

MY CAUSE MY CLEATS | PIT VS. MIN | 12.09.21 | U.S. BANK STADIUM

# PLAYBOOK



# EVERY CHALLENGE. EVERY VICTORY.

## Orthopedic Care Trusted by the Pros

Whether you're a pro athlete or a weekend go-getter, we're here to help after an injury strikes. We have 39 convenient locations, including urgent care hours. In most cases, you don't even need a referral to see one of our top-rated specialists and get back to what you love.

**TCOmn.com**







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## QUESTIONS AT THE GAME?

USE YOUR SMARTPHONE TO  
SCAN AND START YOUR CHAT  
WITH 'ASK VIK,' THE VIKINGS  
VIRTUAL ASSISTANT.



# \$10,000 MATCH

PROVIDED BY: **usbank**

YOUR DONATIONS IN 2020:



**735,000**

PEOPLE ASSISTED



**5.3 MIL**

MEALS DISTRIBUTED



**221,500**

NIGHTS OF SHELTER



**21,000**

CHILDREN RECEIVED TOYS



COACH ZIMMER DONATES  
10,000 CANS TO THE  
'2 MILLION POUNDS'  
FOOD DRIVE

## VIKINGS FANS WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Your gift today helps provide food, shelter, and care to neighbors in your community.



TEXT **SKOL** TO **24-365**  
AND DONATE OR GIVE ONLINE AT  
[SALVATIONARMYNORTH.ORG/VIKINGS](https://salvationarmynorth.org/vikings)





## PRIMETIME PURPLE

THURSDAY, DEC. 9, 2021 | U.S. BANK STADIUM

The Vikings are wearing their #PrimetimePurple uniforms tonight against the Steelers. This will be just the ninth time for the team to wear purple jerseys and pants in a game, although the first time – Oct. 11, 1964 – wasn't intentional. A communication error led to the Vikings and Lions opening that game in white jerseys. Minnesota switched to purple jerseys on the sideline during the game.

### MY CAUSE MY CLEATS

Through the NFL's annual My Cause My Cleats initiative, players reveal their passions beyond the game and wear their hearts on their feet. More than 50 Vikings selected a cause that is important to them and are representing their chosen organization on custom-designed cleats for tonight's game.

Several player's cleats – and their stories – are featured throughout this Playbook.

Visit [vikings.com/mcmc](https://vikings.com/mcmc) to see photos of all of the cleats and learn more about the causes.

### VIKINGS COMMUNITY MAN OF THE YEAR

The Vikings were proud to announce Tuesday that Anthony Barr has been selected as the 2021 Vikings Community Man of the Year. Check out a feature on page 36 to read about the way he invests in dreams and tackles poverty two generations at a time through his Raise the Barr foundation.

## TONIGHT'S GAME PRESENTED BY



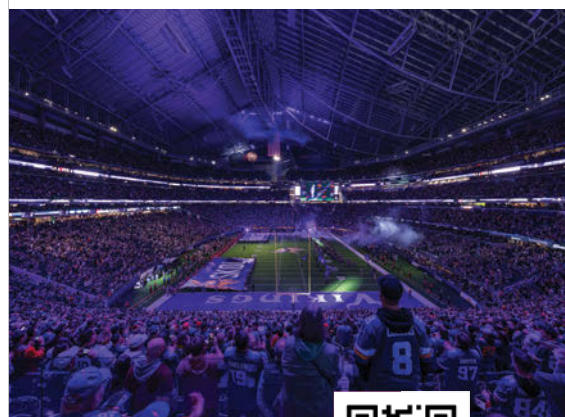
## IN-GAME ELEMENTS

### COLOR GUARD & FULL-FIELD AMERICAN FLAG

The colors will be presented by Marines, and members of the Air Force and Army will unfurl and display a full-field American flag during the National Anthem.

### HALFTIME

Flo Rida will perform. See page 52 for details.



Scan the code with your smart phone for more info on tonight's game entertainment.



## SEND YOUR FAVORITE VIKINGS TO THE PRO BOWL

SCAN THE CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE OR TEXT VIKINGS TO 635635 TO VOTE



CHRISTMAS  
IS HERE!

MINNESOTA'S CHRISTMAS  
STATION IS LIVE







# TONIGHT'S PROMOTIONS



## SALVATION ARMY DIGITAL KETTLE



**usbank**

Join the Minnesota Vikings and support The Salvation Army! Your gift to The Salvation Army's Digital Kettle helps fight hunger and empower youth right here in your own community. Text **SKOL** to **24-365** to donate or visit [SalvationArmyNorth.org/Vikings](http://SalvationArmyNorth.org/Vikings). U.S. Bank will match up to \$10,000!

## OPENING DRIVE SWEEPSTAKES

PRESENTED BY KWIK TRIP

Tonight's Kwik Trip opening drive contestant is John McKeon from Duluth. John 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. John also has the chance to win a Ford Bronco Sport from Northland Ford Dealers at the end of the season. Enter tonight at any Minnesota Kwik Trip store.

**Kwik Trip**

## HOMETOWN HEROES

PRESENTED BY U.S. BANK

During each home game, U.S. Bank and the Minnesota Vikings will recognize individuals who have helped make our community a better place. Tonight's Hometown Heroes are members of the Long Lake Fire Department. In addition to their brave work, they volunteer their off-duty time as bell ringers to help The Salvation Army raise funds for families.

**usbank**

## SACKS FOR APPS

PRESENTED BY  
BUFFALO WILD WINGS

Buffalo Wild Wings brings you "Sacks for Apps" during all Vikings home and away games this season! When the Vikings record 2.0 or more sacks in a game, all fans score a free appetizer with a minimum purchase of \$20. Offer is valid for three days after each eligible game. Visit [Vikings.com/bww](http://Vikings.com/bww) for your digital coupon and details.



## VIKINGS WIN, YOU WIN!

PRESENTED BY KWIK TRIP

Vikings Win, You Win! Buy one Pothole Pizza from Kwik Trip and get the second one free the day after a Vikings win!



## #VIKINGSHAIR

PRESENTED BY  
SPALON MONTAGE

Spalon Montage will be giving away a \$100 gift card at tonight's game! Show us your game-day hairstyle by tweeting a photo @VikingsPromos using #VikingsHairstyle to enter.

**SPALON**  
EST. 1991



## YOU COULD WIN A PEPSI PRIZE PACK!

Simply scan your Pepsi cup with the Vikings app or select "Augmented Reality" within the Vikings app to unlock Vikings photo filters. Share yours using #VikingsGameFace for your chance to win! For full contest rules, visit [Vikings.com/VikingsGameFace](https://vikings.com/VikingsGameFace).



## HY-VEE FUEL SAVERS

PRESENTED BY HY-VEE

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.



## FANCAM

PRESENTED BY U.S. BANK

Vikings Fancam, presented by U.S. Bank, captures your excitement throughout the game. Tag yourself and enter to win prizes by visiting [vikings.fancam.com](https://vikings.fancam.com).



## 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](https://vikings.com/homegater).



## SKOL SCRIBBLES

PRESENTED BY SOUTH DAKOTA TOURISM

Enter Skol Scribbles for a chance to win one of 17 weekly prize packs from South Dakota Tourism! Check Vikings Instagram and Snapchat stories to learn more.



## UNRL HOMETOWN COLLECTION

The Minnesota Vikings and UNRL have partnered together to create the Hometown Collection. Six unique, limited-edition hoodies have been created for fans this season. Available exclusively on game days. Pick up your limited-edition hoodie in the Vikings Locker Room Store tonight!

## UNRL



## BEANIES THAT BENEFIT

PRESENTED BY POLARIS

The Vikings and Polaris are partnering with Minnesota-based children's food charity, Every Meal, to create a limited-edition beanie. With a minimum donation of \$20, you will receive a free, exclusive beanie with all proceeds going directly to Every Meal's "Weekend Food Program." To show additional support, Polaris will also match your minimum donation on every hat sold. Visit [Vikings.com/beaniesthatbenefit](https://vikings.com/beaniesthatbenefit) to get yours!





