

PLAYBOOK

WK 1



VIKINGS VS. PACKERS | SEPT. 13, 2020

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PUBLISHED BY: GameDay Sports; info@gamedaysportsmarketing.com

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES: advertising@vikings.nfl.net

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Use the camera app on your smartphone to scan and get the answers you need.



VIKINGS

V S P A C K E R S



TODAY'S GAME IS
PRESENTED BY



SPECIAL TRIBUTE

The words "It Takes All of Us" will be painted at the back line of one end zone, and "End Racism" will be painted at the other end zone.

Players have the option of wearing a helmet decal, and coaches have the option of wearing a hat patch to show support for social justice initiatives.



The 120th Border Battle will be the seventh time the Vikings and Packers have met in a Week 1 game, but it is the first rivalry game hosted by Minnesota on Kickoff Weekend.

Vikings Head Coach Mike Zimmer is entering his seventh season with Minnesota and is 57-38-1. Matt LaFleur guided Green Bay to a 13-3 mark last season, his first in charge of the Packers.

The teams have combined to win 11 of the past 13 NFC North titles.

FIRST GLANCE

Vikings Defense vs. Packers Offense:

Minnesota's defense features new starters on the defensive line and at cornerback. The

unit will open against Aaron Rodgers, who has passed for 4,000 yards in eight of his 12 seasons as a starter.

Vikings Offense Vs. Packers Defense:

Tackles Riley Reiff and Brian O'Neill will have their hands full against edge rushers Za'Darius Smith, who recorded a career-best 3.5 sacks against the Vikings in December, and Preston Smith. They combined for 25.5 sacks in 2019. Minnesota's offense reduced its sacks allowed from 40 in 2018 to 28 last season.

SERIES RESULTS

- Vikings W-L-T vs. Packers: 54-62-3 (including 1-1 in the playoffs)
- Home: 29-29-0; Away: 25-33-3
- Last time in regular season in Minnesota: Packers defeated Vikings 23-10 on Dec. 23, 2019

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The National Anthem will be performed by Sounds of Blackness, a Grammy-winning ensemble group from the Twin Cities that performs multiple genres of music to deliver messages of "hope, unity, love and peace for all humankind."



The Vikings organization is committed to causes that promote equality and ensure social justice, voting rights and positive reforms. In addition to having heartfelt discussions with teammates, Vikings players have committed to Be the Change. Players will have the option of wearing a "Be the Change" or an NFL Players Association T-shirt during warm-ups. The backs of the "Be the Change" shirts display 200 names of individuals who have died and challenge all to "Say Their Names."



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WITH THESE EXCITING PROMOTIONS.



VIKINGS FANS IN THE STANDS PRESENTED BY CARIBOU COFFEE

While there are no fans at U.S. Bank Stadium to start the season, we still want Vikings Fans in the Stands. Presented by Caribou Coffee, Vikings fans can purchase a cutout of themselves in their game-day gear and be placed in the stands for the entire season! 100% of net proceeds will go to charitable community causes.

HY-VEE FUEL SAVER PROMOTION

THEY score, YOU save! Shop your local Hy-Vee store following game day to receive great fuel savings. Simply spend the same amount that the Vikings scored, and earn a 1¢ credit on your Hy-Vee Fuel Saver + Perks® card. If the Vikings score 14 points, spend \$14 or more the next day and earn 14¢ credit on your Hy-Vee Fuel Saver + Perks® card. SKOL! Promotion valid at all Minnesota Hy-Vee locations; some limitations apply. See store for details.



CENTURYLINK LEGENDS CONNECTION

Don't miss your chance to virtually meet fan-favorite football heroes all season. CenturyLink has teamed up with your Minnesota Vikings for the Legends Connection Meet & Greet Sweepstakes – an opportunity for a 30-minute virtual Meet & Greet with a Vikings Legend. For a chance to win, enter online at vikings.com/fans/centurylink-promo.



KWIK TRIP OPENING DRIVE

The Kwik Trip opening drive contestant for Week 1 is Jake Meyers from New Richmond, Wisconsin. Jake will win \$25 for every yard earned on the Vikings opening drive plus a \$500 bonus for a field goal or \$1,000 for an opening drive touchdown. To enter, visit your neighborhood Kwik Trip today.



60 GREATEST VIKINGS FANS PRESENTED BY U.S. BANK

In celebration of 60 seasons of Vikings football, the Vikings are naming 60 of their most passionate supporters to the 60 Greatest Fans Team. If you know someone with unyielding dedication to the Vikings, nominate that fan today at Vikings.com/60Fans.



➔ Check out page 42 to learn about the first seven fans to make the team.

SKOL SCRIBBLES CONTEST DRIVEN BY POLARIS

Enter the Skol Scribbles contest by submitting your idea for weekly photo transformations. You could win one of 16 weekly prize packs from Polaris. Follow the @vikings on Instagram or Snapchat Stories to learn more.



PROMOTIONS

FRONTLINE FEATURES PRESENTED BY MILLER LITE

Frontline Features will recognize extraordinary Vikings fans throughout the season who have overcome challenges to make a difference for others during the COVID-19 pandemic. This week's honoree is James Christman. Working with The Sanneh Foundation, James has exceeded the everyday duties of his job by assisting the service of meals to more than 50,000 families in need since the pandemic hit. His commitment is evident in the long hours he devotes to rescuing and distributing fresh food around the Twin Cities to those who need it most. Nominate others at vikings.com/frontline.



BUFFALO WILD WINGS SACKS FOR APPS

Buffalo Wild Wings brings you "Sacks for Apps" during all Vikings home and away games this season! When the Vikings record 3.0 or more sacks in a game, all fans score a free appetizer with a minimum purchase of \$5. Offer is valid for three days after each eligible game. Visit vikings.com/bww for more details.



U.S. BANK HOMETOWN HEROES

The Hometown Heroes for Week 1 are two members of the Twin Cities community who have donated their time and resources to give back to those in need. In 2017, Sara and Jamil Stamschror-Lott founded Creative Kuponya, an organization designed to provide therapy and healing to members in the community. On top of their work with Creative Kuponya, both Jamil and Sara work with numerous organizations to bring equality, social justice and mental health to the forefront of our society. Jamil and Sara also serve as the Institute Director and Wellness Director at All Square, which is a civil rights organization working to employ and empower people impacted by the justice system. To nominate a U.S. Bank Hometown Hero, visit vikings.com/fans/promos/hometown-hero.



MYSTIC LAKE PASS OR PLAY



"Pass or Play" is a free game, presented by Mystic Lake, now available in the Vikings App that allows users to set weekly rosters. You will be dealt three cards at each position with the opportunity to "keep" the player on the first card or pass and move on to your next card. Once you pass on a player, there's no going back. If you pass on all three cards, you can come back the next day for one new card. The top three users each week will be eligible for prizes.

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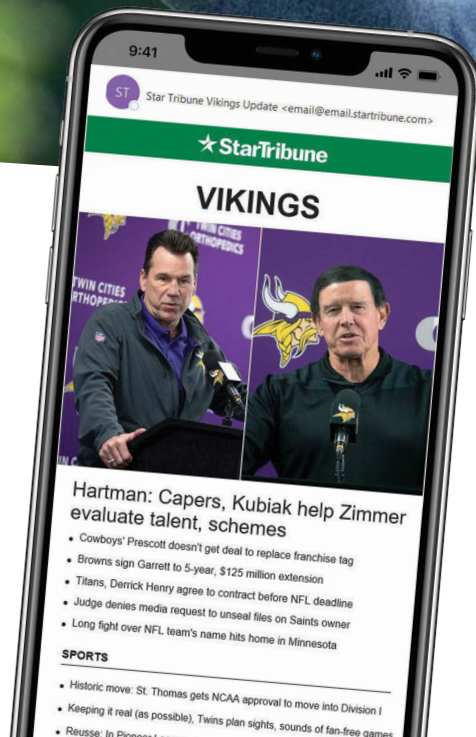




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THE BEST USE THE BEST



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Thielen is entering his 13th Border Battle and ninth as a starting receiver, having posted multiple prolific games against the Packers in recent years. He also recorded the first four receptions of his career in Green Bay in 2014, totaling 57 yards on five targets during mop-up duty at Lambeau Field. In Minnesota's return trip the following year, Thielen busted free for a 41-yard run on a fake punt. The play converted a fourth-and-3 on the opening drive of the game, a "no guts, no glory" affair that the Vikings claimed 20-13 to win the NFC North. Thielen has since become a starter, two-time Pro Bowler and household name beyond the stretches of his native state. Other highlights against the Packers include a pair of 12-catch performances. He set a team record against Green Bay with 202 yards and added two touchdowns in 2016. In 2018, Thielen racked up another dozen grabs for 131 yards and a score.

GETTING OPEN IN OPENERS

Back from an injury-hampered 2019, Thielen is aiming to start 2020 in the same fashion he has other seasons since becoming a starter in 2016. On the past four Kickoff Weekends, Thielen has totaled 22 receptions for 356 yards and a score, helping Minnesota win all four games.

64
OF 20+

Thielen has recorded 64 career receptions that have gained at least 20 yards, including 14 against Green Bay. He has had three such plays in three separate games.

2019 SEASON LEADERS

Passing (Yds)	Kirk Cousins	3,603
Rushing (Yds)	Dalvin Cook	1,135
Receiving (Yds)	Stefon Diggs	1,130
Tackles	Eric Kendricks	130*
Sacks	Danielle Hunter	14.5
Interceptions	Anthony Harris	6
KOR (Yds)	Ameer Abdullah	325
PR (Avg.)	Mike Hughes	7.4

*Team stats

2020 SCHEDULE

1	9/13	Green Bay Packers
2	9/20	at Indianapolis Colts
3	9/27	Tennessee Titans
4	10/4	at Houston Texans
5	10/11	at Seattle Seahawks
6	10/18	Atlanta Falcons
7	10/25	Bye Week
8	11/1	at Green Bay Packers
9	11/8	Detroit Lions
10	11/16	at Chicago Bears
11	11/22	Dallas Cowboys
12	11/29	Carolina Panthers
13	12/6	Jacksonville Jaguars
14	12/13	at Tampa Bay Buccaneers
15	12/20	Chicago Bears
16	12/25	at New Orleans Saints
17	1/3	at Detroit Lions

TOP 2 AGAINST PACKERS

RUSHING YARDS

210	Adrian Peterson on 21 attempts at Green Bay (Dec. 2, 2012)
199	Adrian Peterson on 34 attempts vs. Green Bay (Dec. 30, 2012)

