

PLAYBOOK

WK 6

CRUCIAL CATCH | VIKINGS VS. FALCONS | OCT. 18, 2020



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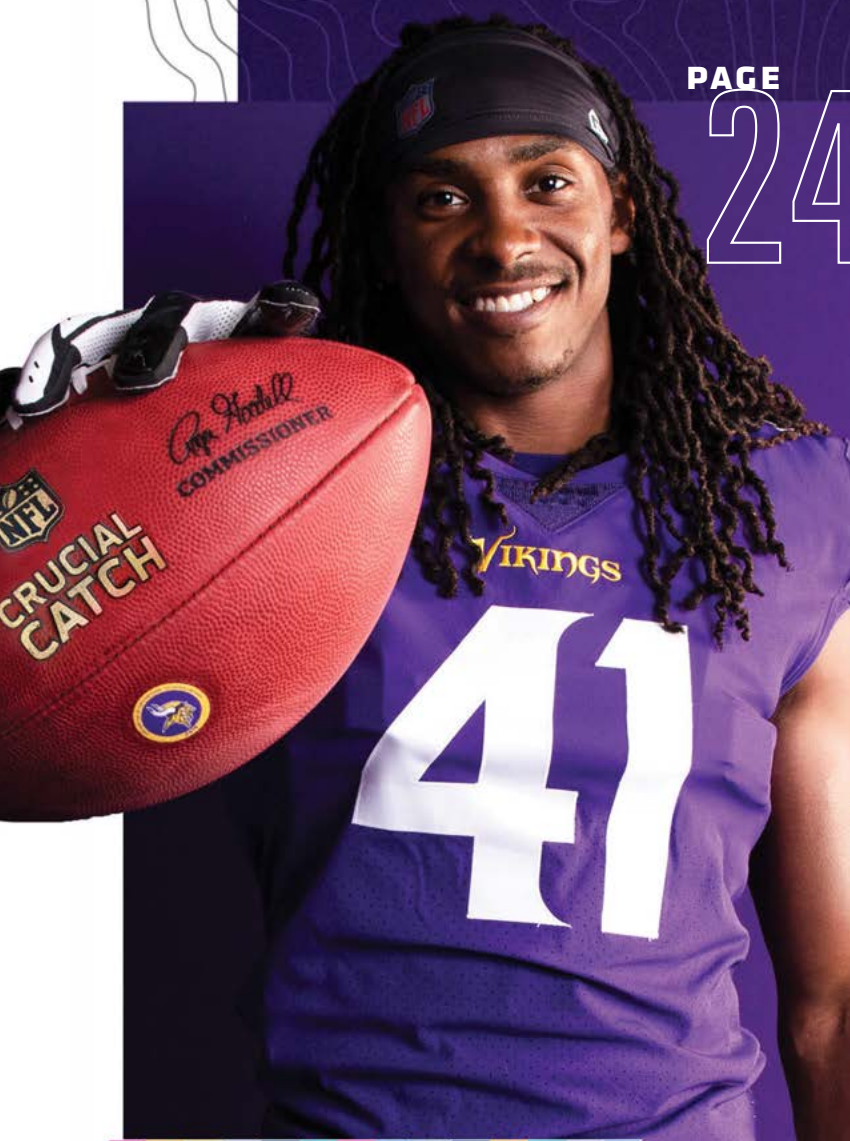
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MINNESOTA
VIKINGS

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ANTHONY HARRIS

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



01

WEEK 5



MIN AT SEA

The Vikings controlled the clock and much of the game but fell 27-26 against the Seahawks in Seattle on *Sunday Night Football*. Seattle has started a season 5-0 for the first time in its history.

PHOTO 1

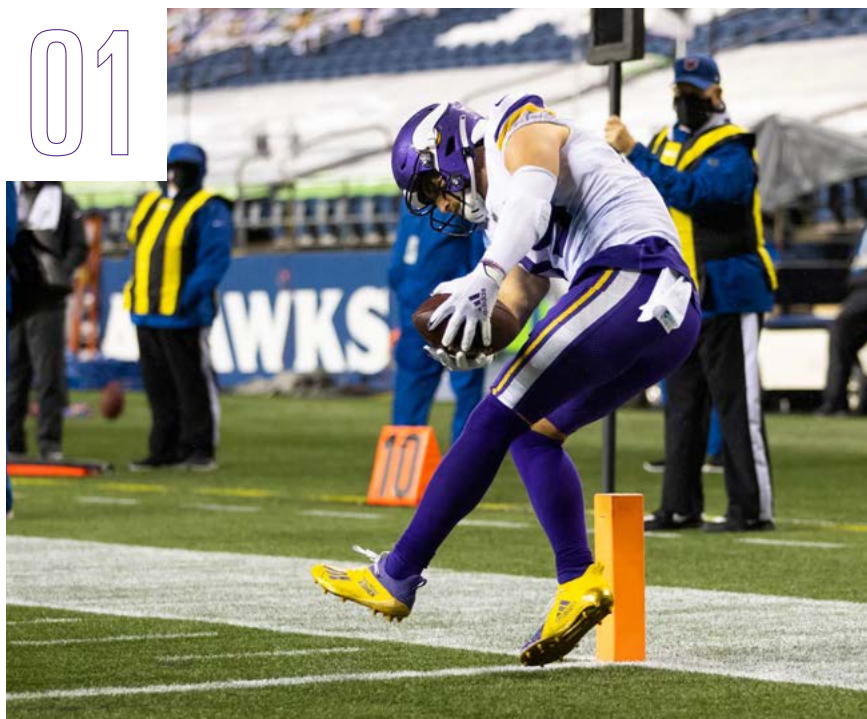
Adam Thielen backs his way into the end zone with nifty footwork on a 6-yard touchdown for his second score of the game. Thielen is tied for the NFL lead with six receiving touchdowns.

PHOTO 2

Eric Wilson picked off Russell Wilson in the fourth quarter for his second interception of the season. The Vikings linebacker also sacked the Seahawks QB earlier in the game.

PHOTO 3

Dalvin Cook rushes for an 8-yard touchdown to cap Minnesota's first possession. Cook, who left the game with a groin injury in the third quarter, leads the NFL with seven rushing touchdowns.



02



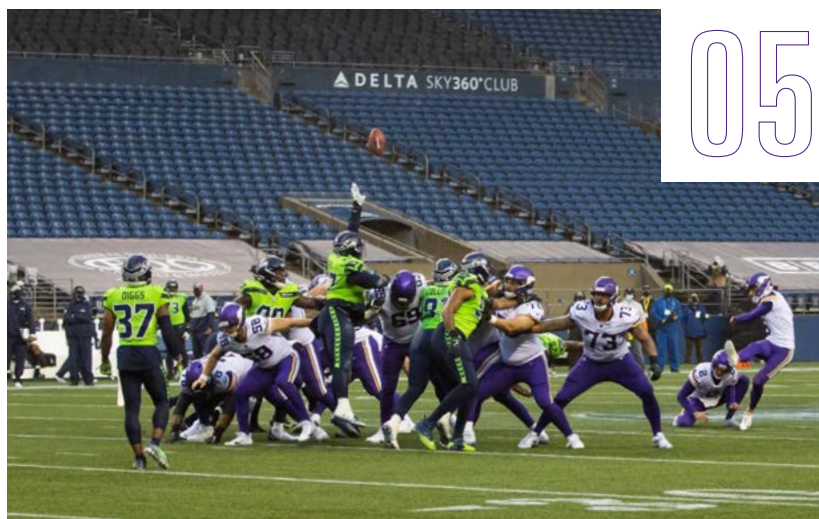
03

**PHOTO 4**

Alexander Mattison rushed for a career-high 112 yards on 20 attempts and added 24 yards on three receptions.

PHOTO 5

Dan Bailey boots a 52-yard field goal through the uprights. He added a 46-yard field goal in the second quarter.



VIKINGS

V S F A L C O N S

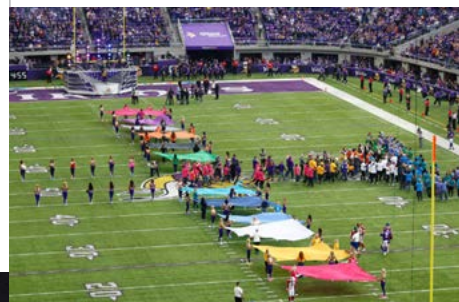
SUNDAY'S GAME IS
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CRUCIAL CATCH

After nearly a decade of focusing the NFL's Crucial Catch with the American Cancer Society toward breast cancer prevention and treatment, the partnership expanded in 2017 to address early detection and risk-reduction efforts for multiple types of cancers.

In previous seasons, the Vikings have welcomed cancer patients, survivors and caregivers to U.S. Bank Stadium for deeply moving halftime ceremonies. With fans unable to attend this game because of COVID-19, the recognition will be reimagined. Banners that are normally displayed on-field during halftime to represent multiple types of cancer will be in the east stands near cutouts that honor patients at the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital. Caribou Coffee purchased the cutouts and is making a \$15,000 donation to the hospital.



CRUCIAL CATCH HALFTIME CEREMONY | OCT. 13, 2019

This will be just the 32nd overall meeting between the Vikings and Falcons franchises and second at U.S. Bank Stadium.

Minnesota (1-4) is trying to build momentum heading into its Week 7 bye and collect its first victory at home in 2020. This will be the third home game this season without fans in attendance, and the Vikings have missed their raucous crowd.

After falling to 0-5 to open the season, the Falcons announced the firings of General Manager Thomas Dimitroff and Head Coach Dan Quinn. Defensive Coordinator Raheem Morris, who was head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers from 2009-11, has been promoted to interim head coach. Assistant Head Coach/Linebackers Jeff Ulbrich has been promoted to defensive coordinator, and running backs coach Bernie Parmalee was promoted to replace Ben Kotwica as special teams coordinator. Will Harriger was shifted to coach running backs.

The Vikings have suffered a pair of one-point losses in two of the past three weeks, and the

Falcons lost fourth-quarter leads against the Cowboys (15 points) and Bears (16 points) in Weeks 2-3.

FIRST GLANCE

Vikings Defense vs. Falcons Offense:

Minnesota's defense has shown incremental improvements over the past few weeks as young players are gaining more experience and others are filling in for injured players. Atlanta receiver Julio Jones missed Weeks 3 and 5 and doesn't have a touchdown yet this season, but Calvin Ridley has caught four scores. The Vikings recorded a season-high four sacks last week at Seattle. Falcons QB Matt Ryan has been sacked 11 times this season.

Vikings Offense vs. Falcons Defense:

The Vikings offense has picked up steam, averaging 29.0 points in the past three outings, but has one victory and a pair of one-point losses to show for it. Protecting the football has been problematic, with Minnesota at minus-5 in turnover margin, which is tied for 28th in the NFL. Kirk Cousins has been sacked 13 times. Atlanta has recorded seven sacks, led by Grady Jarrett's 2.5. The Falcons are plus-1 in turnover margin.



PREGAME
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Vikings fans can connect with home games in a new way thanks to *Vikings Pregame All-Access* presented by U.S. Bank, a livestreaming of pregame events and player warm-ups on vikings.com, the team's mobile app and official social media platforms. The livestream is designed to virtually bring fans into U.S. Bank Stadium. It begins an hour before kickoff.

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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

Sunday's Kwik Trip opening drive contestant is Pam Smith from Rochester, MN. Pam will win a \$25 gift card 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, see 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 pages 43-44 to learn about the next 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.