# Scan the Code to Score Gifts for Every Fan on Your List

[vikings.com/giftguide](https://vikings.com/giftguide)



LET METRO TRANSIT CARRY YOU

# THE FINAL YARD



RIDE STRESS-FREE TO ALL VIKINGS GAMES!

Visit [metrotransit.org/Vikings](https://metrotransit.org/Vikings)  
to make your game day plan!

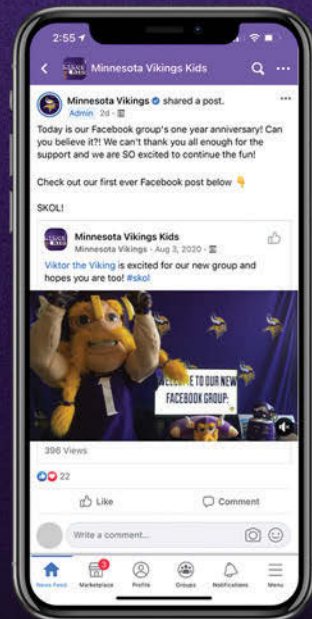


**The Minnesota Vikings Kids Facebook group is  
your one-stop shop for Vikings content geared  
toward youth.**

Share your favorite photos, participate in polls, or  
learn about the latest Vikings events. Whether you  
know a young fan or are simply young-at-heart, our  
Facebook group is the perfect place to interact with  
other Vikings families!



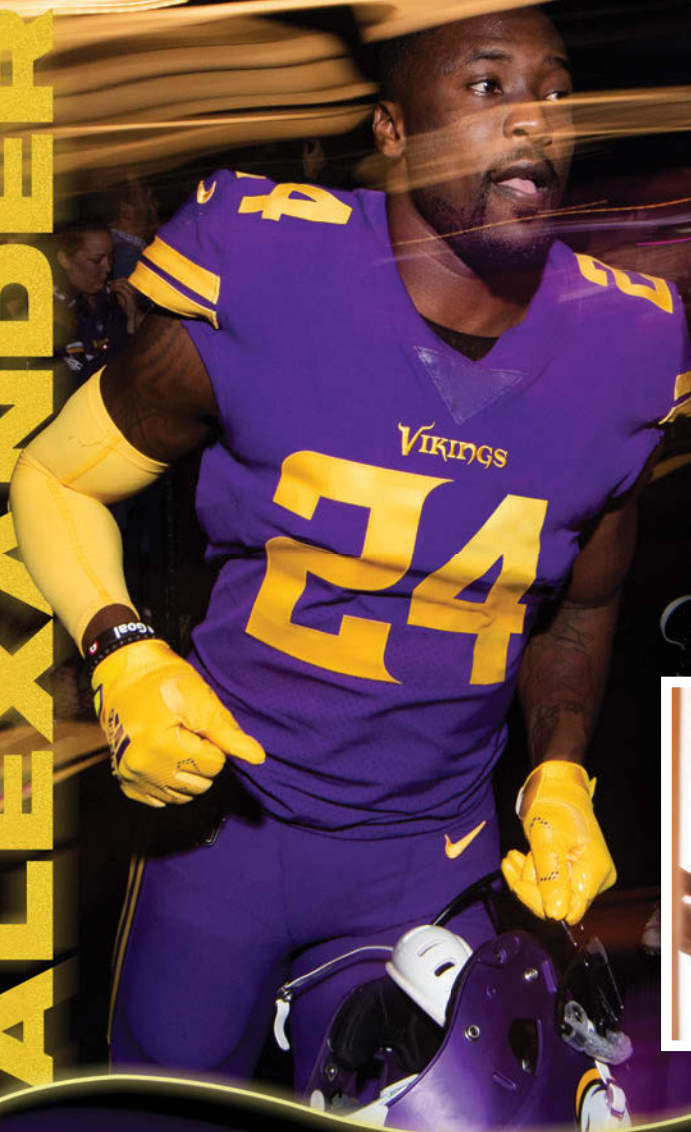
< SCAN HERE TO JOIN





MACKENSIE

ALEXANDER



## 2021 VIKINGS SCHEDULE

**@CIN**  
WK1 | L, 27-24 OT

**BYE WEEK**

**@DET**  
WK13 | L, 29-27

**@ARI**  
WK2 | L, 34-33

**DAL**  
WK8 | L, 20-16

**PIT**  
WK14 | DEC. 9

**SEA**  
WK3 | W, 30-17

**@BAL**  
WK9 | L, 34-31 OT

**@CHI**  
WK15 | DEC. 20

**CLE**  
WK4 | L, 14-7

**@LAC**  
WK10 | W, 27-20

**LAR**  
WK16 | DEC. 26

**DET**  
WK5 | W, 19-17

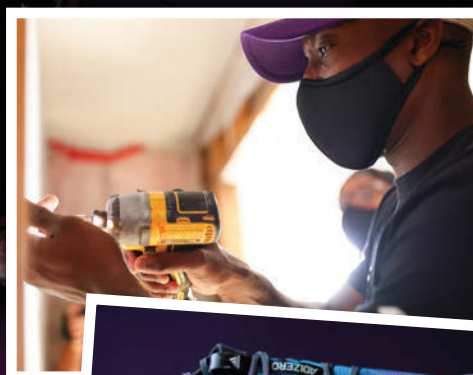
**GB**  
WK11 | W, 34-31

**@GB**  
WK17 | JAN. 2

**@CAR**  
WK6 | W, 34-28 OT

**@SF**  
WK12 | L, 34-26

**CHI**  
WK18 | JAN. 9



## PLAYER HIGHLIGHT

MACKENSIE ALEXANDER | CORNERBACK | 5'10"  
192 LBS | 6TH SEASON | COLLEGE: CLEMSON

Alexander returned to Minnesota this season after spending 2020 with Cincinnati. This will be his fourth game against Pittsburgh, and he'll try to replicate a strong showing in his last outing, when he recorded six tackles, an interception and two passes defended in a Bengals win last December.

**HONORING HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**  
Alexander's cleats for tonight's My Cause My Cleats game will honor Habitat for Humanity.

The Florida native grew up in a Habitat for Humanity home and was among Vikings players who participated in Build Week this

fall to help construct a Twin Cities home that is scheduled for completion early next year.

"Habitat gave my parents an opportunity to gain ownership of a home, the same as it did with Gretchen's family now," Alexander said. "My community came together to help out, just as we're doing."