PASSING YARDS

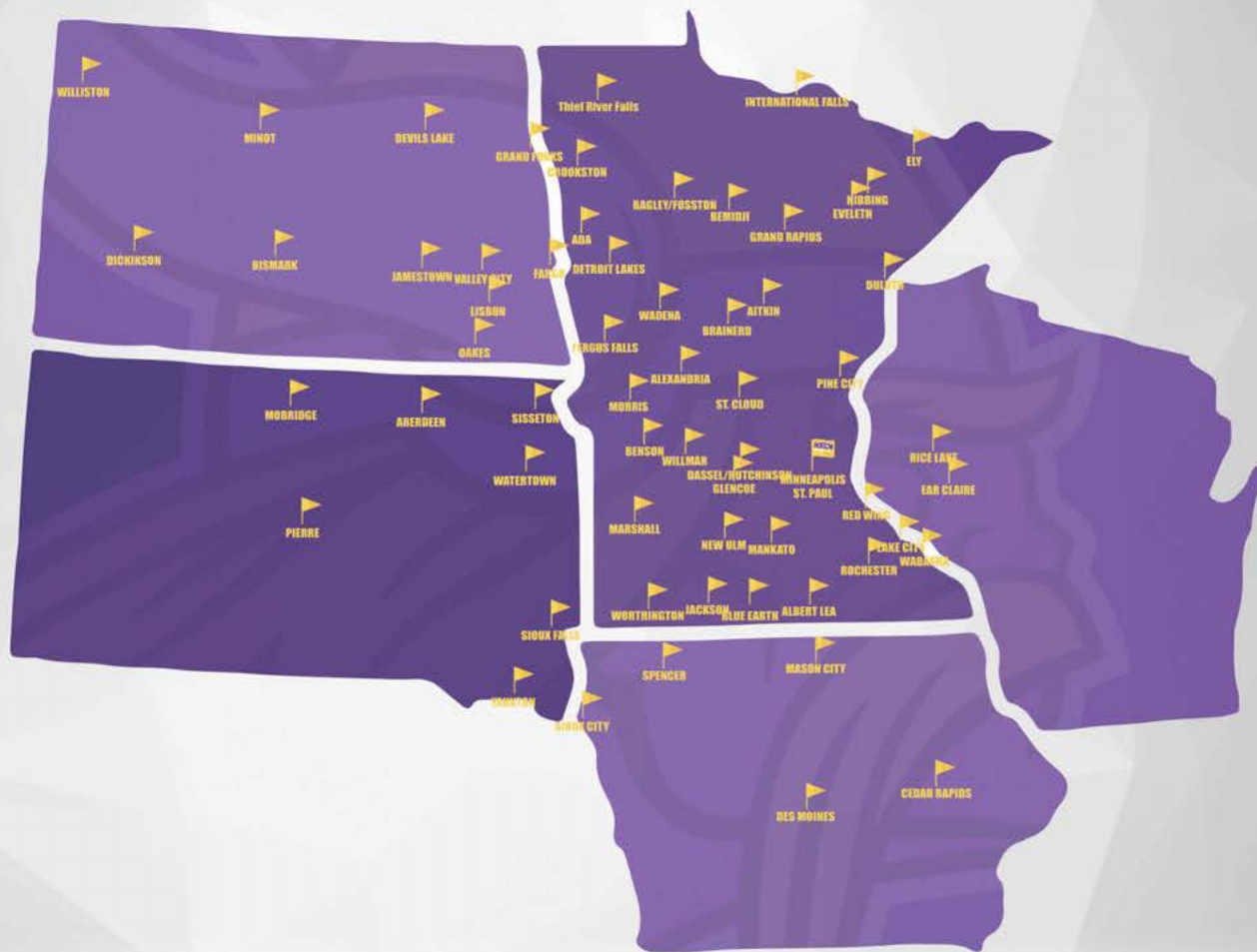
442	Randall Cunningham on 20-of-32 passing at Green Bay (Oct. 5, 1998)
425	Kirk Cousins on 35-of-48 passing at Green Bay (Sept. 16, 2018)

RECEIVING YARDS

202	Adam Thielen on 12 catches at Green Bay (Dec. 24, 2016)
190	Randy Moss on five catches at Green Bay (Oct. 5, 1998)

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A fifth-round pick in 2017, Jones is poised to open his fourth pro season by playing in his sixth Border Battle. He'll try to pick up where he left off against Minnesota in 2019. Jones rushed 23 times in each game against the Vikings last season. He totaled 116 yards and a score and added four receptions for 34 yards at Green Bay in Week 2. The encore game was even better for Jones, who rushed for a career-high 154 yards and two scores, averaging 6.7 yards per carry in Week 16 at U.S. Bank Stadium. His career average of 5.02 yards per carry ranks first in team history among players with at least 300 rushes. It was high-pointed by his 5.47 yards per rush in 2018, which led the NFL. Jones has totaled 2,260 rushing yards on 450 carries and has caught 84 passes for 702 yards with four scores through the air.

STRIDE FOR STRIDE

Jones has doubled his rushing touchdowns in each of the past three seasons, going from four in 2017 to eight in 2018 and 16 in 2019. His total last season tied Tennessee's Derrick Henry for tops in the NFL. Interestingly, the number of games Jones has started has matched his rushing scores in each season.

28

IN 3

The 28 rushing touchdowns totaled by Jones from 2017-19 are the most by a Packers player in his first three NFL seasons.

2019 SEASON LEADERS

Passing (Yds)	Aaron Rodgers	4,002
Rushing (Yds)	Aaron Jones	1,084
Receiving (Yds)	Davante Adams	997
Tackles	Blake Martinez	155
Sacks	Za'Darius Smith	13.5
Interceptions	Kevin King	5
KOR (Yds)	Tremon Smith	303
PR (Avg.)	Tyler Ervin	9.6

2020 SCHEDULE

1	9/13	at Minnesota Vikings
2	9/20	Detroit Lions
3	9/27	at New Orleans Saints
4	10/5	Atlanta Falcons
5	10/11	Bye Week
6	10/18	at Tampa Bay Buccaneers
7	10/25	at Houston Texans
8	11/1	Minnesota Vikings
9	11/5	at San Francisco 49ers
10	11/15	Jacksonville Jaguars
11	11/22	at Indianapolis Colts
12	11/29	Chicago Bears
13	12/6	Philadelphia Eagles
14	12/13	at Detroit Lions
15	12/20	Carolina Panthers
16	12/27	Tennessee Titans
17	1/3	at Chicago Bears

TOP 2 AGAINST PACKERS

RUSHING YARDS

164	Jim Taylor on 17 attempts in Minnesota (Oct. 14, 1962)
161	Ahman Green on 25 attempts in Minnesota (Dec. 17, 2000)

PASSING YARDS

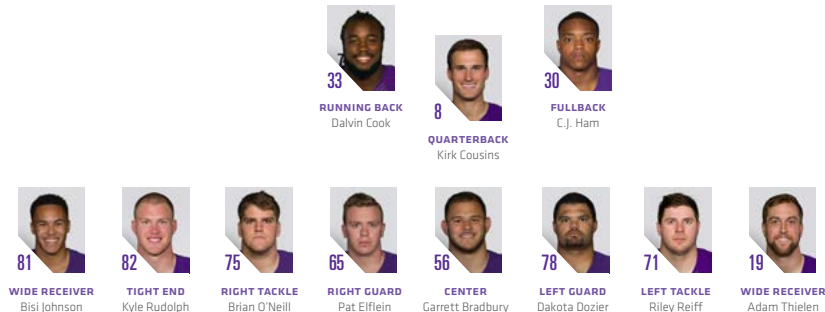
384	Aaron Rodgers on 26-of-37 passing in Minnesota (Oct. 5, 2009)
383	Lynn Dickey on 23-of-41 passing at Green Bay (Oct. 23, 1983)

RECEIVING YARDS

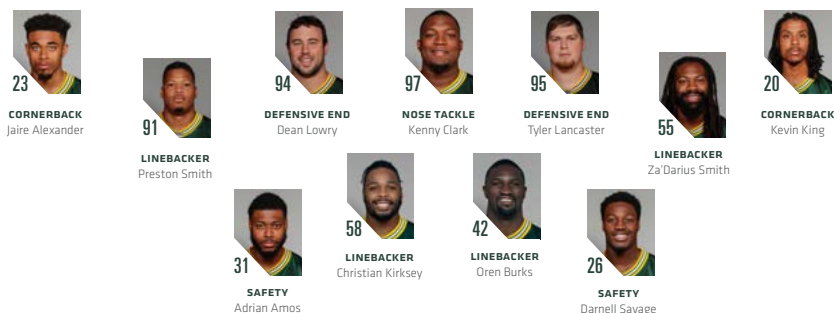
191	Donald Driver on six catches in Minnesota (Nov. 12, 2006)
162	Donald Driver on 11 catches in Minnesota (Dec. 24, 2004)

VIKINGS ROSTER

2	Britton Colquitt	P
4	Sean Mannion	QB
5	Dan Bailey	K
8	Kirk Cousins	QB
11	Tajaé Sharpe	WR
12	Chad Beebe	WR
17	K.J. Osborn	WR
18	Justin Jefferson	WR
19	Adam Thielen	WR
20	Jeff Gladney	CB
21	Mike Hughes	CB
22	Harrison Smith	S
23	Mike Boone	RB
24	Holton Hill	CB
25	Alexander Mattison	RB
27	Cameron Dantzler	CB
29	Kris Boyd	CB
30	C.J. Ham	FB
31	Ameer Abdullah	RB
33	Dalvin Cook	RB
38	Harrison Hand	CB
41	Anthony Harris	S
45	Troy Dye	LB
50	Eric Wilson	LB
51	Hercules Mata'afa	DT
52	Eddie Yarbrough	DE
54	Eric Kendricks	LB
55	Anthony Barr	LB
56	Garrett Bradbury	C
57	Ryan Connelly	LB
58	Austin Cutting	LS
65	Pat Elflein	G
69	Rashod Hill	T
71	Riley Reiff	T
72	Ezra Cleveland	T
73	Dru Samia	G
74	Olisaemeka Udoh	T
75	Brian O'Neill	T
78	Dakota Dozier	G
81	Bisi Johnson	WR
82	Kyle Rudolph	TE
83	Tyler Conklin	TE
84	Irv Smith Jr.	TE
85	Dan Chisena	WR
90	Jalyn Holmes	DE
91	Yannick Ngakoue	DE
92	James Lynch	DT
93	Shamar Stephen	DT
94	Jaleel Johnson	DT
95	Ifeadi Odenigbo	DE
96	Armon Watts	DT
98	D.J. Wonnum	DE
99	Danielle Hunter	DE

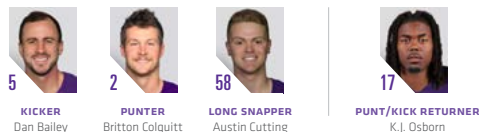


VIKINGS OFFENSE



PACKERS DEFENSE

VIKINGS SPECIAL TEAMS



MINNESOTA VIKINGS DEPTH CHART & ROSTER



OFFENSE


WR	B. Johnson	Jefferson	Chisena
LT	Reiff	R. Hill	
LG	Dozier	Cleveland	
C	Bradbury		
RG	Elflein	Samia	
RT	O'Neill	Udoh	
TE	Rudolph	I. Smith Jr.	Conklin
WR	Thielen	Sharpe	Beebe
QB	Cousins	Mannion	
FB	Ham		
HB	Cook	Mattison	Abdullah

DEFENSE


LDE	Hunter	Holmes	Yarbrough
NT	Stephen	Watts	
DT	Johnson	Mata'afa	Lynch
RDE	Ngakoue	Odenigbo	Wonnum
WLB	Wilson	Connelly	
MLB	Kendricks	Dye	
SLB	Barr		
LCB	Hughes	Dantzler	Hand
RCB	Hill	Gladney	Boyd
SS	H. Smith		
FS	Harris		

PACKERS ROSTER


2	Mason Crosby	K
6	JK Scott	P
8	Tim Boyle	QB
10	Jordan Love	QB
12	Aaron Rodgers	QB
13	Allen Lazard	WR
17	Davante Adams	WR
19	E. St. Brown	WR
20	Kevin King	CB
23	Jaire Alexander	CB
24	Raven Greene	S
25	Will Redmond	S
26	Darnell Savage	S
28	AJ Dillon	RB
29	Ka'dar Hollman	CB
30	Jamaal Williams	RB
31	Adrian Amos	S
32	Tyler Ervin	RB
33	Aaron Jones	RB
35	Parry Nickerson	CB
36	Vernon Scott	S
37	Josh Jackson	CB
39	Chandon Sullivan	CB
42	Oren Burks	LB
43	Hunter Bradley	LS
44	Ty Summers	LB
52	Rashan Gary	LB
53	Jonathan Garvin	LB
55	Za'Darius Smith	LB
56	Randy Ramsey	LB
58	Christian Kirksey	LB
62	Lucas Patrick	G
63	Corey Linsley	C
65	Lane Taylor	G
69	David Bakhtiari	T
71	Rick Wagner	T
73	Yosh Nijman	T
74	Elgton Jenkins	G
76	Jon Runyan	G
77	Billy Turner	G/T
81	Josiah Deguara	TE
83	M. Valdez-Scantling	WR
85	Robert Tonyan	TE
86	Malik Taylor	WR
87	Jace Sternberger	TE
89	Mercedes Lewis	TE
90	Montravius Adams	DL
91	Preston Smith	LB
94	Dean Lowry	DL
95	Tyler Lancaster	DL
96	Kingsley Keke	DL
97	Kenny Clark	DL