ABSOLUT® VIKINGS HOMEGATER

Are you the Absolut® Vikings Homegater? Whatever you do on game day, celebrate your Absolut® best this football season by submitting your photo as the Absolut® Homegater of the week. Fans will have a chance to win a Vikings and Absolut® weekly prize pack, and one super fan will be dubbed the Absolut® Homegater of the Season, winning a co-branded mini-fridge. To enter, go to vikings.com/homegater and submit your fan photo today.

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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. Nominate a deserving frontline worker at vikings.com/frontline.

Miller
Lite



U.S. BANK HOMETOWN HEROES

In recognition of Crucial Catch, this week's Hometown Hero is Erika Rucks, a pediatric oncology nurse. Erika has worked at the University of Minnesota's Masonic Children's Hospital for 17 years. Erika knows firsthand what it's like for the children she treats, as she was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma when she was 15 years old. While in remission, she studied to be a nurse so that she could give back to individuals who were going through the same struggles she endured. In 2019, Erika was diagnosed with breast cancer and later found out that it had spread to her spine, a diagnosis of Stage 4 terminal cancer. Despite the diagnosis, she has remained positive and energetic and continues to work at the hospital and care for the patients she loves.

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.



MYSTIC LAKE PASS OR PLAY

Mystic Lake

"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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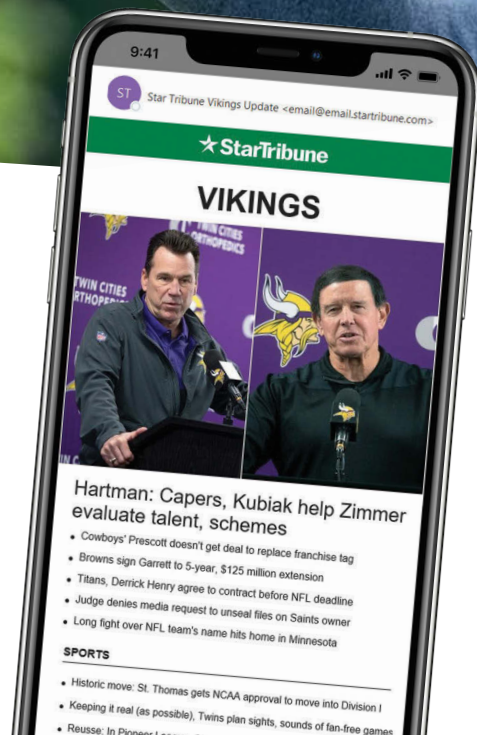




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THE BEST USE THE BEST



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2020 SEASON LEADERS

Passing (Yds)	Kirk Cousins	1,132
Rushing (Yds)	Dalvin Cook	489
Receiving (Yds)	Justin Jefferson	371
Tackles	Eric Kendricks	53
Sacks	Yannick Ngakoue	5.0
Interceptions	Eric Wilson	2
KOR (Yards)	K.J. Osborn	170
PR (Avg.)	K.J. Osborn	6.0

2020 SCHEDULE

1	9/13	Green Bay Packers	L 43-34
2	9/20	at Indianapolis Colts	L 28-11
3	9/27	Tennessee Titans	L 31-30
4	10/4	at Houston Texans	W 31-23
5	10/11	at Seattle Seahawks	L 27-26
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 FALCONS

RUSHING YARDS

- 158 Adrian Peterson on 29 attempts at Atlanta (Nov. 29, 2015)
- 155 Clinton Jones on 22 attempts in Minnesota (Nov. 28, 1971)

PASSING YARDS

- 395 Tommy Kramer on 30-of-42 passing in Minnesota (Sept. 7, 1980)
- 330 Tommy Kramer on 24-of-47 passing at Atlanta (Nov. 23, 1981)

RECEIVING YARDS

- 160 Ahmad Rashad on 11 catches in Minnesota (Sept. 7, 1980)
- 151 Ahmad Rashad on nine catches at Atlanta (Nov. 23, 1981)

Jefferson has been bringing the juice since cracking the starting lineup against the Titans in Week 3. He opened that first half with 104 receiving yards, the most by a rookie and fourth-highest total in a half through the first four weeks of 2020. Jefferson followed that with an impressive 71-yard touchdown catch against the Titans in the second half. It tied Gordon Smith (1961) for the fourth-longest catch by a Vikings rookie in franchise history. Jefferson leads the Vikings with 371 receiving yards and is tied for fourth in the NFL among qualifying receivers with an average of 19.5 yards per catch. The Louisiana native's family made the trip to Houston in Week 4 to see him suit up for the Vikings in-person for the first time. Each of Jefferson's catches that game gained at least 23 yards, and two of the receptions occurred during touchdown drives in the second half.

BACK TO BACK

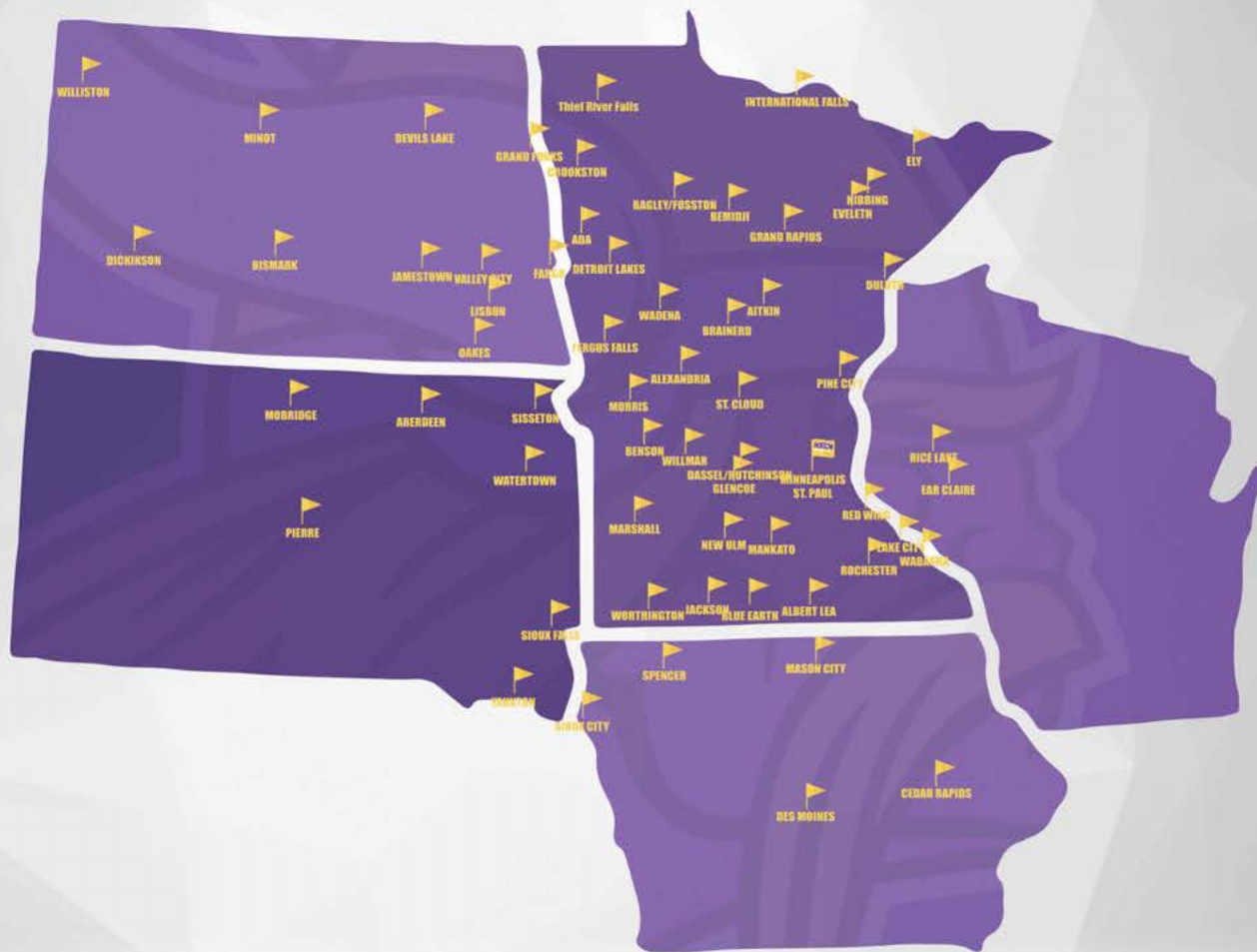
Jefferson posted 175 receiving yards, including a 71-yard touchdown, in Week 3 and followed with 103 in Week 4. He became the first Vikings rookie to have back-to-back games with 100 receiving yards since Stefon Diggs in Weeks 5-6 of 2015.

Jefferson set a school record for receptions in a season by hauling in 111 passes to help the LSU Tigers win the 2019 College Football Playoff National Championship. Jefferson recorded 14 catches for 227 yards and four scores against Oklahoma in the Peach Bowl in Atlanta during the title run.

111
IN '19

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Ryan is set to make his 195th career start and continuing to put up impressive numbers in his 13th season. Ryan is 109-85 as a starting quarterback and has recorded a passer rating of 100 or higher in 83 games and 120 or higher in 34 contests, but the Vikings have had success grounding his attack under Head Coach Mike Zimmer. In four head-to-head games since Zimmer's hire in 2014, Ryan's highest passer rating has been 87.2 (in Zimmer's fourth game in Minnesota), and he has been intercepted twice in three of those four games. The third overall pick of the 2008 NFL Draft has totaled a passer rating of 81.6 against Minnesota. It is below his career rating of 94.5, which ranks 11th all-time. A four-time Pro Bowler and 2016 Offensive Player of the Year by *The Associated Press*, Ryan enters Sunday's game with 328 passing touchdowns, which ranks 11th all-time and is 14 shy of Fran Tarkenton's 342.

FOURTH-QUARTER COMEBACKS

Leads are not safe with Ryan, who has represented his "Matty Ice" nickname well by frequently executing comebacks in the fourth quarters of games. He enters Week 6 ranked eighth all-time with 30 fourth-quarter comeback victories, joining the following players: 1. Peyton Manning, 43; 2. Tom Brady, 36; 3. Drew Brees, 35; 4. Johnny Unitas, 34; 5. Dan Marino, 33; 6. Ben Roethlisberger, 32; 7. John Elway, 31; 8. Matt Ryan, 30; 9. Matthew Stafford, 29 (tied with Fran Tarkenton and Vinny Testaverde); 12. Brett Favre, 28

42
WITH 3+

Ryan has thrown three or more touchdowns in 42 games, including one of four contests against the Vikings since 2014. He's been limited to three total passing touchdowns in the other three games.