## VIKINGS ROSTER

#	NAME	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	HOMETOWN
1	Greg Joseph	K	6-0	206	4	Florida Atlantic	Boca Raton, FL
3	Jordan Berry	P	6-5	195	7	Eastern Kentucky	Melbourne, AUS
8	Kirk Cousins	QB	6-3	205	10	Michigan State	Holland, MI
11	Kellen Mond	QB	6-3	212	R	Texas A&M	San Antonio, TX
12	Dede Westbrook	WR	6-0	178	5	Oklahoma	Cameron, TX
14	Sean Mannion	QB	6-6	230	7	Oregon State	Pleasanton, CA
15	Ihmir Smith-Marsette	WR	6-1	185	R	Iowa	Newark, NJ
17	K.J. Osborn	WR	5-11	203	2	Miami	Ypsilanti, MI
18	Justin Jefferson	WR	6-1	195	2	LSU	St. Rose, LA
19	Adam Thielen	WR	6-2	200	8	Minnesota State	Detroit Lakes, MN
20	Harrison Hand	CB	5-11	185	2	Temple	Cherry Hill, NJ
21	Bashaud Breeland	CB	5-11	195	8	Clemson	Allendale, SC
22	Harrison Smith	S	6-2	211	10	Notre Dame	Knoxville, TN
23	Xavier Woods	S	5-11	204	5	Louisiana Tech	West Monroe, LA
24	Mackensie Alexander	CB	5-10	192	6	Clemson	Immokalee, FL
25	Alexander Mattison	RB	5-11	215	3	Boise State	San Bernadino, CA
26	Kene Nwangwu	RB	6-1	210	R	Iowa State	Frisco, TX
27	Cameron Dantzler	CB	6-2	190	2	Mississippi State	Hammond, LA
29	Kris Boyd	CB	5-11	195	3	Texas	Gilmer, TX
30	C.J. Ham	FB	5-11	250	6	Augustana	Duluth, MN
33	Dalvin Cook	RB	5-10	210	5	Florida State	Miami, FL
35	Luke Stocker	TE	6-5	253	11	Tennessee	Berea, KY
41	Chazz Surratt	LB	6-2	233	R	North Carolina	Denver, NC
42	Andrew DePaola	LS	6-1	229	7	Rutgers	Parkton, MD
43	Camryn Bynum	S	6-0	200	R	California	Corona, CA
44	Josh Metellus	S	5-11	207	2	Michigan	Pembroke Pines, FL
45	Troy Dye	LB	6-3	225	2	Oregon	Norco, CA
48	Blake Lynch	LB	6-3	233	2	Baylor	Gilmer, TX
51	Wyatt Davis	G	6-4	315	R	Ohio State	Bellflower, CA
52	Mason Cole	C	6-5	298	4	Michigan	Tarpon Springs, FL
54	Eric Kendricks	LB	6-0	232	7	UCLA	Fresno, CA
55	Anthony Barr	LB	6-5	257	8	UCLA	San Pedro, CA
56	Garrett Bradbury	C	6-3	300	3	North Carolina State	Charlotte, NC
57	Ryan Connelly	LB	6-2	234	3	Wisconsin	Eden Prairie, MN
58	Michael Pierce	DT	6-0	340	6	Samford	Daphne, AL
59	Nick Vigil	LB	6-2	230	6	Utah State	Plain City, UT
64	Blake Brandel	T	6-7	315	1	Oregon State	Milwaukie, OR
69	Rashod Hill	T	6-6	310	6	Southern Miss	Jacksonville, FL
71	Christian Darrisaw	T	6-5	315	R	Virginia Tech	Upper Marlboro, MD
72	Ezra Cleveland	G	6-6	312	2	Boise State	Spanaway, WA
73	Tashawn Bower	DE	6-5	250	4	LSU	Somerville, NJ
74	Olisaemeka Udoh	G	6-6	320	3	Elon	Fayetteville, NC
75	Brian O'Neill	T	6-7	310	4	Pittsburgh	Wilmington, DE
83	Tyler Conklin	TE	6-3	248	4	Central Michigan	Chesterfield, MI
85	Dan Chisena	WR	6-3	203	2	Penn State	Downington, PA

#	NAME	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	HOMETOWN
89	Chris Herndon	TE	6-4	253	4	Miami	Norcross, GA
90	Sheldon Richardson	DT	6-3	290	9	Missouri	St. Louis, MO
92	James Lynch	DT	6-4	295	2	Baylor	Round Rock, TX
93	Patrick Jones II	DE	6-4	264	R	Pittsburgh	Chesapeake, VA
94	Dalvin Tomlinson	DT	6-3	325	5	Alabama	McDonough, GA
96	Armon Watts	DT	6-5	307	3	Arkansas	St. Louis, MO
98	D.J. Wonnum	DE	6-5	258	2	South Carolina	Stone Mountain, GA

## PRACTICE SQUAD

9	Trishton Jackson	WR	6-1	191	1	Syracuse	West Bloomfield, MI
34	Jake Bargas	FB	6-2	245	2	North Carolina	Boca Raton, FL
36	A.J. Rose Jr.	RB	6-1	212	R	Kentucky	Cleveland, OH
39	Parry Nickerson	CB	5-10	179	4	Tulane	Algiers, LA
40	Zach Davidson	TE	6-7	251	R	Central Missouri	Webb City, MO
46	Myles Dorn	S	6-2	210	2	North Carolina	Charlotte, NC
47	Tuf Borland	LB	6-1	233	R	Ohio State	Bolingbrook, IL
50	T.J. Smith	DT	6-3	300	1	Arkansas	Moultrie, GA
61	Timon Parris	T	6-6	330	3	Stony Brook	Floral Park, NY
68	Kyle Hinton	G	6-2	315	2	Washburn	Peoria, AZ
78	Dakota Dozier	G	6-4	305	8	Furman	West Columbia, SC
79	Kenny Willekes	DE	6-3	264	2	Michigan State	Rockford, MI
86	Brandon Dillon	TE	6-5	250	2	Marian	Flora, IN
87	Myron Mitchell	WR	6-1	185	R	UAB	Jasper, AL
91	T.Y. McGill	DT	6-0	294	7	North Carolina State	Jesup, GA

## RESERVE/INJURED

13	Blake Proehl	WR	6-1	190	R	East Carolina	Charlotte, NC
14	Nate Stanley	QB	6-4	233	1	Iowa	Menomonie, WI
66	Jordon Scott	DT	6-1	326	R	Oregon	Largo, FL
81	Bisi Johnson	WR	6-0	210	3	Colorado State	Lakewood, CO
82	Ben Ellefson	TE	6-3	250	2	North Dakota State	Hawley, MN
84	Irv Smith Jr.	TE	6-2	240	3	Alabama	New Orleans, LA
95	Janarius Robinson	DE	6-5	258	R	Florida State	Panama City, FL
99	Danielle Hunter	DE	6-5	263	7	Louisiana State	Katy, TX

## RESERVE/NON-FOOTBALL INJURY OR ILLNESS

76	Jaylen Twyman (INJ.)	DT	6-2	285	R	Pittsburgh	Washington, DC
97	Everson Griffen (ILL.)	DE	6-3	273	12	USC	Avondale, AZ

## RESERVE/COVID-19 &amp; PRACTICE SQUAD RESERVE/COVID-19

7	Patrick Peterson	CB	6-1	198	11	LSU	Fort Lauderdale, FL
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Brand


**The tape that  
tackles your  
gift list.**




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**33**  
**RUNNING BACK**  
Dalvin Cook




**8**  
**QUARTERBACK**  
Kirk Cousins




**30**  
**FULLBACK**  
C.J. Ham




**19**  
**WIDE RECEIVER**  
Adam Thielen




**83**  
**TIGHT END**  
Tyler Conklin




**75**  
**RIGHT TACKLE**  
Brian O'Neill




**74**  
**RIGHT GUARD**  
Olisaemeka Udoh




**56**  
**CENTER**  
Garrett Bradbury



**72**  
**LEFT GUARD**  
Ezra Cleveland




**71**  
**LEFT TACKLE**  
Christian Darrisaw




**18**  
**WIDE RECEIVER**  
Justin Jefferson

#### VIKINGS OFFENSE


#### STEELERS DEFENSE




**23**  
**CORNERBACK**  
Joe Haden




**97**  
**DEFENSIVE END**  
Cameron Heyward




**99**  
**NOSE TACKLE**  
Henry Mondeaux



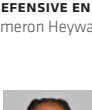
**95**  
**DEFENSIVE END**  
Chris Womley