50
LINEBACKER
Eric Wilson




41
SAFETY
Anthony Harris




54
LINEBACKER
Eric Kendricks




22
SAFETY
Harrison Smith




55
LINEBACKER
Anthony Barr




24
CORNERBACK
Holton Hill




91
DEFENSIVE END
Yannick Ngakoue




93
NOSE TACKLE
Shamar Stephen



94
DEFENSIVE TACKLE
Jaleel Johnson




99
DEFENSIVE END
Danielle Hunter




21
CORNERBACK
Mike Hughes

VIKINGS DEFENSE


PACKERS OFFENSE




17
WIDE RECEIVER
Davante Adams




69
LEFT TACKLE
David Bakhtiari




74
LEFT GUARD
Elgton Jenkins




63
CENTER
Corey Linsley




65
RIGHT GUARD
Lane Taylor




77
RIGHT TACKLE
Billy Turner




89
TIGHT END
Mercedes Lewis




13
WIDE RECEIVER
Allen Lazard



83
WIDE RECEIVER
Marquez Valdez-Scantling



12
QUARTERBACK
Aaron Rodgers



33
RUNNING BACK
Aaron Jones

PACKERS SPECIAL TEAMS



2
KICKER
Mason Crosby



6
PUNTER
JK Scott



43
LONG SNAPPER
Hunter Bradley



32
PUNT/KICK RETURNER
Tyler Ervin

GREEN BAY PACKERS DEPTH CHART & ROSTER



OFFENSE

DEFENSE

WR	D. Adams	St. Brown		DE	Lowry	M. Adams	
LT	Bakhtiari	Nijman		NT	Clark	M. Adams	
LG	Jenkins	Runyan		DE	Lancaster	Keke	
C	Linsley	Patrick		OLB	P. Smith	Ramsey	Garvin
RG	Taylor	Patrick		ILB	Kirksey	Summers	
RT	Turner	Wagner		ILB	Burks	Summers	
TE	Lewis	Tonyan	Sternberger	OLB	Z. Smith	Gary	
WR	Lazard	Taylor		CB	Alexander	Sullivan	Hollman
WR	V-Scantling	St. Brown		CB	King	Jackson	Nickerson
QB	Rodgers	Boyle	Love	S	Amos	Redmond	Scott
RB	Jones	Williams	Ervin	S	Savage	Greene	

*Depth charts are unofficial and as of print deadline (Sept. 9)

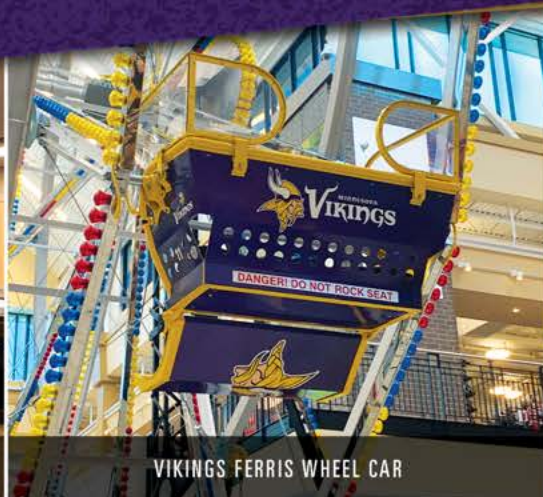


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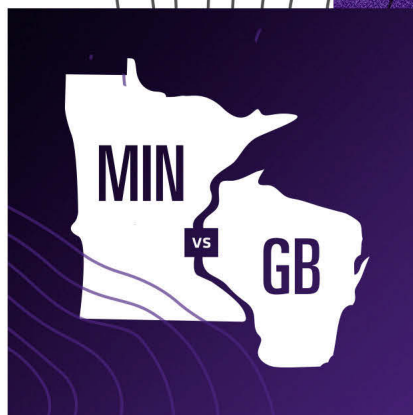
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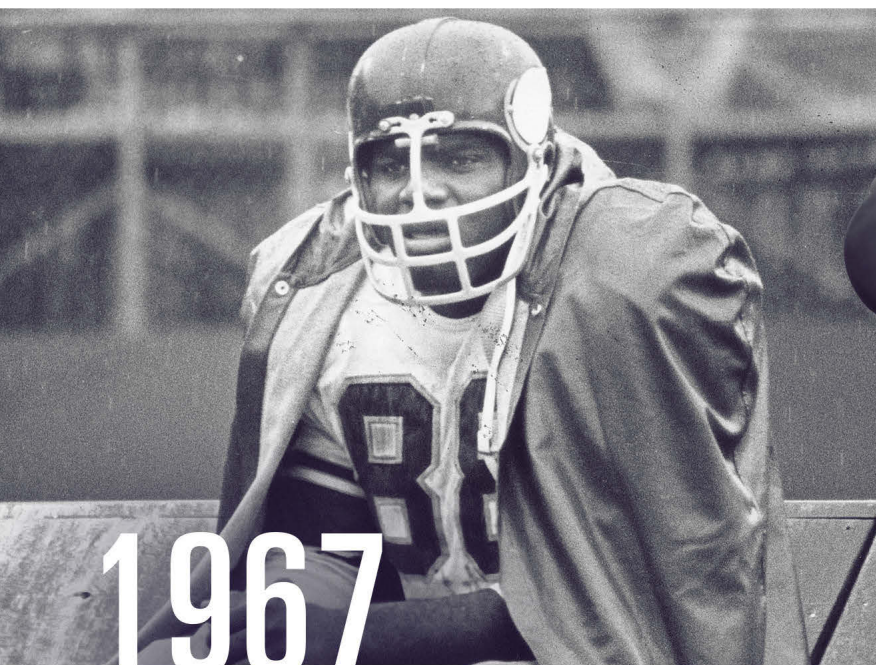
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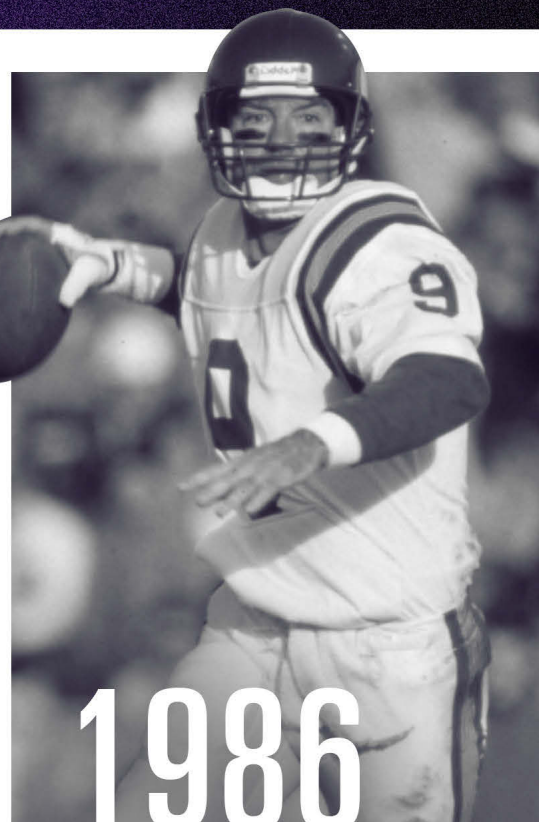


60 SEASONS

OF BORDER BATTLES



1967

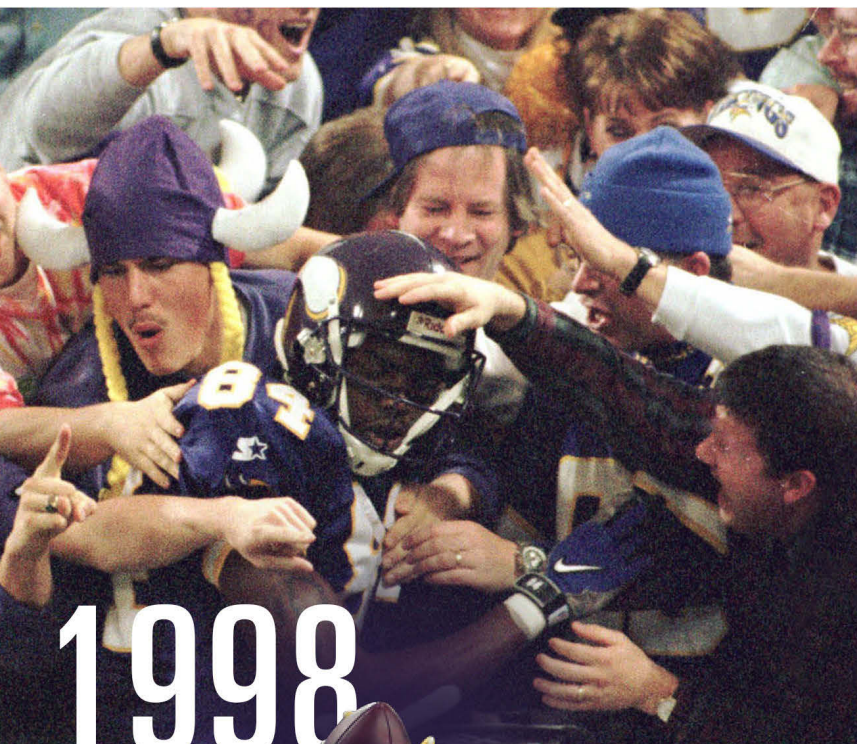


1986



1971

1967: Alan Page helped the Vikings stun the Packers in a 10-7 victory at Milwaukee on Oct. 15. It was his fifth professional game. 1971: The Vikings overcame a six-point deficit in the fourth quarter by clamping down on the Packers and scoring 17 unanswered points for a 24-13 win in Green Bay. 1986: Tommy Kramer led Minnesota to 42-7 and 32-6 victories in a season sweep of Green Bay. He totaled seven touchdown passes and only one interception against the Packers that season.



1998: Randy Moss began leaping into the stands at the Metrodome as a rookie. He totaled 13 catches for 343 yards and three scores against Green Bay that season. (Note: Make sure rookie isn't missing an I)

2009: Brett Favre experienced a different shade in the Border Battle, leading Minnesota to a pair of wins in his first two games against his former team. 2016: Kyle Rudolph caught the first Vikings touchdown at U.S. Bank Stadium, helping Minnesota win its inaugural game at the venue 17-14.



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DIVISION



Joe Browne

BY CRAIG PETERS

Believe it or not, the Border Battle between Minnesota and Green Bay nearly wasn't a divisional contest for the entirety of the past six decades.

In fact, the odds were overwhelmingly (80 to 20 percent) stacked against Minnesota joining the NFC Central as part of the NFL's merger with the American Football League for 1970.

Years of Vikings history – and the team's identity-shaping participation in the "Norse" or "Black and Blue" division – were impacted by a small piece of paper drawn from a flower vase by a woman from Nebraska.

After the NFL and American Football League agreed to a merger on June 8, 1966, to go into effect for the 1970 season, the NFL began the process of assigning 26 total teams across the NFC East, Central, West and AFC East, Central and West. The AFC was formed by adding the Colts, Steelers and Browns from the NFL to the 10 AFL teams, and division alignment was quickly resolved for that conference.