2020 SEASON LEADERS

Passing (Yds)	Matt Ryan	1,472
Rushing (Yds)	Todd Gurley II	375
Receiving (Yds)	Calvin Ridley	485
Tackles	Deion Jones	38
Sacks	Grady Jarrett	2.5
Interceptions	Dennard; Wreh-Wilson	1
KOR (Yds)	Brandon Powell	161
PR (Avg.)	Brandon Powell	8.6

2020 SCHEDULE

1	9/13	Seattle Seahawks	L 38-25
2	9/20	at Dallas Cowboys	L 40-39
3	9/27	Chicago Bears	L 30-26
4	10/5	at Green Bay Packers	L 30-16
5	10/11	Carolina Panthers	L 23-16
6	10/18	at Minnesota Vikings	
7	10/25	Detroit Lions	
8	10/29	at Carolina Panthers	
9	11/8	Denver Broncos	
10	11/15	Bye Week	
11	11/22	at New Orleans Saints	
12	11/29	Oakland Raiders	
13	12/6	New Orleans Saints	
14	12/13	at Los Angeles Chargers	
15	12/20	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	
16	12/27	at Kansas City Chiefs	
17	1/3	at Tampa Bay Buccaneers	

TOP 2 AGAINST VIKINGS

RUSHING YARDS

173	Michael Vick on 10 attempts in Minnesota (Dec. 1, 2002)
126	Warrick Dunn on 18 attempts at Atlanta (Oct. 2, 2005)

PASSING YARDS

352	Doug Johnson on 28-of-40 passing at Atlanta (Oct. 5, 2003)
304	Matt Ryan on 33-of-46 passing in Minnesota (Sept. 8, 2019)

RECEIVING YARDS

168	Peerless Price on 12 catches at Atlanta (Oct. 5, 2003)
128	George Thomas on seven catches at Atlanta (Sept. 8, 1991)

VIKINGS ROSTER

2	Britton Colquitt	P
4	Sean Mannion	QB
5	Dan Bailey	K
8	Kirk Cousins	QB
11	Tajae 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
40	Todd Davis	LB
41	Anthony Harris	S
43	George Iloka	S
44	Josh Metellus	S
47	Hardy Nickerson	LB
50	Eric Wilson	LB
54	Eric Kendricks	LB
56	Garrett Bradbury	C
57	Ryan Connelly	LB
58	Austin Cutting	LS
61	Brett Jones	C
67	eJordan Brailford	DE
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



33
RUNNING BACK
Dalvin Cook



8
QUARTERBACK
Kirk Cousins



30
FULLBACK
C.J. Ham



18
WIDE RECEIVER
Justin Jefferson



82
TIGHT END
Kyle Rudolph



75
RIGHT TACKLE
Brian O'Neill



73
RIGHT GUARD
Dru Samia



56
CENTER
Garrett Bradbury



78
LEFT GUARD
Dakota Dozier



71
LEFT TACKLE
Riley Reiff



19
WIDE RECEIVER
Adam Thielen

VIKINGS OFFENSE



20
CORNERBACK
Kendall Sheffield



98
DEFENSIVE END
Takkarist McKinley



97
DEFENSIVE TACKLE
Grady Jarrett



96
DEFENSIVE TACKLE
Tyeler Davison



56
DEFENSIVE END
Dante Fowler Jr.



26
CORNERBACK
Isaiah Oliver



24
DEFENSIVE BACK
A.J. Terrell



37
SAFETY
Ricardo Allen



54
LINEBACKER
Foyesade Oluokun



22
SAFETY
Keanu Neal



45
LINEBACKER
Deion Jones

VIKINGS SPECIAL TEAMS



5
KICKER
Dan Bailey



2
PUNTER
Britton Colquitt



58
LONG SNAPPER
Austin Cutting



17
PUNT/KICK RETURNER
K.J. Osborn

MINNESOTA VIKINGS DEPTH CHART & ROSTER



OFFENSE

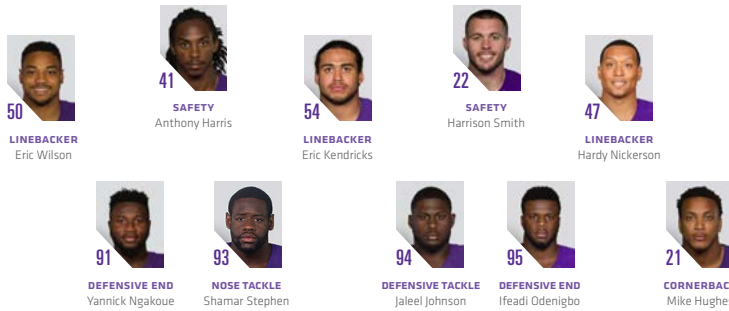
WR	Jefferson	B. Johnson	Chisena
LT	Reiff	R. Hill	
LG	Dozier	Cleveland	
C	Bradbury	Jones	
RG	Samia		
RT	O'Neill	Udoh	
TE	Rudolph	I. Smith Jr.	Conklin
WR	Thielen	Sharpe	Beebe
QB	Cousins	Mannion	
FB	Ham		
HB	Cook	Mattison	Abdullah

DEFENSE

LDE	Odenigbo	Holmes	Brailford
NT	Stephen	Watts	
DT	Johnson	Lynch	
RDE	Ngakoue	Wonnum	
WLB	Wilson	Davis	
MLB	Kendricks	Davis	
SLB	Nickerson	Connelly	
LCB	Hughes	Dantzler	Hand
RCB	Hill	Gladney	Boyd
SS	H. Smith	Iloka	
FS	Harris	Metellus	

FALCONS ROSTER

2	Matt Ryan	QB
4	Sterling Hofrichter	P
7	Younghoe Koo	K
8	Matt Schaub	QB
11	Julio Jones	WR
13	Christian Blake	WR
15	Brandon Powell	WR
17	Olamide Zaccheaus	WR
18	Calvin Ridley	WR
20	Kendall Sheffield	DB
21	Todd Gurley II	RB
22	Keanu Neal	S
23	Brian Hill	RB
24	A.J. Terrell	CB
25	Ito Smith	RB
26	Isaiah Oliver	CB
28	Jordan Miller	DB
30	Qadree Ollison	RB
32	Jaylinn Hawkins	S
33	Bliid Wreh-Wilson	CB
37	Ricardo Allen	S
40	Keith Smith	FB
41	Sharrod Neasman	S
43	Mykal Walker	LB
45	Deion Jones	LB
47	Josh Harris	LS
50	John Cominsky	DE
51	Alex Mack	C
54	Foyesade Oluokun	LB
55	Steven Means	DE
56	Dante Fowler Jr.	DE
59	LaRoy Reynolds	LB
61	Matt Hennessy	OL
63	Chris Lindstrom	G
65	Justin McCray	G
70	Jake Matthews	T
73	Matt Gono	T
75	John Wetzel	T
76	Kaleb McGary	T
77	James Carpenter	G
81	Hayden Hurst	TE
83	Russell Gage	WR
87	Jaeden Graham	TE
88	Luke Stocker	TE
90	Marlon Davidson	DT
91	Jacob Tuoti-Mariner	DT
92	Charles Harris	DE
93	Allen Bailey	DE
94	Deadrin Senat	DT
96	Tyler Davison	DT
97	Grady Jarrett	DT
98	Takkarist McKinley	DE



VIKINGS DEFENSE

FALCONS OFFENSE



FALCONS SPECIAL TEAMS



ATLANTA FALCONS DEPTH CHART & ROSTER



OFFENSE

WR	J. Jones	Blake	
LT	Matthews	Gono	
LG	Carpenter	Hennessy	
C	Mack	McCray	
RG	Lindstrom		
RT	McGary	Wetzel	
TE	Hurst	Graham	Stocker
WR	Gage	Powell	
WR	Ridley	Zaccheaus	
QB	Ryan	Schaub	
RB	Gurley II	Hill	I. Smith

DEFENSE

DE	McKinley	Bailey	Harris
DT	Jarrett	Davidson	Senat
NT	Davison	Cominsky	
DE	Fowler Jr.	Means	T.-Mariner
LB	D. Jones	Reynolds	
LB	Oluokun	Walker	
CB	Sheffield	W.-Wilson	
CB	Terrell	Miller	
CB	Oliver		
S	Allen	Neasman	
S	Neal	Hawkins	

*Depth charts are unofficial and as of print deadline (Oct. 14)



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WATER BREAK
PRESENTED BY *Crown Royal*

BRIAN O'NEILL

BY ERIC SMITH

Week 6 of each NFL season will always be a memorable one for Brian O'Neill. During his rookie season in 2018, the former second-round draft pick made his first NFL start that week against the Cardinals. He hasn't looked back since, entrenching himself as the Vikings starting right tackle.

As his 32nd career start approaches – two full seasons' worth – O'Neill recently reflected on what he has learned over the past 24 months.

"I've learned a ton. If you look around our locker room and see the guys that are there, we have a lot of successful guys who have been around and done it at a high level for a long time," O'Neill said. "Guys like Riley Reiff and Adam Thielen and Kyle Rudolph and Kirk Cousins and Harrison Smith ... they've taught me that you have to bring it every day.

"You have to bring it in meetings, in walk-throughs and just be ready to go every single day," O'Neill added. "Players are good in this league, and you can never stop improving, and you have never arrived. Riley does a really good job of reminding us that we need to put our head down and go to work, and that there are no weeks off in this league."

O'Neill has since played more than 2,000 snaps while protecting Cousins and paving lanes for running back Dalvin Cook, who recorded 65 rushing

yards and a TD last week before leaving the game with a groin injury.

And perhaps nobody has more fun on the field than the 6-foot-7, 297-pound Delaware native who often hoists Cook after touchdowns and even made his way into a limbo touchdown celebration for the ages.

"I feel like it's flown by, just because of the fact that I feel like it was yesterday when I first got here," O'Neill said. "At the same time, I've been able to see a lot in terms of different defenses and coaches and different situations that have come up.

"But I think it's flown by because I've been having a ton of fun, I love being here and I love all the guys we have here," O'Neill added. "Everybody in our locker room is great, so I guess time flies when you're having fun."

The 25-year-old is looked at as one of the key building blocks to the future of the offensive line in Minnesota.

We caught up with Brian this week for a Water Break, presented by Crown Royal.



Q. Has your preparation watching film changed at all in recent years, and how does that aspect help you for weekly opponents?

A. "That comes with experience. I think anytime you do something over and over again, by the time you have a couple of them under your belt, you're going to know what to look for. I don't think my approach to watching film has changed that much, but in terms of being able to recognize looks or fronts or defensive blitzes we may have seen in the past, I'm able to clearly recognize those more now. It's easier to fix and correct when you've been there before."

Q. Watching practice during training camp, one can't help but notice the yin-and-yang duo of Vikings offensive line coach

Rick Dennison, who is more reserved, and assistant offensive line coach Phil Rauscher, who is incredibly vocal on the field. How does that relationship work?

A. "They do a really good job together. Rico does an unbelievable job, he's a great teacher of our offense and the offensive line. He has his certain style, and that's not to say he won't get fired up every now and then, because he does. But Phil brings the juice. He likes to get us going at the start of practice and then keep us going halfway through practice. You're never going to have a lack of energy from Phil, and he's done a great job in that role this year."

Q. Do you prefer pancaking a defender on a run play, or tying up a great edge rusher on a pass play?

A. "Oh, that's a great question. I'd probably say pancaking a guy on a run block. But I like looking back at the end of a game knowing I did my job in both areas, and that I got the better of that guy. The totality of the game is what makes me most excited."

Q. Did you pick up any new hobbies during the distant offseason?

A. "I wouldn't say anything new, but I was definitely reading a lot more than I had in a while, just because I had more down time. I picked up a few more books."

Q. Chiefs left tackle Eric Fisher recently caught a big-man touchdown pass. You're a former college tight end ... are you angling with Vikings Offensive Coordinator Gary Kubiak to get that in the playbook for you?

A. "No way [laughs]. I've got enough issues to worry about with what they're already asking me to do. That stuff is fun and cool ... but I'm worried about getting down in some holes and keeping Kirk healthy back there."