**20**  
**CORNERBACK**  
Cameron Sutton




**90**  
**LINEBACKER**  
T.J. Watt




**97**  
**DEFENSIVE END**  
Cameron Heyward




**55**  
**LINEBACKER**  
Devin Bush




**93**  
**LINEBACKER**  
Joe Schobert



**56**  
**LINEBACKER**  
Alex Highsmith



**34**  
**SAFETY**  
Terrell Edmunds



**39**  
**SAFETY**  
Minkah Fitzpatrick

#### VIKINGS SPECIAL TEAMS



**1**  
**KICKER**  
Greg Joseph



**3**  
**PUNTER**  
Jordan Berry



**42**  
**LONG SNAPPER**  
Andrew DePaola



**12**  
**PUNT RETURNER**  
Dede Westbrook



**26**  
**KICK RETURNER**  
Kene Nwangwu



## VIKINGS DEPTH CHART

#### VIKINGS OFFENSE

#### VIKINGS DEFENSE

<b>WR</b>	Justin Jefferson	K.J. Osborn	Dede Westbrook
<b>LT</b>	Christian Darrisaw	Rashod Hill	
<b>LG</b>	Ezra Cleveland		
<b>C</b>	Garrett Bradbury	Mason Cole	
<b>RG</b>	Olisaemeka Udoh	Wyatt Davis	
<b>RT</b>	Brian O'Neill	Blake Brandel	
<b>TE</b>	Tyler Conklin	Chris Herndon	Luke Stocker
<b>WR</b>	Adam Thielen	Ihmir Smith-Marsette	Dan Chisena
<b>QB</b>	Kirk Cousins	Sean Mannion	Kellen Mond
<b>RB</b>	Dalvin Cook	Alexander Mattison	Kene Nwangwu
<b>FB</b>	C.J. Ham		

<b>LDE</b>	D.J. Wonnum	Patrick Jones II	
<b>NT</b>	Armon Watts	James Lynch	
<b>DT</b>	Sheldon Richardson		
<b>RDE</b>	Tashawn Bower		
<b>SLB</b>	Anthony Barr	Blake Lynch	Ryan Connelly
<b>MLB</b>	Eric Kendricks	Troy Dye	
<b>WLB</b>	Nick Vigil	Chazz Surratt	
<b>LCB</b>	Cameron Dantzler	Mackensie Alexander	Harrison Hand
<b>RCB</b>	Bashaud Breeland	Kris Boyd	
<b>SS</b>	Harrison Smith	Josh Metellus	
<b>FS</b>	Xavier Woods	Camryn Bynum	





**59**  
**LINEBACKER**  
Nick Vigil



**23**  
**SAFETY**  
Xavier Woods



**54**  
**LINEBACKER**  
Eric Kendricks



**22**  
**SAFETY**  
Harrison Smith



**55**  
**LINEBACKER**  
Anthony Barr



**21**  
**CORNERBACK**  
Bashaud Breeland



**73**  
**DEFENSIVE END**  
Tashawn Bower



**58**  
**NOSE TACKLE**  
Michael Pierce



**94**  
**DEFENSIVE TACKLE**  
Dalvin Tomlinson



**98**  
**DEFENSIVE END**  
D.J. Wonnum



**27**  
**CORNERBACK**  
Cameron Dantzler

#### VIKINGS DEFENSE



**13**  
**WIDE RECEIVER**  
James Washington



**65**  
**LEFT TACKLE**  
Dan Moore Jr.



**67**  
**LEFT GUARD**  
B.J. Finney



**53**  
**CENTER**  
Kendrick Green



**51**  
**RIGHT GUARD**  
Trai Turner



**76**  
**RIGHT TACKLE**  
Chukwuma Okorafor



**88**  
**TIGHT END**  
Pat Freiermuth



**11**  
**WIDE RECEIVER**  
Chase Claypool



**7**  
**QUARTERBACK**  
Ben Roethlisberger



**22**  
**RUNNING BACK**  
Najee Harris



**18**  
**WIDE RECEIVER**  
Diontae Johnson

#### STEELERS SPECIAL TEAMS



**9**  
**KICKER**  
Chris Boswell



**6**  
**PUNTER**  
Pressley Harvin III



**46**  
**LONG SNAPPER**  
Christian Kuntz



**14**  
**KICK/PUNT RETURNER**  
Ray-Ray McCloud



## STEELERS DEPTH CHART

#### STEELERS OFFENSE

<b>WR</b>	James Washington	Ray-Ray McCloud
<b>LT</b>	Dan Moore Jr.	
<b>LG</b>	B.J. Finney	Josh Leglue
<b>C</b>	Kendrick Green	B.J. Finney John Leglue
<b>RG</b>	Trai Turner	B.J. Finney
<b>RT</b>	Chukwuma Okorafor	Zach Banner
<b>TE</b>	Pat Freiermuth	Zach Gentry
<b>WR</b>	Diontae Johnson	Cody White
<b>WB</b>	Chase Claypool	Cody White
<b>QB</b>	Ben Roethlisberger	Mason Rudolph Dwayne Haskins
<b>RB</b>	Najee Harris	Benny Snell Jr. Kalen Ballage

#### STEELERS DEFENSE

<b>DT</b>	Cameron Heyward	Isaiah Loudermilk
<b>NT</b>	Henry Mondeaux	Isaiah Buggs
<b>DE</b>	Chris Wormley	Montravius Adams
<b>LOLB</b>	T.J. Watt	Taco Charlton Derrek Tuszka
<b>LILB</b>	Devin Bush	Marcus Allen Ulysees Gilbert III
<b>RILB</b>	Joe Schobert	Robert Spillane Buddy Johnson
<b>ROLB</b>	Alex Highsmith	Taco Charlton Derrek Tuszka
<b>LCB</b>	Joe Haden	Justin Layne Ahkello Witherspoon
<b>RCB</b>	Cameron Sutton	James Pierre Arthur Maulet
<b>SS</b>	Terrell Edmunds	Miles Killebrew
<b>FS</b>	Minkah Fitzpatrick	Tre Norwood

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MINKAH

**FITZPATRICK**

SAFETY | 6'1" | 207 LBS  
4TH SEASON | COLLEGE: ALABAMA

## 2021 SCHEDULE

**@ BUF**  
WK1 | W, 23-16

**DET**  
WK10 | T, 16-16 OT

**LV**  
WK2 | L, 26-17

**@ LAC**  
WK11 | L, 41-37

**CIN**  
WK3 | L, 24-10

**@ CIN**  
WK11 | L, 41-10

**@ GB**  
WK4 | L, 27-17

**BAL**  
WK13 | W, 20-19

**DEN**  
WK5 | W, 27-19

**@ MIN**  
WK14 | DEC. 9

**SEA**  
WK6 | W, 23-20 OT

**TEN**  
WK15 | DEC. 19

**BYE  
WEEK**

**@ KC**  
WK16 | DEC. 26

**@ CLE**  
WK8 | W, 15-10

**CLE**  
WK17 | JAN. 3

**CHI**  
WK9 | W, 29-27

**@ BAL**  
WK18 | JAN. 9

## A HISTORY HERE

Fitzpatrick's first career touchdown occurred at U.S. Bank Stadium when he returned a pick 50 yards for a touchdown as a member of the Dolphins in a 41-17 Vikings win on Dec. 16, 2018.

## PLAYER HIGHLIGHT

The Steelers acquired Fitzpatrick in a trade with the Dolphins in September 2019. Just a couple of games into his second season with Miami, the 11th overall pick of the 2018 NFL Draft headed up to Pittsburgh.

Adding Fitzpatrick has worked out well for the

Steelers. He recorded five interceptions, including one he returned 96 yards for a touchdown, in 2019 for Pittsburgh.

Fitzpatrick has added six more interceptions since 2020 and has been selected as a First-Team All-Pro and Pro Bowler in each of the past two years.

He is tied with Marcus Peters for the most defensive touchdowns (four) since entering the

NFL in 2018, and his 13 total takeaways since 2019 rank second.

At Alabama, Fitzpatrick won the Chuck Bedarik Award (nation's top defensive player) and Jim Thorpe Award (nation's top defensive back), becoming the third player in NCAA history to win both awards. Hall of Famer Charles Woodson and Vikings CB Patrick Peterson are the other two.



