during pre-draft interviews and his game tape at UCF. Described as a “DB guru” by Trae Waynes when the corner was drafted 11th overall

in 2015, Zimmer has a long history of developing players, especially with helping cornerbacks reach the next level and the one after that.

Hughes is the third cornerback drafted by Minnesota in the second round or higher since 2015, and Zimmer is looking forward to working with him.

“Mike’s a tremendous athlete, great quickness in and out of the cut,” Zimmer said. “A short shuttle time (4.13 seconds), which I look at very hard. He was outstanding, obviously, in his 40-yard time (4.53 seconds). He goes and gets the ball in the air, and as Rick said, he’s an excellent returner.”

The Vikings also continued adding to the offensive line by selecting tackle Brian O’Neill in the second round and guard Colby Gossett in the sixth. The selections of O’Neill and Gossett are part of a multiyear transition from road graders in a construction zone to open roaders in more of a zone-blocking scheme and on screen passes.

“We felt very fortunate that Brian was there,” Spielman said. “He has tremendous athletic ability that you can’t teach. You watch his tape, watch him get to the second level, watch him pull, [you see] all the physical and athletic traits that we look for in the scheme that we run.”

Spielman traded out of the third round to acquire an extra sixth-round selection but was able to tab Jalyn Holmes out of Ohio State at 102 overall early in the fourth round.

The GM then vaulted up in the fifth round to select Central Michigan tight end Tyler Conklin at 157 before reacquiring the 167th overall pick to draft Auburn

kicker Daniel Carlson. Five spots after selecting Gossett at 213, the Vikings tabbed Tulane defensive end Ade Aruna. Seven places later, Minnesota picked Devante Downs early in the seventh round.

O’Neill, Conklin and Aruna all accomplished quite a bit on the basketball court, adding to the athleticism of this year’s haul.

“We’re going to have a hell of an intramural team coming up, so we’re taking on the media,” Spielman joked. “Conklin is a tremendous athlete. I know Aruna is a great athlete. All these guys are long, all these guys jump out of the gym, all these guys can run, and when ... you can get athletes in like that, it gives you a chance to hit on some guys that can be pretty special.

“When we go that route, and we talk about this all the time in the draft meetings, ‘This guy may be a better football player today, but this guy has such a higher ceiling.’”



2018 DRAFT CLASS

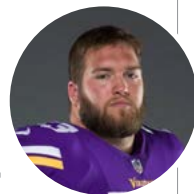
IN 18 WORDS OR FEWER BY
GM RICK SPIELMAN



JALYN
HOLMES

DT | 4TH ROUND
102ND OVERALL

Spielman: "He ran a 4.77 on our watches in Indianapolis, and he has over 34-inch arm length."



COLBY
GOSSETT

G | 6TH ROUND
213TH OVERALL

Spielman: "He [faced] a couple of the top defensive linemen [at the Senior Bowl], and he held his own."



MIKE
HUGHES

CB | 1ST ROUND
30TH OVERALL

Spielman: "We felt he was one of the top corners, as far as the quickness that we're looking for."



TYLER
CONKLIN

TE | 5TH ROUND
157TH OVERALL

Spielman: "[Offensive Coordinator John] DeFilippo always wanted a tight end that could be a potential mismatch guy."



ADE
ARUNA

G | 6TH ROUND
213TH OVERALL

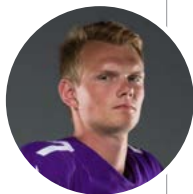
Spielman: "He had a tremendous [2016 season] when they split him out wider and let him rush the passer."



BRIAN
O'NEILL

T | 2ND ROUND
62ND OVERALL

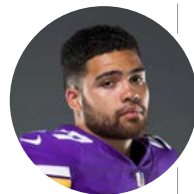
Spielman: "If I can get coaches this type of athlete, they can develop these guys. [He] has tremendous upside."



DANIEL
CARLSON

K | 5TH ROUND
167TH OVERALL

Spielman: "He was another kid that we wanted to get in to compete and see where this goes."



DEVANTE
DOWNS

G | 7TH ROUND
225TH OVERALL

Spielman: "He's a multi-position player. Extremely smart, very instinctive, excellent size."