NFC teams, however, underwent considerable lobbying and disagreements that spilled into mid-January 1970. According to Joe Browne, who worked in the NFL's PR department for 50 years, all teams desired divisions with large stadiums (for bigger gate receipts), at least one foe based in a warm-weather city and pushovers. Unable to please everyone, NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle requested a chalkboard with five plans wheeled into the room.

Five numbered pieces of paper were placed in an empty vase. Four of the five plans assigned the Vikings to the NFC East, but Rozelle's secretary, Thelma Elkjer, drew scenario No. 3, placing Minnesota in the NFC Central.

Browne recalled the atmosphere inside the meeting room at the NFL headquarters.

"If you try to picture the scene in the small conference room, you should think more along

the lines of the way C-SPAN covers Congress than a Jennifer Lopez-Super Bowl halftime production," Browne said. "It was dramatic, but there were no bells and whistles attached."

Browne said the piece of paper pulled by Elkjer and the vase have "fallen away into the great football unknown ... kind of like Sid Hartman's typewriter from the first Vikings game he covered back in '61."

After assignment, Jim Finks, the Vikings General Manager from 1964-73, was quoted in the *Minneapolis Tribune* on Jan. 17, 1970: "We've always taken the position we wanted to stay with the same teams. Well, that's where we are, and we're happy. ... Our only qualms are over the fact that we did not get a warm-weather city in with us. But the plusses outweigh the minuses."

The randomized selection of fate stemmed from an unyielding gridlock after teams "submitted more than 100 different combinations" of realignment proposals.

VIKINGS DIVISION ASSIGNMENTS

1961-66 NFL Western Conference:

Baltimore Colts, Chicago, Detroit, Green Bay, Los Angeles Rams, Minnesota, San Francisco

1967-69 NFL Central: Chicago, Detroit, Green Bay, Minnesota

1970-2001 NFC Central: Chicago, Detroit, Green Bay, Minnesota and Tampa Bay (1976-2001)

2002-Present NFC North: Chicago, Detroit, Green Bay, Minnesota

1970 NFC REALIGNMENT PLANS

PLAN 1

EAST	NYG, WAS PHI, MIN, ATL
CENTRAL	CHI, GB DET, NO
WEST	LAR, SF DAL, STL

PLAN 2

EAST	NYG, WAS PHI, MIN
CENTRAL	DAL, NO ATL, STL
WEST	LAR, SF CHI, GB, DET

PLAN 3

EAST	NYG, WAS PHI, DAL, STL
CENTRAL	CHI, GB DET, MIN
WEST	LAR, SF ATL, NO

PLAN 4

EAST	NYG, WAS PHI, STL, MIN
CENTRAL	CHI, GB DET, ATL
WEST	LAR, SF DAL, NO

PLAN 5

EAST	NYG, WAS PHI, DET, MIN
CENTRAL	CHI, GB DAL, STL
WEST	LAR, SF NO, ATL

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ANTHONY HARRIS

BY LINDSEY YOUNG

This week's Border Battle between the Vikings and Packers will mark Anthony Harris' second season opener as a full-time starter.

Harris stepped in alongside All-Pro safety Harrison Smith partway through the 2018 campaign and hasn't looked back since.

He opened 2019 by picking off two passes and recovering a fumble against Atlanta, becoming the 15th Vikings player to record three takeaways in one game.

Harris finished the season tied for the league lead with six interceptions. He also recorded 60 tackles (coaches' tally), a tackle for loss and 11 passes defended.

He's had quite the journey since joining the Vikings as an undrafted free agent in 2015.

Harris has made sure to appreciate every part of the process.

"Each year just taking it one step at a time, whether it's OTAs or training camp and then into the season. It's been a lot of fun," Harris said. "[I've been] living in the moment, enjoying the time in the locker room with the guys, enjoying the moments on the field and continuing to take all the experiences and continuing to strive.

"I'm taking motivation from

individuals back home watching and people all over the world and trying to be an inspiration while performing the game that I love to play," he added.

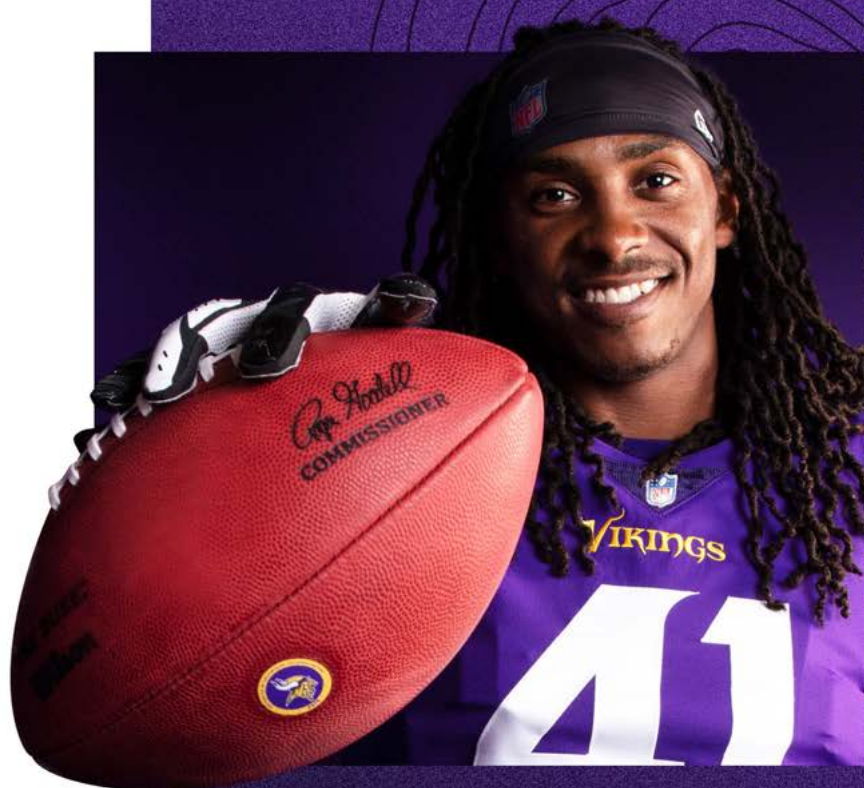
Harris is on the Vikings Social Justice Committee. He has participated in multiple discussions, including a summer session with Anthony Barr for Positive Coaching Alliance.

After Minnesota practiced at U.S. Bank Stadium last month, Harris described the team's ongoing efforts.

"We're trying to bridge the gap, getting to know each other better, getting to know the community better, and we need each person at home to try to impact one life," Harris said. "If we can do that, change perspectives, get to know each other better, learn to treat each other as human and see each other as individual people, and our uniqueness, then we can one day accept each other, and we'll be halfway closer to our goal. So one step at a time, we're taking it together, and we'll just ask you to join the fight."

We caught up with Harris to chat about his chemistry with Smith, assuming more of a leadership role and his expectations for the 2020 defense.





"I've always viewed myself in that leadership role, speaking up and giving direction where I think it's really needed. I'm not really one to speak just because people will listen."

- ANTHONY HARRIS

Q. How have you viewed your role this year in helping lead the younger DBs?

A. "I've always viewed myself in that leadership role, speaking up and giving direction where I think it's really needed. I'm not really one to speak just because people will listen. But I think this year [with] the pandemic, a young team and then the social justice issues, it's been becoming more of a necessity for me to speak up as an individual who's been in the league a while now. ... Coming out undrafted and being unable to physically do anything for the first couple of months [due to injury], I was there and I was in the meetings, but I couldn't actually physically do any of the drills or participate in any of the plays. So this year I was just trying to be there to support them mentally [through the virtual spring programming] - because that's going to be biggest adjustment."

Q. For those who haven't played for Vikings Head Coach Mike Zimmer

previously, what's required to succeed in his defense?

A. "I would say you have to be smart, a quick thinker with being able to process information. You have to be able to tackle in space, and you also have to be able to cover. ... You definitely have to be smart. That's one of the first things, for sure."

Q. How far has the communication between you and Harrison come over the past five seasons?

A. "There was a point where I'd be communicating to him a lot just to make sure we were on the same page, and I think for him it was kind of like, 'I know this, I've got it,' and I'm like, 'Cool, we're actually on the same page.' So then it became a little less communication as far as during the play. Now we kind of build that in during the week, just looking at stuff and really being able to communicate and get to an

understanding where we're seeing it the same way and we can cover each other."

Q. You guys are friends off the field, too. Do you think your cats, Cookie and Ella, and Harrison's dog, Deuce, would get along?

A. "(Laughing) I don't know how that would go, because one of my cats acts like a dog, so I don't know if there might be an ego/pride thing that will get in the way. I'm not sure how that would work out..."

Q. With so many unknowns at the start of this season, what are your expectations for the 2020 defense?

A. "I think the [key] that I see from a defensive standpoint is not letting up and not really taking a step back. We have to take whatever challenges we've faced ... in stride and just step up and be ready to go. [The mindset is] getting better one day at a time, but I think the expectations always remain high."



The 'Water Break' series will post on vikings.com on Wednesdays before home games.

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VIKINGS COMMIT TO

BE THE CHANGE



BY LINDSEY YOUNG

Advocating for societal change isn't unique for the Vikings, who in 2018 established their Social Justice Committee.

But when Minneapolis became the epicenter of new calls for justice after the tragic death of George Floyd on Memorial Day, the team increased its response.

Floyd, a Black man, died in police custody. A video showed a police officer kneeling on his neck for nearly eight minutes.

Several players struggled with the pain. They spoke up, sharing their emotions, and are committing to bring about positive changes.

Last month, a Black man named Jacob Blake was shot seven times in the back by a police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Some NFL teams canceled practices, but the Vikings players instead organized a two-hour team meeting to discuss how they can unite to deliver long-term results.

In a year that likely will be pivotal in our nation's history, the Vikings messaging is clear: they plan to BE THE CHANGE.

Following Minnesota's training camp practice at U.S. Bank Stadium on Aug. 28, the entire team – including coaches – took the field in solidarity as Ameer Abdullah, Kyle Rudolph and Anthony Harris addressed media members.

"We want to be an example of what things can be like. We want to be an example of what our society can look to and where we want to go. But we also want to be at the forefront of change," said Rudolph, who has called the Twin Cities home for 10 years. "I talked to these guys about not getting discouraged.

"This organization has done unbelievable things over the past four years, and things aren't going to change overnight. We've got to keep chipping away," Rudolph added. "We've got to keep chipping away, and we can't get discouraged. We've got to keep fighting.

He closed by saying, "This team is working toward two things: winning a championship and being the change. And we're going to do both of those."

Amid navigation of an offseason program drastically altered by the COVID-19 pandemic, Vikings teammates have continued to make the Twin Cities community a priority.

Rudolph, Danielle Hunter and several other teammates in June participated in a "Change Starts with Me" distribution event to support Minneapolis communities recovering from riots that followed Floyd's death.

Eric Kendricks and Anthony Barr formally met with Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo and phoned NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, and Harris said an impromptu conversation with a police officer in Virginia also provided productive dialogue.

"As a social justice coalition, as a group, as a team and as an organization, we're doing everything we can to build sustainable programs that will help the long-term effects

of the lack of economic progress in lower-income areas [and] the lack of mental health support in some of these areas," Abdullah said.

Harris, entering his sixth season in Minnesota, emphasized that the team is committed to creating change and isn't afraid to ask for help.

"We've having these discussions every day in the locker room [from] different backgrounds," Harris said. "We're trying to bridge the gap, getting to know each other, getting to know the community better – and we need each person at home to try to impact one life.

"If we can change perspectives, get to know each other better, learn to treat each other as humans and see each other as individual people ... then we can one day accept each other, and we'll be halfway closer to our goal," Harris added.

As Minnesota takes the U.S. Bank Stadium field for its 2020 season opener against Green Bay, the Vikings unity goes

far deeper than the Purple jerseys – and they strive to see that togetherness grow throughout society.