# STEELERS ROSTER

#	NAME	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	HOMETOWN
2	Mason Rudolph	QB	6-5	235	4	Oklahoma State	Rock Hill, SC
3	Dwayne Haskins	QB	6-4	230	3	Ohio State	Highland Park, NJ
6	Pressley Harvin III	P	6-0	255	R	Georgia Tech	Alcolu, SC
7	Ben Roethlisberger	QB	6-5	240	18	Miami (OH)	Findlay, OH
9	Chris Boswell	K	6-2	185	7	Rice	Fort Worth, TX
11	Chase Claypool	WR	6-4	238	2	Notre Dame	Abbotsford, BC, CAN
13	James Washington	WR	5-11	213	4	Oklahoma State	Stamford, TX
14	Ray-Ray McCloud	WR	5-9	190	4	Clemson	Tampa, FL
15	Cody White	WR	6-3	215	1	Michigan State	Novi, MI
18	Diontae Johnson	WR	5-10	183	3	Toledo	Ruskin, FL
20	Cameron Sutton	CB	5-11	188	5	Tennessee	Jonesboro, GA
21	Tre Norwood	DB	6-0	194	R	Oklahoma	Fort Smith, AR
22	Najee Harris	RB	6-1	232	R	Alabama	Antioch, CA
23	Joe Haden	CB	5-11	195	12	Florida	Ft. Washington, MD
24	Benny Snell Jr.	RB	5-10	224	3	Kentucky	Columbus, OH
25	Ahkello Witherspoon	CB	6-2	195	5	Colorado	Sacramento, CA
26	Anthony McFarland Jr.	RB	5-8	193	2	Maryland	Hyattsville, MD
27	Marcus Allen	LB	6-2	215	2	Penn State	Silver Spring, MD
28	Miles Killebrew	S	6-2	222	6	Southern Utah	Henderson, NV
29	Kalen Ballage	RB	6-2	231	4	Arizona State	Falcon, CO
31	Justin Layne	CB	6-2	192	3	Michigan State	Cleveland, OH
34	Terrell Edmunds	S	6-1	217	4	Virginia Tech	Danville, VA
35	Arthur Maulet	CB	5-10	190	5	Memphis	New Orleans, LA
39	Minkah Fitzpatrick	S	6-1	207	4	Alabama	Old Bridge, NJ
42	James Pierre	CB	6-2	185	2	Florida Atlantic	Deerfield Beach, FL
44	Derek Watt	FB	6-2	234	6	Wisconsin	Pewaukee, WI
45	Buddy Johnson	LB	6-2	240	R	Texas A&M	Dallas, TX
46	Christian Kuntz	LS	6-1	228	1	Duquesne	Pittsburgh, PA
48	Derrek Tuszka	OLB	6-5	246	2	North Dakota State	Warner, SD
51	Trai Turner	G	6-3	315	8	Louisiana State	New Orleans, LA
53	Kendrick Green	C	6-4	315	R	Illinois	Peoria, IL
54	Ulysees Gilbert III	ILB	6-0	230	3	Akron	Ocala, FL
55	Devin Bush	LB	5-11	234	3	Michigan	Pembroke Pines, FL
56	Alex Highsmith	LB	6-4	242	2	Charlotte	Wilmington, NC
57	Montravius Adams	DT	6-3	304	5	Auburn	Americus, GA
65	Dan Moore Jr.	OT	6-5	315	R	Texas A&M	Beaumont, TX
67	B.J. Finney	C/G	6-4	318	6	Kansas State	Wichita, KS
72	Zach Banner	OT	6-8	335	5	USC	Lakewood, WA
73	Carlos Davis	DT	6-2	320	2	Nebraska	Blue Springs, MO
76	Chukwuma Okorafor	OL	6-6	320	4	Western Michigan	Southfield, MI
77	John Leglue	OL	6-7	310	1	Tulane	Alexandria, LA
81	Zach Gentry	TE	6-8	265	3	Michigan	Albuquerque, NM
87	Kevin Rader	TE	6-4	250	1	Youngstown State	Pittsburgh, PA
88	Pat Freiermuth	TE	6-5	258	R	Penn State	Merrimac, MA
90	T.J. Watt	LB	6-4	252	5	Wisconsin	Pewaukee, WI

#	NAME	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	HOMETOWN
92	Isaiah Luderhilk	DE	6-7	240	R	Wisconsin	Howard, KN
93	Joe Schobert	LB	6-1	240	6	Wisconsin	Waukesha, WI
95	Chris Wormley	DL	6-5	300	5	Michigan	Toledo, OH
96	Isaiah Buggs	DE	6-3	295	3	Alabama	Ruston, LA
97	Cameron Heyward	DT	6-5	295	11	Ohio State	Pittsburgh, PA
98	Taco Charlton	DE	6-6	270	5	Michigan	Pickerington, OH
99	Henry Mondeaux	DE	6-4	280	2	Oregon	Portland, OR

## PRACTICE SQUAD

8	Karl Joseph	S	5-10	200	6	West Virginia	Orlando, FL
16	Sam Sloman	K	5-8	205	1	Miami, Ohio	Roswell, GA
17	Anthony Miller	WR	5-11	199	4	Memphis	Memphis, TN
33	Trey Edmunds	RB	6-2	223	3	Maryland	Danville, VA
37	Donovan Stiner	S	6-2	210	R	Florida	Houston, TX
40	Linden Stephens	DB	6-0	193	3	Cincinnati	Euclid, OH
49	Jacob Tuioti-Mariner	OLB	6-2	285	3	UCLA	Corona, CA
50	Delontae Scott	LB	6-5	246	1	SMU	Irving, TX
61	Daniel Archibong	DL	6-6	307	R	Temple	Springfield, PA
64	Malcolm Pridgeon	G	6-7	310	R	Ohio State	Central Islip, NY
68	Khalil Davis	DT	6-1	308	2	Nebraska	Blue Springs, MO
74	Chaz Green	T	6-5	318	6	Florida	Tampa, FL
79	Rashaad Coward	OL	6-5	319	4	Old Dominion	Brooklyn, NY
80	Tyler Vaughns	WR	6-2	184	R	USC	Pasadena, CA
82	Steven Sims	WR	5-10	176	2	Kansas	Houston, TX
89	Jace Sternberger	TE	6-4	251	3	Texas A&M	Kingfisher, OK

## INJURED RESERVE

5	Joshua Dobbs	QB	6-3	210	4	Tennessee	Alpharetta, GA
19	Juju Smith-Schuster	WR	6-1	215	5	USC	Long Beach, CA
60	J.C. Hassenauer	C	6-2	295	2	Alabama	Woodbury, MN
69	Kevin Dotson	OL	6-4	321	2	Louisiana	Plaquemine, LA
85	Eric Ebron	TE	6-4	253	8	North Carolina	Newark, NJ
91	Stephon Tuitt	DE	6-6	303	8	Notre Dame	Miami, FL
93	Demarcus Christmas	DT	6-3	302	1	Florida State	Sarasota, FL
94	Tyson Alualu	DE	6-3	304	11	California	Honolulu, HI

## RESERVE/COVID-19

71	Joe Haeg	T	6-6	298	6	NDSU	Lake Shore, MN
41	Robert Spillane	LB	6-1	229	3	Western Michigan	Oak Park, IL



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3 GAMES**

**BY MINNESOTA VIKINGS**

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**BY PITTSBURGH STEELERS**

(Dec. 2, 2001 – Oct. 25, 2009)

### FIRST MEETING

**NOV. 4, 1962 | @ PIT  
STEELERS 39, VIKINGS 31**

Fran Tarkenton threw for 273 yards and four touchdown passes, but the Steelers rushed for 212 yards and four touchdowns. Pittsburgh scored the game's final 10 points.