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MUST-SEES AT THE VIKINGS MUSEUM

BY LINDSEY YOUNG

FROM EARLY FOOTBALL
IN MINNESOTA TO THE
MINNEAPOLIS MIRACLE,
THE VIKINGS MUSEUM
CHRONICLES SIGNIFICANT
MOMENTS IN FRANCHISE
HISTORY IN A NEW
14,000-SQUARE-FOOT
FACILITY THAT IS PART OF
TWIN CITIES ORTHOPEDICS
PERFORMANCE CENTER.

Located just south of TCO Stadium and adjacent to the Vikings Locker Room Store, the museum features exhibits on the evolution of the team's logo and uniforms, permanent home venues and the accomplishments of players and coaches over the years.

Did you know that Tommy Mason, the first player ever drafted by the Vikings, had a pet monkey and performed at the Grand Ole Opry?

"We have been working hard to obtain the most complete Vikings history collection – meeting with hundreds of fans, learning their stories and collecting amazing artifacts," said Vikings Director of Brand & Creative Erin Swartz. "We are

thrilled to open the doors and share these stories with all of our fans for the first time."

Added Swartz: "Hopefully this is just the beginning, and fans will continue to share with us their incredible Vikings memories and pieces of history."

In addition to diving through decades of historic artifacts, attendees can flip through a digital book about the 50 Greatest Vikings, watch the top plays in franchise history, listen to audio clips from every head coach, share their favorite Vikings memories and relive their passion for the Vikings with future generations.

Here are five must-see highlights when traveling through decades of Vikings lore.

"FROZEN IN TIME" ICE COLUMNS

Sure to be a fan favorite, the "Frozen in Time" exhibit honors the six Vikings Legends whose jersey numbers have been retired: Fran Tarkenton (10), Alan Page (88), Jim Marshall (70), Korey Stringer (77), Mick Tingelhoff (53) and Cris Carter (80).

Creatively designed columns topped with shards of "ice" give the appearance of freezing the players' jerseys – and accompanying artifacts – and preserving them for years to come.

Be sure to check out Tingelhoff's Hall of Fame bust, Cris Carter's Walter Payton Man of the Year trophy and Alan Page's 1971 MVP trophy, among numerous historic items.

Upon entry, fans are met by ice columns honoring six Legends, including No. 70, Jim Marshall (left).

BUD GRANT EXHIBIT

It's impossible to recount Vikings history without a significant ode to Hall of Fame Head Coach Bud Grant.

An entire exhibit is dedicated to Grant, the second head coach in Vikings history, who held the reins from 1967-83 and then came out of retirement to coach one more season in 1985.

Fans will be treated to a unique chronicling of Grant's story – his time as a college and professional athlete, as a coach for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and with the Vikings – through a series of fascinating artifacts.

Among many one-of-a-kind or rare items within the legendary coach's exhibit are his 1969 PFWA Coach of the Year trophy, which Grant received after just his third season in Minnesota, and a trading card from Grant's stint with the NBA Champion Minneapolis Lakers.



ORIGINAL FOUNDING DOCUMENTS

The Vikings franchise was founded in 1961, but do you know the full story?

An exhibit at the Vikings Museum allows fans to take a trip back in time and learn more about how the Vikings came to be: from the NFL awarding Minnesota a team; to the concept, design and execution of the team logo and uniforms; to the founding partners and Norm Van Brocklin, the Vikings first head coach.

Perhaps most interesting in the exhibit are the original illustrations for Vikings uniforms drawn by Karl Hubenthal.

TRIUMPHS IN BATTLE

A common practice throughout the NFL is presenting a player with a game ball, often recognizing an exceptional performance or play.

The Vikings have awarded game balls over the years for individual achievements or to acknowledge an honor, such as being named to the All-Decade Team. There also is a team ball custom-painted each year to represent the respective season as a whole.

Fans at the museum can view a uniquely designed wall that features 54 game balls – each one indicating an important moment or distinction in Vikings history. A digital kiosk accompanying the display includes information about each football.