"I truly believe that as a people, we have the same fundamental needs," Kendricks said during an NFL Network interview.

"We need love. We need food, things like that. The more we can realize that everyone – together – has these same fundamental needs, the more we'll realize that you and me are so much more alike than we are different. I think if we all embrace a little bit of that, we can start to look out for the person that is next to us, regardless of their sexual orientation, their skin color, where they were brought up at, how they speak.

"I'm going to keep doing what I can. I'm going to keep pushing people, keep having these conversations," he added. "It's emotionally draining, but it's nothing we can't handle ... I love to see all the athletes banding together for this, and I'm going to do my part."

The Wilf family ownership group of the Vikings is supporting the players' passion.

Brothers Mark and Zygi Wilf, along with their cousin Lenny, have championed the Vikings off-field causes since purchasing the team in 2005. The children of Holocaust survivors, Mark and Zygi consistently speak out against injustices. In June, they announced a \$5 million donation to social justice causes.

"[We] continue to be proud of how [the players] are using their platform to productively and peacefully bring awareness to critical issues of racism and injustice with the goal of creating transformational change," Mark, Zygi and the team said in a statement after an Aug. 28 practice at U.S. Bank Stadium. "We are angered and distressed by the continued horrendous acts of violence against members of the Black community [...]. Together with the players, we are committed to taking action in three initial areas: 1) urging citizens to use their right to vote and increasing voter education and registration; 2) supporting the adoption of impactful educational curriculum on racism and Black history; and 3) advocating for law enforcement and criminal justice reform. These are not political issues but rather societal issues, and they cannot be transformed through sports alone. We will work to create further opportunities to engage our fans and Minnesotans as we work to end racism and build a community based on equality, empathy and justice."



View the full message delivered by Abdullah, Harris and Rudolph at U.S. Bank Stadium by scanning the QR code with the camera app on your smartphone.



SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES

The Vikings on Sept. 8 announced nearly \$1 million of a \$5 million donation will go toward the expansion or launch of multiple initiatives in one of three areas of focus:

1. VOTER EDUCATION AND REGISTRATION AWARENESS

Working together with the Minnesota Office of the Secretary of State, the Vikings are using the team's platform to encourage fans to register and safely participate in the electoral process. The Vikings will launch a series of player-led voting content and make it easy for fans to find voting information via vikings.com/bethechange. The team will also help provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for polling workers throughout Minnesota. Additionally, the team has hosted voter educational sessions with the entire Vikings staff and players/coaches in conjunction with Rock the Vote and Secretary of State Steve Simon with the goal of having 100% of the organization registered to vote in the Nov. 3 election.

2. EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM ON RACISM AND BLACK HISTORY

Critical Conversations

In partnership with RISE (Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality), the Vikings will host a series of Critical Conversation sessions with Minnesota High School athletic programs to help address issues of race and injustice. Vikings safety Anthony Harris and linebacker Anthony Barr have spoken to a group of high school coaches to discuss the importance of having these conversations in a team environment. The program with RISE will further formalize the discussions and provide statewide access.

306: Black History Curriculum Expansion

In 2016, with a focus on integrating Black history into mainstream U.S. history and developing courses devoted to the African American experience, the Vikings became the first NFL team to partner with Everfi in an effort to bring a 306 Black History curriculum to Minnesota students. The interactive course informs and inspires today's students through history's most important stories of Black

women and men who overcame obstacles through grit, strength, creativity and intellect. The digital curriculum incorporates videos from Vikings Legends, provides direct-source materials and allows students to explore and reflect on key themes of Black history. Now in its fifth year, the program has since been replicated in multiple NFL markets. The Vikings are expanding the program from 12 to 24 schools.

Project Success

In 2019, the Vikings partnered with Project Success, a Minneapolis-based organization focused on helping kids develop life-skills, support and confidence so they are more successful and engaged during high school and more prepared for life after graduation. The two organizations took 50 students of color from Minneapolis, along with Harris and Vikings running backs C.J. Ham and Ameer Abdullah, to Washington, D.C., for a special experience that included a visit to the National Museum of African American History & Culture. A virtual experience will replace the trip in 2020 because of COVID-19, and a return trip will be planned for 2021.

3. LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

George Floyd Legacy Scholarship

In June, the Vikings created the George Floyd Legacy Scholarship with a \$125,000 endowment that will generate approximately \$5,000 annually to benefit African American graduating seniors in Minneapolis-St. Paul who are pursuing post-secondary education. Meredith "Mimi" Kol-Balfour, a graduate of Minneapolis Southwest who is attending Barnard College, was selected as the inaugural recipient. She was informed via videoconference by Vikings Owner/President Mark Wilf, General Manager Rick Spielman, running backs Alexander Mattison and Abdullah, and linebackers Eric Kendricks and Barr.

All Square

The Vikings will further expand the team's commitment to All Square, a local nonprofit social enterprise that invests in the minds and lives of formerly incarcerated individuals. Centered on a craft grilled cheese restaurant, professional development institute and forthcoming civil rights law firm, All Square's mission is to ensure that those impacted by the criminal justice system have the support and opportunities they deserve to become our country's future leaders, business owners, legal practitioners and entrepreneurs. The Vikings engagement will focus on All Square's Fellow & Fellow Alum Fund.

Additional Initiatives

The Vikings are also increasing the team's investment in and involvement with the following groups:

- Hennepin County & Ramsey County Juvenile Detention Centers
- Jeremiah Program
- The Link
- Page Education Foundation
- People Serving People Facebook and Twitter).

BLACK HISTORY MONTH PANEL



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BY ERIC SMITH

STAND IN THE GAP & SPEAKING OUT

ERIC KENDRICKS
FIRST APPEARS at the
17-second mark of the
70-second video, which
was released on June 4
and features more than
a dozen NFL players.

He wonders aloud what the league would do if he was George Floyd, a 46-year-old man who died May 25 in Minneapolis while in police custody.

At the 22-second mark, Kendricks appears again and proclaims, "I am Ahmaud Arbery."

It is in reference to the unarmed 25-year-old fatally shot by civilians while jogging in Georgia in February.

Kendricks' biggest role in the viral video comes at the 53-second mark. He initially speaks while surrounded by a screenful of

other players before appearing alone. The Vikings linebacker then puts pressure on the league to admit it was wrong in silencing players from peacefully protesting in recent years.

His final speaking part comes at the end, when he proclaims "Black lives matter," along with eight other NFL stars, including fellow Vikings linebacker Anthony Barr.

The collaborative call to action occurred in the wake of Floyd's death. Video recorded by a bystander showed a Minneapolis police officer kneeling on Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes.

Barr, who also appeared multiple times in the player-driven message, explained why he and Kendricks felt the need to make their voices heard.

"It's important for employees of any organization to feel the support of their bosses and the people who run the show," Barr said. "That was really the idea behind that."

"At some point, they need to acknowledge there is stuff that isn't right, and you don't need to be afraid

of offending people on injustice and inequality matters," Barr added. "I think we were able to get the attention of the league on that."

And while the viral video did prompt a video statement from Roger Goodell a few days later – in which the NFL Commissioner admitted the league can improve on a variety of issues – it also highlighted Kendricks' rising status in the fight for social justice.

The linebacker has long been an advocate for social causes, even back in the spring of 2017 when he helped donate \$20,000 to combat childhood hunger in the Twin Cities.

But Kendricks surged to the forefront in response to multiple tragedies, speaking publicly and revealing he was weighed down at times.

"[It's been] pretty emotional. I'm not the only one feeling that way," Kendricks said. "But within that emotion, I feel like there's a lot of optimism."

"Optimism in the sense that, you know, we are starting to realize as athletes, as teammates, the kind of impact we have, and whether it's as

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a team or individually, what direction we're willing to take things and fight for," he added. "Fight for what's right."

Kendricks, who is entering his sixth season in Minnesota, has earned the respect of coaches, teammates and fans with his actions on and off the field since he was a 2015 second-round pick out of UCLA.

In between the white lines, Kendricks has led the Vikings in tackles in each of his first five seasons in the league, establishing himself as a versatile linebacker who can make plays from sideline to sideline.

That was evident as ever in 2019, when the 28-year-old had the best season of his career.

Kendricks recorded 130 combined tackles (according to coaches' stats) and tied for the league lead among linebackers with 12 pass breakups. He added four tackles for loss, two forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries in 15 games.

As a result, Kendricks was Minnesota's lone First-Team All-Pro selection by *The Associated Press* from the 2019 season.

Vikings Co-Defensive Coordinator Adam Zimmer, who also has been Kendricks' position coach for the past five seasons, said it starts with Kendricks being "a tremendous person."

"I'm really proud of him for putting himself

out there and standing up for what he believes in," Zimmer said. "He does everything the right way, is a great kid, a great worker. We're thankful to have him.

"As far as [his] leadership role, guys look to him anyway because of the way he plays. He plays 100 percent all the time, great effort all the time," Zimmer added. "He's a leader by example that way, but he's not afraid to call people out when [necessary]. That has developed with time."

Ten days after Floyd's death, Kendricks delivered a profound and emotional message. The nearly 3-minute long speech came from his heart and described his thoughts on injustices happening in Minnesota and across the nation.

The self-filmed video provided a window into his soul. He filled with emotion as he turned the attention to what he can do to help.

Speaking out is one thing, the linebacker noted, but putting ideas into action is how meaningful changes can be implemented.

"This isn't a problem that is going to be fixed overnight. It's going to take accountability from each of us," Kendricks said. "I say that because I'm applying the pressure to myself as well. I'm applying the pressure to myself to do more."

Kendricks soon put his words into action.

He and Barr flew from California to Minnesota for a formal meeting with Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo on June 6. They attended the session with open ears and minds and learned some of the challenges that Arradondo has faced when trying to implement reforms.

The linebackers also visited All Square, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit restaurant and institute that helps people move past prior criminal convictions.

It wasn't the first time they had shown their support for All Square. In January, the Vikings Social Justice Committee appointed a grant for \$35,000 to All Square that was part of a \$250,000 allotment provided by the Wilf family ownership group.

Kendricks has also continued his commitment to those in the Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center, where he wants youth to know that he is there to listen and support them.

Kendricks visited the Juvenile Detention Center three times in person in 2018 and another four times in 2019.

With the COVID-19 pandemic restricting in-person visits, Kendricks has held monthly virtual meetings with those in the center since

Photo taken in November 2019 at All Square



"It's going to take accountability from each of us...I'm applying the pressure to myself as well. I'm applying the pressure to myself to

DO MORE."

- ERIC KENDRICKS



Scan this code with your smart phone to watch a heartfelt message Kendricks posted in early June.

April. By the time the 2020 regular season concludes, Kendricks is scheduled to make nine total virtual visits.

Kendricks' focus has also been on voter education and registration.

After publicly asking the NFL to do more for social justice, Kendricks and Barr hopped on the phone with Commissioner Goodell in early June.

With 2020 being a major election year, Kendricks wants to encourage voting participation. The team has a goal of registering all players, coaches and staff members to vote.

"Now I'm just like, 'OK, what's going to be next? How are we going to take this and create real change?' That's the thing, we've gotta educate ourselves on laws," Kendricks said. "We've gotta educate ourselves politically. Whoever you may want to vote for or vice versa [is fine], but we need to educate ourselves about the importance of voting in general.

"These things all coincide with each other, and I'm just glad to see everybody unifying in the sports world to bring these issues to light," Kendricks added.

Whether it has been over the past few months, or in recent years, Kendricks has steadily been raising his voice and using his platform to push for improvements in the world.

A member of the Vikings Social Justice Committee (which was founded in 2018), the energetic linebacker is encouraging his teammates to be proactive in helping him along the way.

"Eric's someone who's not only talking the talk right now ... but he's walking the walk," said Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins. "He's

been a great leader for us through the Social Justice Committee. He's done a lot to educate himself, he's done a lot to have great conversations with other people, including myself.