Q. You had two touchdown catches at the University of Pittsburgh. If they were to put in such a play, what's your confidence level you'd catch the pass?

A. "Oh, very high. Very, very high."



The 'Water Break' presented by Crown Royal will post on Vikings.com on Wednesdays before home games.

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For Mom, with Love

HAM HONORS MOTHER'S
MEMORY FOR CRUCIAL CATCH

BY ERIC SMITH



In some ways, the past 12 months have been filled with plenty of wonderful milestone moments for C.J. Ham and his family.

During Minnesota's bye week in 2019, the Vikings fullback treated nearly a dozen family members – including his mother Tina – to a warm-weather getaway on a Florida beach.

Less than two months later, Ham earned his first-career Pro Bowl nod, earning recognition for moving defenders out of the way for Dalvin Cook, who was also a first-time Pro Bowler.

When it was time to go to Orlando, Ham once again brought his family with him, including Tina, who was battling Stage 4 pancreatic cancer.

And in March, the Vikings rewarded Ham – a former undrafted free agent – with a multi-year contract extension. It provided him and his family with financial security, while also highlighting the fullback's importance in Minnesota's offense.

It is those family oriented memories that

Ham holds close to him these days, as Tina Ham passed away in May, ending her battle with the disease at the age of 57.

"Looking back on things now, I've come to find joy from things in this past year that I was able to experience with her," Ham said. "To sign that contract, and for her to see me really live out my dream, it's those moments that I really cherish.

"I just remember how happy she was, the smiles that she had. I know she felt really special to be there [at the Pro Bowl] with me," Ham continued. "Although it's sad [my mother passed], you have to find joy in the memories and find joy in the good times.

"Sometimes you feel like the hard times, especially once they are gone, come up to the surface a little more," Ham added. "But as time goes on, you start to cherish and remember the joyful moments, and the smiles and the laughs. Those are the things I try to focus on the most."

October is Crucial Catch month around the NFL, as the league places a heavy importance on fighting all types of cancer

through early detection and risk reduction.

The Vikings Crucial Catch home game this year is against the Falcons. Although fans will not be in attendance, the game will give the organization a spotlight to honor cancer survivors and those currently battling cancer, as well as those who have passed on.

Week 6 will be the third Crucial Catch game the Vikings will be involved in, as road opponents Houston and Seattle also celebrated the cause earlier this month.

"Even in Houston, when we first got there and are walking on the field, you see the Crucial Catch logo," Ham said. "It brought back memories to last year, having my mom come to the Crucial Catch game and wearing my cleats. It just brought up so many memories from a year ago and what she was going through at that time, but how she was also still supporting me.

"It's always been important in the sense that cancer is a disease that a lot of people have to deal with and is a very serious thing," Ham added. "But when my mom was diagnosed, it became even more important



to me ... when it happens to you, it means a little bit more. These past couple years, and especially now, this month has been a very special month for my family."

Tina was initially diagnosed in March 2018 with Stage 2 pancreatic cancer, but surgery later revealed that it actually was Stage 4.

Even as she battled the disease, Tina kept her family close. But if her love for Ham and his sister, Markeeta, was special, she took it to another level when it came to her six grandchildren.

Ham smiles warmly at the thought of having Tina experience once-in-a-lifetime moments with Ham's daughters, Skylar and Stella, on their first trip to Disney World in Orlando.

"My mom really showed me how to love," Ham said. "To look at something bigger than yourself and love unconditionally.

"Seeing how she loved me and my father and my sister, but specifically, how she loved my children," Ham added. "She loved them

unconditionally and they really meant the world to her, as did her grandchildren from my sister, as well. She really loved them, and that makes me want to be a better person. She taught me to love everybody, and to do with your full heart."

Ham wore custom shoes in Minnesota's 2019 Crucial Catch game and plans to do so again Sunday. But he has also added two special accessories to his wardrobe to honor his mother.

Ham's wife, Stephanie, gifted him a custom necklace with Tina's face on it in for his 27th birthday in July. And last month, she presented him with a denim jacket with a picture of Tina on the back.

The necklace, Ham said, holds his mom close to his heart. And the jacket is a symbol of him wrapped in her love.

"That's really my wife being awesome," Ham said. "Soon after my mother passed, she got me the necklace with my mother's picture. Then she surprised me with the jacket.

"It was a gift from her, and it turned out unbelievable ... even better than I could have ever imagined," Ham added. "When I first saw that jacket and was able to put it on, it was emotional. It's just very special to me."

There is nothing that equates to a mother's love. Sometimes it is tender and caring, and other times it is pointed and guiding. But behind every conversation, inside joke or life lesson, there is always love.

As Ham honors his mother at Sunday's game, in October and for all the days to come, he will hold a son's love for his mother near and dear, just like those precious family memories that he now remembers with a smile.

"SHE WAS THE rock of our family," HAM SAID. "SHE'S GONE, BUT SHE'S DEFINITELY not forgotten, AND WILL ALWAYS BE in our hearts."



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ANT

RAISING HIS



BY LINDSEY YOUNG

ANTHONY HARRIS

VOICE FOR THE HUDDLE AND HUMANITY

Layers of purple helmets and jerseys encircled the safety, mirroring endless rows of starkly empty, purple seats in the background.

Anthony Harris' voice carried easily over warmup music, his passionate messaging a pump-up beat of its own.

"I'm trying to speak the truth, man. Be yourself," Harris told his teammates. "Everybody who's standing right here is standing right here for a purpose. Your talent, your abilities, they're enough. Believe in the process, believe in the preparation. We've got to do our ... jobs.

"Build that --- trust. Build that --- chemistry," he shouted. "Have fun out there. Do your job!"

Harris' speech didn't magically produce a Vikings Week 3 win. It did, however, help energize a team that competed in a dynamic game against Tennessee after looking listless in Minnesota's first two games, both ugly losses.

"I kind of sat back and tried to evaluate the team for the first two weeks, figure out what our identity is, what we need to do individually, what myself as a player, leader and veteran on this team, what role do I need to play to bring out the best in the team?" Harris explained.

Harris asked Vikings Head Coach Mike Zimmer for permission to address the team that Saturday night during a team meeting. The next day, he more spontaneously spoke out.

"Going in that huddle, it was about, 'Let's be who we are. Let's remember who we are,'" Harris recounted. "For the guys who have been here, we've got to take the reins and remind guys, 'This is how we play here at Minnesota.

This is our identity. Let's go out and do it.'"

"Pretty much talking to guys and what we pride ourselves on and what we're looking to do here in the Minnesota Vikings organization," he added.

ANSWERING THE CALL

Now in his sixth season with the Vikings and under Zimmer, Harris has understood and shaped the identity of past teams. He's gone from undrafted free agent, to special teams stalwart, to "next man up," to full-time starter across from All-Pro safety Harrison Smith.

Vikings linebacker Eric Kendricks remembers clearly his first time playing with Harris.

Both had been rookies in 2015 – Kendricks a second-round draft pick and starter by Week 4 and Harris a college free agent who spent 13 games on Minnesota's practice squad. But on Dec. 10, 2015, Harris was called up to the active roster for the Vikings *Thursday Night Football* game at Arizona.

"We had a bunch of guys that were injured, and he got the call," Kendricks said. "I remember leaving that game and telling the rest of the linebacker group, 'Hey – Ant Harris, he's a guy who can play.' He can play, but not only can he play, he has the mental wherewithal to communicate on the field and be calm in certain situations, and I felt that immediately.

"Since then, he's slowly chipped away," Kendricks added. "He's always doing the right thing on and especially off the field, and I think when he made the

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transition to the player we know now, it was just natural. He had always been doing the right things to put himself in that position."

Two weeks ago, Harris delivered another speech in Houston, firing up his teammates before Minnesota went on to secure its first win of the 2020 season.

The message has been simple but significant, said Kendricks: Believe in yourself.

"Obviously as a team we've got to believe in ourselves, but more importantly, he was preaching that the individual work we all put in, just to trust it and let loose," Kendricks said. "I think I think that was important to hear that from a guy like Anthony because he has done it at the highest level. Especially for the young guys on our team who may have never seen him in that light ... it was good to [hear him] vocalize that."

The pregame preaching might be new for Harris this year, but the leadership behind it is not.

Just ask Dalvin Cook, a locker neighbor of Harris at Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center who also delivers speeches in the huddle.

"Being around him and just knowing his thought process, everything about Ant is a leader," Cook said. "He's a guy that you want in the locker room, and he's a guy you want to surround yourself with when it comes to being positive."

"We're all leaders in that locker room, and

whoever wants to step in the middle of that huddle and get the guys ready to go, I'm all for it," Cook added. "Ant stepped in there and gave us some great energy."

MICROCOSM OF SOCIETY

Harris hopes to leave an impression beyond just the huddle.

The Vikings this year have not only navigated the COVID-19 pandemic but also responded in significant ways to social unrest that initially centered in Minneapolis following the tragic death of George Floyd, then reverberated through the country.

Harris has been a part of the Vikings Social Justice Committee since its establishment in 2018; he's delivered – along with teammates – messaging that urges change. Harris' words have been weighty with compassion, conviction and care.

From playbook questions to tough topics, Harris opens himself up to regular conversation within the locker room, drawing on experience both as an African American male and now an NFL veteran.

"I wanted to open that up for people to be able to discuss. Understanding that [race] is a sensitive topic and that everybody might not be as comfortable to speak out on it," Harris said. "I was naturally more comfortable and more open to do it, just letting everybody know, 'Hey, it's OK to say what you feel, and

if you're not sure, if you don't know about something, you won't be judged or scrutinized because you don't know.' It's more about making each other aware of everything so we can take some steps toward a common goal of unity and peace within society."

Smith is one teammate who's gained a deeper understanding through his friendship and dialogue with Harris, as well as other Black teammates and coaches. He acknowledged having been "a little naïve" to the injustices and racism that people of color face on a daily basis. Smith committed to not only educate himself but – along with Harris – work to make a difference beyond the scoreboard.

"Sometimes you just think, 'It's like this everywhere. It's all good.' And that's just not true," Smith said. "We need to do better. And it's uncomfortable I think, especially for the white community, to have conversations around that – because it acknowledges that there's a bias or a privilege. And that's uncomfortable for a lot of people to do."

"I'm sure Ant's had plenty of experiences that I wouldn't have had if I'd grown up in the same spot," Smith added. "I'm from Tennessee; I know Black people in the city, I know white people in the city, and I know our lives, realistically, our day-to-day interactions are just different ... and that's not how it should be."

Together, Smith and Harris lead by example



"We all come from different backgrounds, different upbringings, so the awareness about some issues isn't there for everyone. It can't become a topic of conversation unless we open up to each other and express how we really feel and what we do – and do not – understand."

– ANTHONY HARRIS

within an NFL locker room that often feels like a microcosm of society that is better unified by shared goals.

"When football players speak out on these things and people are like, 'Shut up, dude, just go play football' – I mean, I get the sentiment, because what qualifies a football player to know anything more than anybody else? And really, nothing," Smith said.

"But that experience and that day-to-day interaction with people from everywhere, that willingness to debate things and talk and trust – you just can't find that a lot of other places."

UNIQUE BUT UNIFIED

When Harris speaks to the pregame huddle, every player looking back at him is unique. And there's beauty in that, he says.

"We all come from different backgrounds, different upbringings, so the awareness about some issues isn't there for everyone, and it can't become a topic of conversation unless we open up to each other and express how we really feel and what we do – and do not – understand," Harris said. "That allows us to be more understanding and for everybody

to be more sensitive and to be more patient while trying to understand where each other is coming from.