Significant accomplishments represented range from Joe Kapp tying an NFL record with seven touchdown passes against Baltimore (Sept. 28, 1969) to Daunte Culpepper passing for a franchise-best 4,717 yards (2004).



Things were looking up for the Vikings, which meant goalposts were in danger of coming down. This segment marks Minnesota's victory over the Cleveland Browns in the 1969 NFL Championship to advance to Super Bowl IV.

DECADE OF DOMINANCE

The Vikings closed their first decade on the rise, finishing the 1969 season with a 12-2 mark in the regular season.

Minnesota followed with home wins against the L.A. Rams (23-20) on Dec. 27 and the Cleveland Browns (27-7) on Jan. 4, 1970.

That team was part of a Vikings "decade of dominance" after transitioning from a fledgling franchise into a revered and resolute squad. From 1968-77, the Vikings went 104-35-1 in 10 regular seasons and won nine division titles.

Minnesota won three NFC Championship Games and advanced to four Super Bowls.

The Vikings developed an iconic identity that was recognized from coast to coast. Numerous artifacts chronicle the team's climb.

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LETTERS TO BUD

By Lindsey Young



IN MAY OF 2016, I WALKED INTO HALL OF FAME HEAD COACH BUD GRANT'S OFFICE FOR WHAT I BELIEVED WOULD BE A BRIEF INTERVIEW AND STORY FOR VIKINGS.COM.

While the interview met expectations of brevity (conversations are usually to the point with Coach Grant), our interaction instead inspired a project much larger than I could have imagined.

What I thought would be a conversation about one letter, written by Grant in response to a young fan in 1977, soon turned into so much more. Grant opened a file drawer in his office and, along with it, a passageway into the love and respect he received, from writers of all ages and across the country, during his time at the helm.

And so began the project of carefully sorting through letter after letter – more than 250 of them, to be exact – that were written and mailed to the stoic leader.

Senders ranged from nationally known figures, to former players under Grant, to far-flung Vikings fans with interesting stories to share.

The following are letters that stuck out as personal favorites, along with excerpts from stories that accompanied them in the full digital series on Vikings.com.

RICHARD NIXON

'A FOOTBALL FAN & A BUD GRANT FAN'

Former NFL Vice President Joe Browne, the league's longest-serving employee after a 50-year career, recalled the influence that Richard Nixon, "America's No. 1 Football Fan," had on the game.

"President Nixon was such a football fan that his interest in the Redskins was the driving force behind Congressional legislation that changed NFL television policy," Browne told Vikings.com. "Upset that he could not watch Redskins home games even on his White House TVs in the early 1970s because of [a blackout]

policy, Nixon pressed Congress to pass TV legislation, which he said he would sign."

While Nixon did not affiliate with the Vikings, he self-identified in his letter to Grant – written nearly 10 years after his resignation from office – as "a football fan and a Bud Grant fan."

Nixon and Grant both served in the U.S. Navy during the 1940s, and the former President also revered Grant for a number of other reasons.

Browne came to learn of Nixon's affinity for Grant through the late Herb Klein, who served as Nixon's White House Communications Director and later was the publisher of the *San Diego Union Tribune*.

"[Klein told me] that Nixon was a huge admirer of Coach Grant because of Bud's disciplined, no-nonsense coaching style, his cool demeanor and his winning teams," Browne said.

BOBBY BRYANT

'BUD WAS WILLING TO GIVE ME A CHANCE'

With Green Bay closing in on Minnesota's end zone, Bobby Bryant leapt up and snagged an interception. The pick returned possession to the Vikings, who were able to maintain their lead.

As Bryant walked onto the sideline, Grant offered up a comment: "Bobby, you played a really good game."

Those seven words stuck with Bryant through the rest of his 14-season career in Minnesota and now more than 30 years since hanging up his cleats.

"He normally didn't say anything like that," Bryant recalled. "I'm sure he said it to more players than just me, but that was only time [I heard it from him]."

"I knew that he appreciated the way that I played, because he had stated before that one of the reasons he kept me in there was because I had the tendency to make big plays at critical times. But to have him say it – 'Bobby, you really played a good game' – that let me know that maybe I was good enough to be playing. That meant a lot to me."