"He's been big on, 'What are real, tangible steps that we can take?' He asks those questions in humility and wants to get answers, and wants to work to find answers," Cousins added. "That takes time, that takes energy, but he's willing to put in the work to do that. He [is] taking very seriously the platform [he has]. It's been an inspiration and an encouragement for me to just be able to be alongside that kind of class and character."

Kendricks is well-aware that real change won't happen overnight. He said as much in early June.

He will be relentless in standing up for what's right and speaking out against what's wrong.

"A lot of these issues I've felt really strongly about throughout my whole career, but whether I decided to speak up so actively about it was kind of my choice at the time," Kendricks said. "I feel like since then I've definitely educated myself. I encourage everyone to just further educate themselves on the topic and ask questions and have the difficult conversations and just surround yourself with people who challenge you and keep this at the forefront of conversation because these are important issues.

"Football is cool, I love playing football, I love going out there and representing myself like that," Kendricks added, "but if I can represent my family in other ways, like social justice issues or things like that, that affect my community, I want to be able to do that because I do have a platform."

"Say her name! Breonna Taylor," has been chanted by protesters in the months since the 26-year-old was fatally shot while sleeping in her bed in Louisville, Kentucky.

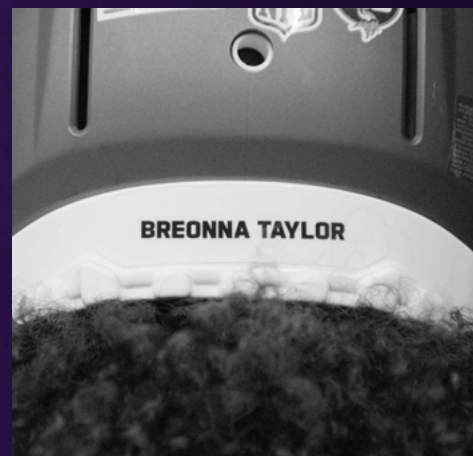
The Black E.M.T. with a bright future died on March 13, just as the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to reveal its impact in America. Taylor's case gained increased notoriety after the death of George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis on Memorial Day.

Unlike Floyd's case in which four officers have been charged after a bystander's video showed one kneeling on Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes, there's no video of what happened at Taylor's apartment. No charges have been filed in the Taylor case, which remains under review.

Officers were trying to locate an ex-boyfriend of Taylor's and issued a no-knock warrant, surging into the apartment. Taylor's boyfriend Kenneth Walker feared an intruder and fired a shot. Police returned fire, and Taylor was struck five times.

The New York Times produced a documentary focusing on Taylor's life and its tragic ending that premiered on FX and streamed on Hulu on Sept. 4. The documentary includes dozens of interviews and a review of more than 1,500 pages of police records, evidence logs, 911 calls and surveillance photos.

The case has resonated with many, including Eric Kendricks, who turned 28 in February. He will wear the name "Breonna Taylor" on a helmet decal throughout the season and continue to join others who believe that justice has not been served in the case.





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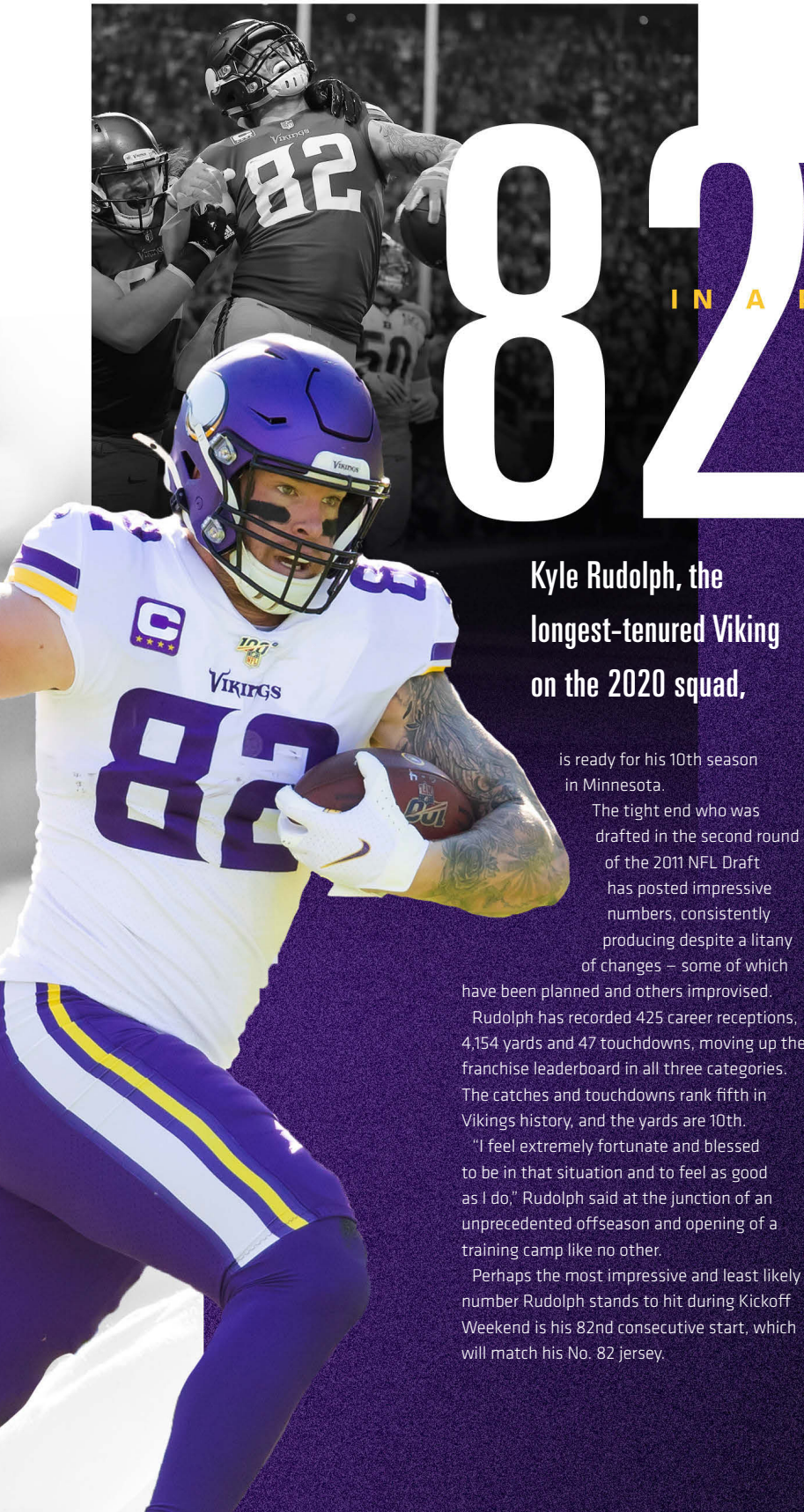
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Kyle Rudolph, the longest-tenured Viking on the 2020 squad,

is ready for his 10th season in Minnesota.

The tight end who was drafted in the second round of the 2011 NFL Draft has posted impressive numbers, consistently producing despite a litany of changes – some of which

have been planned and others improvised.

Rudolph has recorded 425 career receptions, 4,154 yards and 47 touchdowns, moving up the franchise leaderboard in all three categories. The catches and touchdowns rank fifth in Vikings history, and the yards are 10th.

"I feel extremely fortunate and blessed to be in that situation and to feel as good as I do," Rudolph said at the junction of an unprecedented offseason and opening of a training camp like no other.

Perhaps the most impressive and least likely number Rudolph stands to hit during Kickoff Weekend is his 82nd consecutive start, which will match his No. 82 jersey.

BY CRAIG PETERS

IN A ROW FOR NO. 82

"In order to play 82 games in a row, you have to have good luck," Rudolph said. "No matter how hard you work on the field, no matter how hard you work off the field, freak things happen throughout the course of games."

An uncontrollable play occurred at Dallas in 2013. Rudolph ended the play with a touchdown and a broken foot after Cowboys safety Barry Church missed a tackle and landed on Rudolph's foot.

Secondly, Rudolph credits his comprehensive plan of taking care of his body.

"I was banged up early in my career, kind of late in college and early in the NFL, battling some soft tissue injuries, thinking I was doing all of the right things to stay on the field, and I wasn't," Rudolph said. "I kind of changed the way I trained, changed the way I take care of my body. I've gotten myself into a routine in the offseason, but also from Monday to Saturday to be able to go and play every week."

"Thirdly, you have to be tough. You're never going to play 82 games completely healthy," Rudolph added. "You have to play through some things. It's just the nature of our game."

After missing seven games in 2014 while recovering from surgery on his hips, Rudolph worked his way back into the lineup. Unfortunately, he got caught in a pile at Detroit in December and missed Minnesota's game at Miami in Week 16. The following week, the best the Vikings could aim for was a 7-9 mark with a win over Chicago.

"They didn't shut me down and put me on IR, so I wanted to do everything I could to make sure I was ready to play on Sunday," Rudolph said. "I remember trying to battle that week and getting ready to go. It was a big



win for us to end the year on a high note and go into the offseason with some momentum.”

Minnesota prevailed that day, building momentum for an 11-5 mark in 2015 and NFC North crown in Head Coach Mike Zimmer’s second season at the helm.

Much harder to foresee was the fact that Rudolph, who missed 15 games from 2013-14, was beginning a streak that continued for the next five seasons and 81 consecutive regular-season starts. It is the longest current continuous chain by an NFL tight end. Kansas City’s Travis Kelce entered 2020 ranked second having started 32 consecutive games, followed by Cincinnati’s C.J. Uzomah (29).

Rudolph’s run has exceeded Steve Jordan’s mark of 52 by a Vikings tight end (Jordan missed one game in 1989 between streaks of 52 and 51 games), and the 10-year pro has tied linebacker Roy Winston for the 24th longest consecutive starts streak by a Vikings player at any position.

The most substantial threat to Rudolph’s streak occurred in Week 14 of the 2017 season at Carolina. He suffered a high-ankle sprain and began the next week in a walking boot.

Listed as “doubtful” to play against his hometown Cincinnati Bengals on the Friday injury report, Rudolph showed up at Winter Park the following day to run for Vikings Vice President of Sports Medicine Eric Sugarman and former coaches Pat Shurmur and Clancy Barone.

“I remember being in the training room

at Winter Park [on Friday] and just begging ‘Sugs’ because we still had 48 hours before the game, and I hadn’t done anything to that point to prove to them that I was going to be able to play,” Rudolph recalled. “I just knew I still had 48 hours to try to get myself ready to play. ... We had to win those last three games to potentially have home-field advantage throughout the playoffs. It was a big stretch for us, and I thought that it was important that I was out on the field each week.”

Rudolph displayed determination and his nose for the end zone, lobbying to go in for a particular play on the goal line that resulted in a 1-yard touchdown catch. He followed by hobbling his way through the “Ickey Shuffle” in homage to the former Bengals running back.

“I had missed the last time we played the Bengals,” Rudolph said. “I wouldn’t get another chance to play the Bengals for another four years, so it was really important for me to get out there because it’s my hometown team.”

Rudolph also was persuasive in starting the 2019 regular-season finale on a day when Zimmer rested most starters to prepare for the playoffs. Zimmer allowed one snap and then pulled the tight end so he could join other starters on the sideline.

The decision by Zimmer paid off the following week when Minnesota upset New Orleans 26-20 in overtime. Rudolph went up the ladder to reel in a 4-yard touchdown pass from Kirk Cousins on third down and silence the Superdome.

VIKINGS ALL-TIME

CONSECUTIVE STARTS

Kyle Rudolph holds the record for consecutive regular-season starts by a Vikings tight end, having surpassed streaks of 52 and 51 games by Steve Jordan by opening every game of the past five seasons and the 2014 season finale.