"Outside in the world, there will be a number of people who, some disagree, some agree, some understand, some don't understand. But it's up to us all to be willing to teach each other and be willing to learn," he later added.

Harris emphasized that just as they share one goal as a team, the Vikings are unified in wanting to impact Twin Cities communities – and beyond – for the better. Means of expression may look different, but the motivation is the same.

"We're all in agreement that we want to take part in uniting the community, bringing people closer together [and] using our voices for what we all think is right," Harris said. "That's what was a pretty unanimous decision on what we wanted to do."

Harris' focus on social justice does not detract from his drive and determination on the gridiron.

On the contrary, he believes that achieving success (which he knows the team is capable of) on game days will increase the impact of off-field efforts.

"Our performance and being united in how

we can play together, the success we can bring on the field, is using football and our platform, which is kind of a bridge to the community," he said.

Ask his teammates, and you'll find that bringing people together just comes naturally for Harris.

"He's very loving, very caring. I haven't met anyone who doesn't like Ant or doesn't get along with him, and I think that just goes to show Ant's personality," Kendricks said. "He just treats everybody with that same respect."

And Harris will continue to use his voice – and his heart – to do so. Whether in the huddle or in life.

"If there's something that needs to be said, I'm not shy about saying it. [I was] just being who I am," Harris said. "That was the first experience pregame, getting in the circle and talking to those guys. It was just something I felt was in my heart to do at that moment, so I just went with it."

"We're just going to continue," he added. "Everybody is going to play their role and be who we are as teammates and individuals and keep moving forward."

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE

This season, teams across the NFL held mandatory "NFL Votes" informational sessions for players, coaches and staff members. Clubs were able to partner with one of three nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations (I Am a Voter, RISE to Vote and Rock the Vote) for the sessions. The Vikings have a goal for everyone in the organization to participate in this year's election.

"I think being part of a society, it affects you, so taking the time out to inform yourself and voting on representatives who ultimately speak on your behalf, it's important to take advantage and exercise that right [to use your voice]," Harris said.

Scan the code with your smart phone camera app to access MNVotes.org for information on voting in Minnesota.



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ERIC WILSON

SEEING CLEARLY NOW

BY CRAIG PETERS

Blood dripped down from Eric Wilson's forehead, hueing the normally clear protective shield on his face mask an unmistakable red.

Tears streamed down Wilson's face a year later, resulting from a pain that's less visible but more difficult to bear for even the toughest among us.

The bleeding resulted from a cut that Wilson suffered while blocking a Falcons punt — after which he recovered the football — on the fourth snap of Minnesota's 2019 season. The Vikings built off the momentum and scored a touchdown a minute later, seizing control early against the Falcons.

Punter Matt Bosher's right foot went through the protective shield during the play, but the adrenaline of the moment prevailed.

The signature play is documented by an "awesome picture" that is on display in Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center, and his uncle had a friend hand-draw a portrait — "it's huge, like, 3 feet by 2 feet" — for Wilson.

"We have multiple blocks and returns, and depending on whatever down and distance certain blocks are better, but it lined up great on that one," Wilson explained. "Coach made a great call, and my teammates did a great job of doing their part, and I did the same. It was great. I got it right off his foot.

"You just have to adjust. You don't really



know when the [right] circumstances are going to get called," Wilson said. "You've got to do what you've got to do and execute your responsibility."

It was a case of the right call and Wilson getting to the right place at the right time, making good on his work as a special teams ace since arriving in Minnesota in 2017 as an undrafted free agent out of Cincinnati.

"I remember my rookie year there would be several [plays] where the ball is right here and my hand is right here, and I'd just barely miss it, so it was great to finally get one," Wilson said. "I don't know what would have happened if I hadn't had the face shield."

"The face shield definitely saved me some bruising and some scarring and [offered] protection from a cut because his foot actually did go directly through my face shield," Wilson added. "It was wild. It's never expected for a punter to basically kick you in the face, but it happened and was a big play."

Wilson said he wore the protective face shield "on and off" in college, opting for it in cold-weather games and avoiding it in hot weather because "you might sweat more and then you're trying to clean it off all of the time."

The protective piece is now non-negotiable for Wilson, who has worked his way up from being an understudy and learning each of the three positions in Minnesota's defense to playing a role in sub packages, and finally this year, the starting lineup in the Vikings base defense.

CRIES FOR JUSTICE

Before what would be Wilson's first start on a Kickoff Weekend, he and teammates lined up on the goal line. They locked arms and fixed their eyes on the west video board of U.S. Bank Stadium for a pre-recorded performance by Alicia Keys of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," as well as a tribute to George Floyd, who tragically died less than five miles from the stadium on Memorial Day.

Instead of freeze-framing Wilson's gusto for the game, images taken by Vikings photographers of him in that moment reveal a tremendous pain brought by injustices and inequalities.

"I think that's very accurate, the pain that I've felt, the pain that my people have felt, the pain that my ancestors have felt, I've really felt that this year," Wilson said. "I just

felt all of that emotion. I couldn't help myself, and I cried because I felt that pain. I cried because it's frustrating that our people are still being mistreated."

Wilson, who deeply reflected before deciding this year to kneel during the National Anthem, said he appreciates the NFL allowing players to better express their emotions this year and use their platform to work toward meaningful changes.

"I think what inspires me to know that we can do better is it's not, I guess some are drastic changes, but things throughout our history have gotten better," Wilson said. "It hasn't gotten to where it needs to be for true equality and true justice, but it has gotten better. I think what motivates me is my family, myself, my teammates, my ancestors who have fought and gone through so much more hostility and violence than I guess I have. Them pushing through and having that ability to persevere through those challenges has allowed me to live the life that I'm living, so I'm grateful for that."

RELAYING THE MESSAGE

Wilson recorded his first career interception at Indianapolis in Week 2. He showed good instincts and reaction in corralling a pass tipped by Harrison Smith. It was a high point on a down day that also included a season-ending injury to Anthony Barr, who usually wears the helmet with the headset device to relay calls from Head Coach Mike Zimmer to the rest of the defense.

Eric Kendricks took over in that game, but coaches shifted the responsibility to Wilson in Week 3.

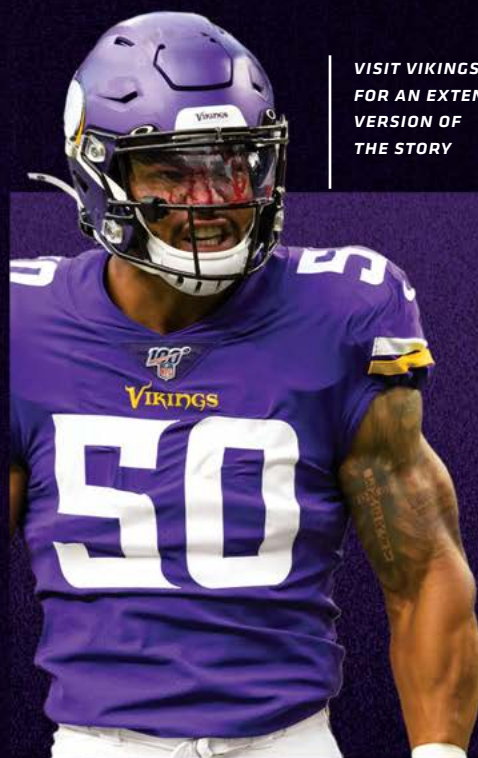
Wilson's prior experience of learning all three linebacker positions has "definitely helped" his transition to the role.

"Knowing the little intricacies of the defense, and even if we have new guys in there, knowing what they should be doing and being able to relay that

information to them so we're all on the same page on defense," said Wilson, who recorded his second interception and second sack of the season at Seattle in Week 5.

"It might be a little hectic sometimes, but when you have the headset, you have to be the one that's able to communicate to everybody and in a way where everybody can hear you and use that information," Wilson added. "You definitely have to be poised. You can't overreact or just be too calm. If you're too calm and just trying to say the call like some guys do, they're focused on their responsibility, so they might not hear you."

"You have to find that balance in telling them the call, not yelling and keeping your cool without saying the call too quietly," he continued. "And you definitely have to know how to diagnose certain calls, too. I think for me, it's definitely allowed me to develop my understanding of the defense more, understanding the play calls, when we're going to call certain things in certain parts of the field."



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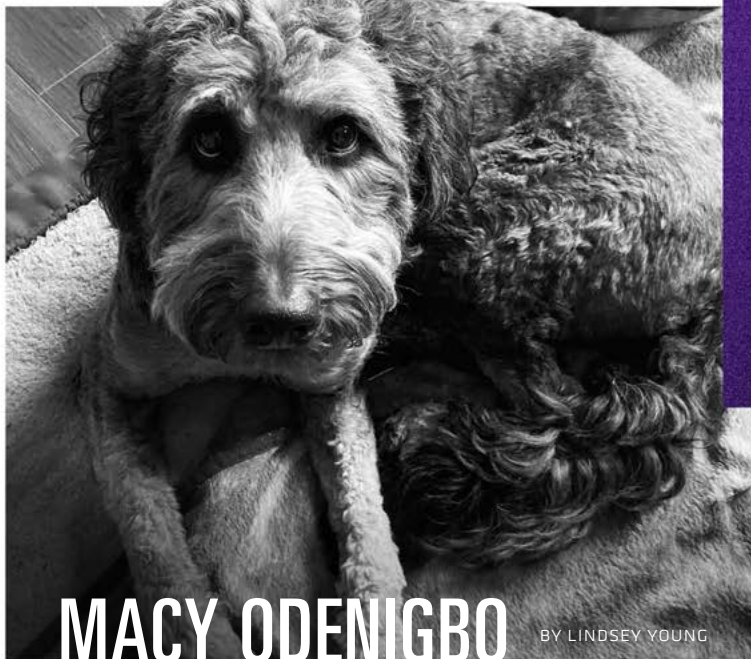


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MACY ODENIGBO

BY LINDSEY YOUNG

PURPLE Pups

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MEMORIAL HEALTH

Ifeadi Odenigbo is living out two of his childhood dreams.

Sure, there's the obvious one: being a defensive end in the NFL is a pretty big deal. But there's also the lesser-known aspiration Odenigbo had as a youngster growing up in Centerville, Ohio: getting a puppy.

Odenigbo always wanted a dog, but his parents – Nigerian immigrants – “never understood the concept of having a dog as a companion,” he noted.

Despite his parents' repeated rejections, Odenigbo knew deep down he'd one day be a dog owner, and he even planned a name for his future pup.

On family drives to church or on his way to school, Odenigbo's attention often was caught by the Macy's department store as he passed by.

“I was like, ‘Man, I like that name, Macy. That would be a cool dog's name,’ ” he recalled.

Fast forward to 2017, when Odenigbo was drafted 220th overall by the Vikings and spent that season on Minnesota's practice squad. He decided that spring to finally make the purchase he'd been waiting for.

Odenigbo went from studying opposing offenses to studying – just as thoroughly – dog breeds.

The defensive lineman did his due diligence, but he continued to come back to the Goldendoodle.

“It's a very smart dog – we know



OWNER:

IFEADI ODENIGBO

PUP PALS:

MACY HAS MANY
VIKINGS FRIENDS,
INCLUDING
HARRISON SMITH'S
DOG DEUCE.

SO FRESH & SO CLEAN:

MACY IS
HYPOALLERGENIC,
AND SHE
DOESN'T SHED.