### LAST MEETING

**SEPT. 17, 2017 | @ PIT  
STEELERS 26, VIKINGS 31**

C.J. Ham scored his first NFL touchdown, but it wasn't enough to overcome a 14-3 halftime deficit. Ben Roethlisberger threw two touchdowns, and Chris Boswell kicked four field goals.



## UNIQUE VENUES

U.S. Bank Stadium will become the ninth different venue in which the Vikings and Steelers have met.

The series began at Pittsburgh's Forbes Field (1962) and resumed at Metropolitan Stadium (1964). Pitt Stadium hosted the teams in 1967.

Minnesota won 52-14 at The Met in 1969 three

years before visiting Three Rivers Stadium, which hosted the most games in the series (1972, 1983, 1989, 1992 and 1995).

Tulane Stadium hosted Minnesota and Pittsburgh in Super Bowl IX because the Superdome, which was depicted on the cover of the game program, had not finished completion.

The Metrodome hosted the teams in 1986 and 2005.

Heinz Field's inaugural 2001 season included a matchup, and the Vikings returned there in 2009 and 2017 but are still looking for their first win there.

Minnesota "hosted" Pittsburgh at London's Wembley Stadium [pictured] in 2013.

## TOP 2 AGAINST STEELERS

### RUSHING YARDS

**172** Terry Allen on 33 attempts at PIT (12.20.92)

**148** Chuck Foreman on 27 attempts in MIN (10.04.76)

### PASSING YARDS

**334** Brett Favre on 33-of-50 passing at PIT (10.25.09)

**257** Tommy Kramer on 19-of-27 passing in MIN (09.21.86)

### RECEIVING YARDS

**144** Randy Moss on eight catches at PIT (12.02.01)

**140** Hassan Jones on six catches in MIN (09.21.86)

## AGAINST VIKINGS

### RUSHING YARDS

**158** Franco Harris on 34 attempts (01.12.75)\*

**128** Franco Harris on 17 attempts at PIT (11.26.72)

### PASSING YARDS

**383** Ben Roethlisberger on 36-of-51 passing (09.29.13)^

**243** Ben Roethlisberger on 23-of-35 passing at PIT (09.17.17)

### RECEIVING YARDS

**141** Yancey Thigpen on 10 catches at PIT (09.24.95)

**107** Lynn Swann on six catches in MIN (10.05.80)

\* Super Bowl IX, Tulane Stadium

^ Wembley Stadium, London England



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BY LINDSEY YOUNG

## CHRISTIAN DARRISAW



Christian Darrisaw always knew that once his dream of making it to the NFL was realized, so too would be his dream of making an impact in and around his community.

For the Vikings rookie left tackle, that has meant giving back in Virginia, where the Maryland native attended college, as well as the community around his new home in the Twin Cities.

Darrisaw was introduced to Ronald McDonald House Charities soon after graduating from Virginia Tech, where he started 10 games as the Hokies left tackle in 2020 and was a First-Team All-ACC selection.

Ronald McDonald House Charities is a unique nonprofit that has a presence in more

than 62 countries around the world and operates three main programs:

325+ Ronald McDonald House programs provide comfort, support and resources to families who travel far from home for the medical care their child needs.

265+ Ronald McDonald Family Room programs provide comfort to families in hospitals, giving them private places to relax or decompress.

45+ Ronald McDonald Care Mobile Programs bring medical, dental and health care resources to underserved communities where they're needed the most.

We recently caught up with Christian for a Water Break, presented by Crown Royal, to discuss his desire to make a difference and why he's representing Ronald McDonald House Charities on his cleats for tonight's game.



**Q: What drew you to Ronald McDonald House Charities, and how have you been involved?**

**A:** "I didn't know anything about Ronald McDonald House until my marketing advisor presented it to me, and I knew it was the one I wanted to do. The kids, they're going through rough times, and their family might not be able to [afford housing nearby on top of medical bills]. For them to take whole families in – provide meals, a place to stay, stuff like that – it's really unique. That's what drew my attention right away. They were the first charity I got partnered with right out of college ... it felt like the right fit, the right choice, for me. I donated \$15,000 during the bye week, and we're doing a challenge, a workout fitness challenge, to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southwest Virginia "

**Q: Were you involved in community work during your time at Virginia Tech?**

**A:** "Not really anything crazy at that time. My 2019 season, we did a turkey giveaway for Thanksgiving. Last year we weren't able to do much because of COVID-19 and everything."

**Q: Where does this desire to give back come from?**

**A:** "It's just the platform that I have now,

and the ability, really. People look up to me, and giving back to the community is something that, when I was growing up, I was seeing other NFL players do, and I looked up to them. I wanted to be in their shoes, be in their position, so it's something I've always wanted to do. I told myself if I had the opportunity to do it, I would."

**Q: Were there specific athletes you saw in your community?**

**A:** "Not really anyone specific that came back to my community. [NBA Star] Kevin Durant is from P.G. (Prince George's) County [where I went to high school], maybe Kevin Durant. Not everybody is fortunate enough to grow up and have everything they need, so for those less-fortunate kids, to be there and be a light, just help provide for them, anything you can do, it helps them and their families."

**Q: Why do you believe it's important for athletes to give back?**

**A:** "Not everyone comes from an upper-class or middle-class family. Some people might not even be having [basic needs]. So being able to do this kind of stuff, especially around the holidays – there might be kids who only get one present, maybe two presents. Growing up, I was an only child, so I was very fortunate to get anything I wanted, and I knew it wasn't like that for all kids. So being able to provide, just give back something, I feel like it makes a difference

for those kids who need it."

**Q: You've mentioned the 'culture' of the Vikings offensive line group off the field. How do you see that show up on a daily basis?**

**A:** "We have a fine jar for our room, and at the end of the year, we take the money and donate it to a cause or charity. You can tell even by that, the [older players] aren't just spending money or blowing it on stupid stuff. I just feel like anytime they have the opportunity to give back, they do it."

**Q: This is your first My Cause My Cleats experience in the NFL; what do you appreciate about the initiative?**

**A:** "It's pretty cool to see all the different guys and the charities they're working with and partnering with. To see everybody's cleats this weekend, it's pretty cool to see all the different designs, the variety of charities and why they're wearing those cleats."

**Q: What do you plan to do with your cleats following the game?**

**A:** "I'm going to give them back to the Ronald McDonald House in Roanoke, Virginia, and they're going to auction them off."





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**TAKING**

# FLIGHT

BY ERIC SMITH



**WHY JUSTIN JEFFERSON  
WAS MADE FOR THE NFL**



Justin Jefferson's shimmering career thus far – the record-breaking rookie season, the spectacular catches and newfound stardom – was all part of the plan. It had been in the works for years, more than a decade.

Put another way, the Vikings second-year wide receiver was made for this. Made for the NFL.

"He was bred to be a main contributor," Jefferson's brother, Jordan, said. "His upbringing was for him to be the top guy."

The 22-year-old Vikings megastar explained it in his own words: "It comes easier since I had two older brothers that did it before me," Jefferson said. "They went through things before I did, made mistakes that I got to learn from ... they paved the path for me and made it easier for me in my life."

"I've been in the right places at the right time, had the right coaches and teammates ... I've been blessed, honestly, for my whole career," Jefferson added. "But I have to keep paving my way."

The family history is well-known, especially down in his native Louisiana.

Jordan Jefferson started 32 games as LSU's quarterback between 2008-2011, going 24-8 as a starter for the Tigers. Rickey Jefferson, the middle brother, was a defensive back who played 37 career games and recorded four interceptions at LSU between 2013-2016.

Justin followed the same path as his brothers, from Destrehan High School just outside of New Orleans, to LSU, which sits just 75 miles up Interstate 10.

The wide receiver enjoyed plenty of college success, too, helping lead the Tigers to a 2019 national title and cementing himself as one of the nation's top playmakers.