1. Jim Marshall, DE	270
2. Mick Tingelhoff, C	240
3. Tim Irwin, T	181
4. Randall McDaniel, G	170
5. Alan Page, DT	157
6. Ron Yary, T	150
7. Cris Carter, WR	144
T8. Paul Krause, S	142
T8. Jeff Siemon, LB	142
10. John Randle, DT	133
11. Carl Eller, DE	125
12. Chris Doleman, DE	111
13. Joey Browner, S	110
14. Gary Zimmerman, T	108
15. Tommy Hannon, S	103
16. Fred McNeill, LB	102
17. Jared Allen, DE	96
T18. Carl Lee, CB	94
T18. Randy Moss, WR	94
20. Chad Greenway, LB	90
T21. Bryant McKinnie, T	88
T21. Ahmad Rashad, WR	88
23. Kevin Williams, DT	83
T24. Kyle Rudolph, TE	81
T24. Roy Winston, LB	81

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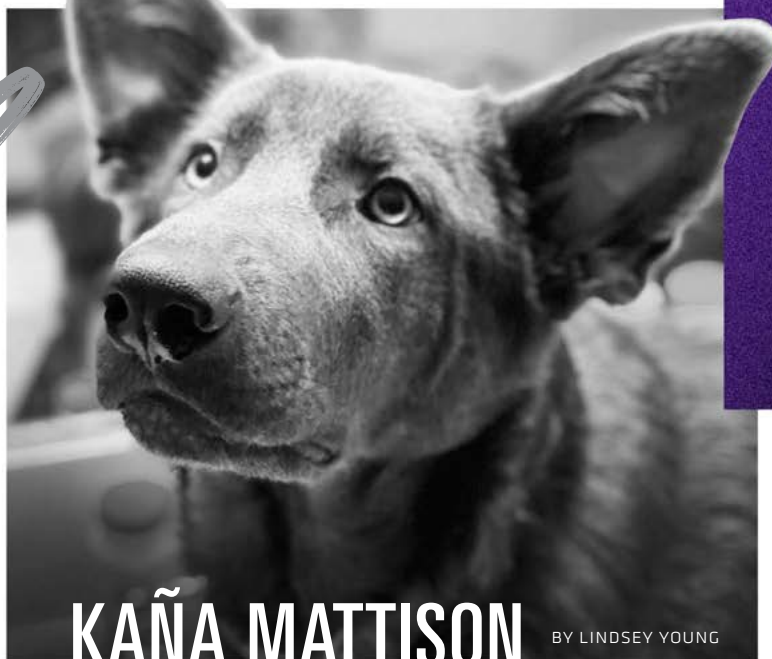


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KAÑA MATTISON

BY LINDSEY YOUNG



PURPLE Pups

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MEMORIAL HEALTH

Alexander Mattison doesn't really remember a time in his life without dogs.

Growing up in San Bernardino, California, his family always had them. A Golden retriever when he was really young, a German shepherd, and several pit bulls, sometimes two or three at a time.

"I'm at a point now where [dogs are] just close to my heart – it feels weird not to have one," Mattison said.

So when the Vikings drafted Mattison 102nd overall in 2019 and he moved to Minnesota, he decided it was time to start perusing for his very own pup.

Drawn toward larger dogs that "you can wrestle and play with," the running back first considered rottweilers but decided to look for a more unique breed. He started investigating blue Italian mastiffs, also known as Cane Corsos; before long, his search took him a little bit off the beaten path, and Mattison found himself reading about Blue Bay shepherds.

"I was kind of looking through the 'blue' catalogue, I guess," he quipped.

Mattison discovered the unique breed is known for its deep, bluish-black coat color and wolf ancestry.

"They ranged from like 10-percent to 25-percent wolf. I didn't want to do too much – they said that at too much wolf, they become less obedient," said Mattison.

OWNER:
**ALEXANDER
MATTISON**

BREED:
BLUE BAY
SHEPHERD

DOG DAD:
MATTISON HAS
OWNED DOGS
SINCE CHILDHOOD

SO SWEET:
KAÑA (CAÑA)
MEANS "CANE SUGAR"
IN SPANISH

WINTRY MIX:
KAÑA LOVES
PLAYING IN
THE SNOW



"She loves [the snow]. She will literally lay outside, go out and play around and just lay in the snow. I have to call her, like, 15 times to try to get her to come inside. It's like her natural habitat or something."

- ALEXANDER MATTISON ON KAÑA

And so he brought home Kaña, a Blue Bay shepherd that's 18-percent wolf.

"She's a pain, but she's awesome," he laughed. "She's super smart."

Kaña, who turned 1 on July 5, draws some attention for her unique name.

Having initially set his sights on a male dog, Mattison had planned to name him Kane. But when he pivoted toward the female puppy, he sat down with his mom to discuss name options.

"My mom at first said Sugar, and I was like, 'No, I don't want to name my dog Sugar,'" Mattison laughed. "But then we kind of went down that route ... Kaña [means 'cane'] in Spanish, like cane sugar.

"We just changed it to the K, so it's Kaña," he added.

The high-energy pup has been a constant companion for Mattison, especially during shutdowns and social-distancing protocols put in place around the country this spring and summer due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's been helpful," he said of Kaña's company. "Other than her grabbing a shoe and running off or something, it's been fun to have her around and just play with her. She

just likes attention. It's pretty fun."

He described Kaña as "really outgoing." The youngster does find ways to get into trouble – including chewing on Mattison's belongings during the virtual interview for this story – but her equally affectionate personality typically earns her a pass.

Mattison speaks like a proud dad when he shares about Kaña, noting that she learned to sit on command before she was 2 months old.

"She's super loving," he explained. "And you feed her a lot, and she'll be real calm, laying down, going to sleep... She has a balance of being calm and nurturing but [can also be] really excited."

He later added: "She's super smart and super intuitive."

Moving to the North was quite the transition for Mattison, a West Coast native. He did play college at Boise State University, which softened the stark contrast between California and Minnesota, but Boise's average of 18 inches of snow doesn't hold a candle to the Minneapolis average of 45.3.

Twin Cities winters may have been harsh for Mattison in his first pro season; Kaña, on the other hand, who came from a Florida breeder,

delighted in the declining temps.

"She loves it," Mattison said of Kaña's affinity for Minnesota winters. "She will literally lay outside, go out and play around and just lay in the snow. I have to call her, like, 15 times to try to get her to come inside.

"It's like her natural habitat or something," he added. "She's super calm in the snow, so sometimes I can just leave her outside, watch her, and she'll be fine."

In the warmer months of the year, Mattison and Kaña play together in the backyard, where the running back is even able to practice some football drills with his four-legged friend.

"I love that about her – she loves to chase me around, and I get a real challenge trying to juke her out," he laughed.

As Mattison enters his second season with the Vikings and looks to juke real defenders on game day, he's happy to have Kaña's companionship.

"I believe that dogs have their own feelings, and they express them in a special way. You love them, they love you back," Mattison said. "It's not really like having a pet. It's like having a partner, having a friend. That's the reason I love dogs."

Remember to check your health stats.

This football season, North Memorial Health wants to remind you that true teamwork is all about keeping each other safer. So make sure to check yourself for symptoms of COVID-19 regularly, and visit one of our COVID-19 testing sites if you are experiencing symptoms. **Learn more at northmemorial.com/covid-19**



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MINNESOTA
VIKINGS

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In honor of the Minnesota Vikings 60th season, the team is recognizing the 60 Greatest Vikings Fans.

A designated committee reviewed thousands of submissions and has selected 60 fans – of all ages, backgrounds and stories – to be recognized throughout the 2020 season.

As the Vikings prepare to host the Packers for the first time during a Kickoff Weekend, we are proud to spotlight the initial group of fans.



100% CHEESE FREE

FEATURED FAN

SYD DAVY

BY CRAIG PETERS

SYD DAVY – 100% CHEESE FREE

— is hard to miss in the first row of Section 140 at U.S. Bank Stadium.

Davy's face paint, helmet and braided locks are joined by a Viking World Order wrestling belt, and his passion for the Vikings is unmistakable.

He first became entranced with the Vikings after the team hired Bud Grant, who had been a hero of his when he played and then coached for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

The sideline antics of original Vikings mascot Hub Meeds also didn't hurt.

"When Bud Grant went to the Vikings, that cemented me as a Vikings fan the rest of my life," Davy said. "Hub Meeds made me want to become the Vikings fan I am today."

Davy attended his first game on Sept. 28, 1986. Tommy Kramer threw a career-high six touchdowns in leading the Vikings to a 42-7 victory over the Packers.

"I never experienced anything so loud, being my first time in a domed stadium," Davy recalled. "100% Cheese Free was born that day."

Well, technically, it was a few years later.

Davy became a season ticket member

(Section 101, Row 1, Seats 13-16) at the Metrodome in 1992. On Oct. 31, 1993, Davy painted up and donned the horns and braids for the first time. He sported a shirt with *100% Cheese Free* on his back.

The phrase spun off from a shirt Davy wore to gyms while working out that said *100% Steroid Free*. Davy said he "didn't care much for" the Cheesehead look created by Ralph Bruno while reupholstering a couch in the late '80s. The wedge, first cut with a turkey slicer, has admittedly aged well, but Davy's commitment as 100% Cheese Free is also still going strong.

"I have done it every game I have been to since, home or away," Davy said.

The iconic look is reinforced by Davy's arms that hoisted Randy Moss and Adrian Peterson during touchdown celebrations. Davy's first career catch occurred in 1998 when Moss was a rookie.

"I didn't know what I was doing and held him in the stands in a bear hug till Cris Carter begged me to lower him back down to the field," Davy said. "I learned on my third catch of Randy Moss to always make sure to get my face out of the way of his helmet. It is much harder than my nose, and they come up fast."

The video game *NFL Fever 2002* on Xbox featured a digitized

version of Davy catching Moss. When Moss in 2017 reached the rare air of the Vikings Ring of Honor, the receiver invited Davy on the podium with him during the halftime ceremony.

"He thanked me and gave me one of his famous hugs on stage. Randy Moss has such class and has come a long way," Davy said. "He made me a better person. He made me who I, deep down as a child, wanted to be, and for that, I can never thank Randy Moss enough."

Davy's longtime support of the Vikings led to his selection to sound the Gjallarhorn on Dec. 28, 2008. The unique experience was special to Davy because Meeds had been the first person to sound the original Gjallarhorn created by TJ Johnson in 2007.

The season finale fell on the 23rd wedding anniversary for Davy and his wife Susan. The game against the Giants ended with a 50-yard, game-winning field goal by Ryan Longwell to help the Vikings clinch their first NFC North crown and 17th overall division title.

"Catching and pulling AP into the stands after his 67-yard touchdown that game was a pretty spectacular cherry on top to say the least," Davy said.



TONISHA FARMER & DAUGHTER TONIYA

Football was tradition in Tonisha Farmer's family. Even though she didn't always understand the calls and plays on the field, Tonisha consistently supported her hometown Vikings and learned the "SKOL Vikings!" song at an early age. A single mother to 8-year-old Toniya, Tonisha has passed on her love of the Vikings to her daughter. No matter where they are, they make sure to tune in on Sundays to watch and cheer on their Vikings.

CURRENT CITY:
ST. PAUL, MN

**FAVORITE
ALL-TIME VIKING:**
JARED ALLEN



LINDSEY LORENTSON (PURPLELICIOUS)

Purplelicious has bled purple and gold for more than 30 years. Everywhere you look in Purplelicious' world you'll find the Vikings – from her game-day face paint to the memorabilia around her house. She cheers her team in every environment. She is the ultimate Vikings super fan and champion of "all things SKOL."