GRAND-DOG:

IT TOOK A WHILE FOR
ODENIGBO'S PARENTS
TO WARM UP TO MACY,
BUT NOW THEY ARE
GREAT FRIENDS.



"She loves attention; she needs attention. It's cool. Going back home after a long day at work, whether you played good or bad, it's nice to just have a dog [there ready to welcome you]."

- IFEADI ODENIGBO ON MACY



poodles are very smart – and the retriever side, the fact that it's [high-energy], it's just a fun dog," Odenigbo explained. "And what made it really appealing was the fact that it doesn't shed.

"I'm not the cleanest person in the world," he added with a laugh. "When I saw a dog that doesn't shed, so I don't have to vacuum every two hours, [a Goldendoodle] seemed like the best fit for me."

Now two-plus years into being a dog dad, Odenigbo couldn't be happier with his decision.

And as he's bonded with Vikings teammates over the years, Macy has connected right along with him.

Macy's pup pals include Harrison Smith's chocolate Lab, Deuce, and Eric Kendricks' French bulldog, Basil, who sadly passed away this spring.

"Deuce is a workhorse. He's super competitive and super athletic," Odenigbo said. "Macy always thinks she's one of the guys, so she tries to compete with Deuce. Every time we go to Harry's crib, they'll jump in the pool, and you can just see that they're having a ton of fun.

"One of Macy's best friends was Basil," he added. "They had such a blast together. And then Ben Gedeon with his dog, Sal. ... Macy's got a couple of friends on the team."

Anyone familiar with Odenigbo knows he's

always operating at full-throttle. And as it turns out, Macy's personality matches his.

He joked that Macy is the "spitting image" of him.

"She's got no chill," Odenigbo laughed.

"Macy will be in my apartment, and we're just chilling, but as soon as someone knocks on the door ... she's bouncing off the walls. Or when you're walking her on the leash, she's like, 'Oh yeah – we've got something.' She sees a squirrel, she's yanking on that leash, and I'm pulling her back.

"She loves attention; she needs attention," he added. "It's cool. Going back home after a long day at work, whether you played good or bad, it's nice to just have a dog [there ready to welcome you]."

Even his mom, Linda, and dad, Thomas, have developed a fondness for their grand-pup.

"Now that I have Macy, my parents are pretty accepting," said Odenigbo, who recalled Linda being "terrified" when he first brought Macy home to Ohio as a puppy.

"She wanted nothing to do with her," he said. "But after [some time went by], she was like, 'This is actually a fun dog. I get why you wanted to get a dog.' And now my mom will come and visit, and she's excited about Macy. It's pretty cool to see that even at their age, they had this [perception] of what dogs were, to them now really loving dogs."

Reflecting back over the past six-plus months that have offered a number of challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, Odenigbo said that having Macy has been a blessing.

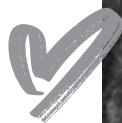
When the coronavirus began to impact the U.S. and caused cross-country shutdowns in March, Macy provided constant companionship.

"Dogs are very therapeutic," Odenigbo said. "Having a dog is knowing you have a purpose. ... Having Macy during this whole quarantine, I got to walk her every single day, I got to play fetch with her.

"Having Macy made [the social distancing] really not that bad for me, to be honest," he added.

Despite the hardships that 2020 has presented – both on and off the field – Odenigbo is careful to keep things in perspective and not take anything in his life for granted, including the puppy he always wanted.

"It's kind of a dream come true," he said. "I had a vision when I was a kid, and it's cool that I'm really fulfilling my dreams."



Pierre
NOUJAIM

Ron
JOHNSON

Hobie
ARTIGUE

Jim
RICH

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CRUCIAL CATCH

INTERCEPT CANCER

The Vikings, the NFL and the American Cancer Society are united in their fight against cancer through the "Crucial Catch: Intercept Cancer" initiative that is in its 12th season.

During Minnesota's Week 6 home game against Atlanta, players will wear specially designed, multicolored equipment to represent multiple types of cancer.

Game-worn Crucial Catch merchandise will be auctioned on NFL Auction ([nfl.com/auction](https://www.nfl.com/auction)). The NFL does not profit from the sale of Crucial Catch merchandise. Charitable contributions are donated to the American Cancer Society to support its Community Health Advocates Implementation Nationwide Grants for Empowerment (CHANGE) grant program.

Since 2012, the NFL has funded CHANGE grants, contributing to 370,000 screenings in underserved communities and reaching more than 1 million individuals with education, screening reminders and patient navigation.

IT TAKES ALL OF US



IT TAKES ALL OF US

This year has been dramatically altered by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the battle against cancer continues. The NFL and ACS are reminding, "It takes all of us to fight cancer."

Vikings tight end Kyle Rudolph was among players, coaches and fans who participated in a national television ad to deliver that message.

Rudolph's brother, Casey, was born with and overcame neuroblastoma, an aggressive cancer that affects infants. The Rudolph family's experience during Casey's battle motivated the three-time Vikings Community Man of the Year to create "Kyle Rudolph's End Zone" at the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital.

Additionally, Rudolph recently surprised 7-year-old cancer survivor and superfan Haakyn Mohr with a video call. After he was diagnosed with a tumor the size of a football on his kidney, Haakyn underwent surgery to remove the kidney and tumor, followed by 28 weeks of aggressive

rounds of chemotherapy and radiation.

Haakyn recently told his parents, Ryan and Tory, that he wants to play in the NFL so he can bring his teammates to a children's hospital, sign footballs and make young patients smile – just like Rudolph.

HOPE LODGE

Vikings Legends, players and staff visited the Richard M. Schulze Family American Cancer Society Hope Lodge in person in October 2019 but shifted to a virtual event earlier this month.

The facility opened in 2007 and offers 42 guest rooms where cancer patients and caregivers are able to stay at no personal cost while they are here from out of town to undergo treatment.

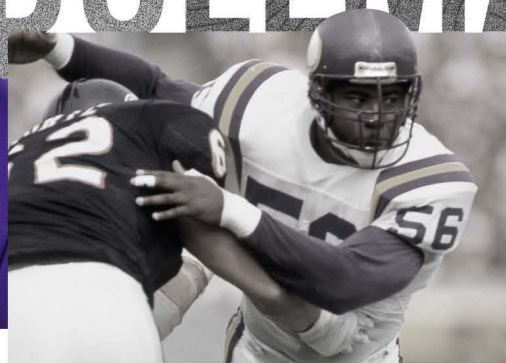
CRUCIAL CATCH DAY

KFAN 100.3-FM, the flagship station of the Vikings Radio Network, helped the efforts as well by hosting a "Crucial Catch Day" fundraiser on Oct. 13.



REMEMBERING

CHRIS DOLEMAN



Pro Football Hall of Fame member Chris Doleman passed away in January 2020 at the age of 58 after courageously battling brain cancer for more than two years.

The No. 4 overall pick of the 1985 NFL Draft, Doleman played 10 of his 15 pro seasons in Minnesota. He made six trips to Pro Bowls after seasons in Purple, plus an additional all-star appearance each with Atlanta and San Francisco. He eventually totaled 150.5 sacks, the fifth-most in an NFL career.

Doleman set a Vikings franchise record of 21 sacks in 1989 that was topped by Jared Allen's 22 in 2011. Allen recalled how gracious Doleman was to him during his pursuit.

"He was there when I got 22, and he gave me a big ol' hug on the sideline. Who he was as a man speaks more volume than who he was as a player," Allen said. "Chris was a phenomenal human being from what I knew of him. We shared a faith connection, and he was always gracious and humble. The world lost a great person."

Doleman, who would have turned 59 on Oct. 16, was instrumental for three Vikings defenses that ranked No. 1 in the NFL in yards allowed (1988, 1989 and 1993).

He led the Vikings in sacks in five separate seasons (and tied for the lead another year) and reached 10-plus sacks eight times over the course of his 15 NFL seasons.

Doleman also had a penchant for stripping the ball, forcing 45 fumbles and recovering 24. He caused four or more fumbles in six separate seasons, including 1987 when he led the NFL with six.

Doleman was inducted to the Vikings Ring of Honor on Nov. 14, 2011, and he

was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame on Aug. 4, 2012.

Hall of Fame receiver Cris Carter recalled meeting Doleman when the receiver was just 17.

"He recruited me when ... they had those great University of Pittsburgh teams, and I was just a kid in Ohio looking for an opportunity," Carter said. "So, we were friends for almost 40 years. Truly, truly, we have lost a great man – and I have lost a friend."

Hall of Fame guard Randall McDaniel said he enjoyed the way Doleman positively impacted younger players.

"I loved him in the locker room, just helping the young guys out and teaching them how to be professional," McDaniel said. "He'd carry a briefcase in, and we all used to laugh and joke about it, but he was teaching a lot of the young guys that, 'Hey, this is your job now. Treat it that way.'"

"He was great, and as a teammate, he was excellent," McDaniel added. "He kept the locker room lively, as Chris could only do."

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WATCH BARS



Catch all the excitement of Minnesota Vikings Football this season at a Vikings Game Day Watch Bar. These team-approved locations are specifically set up for viewing every minute of Vikings Football during the 2020 season, home and away. Bars will feature beer and food specials. SKOL Vikings!



BY CRAIG PETERS

INTERCEPTIONS

The Crucial Catch: Intercept Cancer initiative is a joint effort between the NFL and American Cancer Society that stresses the important role that screenings can play in early detection and treatment.

This 12th season of the Vikings and NFL teams supporting Crucial Catch is against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic that has resulted in a dramatic decrease in screenings and access to screenings in underserved communities. Money raised during Crucial Catch supports ACS CHANGE grants to provide screenings in those communities and raise awareness to the importance of early detection.

In honor of Crucial Catch and the Vikings 60th Season, here's a look at some historic Vikings interceptions through the years.

AUDRAY McMILLIAN is the only Vikings player to provide a game-winning score on an interception.

McMillian returned a pass by Cleveland backup Todd Philcox 25 yards for a touchdown with 9:05 remaining. The pick-six gave Minnesota a 17-13 lead and was the third interception of the

game by McMillian. He nabbed two offerings by Mike Tomczak earlier in the second half, leading to the QB's benching by Bill Belichick.