But the similarities ended there for the brothers, as neither Jordan nor Rickey was drafted or played a game in the NFL. Justin was determined to change that trajectory for his family.

"What motivates me?" Jefferson said, repeating a question on a recent Friday afternoon at Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center. "I love the game of football."

"But also, my brothers not being able to live the same dream I have of being in the NFL and being a top pick," Jefferson added. "I want to let them live through me."

Jefferson did indeed make it to the NFL, as the Vikings tabbed him with the 22nd overall pick in the 2020 NFL Draft.

The fifth wide receiver off the board, 18 different teams passed him up before he landed in Minnesota. (Miami, Jacksonville and Las Vegas each made multiple first-round picks before Jefferson's name was called).

Jefferson promptly outclassed the rest of his counterparts by setting a Super Bowl-era rookie record with an even 1,400 receiving yards. He added 88 receptions (which set a Vikings

rookie record) and hauled in seven touchdowns.

Perhaps the sudden success surprised others around the league, but not the Jefferson family, which includes his parents, John and Elaine.

The roots for his phenomenal rookie season were actually laid a decade-plus prior in Baton Rouge, where an elementary school-aged Justin got an up-close look at a blueblood college program.

"To be able to go inside of the LSU locker room when you're 8 years old? I didn't get that opportunity until I was 17," Jordan Jefferson said.

Justin hung out back then with Patrick Peterson, a two-time All-American cornerback who was Jordan's roommate. And there were a handful of other Tigers that eventually made their way to the NFL, too.

"The best of the best. The best players go there to play against the other best players in the country in the SEC," Justin said. "It was always a high standard at LSU, and that's one of the reasons why it was so easy for me to come into the league."

"I went up against top players every single week, and the NFL is the same ... going up against top players every single game," he added. "LSU definitely got me ready for it, but I'm lucky I got to see it at a young age."

Not that Jefferson was satisfied with that production in his NFL debut. He honed his craft this offseason and carried that worth ethic into his second year with the Vikings.

The result? Well, he's already surpassed the 1,000-yard receiving mark, joining Hall of Famer Randy Moss as the only Vikings players to hit the mark in their first two seasons in the NFL.

"One thing about J.J., he's not comfortable with who he is," said Vikings running back Dalvin Cook. "He just wants to get better. You see him in practice, man, he's flying around, running around."

"That's important, man, just to see somebody that's not complacent with their talent, and he's got a God-given talent," Cook added. "Hard work matches talent, and you've got a guy right there."

Vikings Head Coach Mike Zimmer added:

"He's very confident. I don't think any of this stuff bothers him. He thinks he's a great player, and he is a great player."

He really doesn't have any prima donna in him, as

far as not working in practice or being late or anything like that. He just goes about his business.

I think he just loves to go play and loves to practice, and I think he loves the limelight, too. I think he loves catching the ball and scoring touchdowns.



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**OR TEXT VIKINGS TO 635635**

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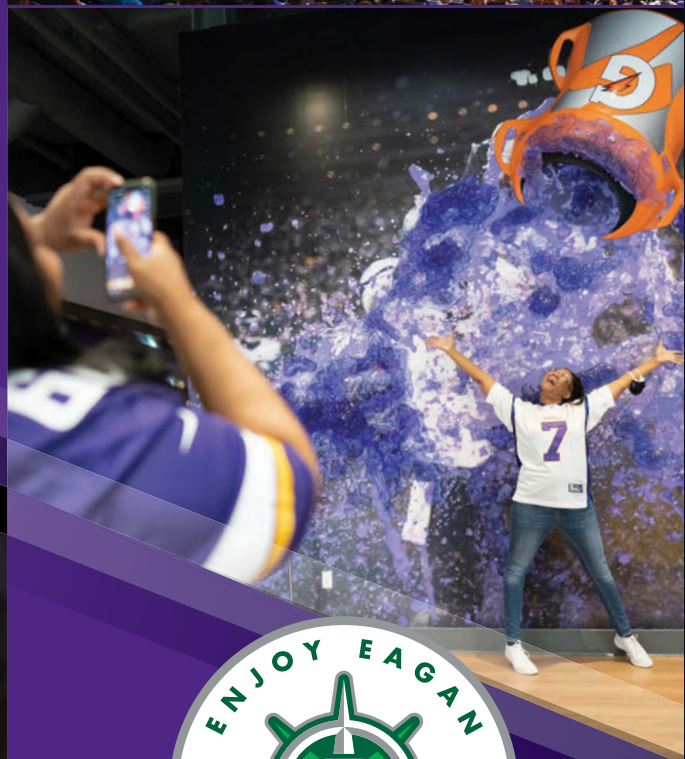


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"The guys that you know are big-time players, they want the ball in the moment of truth," McCardell added. "If you want to judge a guy around the league, judge him by whether he steps up when it's time to, or whether he fades into the background. He's a guy that steps up all the time and wants it all the time."

Jordan Jefferson added: "He has that internal aspect of who he is helps make him the player he is. You can find anybody who is 6-foot-2 and 200 pounds. But to have the tenacity, the desire to be great ... that's something where he separates himself from a lot of wide receivers."

Jefferson is now just 28 games into his NFL career. And he's kept up his record pace that he started as a rookie.

The NFL record for the most receiving yards by a player in his first two NFL seasons is 2,755 yards, and is held by Odell Beckham, Jr., another former LSU star. Moss, by the way, is

second on that list at 2,726 yards.

Jefferson has naturally drawn comparisons to Moss, who took the league by storm early on and eventually ended up enshrined in Canton, Ohio.

Jefferson recently paid homage to Moss by wearing No. 84's image on a T-shirt in warmups against the Packers, a team Moss routinely torched in his career. Jefferson then did the same, with eight catches for 169 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

Yet even though similarities will be made between the two, McCardell wants his wide receiver to simply focus on the task at hand.

"Randy is Randy ... a great, Hall-of-Fame receiver," McCardell said. "But Randy did what he did, and now Justin is doing what he's doing. It's a different time and era.

"I tell him, 'Just go be Justin.' He's his own receiver," McCardell added. "I want Justin

Jefferson to be Justin Jefferson. That's it."

Jefferson has interacted with Moss a few times since being drafted, and said he's well-aware of the elite history of Moss, Cris Carter and other Vikings wide receivers in team history.

And yes, he said he knew he had to ball out if he wore a Moss shirt in warmups.

But Justin Jefferson accepts that. He also wants to do his own thing, create his own legacy. He's off to a good start.

"I'm not trying to be like anyone else. I have my own style, my own swagger," Jefferson said. "I definitely look up to greats like him, greats like Carter. But I don't try to imitate them. I try to be the best player I can be.

"[Moss] had so many different stats and achievements that he accomplished in his career. He has a Gold Jacket, and I definitely want that," Jefferson added. "But I just have to keep playing my own game. I think I'm doing pretty good so far."

# JEFFERSON

## IS KNOWN FOR HIGHLIGHT-REEL PLAYS AND FLASHY FOOTWEAR.

*The Vikings wide receiver will certainly have the latter part covered in tonight's game against the Steelers, as he will celebrate the league's My Cause My Cleats initiative by honoring Northside Achievement Zone.*

*Jefferson's multi-colored cleats feature a mix of green, blue and purple, with white shoelaces. And they also include the initials of his mom, dad and two brothers.*

*He aims to bring awareness to an organization whose mission is to end generational poverty and build a culture of achievement in North Minneapolis in which all low-income children of color graduate from high school*

*ready for college or a career. Northside Achievement Zone partners with parents and scholars to overcome racial and income gaps in housing, employment, wellness, early childhood and K-12 education.*

*"I wanted to choose Northside Achievement Zone because I wanted to give back to the community," Jefferson said. "I always want to share my love around Minneapolis, and the Northside is really struggling right now.*

*"Just wanted to shed light on them and bring some hope to their community," Jefferson said.*





# MY CAUSE MY CLEATS

BY LINDSEY YOUNG

The Vikings tonight are using their feet to promote causes close to their hearts.