HERB BROOKS

FROM ONE ICON TO ANOTHER

Herb Brooks coached hockey, and Grant coached football, but had their players swapped sports for a day,

they might have recognized similarities between the two feared leaders.

"When they walked into a locker room, and when they spoke, it was like players just listened and were at attention," said Herb's son, Dan. "For the players that didn't buy in or were acting up or screwing up, they were gone.

"They both had that kind of stoic stare that put the fear of God in these players," Dan added.

Neither coach was easy on his players, but their players respected them and understood that success wasn't always an easy goal to reach.

"During the crunch time, during the heat of the battle, these players were extremely thankful to have them behind the bench," Dan said. "They were great leaders."

HALSEY HALL

'PARDON THE STATIONARY, MAYBE'

Halsey and Bud.

Two trademarks in Minnesota that needed no context – or even a last name – when talked about.

"Everybody knew [Halsey]. He was one of those rare people, like Bud, who was known by one name," said radio personality Dave Mona, another fixture of the Minnesota sports world. "Over his years, if you said, 'Halsey,' everybody knew who you meant; you didn't need 'Halsey Hall.'"

Hall's simultaneous role as a broadcaster was set in motion on July 4, 1923, during a boxing match between St. Paul boxer Tommy Gibbons and heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey. According to Thornley, as a crowd gathered outside of the *Pioneer Press* building, the paper arranged for Hall to provide an account of the fight that was taking place in Montana.

Hall called the fight via megaphone from a second-floor window, and his play-by-play career was born.

Ask anyone who knew Hall, and he or she will tell you of his jovial and colorful personality.

Bits of his nature are evident in the letter he sent to Grant in 1975, which was typed beneath the Twins blue-and-red letterhead:

Pardon the stationary, maybe. But, what the hell, you were in this sport, too.

When Mona was read the letter over the phone and asked about Hall's character, he chuckled.

"'Character' is exactly the right word for Halsey," Mona said. "He was a great storyteller. He was probably the sports emcee of all those years because he knew the history [of Minnesota sports]. Halsey was almost part actor – he was larger than life."

ELIZABETH MERRIGAN

'A FLEET RECEIVER & A PERFECT SPIRAL'

As one of 11 children, Elizabeth Merrigan grew up with a built-in football team.

Merrigan had four older siblings, three of them brothers, and early on she became a regular tag-along to their pickup games. It didn't take long to learn how to pass the pigskin.

"Instead of running to get the football, I learned how to throw it back to them," Merrigan said with a laugh.

"There's really nothing more spectacular than a crisp autumn day, a fleet receiver and a perfect spiral," she added. "It's just one of those lovely moments. I guess that's why I'm a football fan."

Merrigan trusted, believed in and looked up to Grant. She couldn't escape her own strong personality and teacher's mindset, however, both of which often reared their heads during Vikings games.

While Grant wasn't one to rant and rave, Merrigan often was.

"I have been known to make loud proclamations [during or after games]," Merrigan said. "Family and friends got sick of me saying, 'I ought to write to that man and tell him what's what.' And they would say, 'Well shut up and write him, then.'"

So finally I did, and then that was that. I told them I wrote to Bud Grant, and they just laughed, like, 'Yeah, right.'"

Added Merrigan with a laugh: "I'm sure Coach Grant read the letter and said, 'Well that's a lot of nerve of that woman.'"

"IT'S JUST
ONE OF THOSE
LOVELY
MOMENTS. I
GUESS THAT'S
WHY I'M A
FOOTBALL
FAN."

– ELIZABETH MERRIGAN



Visit [Vikings.com/news/longforms](https://vikings.com/news/longforms) and dive into the full, digital "Letters to Bud" content series featuring personal messages from other notable names, including former NFL QB Archie Manning, NFL icons and former coaches Paul Brown and Lamar Hunt, and the original publisher of *People* magazine, Richard Durrell.



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RANDY MOSS

BY ERIC SMITH



RANDY MOSS CAUGHT A HALL PASS ON THE FIRST TRY.