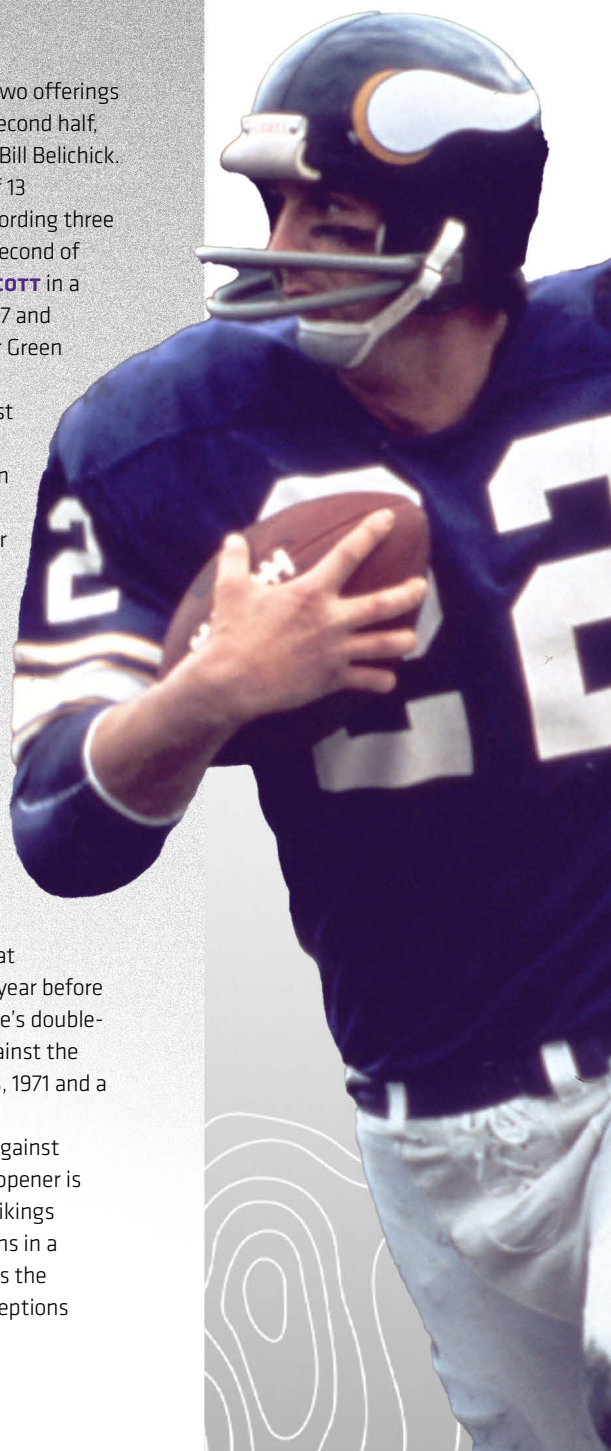
McMillian's "hat trick" is one of 13 instances of a Vikings player recording three interceptions in one game and second of three instances in 1992 (**TODD SCOTT** in a 42-7 win at Cincinnati on Sept. 27 and **VENCIE GLENN** in a 27-7 win over Green Bay on Dec. 27).

ROY WINSTON recorded the first three-interception game in a Vikings uniform (Oct. 25, 1964) in a 27-22 win over San Francisco.

BOBBY BRYANT is the only player in franchise history to record two separate hat tricks (in a 51-3 win over Cleveland on Nov. 9, 1969 and a 31-7 victory at Green Bay on Dec. 8, 1973).

Hall of Famer **PAUL KRAUSE** spelled the most double-trouble for opponents. He recorded two interceptions in a franchise-best 11 games on his way to breaking the NFL record with 81 career interceptions. Krause had one hat trick with Washington in 1967 a year before joining Minnesota. Two of Krause's double-interception games occurred against the Falcons (in a 24-7 win on Nov. 28, 1971 and a 38-0 victory on Nov. 9, 1975).

ANTHONY HARRIS' two picks against the Falcons in the 2019 season opener is the most recent instance of a Vikings player recording two interceptions in a game, and **HARRISON SMITH** has the franchise record with four interceptions returned for touchdowns.





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FEATURED FAN

MARION

Marion and Dan Doheny have attended Vikings games together for 25 years.

The Vikings have been a part of Marion Doheny's life for almost as long as she can remember.

A Minnesota native, Marion often bundled up and attended Vikings games at Metropolitan Stadium during the team's inaugural 1961 season with her cousin, a Season Ticket Holder.

Marion purchased the season tickets from him a few years later and has been in the stands ever since.

In 1966, Marion became a flight attendant for Northwest Airlines, an occupation she would hold for 42 years.

Marion's supervisor approached her six years into the job with an opportunity: Would she like to work on the Vikings charter flights?

"Of course, I couldn't say no," Marion said with a chuckle.

And so for the 1972 and 1973 seasons, Marion served the Vikings on their road trips.

She recalled quarterback Fran Tarkenton re-joining Minnesota after five seasons with the Giants, and she noted that Hall of Fame Coach Bud Grant sat in coach with the rest of his staff, leaving the first-class seats for

starters and veteran players.

After games, Marion said, Grant allowed the players two beers – and only two – apiece.

"We had to leave at the third quarter and [prep the airplane], and we would put two beers in everybody's seat pocket," Marion said.

Through six decades of Vikings football – including all four Super Bowls, which she attended – Marion has remained loyal. She married her current husband, Dan, in 1996, and the two have been attending home games together for 25 years.

"I can't even start to name all of the fun and the thrills of being at the Vikings games," Marion said.

Through electrifying wins and crushing losses, Marion has stuck with her team. And in some of her darkest hours, the Vikings have brightened her days.

In August 2018, Marion was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She underwent chemotherapy and radiation that wreaked havoc on her body; and yet, she never missed a Vikings game.

Marion was declared cancer-free

approximately one year after her initial diagnosis. But during follow-up scans this spring, doctors discovered that her cancer had returned and spread to her liver.

But much like her beloved Vikings, Marion has a fighting spirit.

"I'm praying. And I've been on so many prayer chains and gotten so many cards, that I know they're all helping," said Marion. "I do think [staying tuned-in to the Vikings] has helped me.

She added happily: "Even at the stadium, I have some of the ushers praying for me."

And although the Vikings 2020 season isn't going quite as hoped, Marion loves them just the same.

"I always stand up the Vikings," she said. "Before I got really sick again, I was able to make some Vikings masks [for COVID-19]. I had mine on recently, and this guy looked at me and said, 'You aren't going to wear that all day.' And I said, 'I most certainly am.' Win or lose, I'm proud of them, regardless."



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CRAIG LIABRAATEN

The strength of Craig's Vikings fandom matches the strength he showed throughout a battle with cancer. Diagnosed in 2003 with lymphoma, he suffered from a 75-pound tumor that was removed by doctors in Duluth, Minnesota. Craig demonstrated an incredible will to live, often inspired and motivated by his beloved Vikings, whom he's supported for 50 years. Craig has been cancer-free for 15 years.

CURRENT CITY:
HIBBING, MN

FAVORITE
ALL-TIME VIKING:
FRAN TARKENTON



JOSH MATHIOWITZ

Josh has been a Vikings Season Ticket Member since 2009 and from 2007-19 has only missed one home game – for his wedding in 2018. His friends say he “bleeds purple,” evidenced by a home lit purple-and-gold for every game day. He often attends games with his dad; he's been to more than 150 total and visited 13 road-city stadiums, including London in 2013.

CURRENT CITY:
BURNSVILLE, MN

FAVORITE
ALL-TIME VIKING:
RANDY MOSS



RANDY FETTIG

Ever since seeing Fran Tarkenton “scramble around to get us into the Super Bowl,” Randy has followed the Vikings religiously. He reads everything he can about the team, having followed Sid Hartman's column since the '70s. Having survived multiple accidents and twice battling Stage 4 bile duct cancer that has required chemotherapy and surgeries, Randy says he's living to see the Vikings win the Super Bowl.

CURRENT CITY:
CORMORANT
TOWNSHIP, MN

FAVORITE
ALL-TIME VIKING:
FRAN TARKENTON



OLIVIA BEEKMAN

Olivia is a superhero battling high-risk neuroblastoma – cancerous tumors that have taken over her bone marrow. She has faced every step of her intense treatment plan with bravery, strength and, yes, even joy. She loves Batgirl, the color blue, penguins and – of course – the Vikings. She once asked Kyle Rudolph and Adam Thielen about their favorite type of penguin. For a 4-year-old who knows facts about each penguin species, their answer of “all penguins” left her unimpressed.

CURRENT CITY:
OSSEO, MN

FAVORITE
ALL-TIME VIKING:
KYLE RUDOLPH



SABINO SILVA, JR. (“COOKIE”)

From the age of 9, Sabino lived and breathed Vikings football. A dedicated fan, he made it a point to attend games whenever the team played in or near California. After being diagnosed with kidney cancer in 2013, Sabino continued to loyally support his team. In 2016, he flew the family to Minnesota to attend a game at U.S. Bank Stadium. Sabino passed away unexpectedly on Aug. 6, 2020, and was nominated for this honor by his family, all of whom he turned into Vikings fans.

HOMETOWN:
CHINO, CA

FAVORITE
ALL-TIME VIKING:
JOHN RANDLE



HILDA GUTIERREZ

A native of El Paso, Texas, Hilda grew up a Vikings fan thanks to her father, who often brought her to Minnesota to see the team play. She and her husband Arty Ortiz married in 2006, and in 2012 she “finally” turned him into a Vikings fan. They became Vikings Season Ticket Members in 2013; in 2014, the couple made Hilda's dream move, permanently relocating to Minnesota. Hilda helps run two Vikings fan clubs, the Skol Vikings Booster Club and The Purple Code en Español.

CURRENT CITY:
PLYMOUTH, MN

FAVORITE
ALL-TIME VIKING:
ROBERT SMITH



JILL ANGOVE

CURRENT CITY: DULUTH, GA
FAVORITE ALL-TIME VIKING:
CRIS CARTER

Jill was among one of the Minnesota Vikings Foundation's first donors when it launched in 2017 and has continued to consistently support its mission of advancing youth health and education in Minnesota.

To read more about Jill, her family and their commitment to the Vikings, check out the feature on page 50.



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Shout-Outs

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Let the Minnesota Vikings Cheerleaders help!

You can send a special, personalized video greeting from Minnesota Vikings Cheerleaders and help the charitable work of the Minnesota Vikings Foundation.

Shout-outs are \$20 each, and a portion of the proceeds benefits the **Minnesota Vikings Foundation**, which advances youth health and education initiatives.

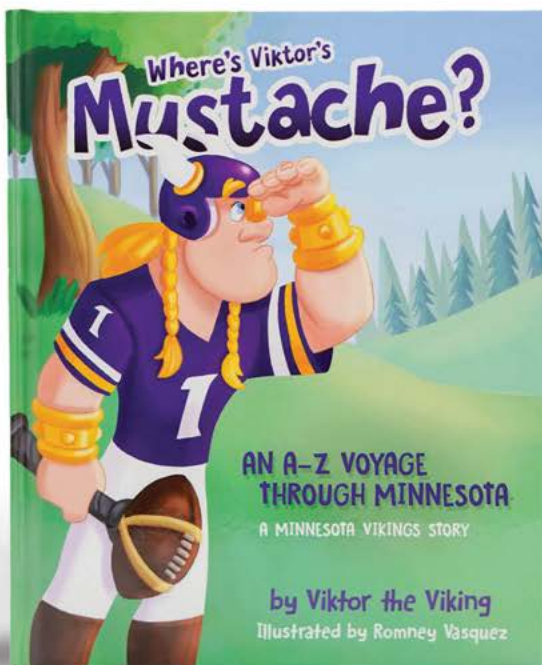
The Minnesota Vikings Foundation launched the **Vikings Table** charity food truck presented by Xcel Energy in 2019. Vikings Table provides free meals and nutrition education. Since March, Vikings Table

has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by delivering 100 meals each weekday to organizations that help youth and families in need.

Help Vikings Table continue its deliveries and send a special greeting, approximately 20 to 30 seconds in length, from a Minnesota Vikings Cheerleader.



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Where's Viktor's Mustache?

Take an adventure through Minnesota as Viktor the Viking retraces his steps to try to find his missing mustache in *Where's Viktor's Mustache?*

This illustrated children's book takes you through some of Viktor's favorite places and activities around Minnesota! While you help Viktor search for his mustache, you might learn a thing or two about the great state the Minnesota Vikings call home.

Order your copies of *Where's Viktor's Mustache?* at Vikings.com/mustache.

Then, help Viktor find his mustache in this fun, engaging story!