CURRENT CITY:
ROSEMOUNT, MN

**FAVORITE
ALL-TIME VIKING:**
RANDALL McDANIEL



PATRICK HEALY

It's hard to top the fandom of Patrick Healy, who regularly impresses others with his vast Vikings knowledge and collection of more than 80 jerseys. On top of being a lifelong Vikings fan, he was a member of the first-ever Vikings Special Olympics Unified Flag Football team in 2019. Having been a Special Olympics athlete for many years, Patrick most enjoys playing football to spend time with his teammates, including his brother Sean.

CURRENT CITY:
ROCHESTER, MN

FAVORITE ALL-TIME VIKING:
"ALL OF THEM" (RANDY MOSS & JOHN RANDLE LEAD THE WAY, THOUGH)



BRENDA STEWART

Since 1998, Brenda Stewart has been the curator of her memorabilia-packed "Vikings Woman's Cave," which has been featured on national and local news outlets for its impressive size. While she's always on the lookout for the next item, she's also known for her game-day Facebook memorabilia giveaways. It brings Brenda joy to spread her love for the team and see others celebrate the Vikings.

CURRENT CITY:
ANOKA, MN

FAVORITE ALL-TIME VIKING:
RANDY MOSS



SHAHIDA JADRAN

Shahida Jadran is an avid Vikings fan and a 10-year season ticket member. Every Sunday, you can count on her jumping, screaming and cheering for the Vikings. She is proud to be an American Muslim and to wear her hijab while showing her love and pride for the NFL and her favorite team. Shahida says the Vikings are "part of my life, day-in and day-out."

CURRENT CITY:
ROCHESTER, MN

**FAVORITE
ALL-TIME VIKING:**
ADRIAN PETERSON
(CURRENTLY: HARRISON SMITH & ADAM THIELEN)



JAMES YANG

Distance is no barrier when it comes to James Yang's love of the Vikings. While living overseas in Laos, James regularly woke up as early as 4 a.m. to make the trek to a small gazebo where he could get reception to watch Vikings games. When the Minneapolis Miracle happened at 6 a.m., James jumped up from his fiancé's bed, breaking the frame and nearly got "kicked out of the building for waking everyone" with his loud cheers.

CURRENT CITY:
OAK GROVE, MN

**FAVORITE
ALL-TIME VIKING:**
ADRIAN PETERSON

A young girl with dark hair in a bun, wearing a grey cardigan over a white shirt and blue jeans, is looking up with an expression of wonder and curiosity. She is standing in a museum or science center, with her hands pressed against a glass display case. Inside the case, there are various scientific exhibits, including a complex white metal structure with blue and orange components, and a green bowl-like structure. The background is blurred, showing other visitors and museum displays.

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PAREY



7TH SEASON

WHAT DOES BEING A CAPTAIN MEAN TO YOU?

It allows me to give everything back to the team that was given to me from previous captains. Being in this position has allowed me to grow as a dancer and a person while helping my teammates grow. The women on this team are amazing, and it's been a true honor to be one of their leaders.

FAVORITE ON-FIELD EXPERIENCE:

During my second season on the team, while we cheered at the University of Minnesota, it started raining and I felt like I got to live out my favorite dance scene from *Step Up*. The Minneapolis Miracle is right there at the top, too.

FAVORITE OFF-FIELD EXPERIENCE:

Having the opportunity to meet and dance with the sweetest soul during our MVC Special Stars event. We had way too much fun together!

DID YOU KNOW?

Parey cheered outside during the third-coldest game in NFL history (Minnesota's Wild Card game against Seattle on Jan. 10, 2016).



BY LINDSEY YOUNG

VIKTOR AT HOME

NAVIGATING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
DIDN'T STOP OUR FAVORITE MASCOT FROM
SPREADING LOTS OF LOVE TO VIKINGS FANS!

When Minnesota was placed under a stay-at-home order this spring to flatten the curve and slow the spread of the coronavirus, Viktor the Viking followed the rules and got creative.

Viktor set up an at-home studio and backdrop that included a Vikings helmet, Helga horns, a pair of Crucial Catch gloves and his custom-designed Vikings Table kicks. He then got busy on social media, asking fans to nominate friends and loved ones who needed a special #ViktorShoutout.

From birthdays, graduations and well-wishes for teachers tackling distance learning, to one request reminding family members to replace the empty toilet paper roll (we're not joking about that one!), Viktor sent fun-loving messages to Vikings fans all over the country.

Wait ... does that mean that Minnesota's mascot broke the code of silence?

Don't worry, friends. Viktor sent his messages using a digital tablet and – of course – used the Vikings fight song as background music.

Viktor fully embraced the virtual lifestyle, from holding Zoom meetings with NFL mascot buddies across the league (don't ask us how that worked) to an online reading of his new book, *Where's Viktor's Mustache?*

Viktor hosted the unique event via Facebook Live, and fans of all ages tuned in to hear a collaborative reading of the colorfully illustrated story that takes readers on a Minnesota-themed journey through the alphabet.

Viktor can't wait to get back on the football field and to see his friends at Vikings events, but he also wants everyone to stay safe and healthy.



Follow Viktor on Instagram
(@viktortheviking) or join our
new Facebook group, Minnesota
Vikings Kids, and let him know how
you've spent your time at home.



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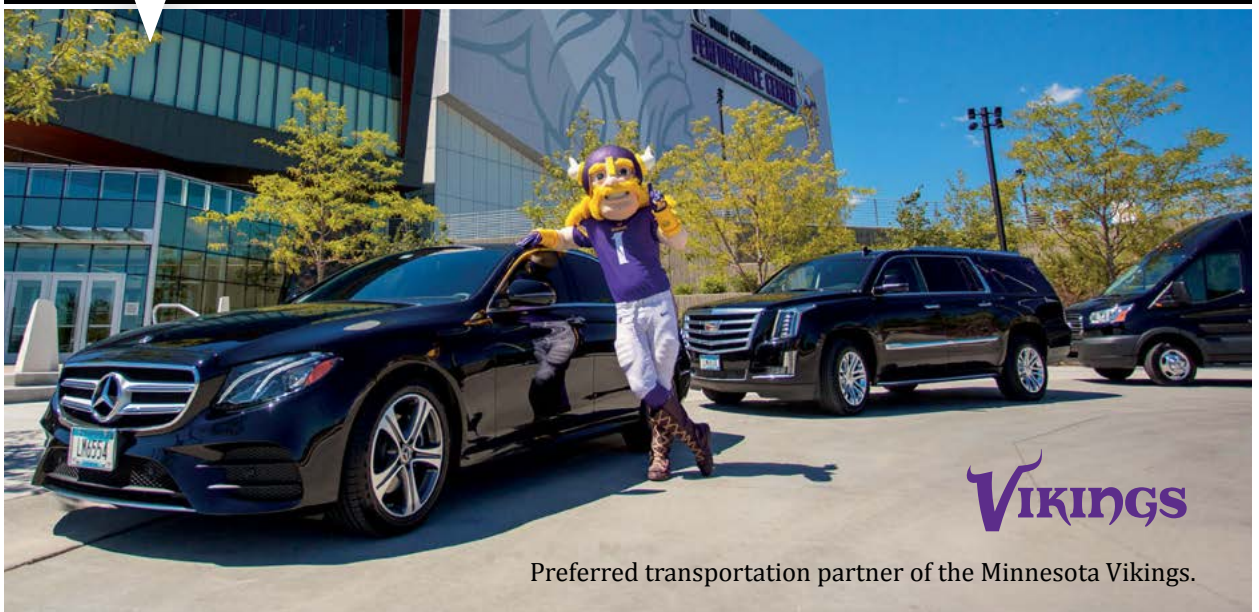
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MINNESOTA VIKINGS FOUNDATION



TO OUR COMMUNITY,

Several years ago, we made a choice to forge a new path in how professional sports approach creating change in their communities. The Minnesota Vikings Foundation has adopted a direct programming approach to impact youth. As we write to you today, we are proud to share with you the differences we have made in our community.

In 2019, the Minnesota Vikings Foundation launched the Vikings Table program to serve healthy meals and provide nutrition education to youth across the Greater Twin Cities area.

I have personally witnessed the impact we have had serving thousands of meals to those people that need it most, and it brings me hope.

Partnering alongside local nonprofits, we are helping remove barriers to improve the health of the next generation.

BRETT TABER

Executive Director
Minnesota Vikings Foundation

FOUNDATION 2019 YEAR
IN REVIEW

[READ MORE HERE ►](#)



1978

Vikings Children's Fund is established as the philanthropic arm of the Vikings and contributes more than \$12 million in grants to youth-related causes during its existence.

2017

The Minnesota Vikings Foundation is established as a nonprofit organization, replacing Vikings Children's Fund as a strategic approach to using the power of sport to create change. Specific focus areas of youth health and education are its driving mission to make measurable impacts.

2019

Vikings Table presented by Xcel Energy is the Foundation's first program and launches on June 13. In 2019, Vikings Table serves more than 4,000 healthy meals to youth and families.

2020

Coronavirus disrupts communities and Vikings Table transforms. Beginning March 30, Vikings Table delivers 100 packaged meals each week day to nonprofit partners serving youth in need of a healthy meal.



PRESENTED BY  Xcel Energy®

Vikings Table presented by Xcel Energy is a custom-built food truck program with the mission of serving healthy meals and nutrition education to youth across the Greater Twin Cities.

Twin Cities youth miss more than 250,000 meals during summer months. Additionally, this generation is the first in history tracking to have a shorter life expectancy than its parent generation due to physical inactivity and poor nutrition. The Minnesota Vikings Foundation sees Vikings Table as a unique way to use the Vikings brand to directly address the issue of childhood hunger in our community.

The Minnesota Vikings Foundation remains committed to combatting food insecurity. As our community perseveres through COVID-19 and recent tragedies, our Foundation and food truck have stepped up our support of racial equity and social justice. The Vikings Table has increased distribution of free, healthy meals to disproportionately impacted communities.

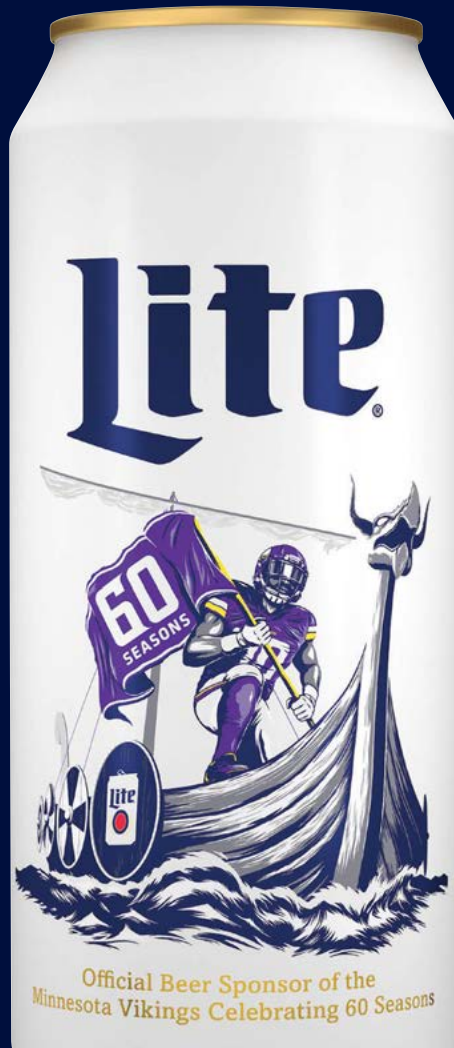
Since March 30, more than 10,000 free meals have been delivered through the Vikings Table program in partnership with nonprofits who serve youth and families in need. We are proud to be members of this community and our commitment to ensuring everyone has a seat at our family table will remain steadfast.

EACH PACKAGED MEAL HAS INCLUDED A VIKINGS ACTIVITY PAGE TO INSPIRE HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT HOME!

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