The former Vikings wide receiver was named a Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee in February, a day before Super Bowl LII in Minneapolis, beginning the excitement for an Aug. 4 enshrinement.

"Now that I'm a Hall of Famer, I can breathe easy and be thankful," Moss said Feb. 3 at NFL Honors. "I started this game at 6 years old and never imagined I'd be here putting on a Hall of Fame jacket.

"Now that this time has come, and I can put this jacket on, it's a blessing from above," Moss said. "I just can't wait to celebrate with my family."

Moss and classmate Terrell Owens are the first receivers voted in since Jerry Rice in 2010. Moss is the third wide receiver to be inducted in his first year of eligibility along with Steve Largent and Rice.

"I watched Steve Largent ... I don't think I can say enough good words about Jerry Rice and what he meant to the game," Moss said. "To be the third, first-ballot [receiver], that's special.

"For me to be a first-ballot Hall of Famer, I don't think it's really set in," Moss added.

"Now that this time
has come, and I can
put this jacket on, it's a
blessing from above."

- RANDY MOSS



Moss spent seven-plus seasons of his illustrious career with the Vikings. He enters the Hall ranked second all-time with 156 receiving touchdowns and is fourth in league history with 15,292 receiving yards.

The former first-round pick burst onto the scene as a rookie in 1998 with 69 catches for 1,313 yards and 17 touchdowns, a mark that still stands as a rookie record. Moss also holds the single-season record with 23 touchdown catches, which he set in 2007 while with New England.

Moss ranks second in Vikings history with 587 catches for 9,316 yards and 92 touchdowns. He was inducted into the Vikings Ring of Honor. Moss' name was unveiled on the façade of U.S. Bank Stadium – in the end zone, of course – before Minnesota's 2017 season opener.

"Anybody who doesn't see him as one of the top receivers in the history of the league probably has blindfolds on or something," said former Vikings quarterback Daunte Culpepper, who threw Moss 53 touchdown passes during their five seasons together. "If they had seen him, they'd know."



THE LEGACY OF **DENNIS GREEN** IS COMING FULL-CIRCLE.

The former head coach who passed away at age 67 on July 22, 2016 – the day the Vikings cut the ribbon for U.S. Bank Stadium – will be forever intertwined with the venue.

The Vikings announced in mid-June that Green will be the 24th member of the Vikings Ring of Honor. Green's name will be unveiled on the U.S. Bank Stadium façade during halftime of Minnesota's Week 3 home game against the Buffalo Bills.

Green was the Vikings head coach from 1992 to 2001. He won 97 regular-season games with Minnesota, which ranks second in franchise history.

Green's teams won division titles four times and advanced to the NFC Championship Game after the 1998 and 2000 seasons.

Vikings Owner/Chairman Zygi Wilf and Vikings Owner/President Mark Wilf delivered the news to Green's widow, Marie, in a surprise announcement on June 18 at Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center.

Marie let out a gasp and simply said, 'Wow!' when the Wilfs told her

the news with her daughter, Patti, at her side.

"[It's] very emotional, clearly," Green said with a laugh and some tears in her eyes. "I'm so honored for my husband, and this is an honor that is well-deserved. I just wish he could have accepted it himself.

"I think that he would be very humbled. And he would be extremely proud of how the franchise has progressed to an amazing facility like this," Green later added. "I think he'd be really honored and very proud to be in the Ring of Honor."

Vikings Owner/President Mark Wilf said: "Coach Green was really a special role model for our players. He was a father figure and paved the way for future African-American head coaches. Both on the field and off the field, he's such a special part of our family. He'll forever be synonymous with the Minnesota Vikings."

Green became the second African-American head coach in the modern NFL and third overall when he was hired in 1992. He will be the third former head coach in the Vikings Ring of Honor, along with Bud Grant and Jerry Burns.

BY ERIC SMITH



**"COACH GREEN WAS
REALLY A SPECIAL ROLE
MODEL FOR OUR PLAYERS.
HE WAS A FATHER FIGURE
AND PAVED THE WAY FOR
FUTURE AFRICAN-AMERICAN
HEAD COACHES."**

- MARK WILF





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