The Vikings Kids Club offers members exclusive engagement with players throughout the entire year via events and members-only contests, as well as monthly e-newsletters.

Upon registration, members will receive a special Vikings kit that includes the following:

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- o Mini Signature Football
- o Wallet & more!

Join the Vikings Kids Club today by visiting Vikings.com/kidsclub.



Check out the new Facebook group "**Minnesota Vikings Kids**" for your one-stop shop featuring Vikings content geared toward youth. Whether you know a young fan or are simply young-at-heart, our new Facebook group is the perfect place to interact with other Vikings families!

Join the fun and become a group member by visiting www.facebook.com/groups/minnesotavikingskids/

VIKTOR'S HEROES

IN HONOR OF CRUCIAL CATCH, VIKTOR IS
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ARE BATTLING OR HAVE BEATEN CANCER.



BRAXTON, 10
LEUKEMIA

Brax has been fighting for 22 months and has eight more to go. Being an athlete and having a positive attitude has been a huge part of her journey. She has felt a strong desire to give back, so she created TBIFund to help other patients and families going through the same life changing situations.



DA'VONTE, 14
PEDIATRIC CANCER

Da'Vonte is an outgoing and special young man. He has a positive attitude even when life has been challenging. He is an avid sports fan and loves to play on the court and field. Da'Vonte is looking forward to exploring the Bahamas and ocean with his family soon through an opportunity with Make-A-Wish.



HAAKYN, 7
WILM'S KIDNEY CANCER

In January 2019, Haakyn went into the hospital with a horrible stomachache that wouldn't go away and eventually found out that he had a cancerous tumor the size of a football on his kidney. Haakyn went through aggressive rounds of chemotherapy and radiation for 28 weeks. Although he is continuing to recover and regain strength, Haakyn was declared cancer-free before starting kindergarten.



JOSIAH, 12
BURKETT'S LYMPHOMA

Josiah was diagnosed with an aggressive form of Lymphoma last year. He went through 6.5 rounds of chemo, numerous surgeries and complications from therapy, but through it all he has shown courage, bravery and joy. He is now cancer-free and back on the football field!



LUCAS, 8
ADAMANTINOMATOUS CRANIOPHARYNGIOMA

Lucas fell off a golf cart when he was 5 and had a Head CT, where the doctors found an incidental tumor. He had surgery at Children's Minnesota in 2017 to remove it but had a recurrence in two different spots in 2019. Lucas then had to spend six weeks at Mayo Clinic in Rochester to receive radiation therapy, and as of 2020 his tumors have been in a stable status!



MEGAN, 10
OSTEOSARCOMA

Megan is a two-time osteosarcoma (bone cancer) survivor. Megan went into heart failure from the toxicity of the chemotherapy after beating osteosarcoma the first time. She now has a mechanical heart pump and recently beat osteosarcoma for a second time.



OLIVIA, 5
B CELL ACUTE LYMPHOBLASTIC LEUKEMIA

At 2½ years old, Olivia was diagnosed with cancer. In the last 2½ years she has endured more than any child should ever have to go through. She has been supported across the United States to help her fight. Olivia recently turned 5 years old and is doing well. Her end-of-treatment date is approaching quickly: Nov. 20. She continues to be an amazing little lady and a true fighter.



Congrats JILL ANGOVE



The Minnesota Vikings Foundation relies on the support of community-minded fans to make a difference in the lives of youth and families. Minnesota native Jill Angove is a Vikings super fan and one of the Foundation's first supporters.

Jill was raised a Minnesota Vikings fan as the daughter of Brad French, a loyal Season Ticket Member at Metropolitan Stadium, and has instilled the SKOL spirit in her family: husband, Duncan; and two children, Nick and Abby.

The Minnesota Vikings Foundation's Vikings Table has served more than 15,000 healthy meals since its launch in June 2019, and its goal to provide healthy meals to at-risk youth and families is achieved because of Jill's contributions.

"We are proud to support the Minnesota Vikings Foundation as one of our family's principle charitable donations each year," said Jill. "Having strong roots in Minnesota, the local community still means so much to us. The mission of the Foundation is directly aligned with our belief in fighting childhood hunger by providing both meals and nutritional education. We are so impressed with the work the Foundation team does every day to improve the lives of youth in the state of Minnesota."

Jill has not only become a donor to the Foundation but has involved her family in Foundation events to show them what their support provides. At the Foundation's 2019 holiday reception the morning of the Packers game, Jill and her family arrived at

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the training facility to tour the Vikings Table food truck and help wrap books that were to be distributed as holiday gifts to youth in our community. Their support is so much more than a donation, and the Foundation can't thank Jill enough.

Her loyalty to the Minnesota Vikings grows through her charitable commitment to our community. The Minnesota Vikings Foundation is honored to recognize Jill Angove as a Minnesota Vikings Greatest Fan.

Thank you, Jill! – Your biggest fans, the Minnesota Vikings Foundation

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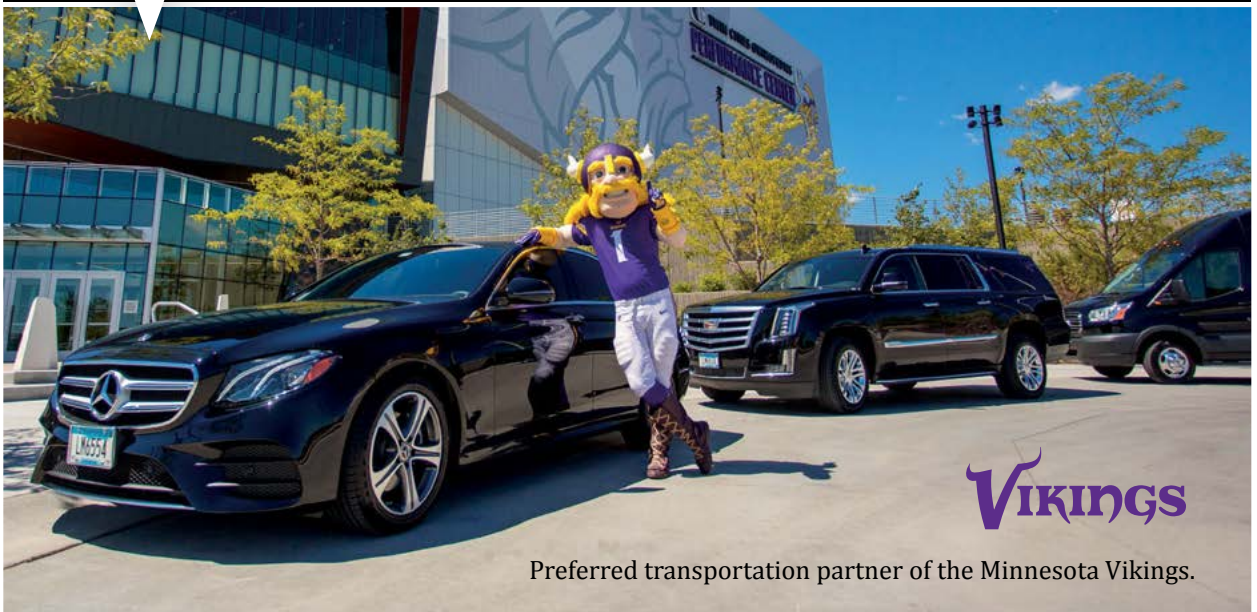
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X'S & O'S WITH MIKE ZIMMER
PRESENTED BY U.S. BANK

TUNE-IN INFO: 6-7 P.M. WEDNESDAYS

Paul Allen interviews Vikings Head Coach Mike Zimmer at the midpoint of each week for an in-depth recap of the team's previous game and a look ahead to the upcoming opponent. Allen also connects with an assistant coach for a deeper look at a particular position. The series features both video and audio components and is available across multiple platforms.



SKOL STORIES
PRESENTED BY CENTURYLINK

TUNE-IN INFO: 6:30 P.M. THURSDAYS

Embark on a voyage through Vikings history with Mark Rosen, who covered the team for decades, and Pete Bercich, the former linebacker and assistant coach. *Skol Stories* offers rich storytelling that reconnects fans with their favorite memories and links younger listeners to the legacy of the franchise.

VIKINGS REWIND

PRESENTED BY PENTAIR

TUNE-IN INFO: 6:30-7 P.M. MONDAYS

Vikings Rewind takes listeners through a fast-paced recap of the previous day's game. The program features in-game commentary by "Voice of the Vikings" Paul Allen, analyst Pete Bercich and sideline reporters Ben Leber and Greg Coleman.

VIKINGS VANTAGE

PRESENTED BY PEPSI

TUNE-IN INFO: 6:30 P.M. FRIDAYS

Wind-down your week with *Vikings Vantage* by recapping the week that was at Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center. Vikings.com's Gabe Henderson and Chris Corso co-host the program that includes interviews with current players and media members who cover the team.

UNDER CENTER WITH KIRK COUSINS

PRESENTED BY FLEET FARM

RADIO TUNE-IN INFO: 6-7 P.M. TUESDAYS

**TV TUNE-IN INFO: WEDNESDAYS AT 8 P.M.
ON WFTC | 10:35 P.M. ON KMSP FOX 9**

The Vikings starting quarterback teams up each week with Twin Cities sports anchor Mark Rosen to deliver unique content via a weekly series that features current Vikings players, prominent Minnesotans and guests with connections to Cousins. Other segments focus on game highlights and reactions. Use #AskKirk to submit a question.

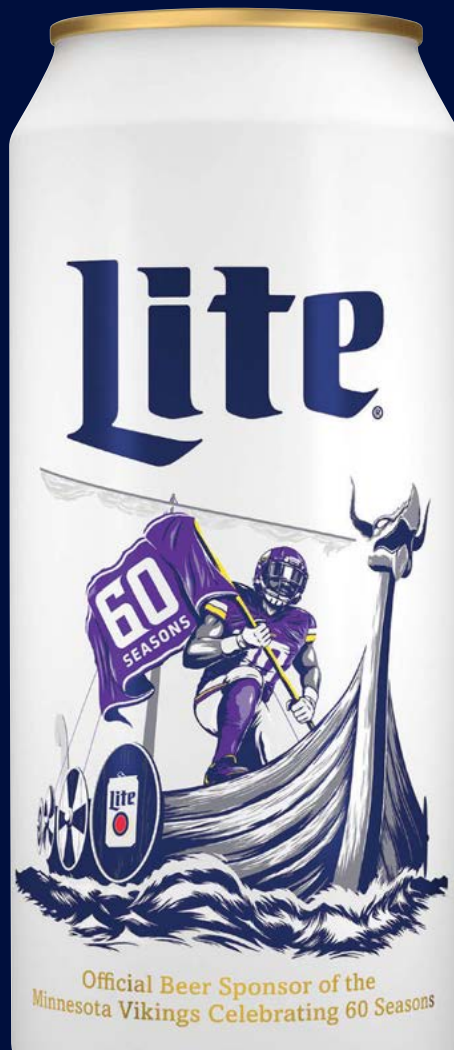
MINNESOTA VIKINGS PODCAST

The Minnesota Vikings Podcast features exclusive guests including players, coaches, staff and experts across the NFL. Go behind the scenes for interviews, press conferences, highlights, quotes from the locker room and much more.

READY TO PLAY

All of the audio programs are available on Vikings platforms (vikings.com, the official Vikings mobile and Vikings Now Connected TV apps and YouTube). They are also available at the following popular podcast sources: KFAN iHeart Radio App, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, etc.

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