Nearly the entire team is making an impact through the NFL's annual My Cause My Cleats campaign, for which players will don cleats custom-painted to represent respective causes players selected to raise awareness and support for.

## KENE NWANGWU

### SUPPORTING YOUNGER BROTHER'S WALK WITH AUTISM

Kene Nwangwu always knew his little brother, Odilinna, was special.

Odilinna wasn't exactly like all the other boys his age, but that never bothered Kene, who formed a deep bond with his younger brother at an early age.

As a child, Odilinna was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, a high-functioning level of autism spectrum disorder.

"And growing up with him, I understood that he was different, but he's still my little brother," Kene said. "He's still like everyone else [in a lot of ways]. He's just unique. I've always wanted people to see him for him. Not just as, 'Oh, that dude's different.' Or, 'He's weird.'"

Kene explained that Odilinna, 17, often is hyper-focused on specific interests, from space to cars.

"And growing up, he really loved weather. I think he still does," Kene said with a smile. "Every time there's a thunderstorm, he opens the door and looks outside."

Odilinna isn't pursuing football like his brother did, but he couldn't be more excited about Kene's journey to the NFL.

"He's so supportive of me. He loves what I

do," Kene said. "I think he sees me as his best friend. And honestly, I see him as my best friend, too. I just love hanging out with him."

Kene is honoring Odilinna tonight by wearing custom-designed kicks repping the Autistic Self Advocacy Network.

ASAN's mission is to advance the principles of the disability rights movement with regard to autism. After researching a number of nonprofits around autism spectrum disorder, Kene found himself drawn to ASAN because it's actually run by autistic individuals.

Kene hopes that his story – and his cleats – will help remind people to act with gentleness and respect toward everyone, including those who have unique personalities, behaviors or disabilities.

"If I could deliver one message, it's really, 'Treat others with kindness. Don't be quick to judge. Just see people how they are,'" Kene said. "That's how I want others to see my little brother."



ODILINNA (LEFT) AND KENE WITH THEIR PARENTS





**JOSH'S WIFE HALEY  
AND SON JOSHUA**



## **JOSH METELLUS**

### **SHINING LIGHT ON POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION**

When Josh Metellus' wife, Haley, went into labor in April, the couple assumed everything would go smoothly.

But that unfortunately wasn't the case for the first-time parents.

After laboring and then pushing for some time, Josh and Haley's son became stuck. Doctors and nurses jumped into action to get the baby out as quickly as possible, and after an excruciatingly long 1 minute and 40 seconds, Joshua Syx Metellus was delivered but wasn't breathing.

The fear that goes through a parent's mind at that point is unfathomable.

Thankfully, doctors were able to get Joshua breathing soon after birth, and he's described by his dad as "perfect and healthy."

The trauma of such an experience, however, is not easily erased.

When Joshua was about a month old, Haley was diagnosed with postpartum depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Josh and Haley were proactive at seeking professional help, which included counseling, for Haley during an incredibly difficult time. Now 7 months after Joshua's birth, Haley has made tremendous progress in her recovery from both conditions.

Josh said he and Haley were aware during pregnancy that 70-80 percent of new moms experience, at minimum, "the baby blues," while 10-20 percent will be diagnosed with clinical postpartum depression.

One study found that one in seven women may experience postpartum depression in the year after giving birth.

"Haley's very on top of stuff like that, researching. She's like, 'You know, we could have postpartum [depression]';" Josh said. "Nobody ever thinks it will happen to them. But it did. We were prepared for it, I would say, at least a little bit."

It's for that reason Josh is wearing cleats tonight for Postpartum

Support International.

"I just wanted to bring awareness to it. Because it is real, and although we did get help, we're in the process of [her recovering], there's still some people out here who aren't getting help," Josh said. "There's probably husbands or dads out there who don't know how to help their wives or girlfriends, don't know what they're going through. So I just wanted to bring awareness to it because it's something that hit home with us."

Despite a demanding schedule in-season, Josh supports Haley as much as he's able, from being a listening ear to taking over dad duty after work each day.

"Doing little things around the house, anything that can take the stress off her plate. The one thing I do when I get home, I'll take the baby off her hands and I'll let her do whatever she wants to do," Josh said. "If she wants to go to the store just to walk around, you know, something to get her head clear so she doesn't have to feel like the world is always on her shoulder."

"Just be there for her," he added. "Ask her how she's doing, be understanding – be a spouse; be a partner; be a husband."



**ANDREW'S  
COUSIN BO**

PHOTOS COURTESY  
OF BO'S FAMILY



## ANDREW DePAOLA

### HONORING LATE COUSIN'S MEMORY THROUGH CLEATS

Andrew DePaola still remembers playing video games with his younger cousin, Bo.

It wasn't often that he'd win.

"He'd always kick my butt, or any of the other cousins', in whatever video game we played. It was very frustrating, getting worked over by a kid seven years younger than me," Andrew quipped.

Bo loved playing the Xbox. He enjoyed lacrosse and baseball and loved his Jeep, his dog Tucker and the holiday season. His family describes him as empathetic, creative and funny.

Bo also struggled with mental illness that darkened some days more than others and stole joy from the little things in life. Bo attempted to overcome his mental health struggles but tragically passed away from an accidental overdose in 2015 at the age of 20.

In the wake of Bo's passing, his parents – Andrew's aunt and uncle – established Bo's Effort, a nonprofit dedicated to assembling community resources to break the stigma around mental illness through education and guidance.

Andrew has been impacted by the loss of his cousin in more ways than one, and he's proud of the mission behind Bo's Effort.

"I think for so many years prior there was this thing, you know, 'Don't talk

about it. Hide your feelings, hide your emotions, just bury stuff down deep.' As we've seen, that really can lead to a lot more problems in life," Andrew said. "It's important to encourage people to talk about what they're going through. That really can be it. That can really be what helps someone overcome what they're fighting. Just having that outlet, getting it off your chest.

"For me, it's really kind of opened my eyes to this fact that just talking to someone – 'Hey, how's your day? How are you? What's going on?' – can really help someone out there. And you never know who you're helping," Andrew added.

Every season, Andrew participates in the NFL's My Cause My Cleats campaign and dons custom-designed kicks to shine a spotlight on Bo's Effort and its messaging.

He hopes to help bring awareness on a league-wide stage and continue breaking down the stigma that can surround such a difficult topic.

"I wanted to do something to use my platform a little bit, to try to get the word out there and help them as much as I could. If it helps to honor my cousin in some way and keep his name alive, that's fantastic. And if I can also help just one person, that's enough for me," Andrew said. "I know for my aunt

and uncle, they're great people who do a lot of great things. This is their cause, and I want to try to help them as much as I can. I think, also, just bringing Bo back a little bit is nice, too, and it helps them in a way."

Andrew appreciates the way more people are becoming comfortable with speaking about their own mental health experiences.

He especially believes it's an important subject to keep at the forefront within the NFL. After all, mental illness and its reverberations do not discriminate based on career, ethnicity or gender.

"I think people paint this picture of us like we're these barbaric giants that make a ton of money, so therefore our problems are gone ... but that's not the case," Andrew said. "At the end of the day, we're people outside of these walls. We have lives, we have families, we have obligations. We have responsibilities.

"Guys in this locker room come from all walks of life. Everybody has a different background; I mean, you'd be hard-pressed to find two guys in the locker room who grew up the same," he continued. "So you just don't really know what guys are dealing with, what walks of life they come from, and what's going on outside of these doors.

"Mental illness doesn't go away simply because you make a decent salary or because you're 'famous,' " Andrew emphasized.





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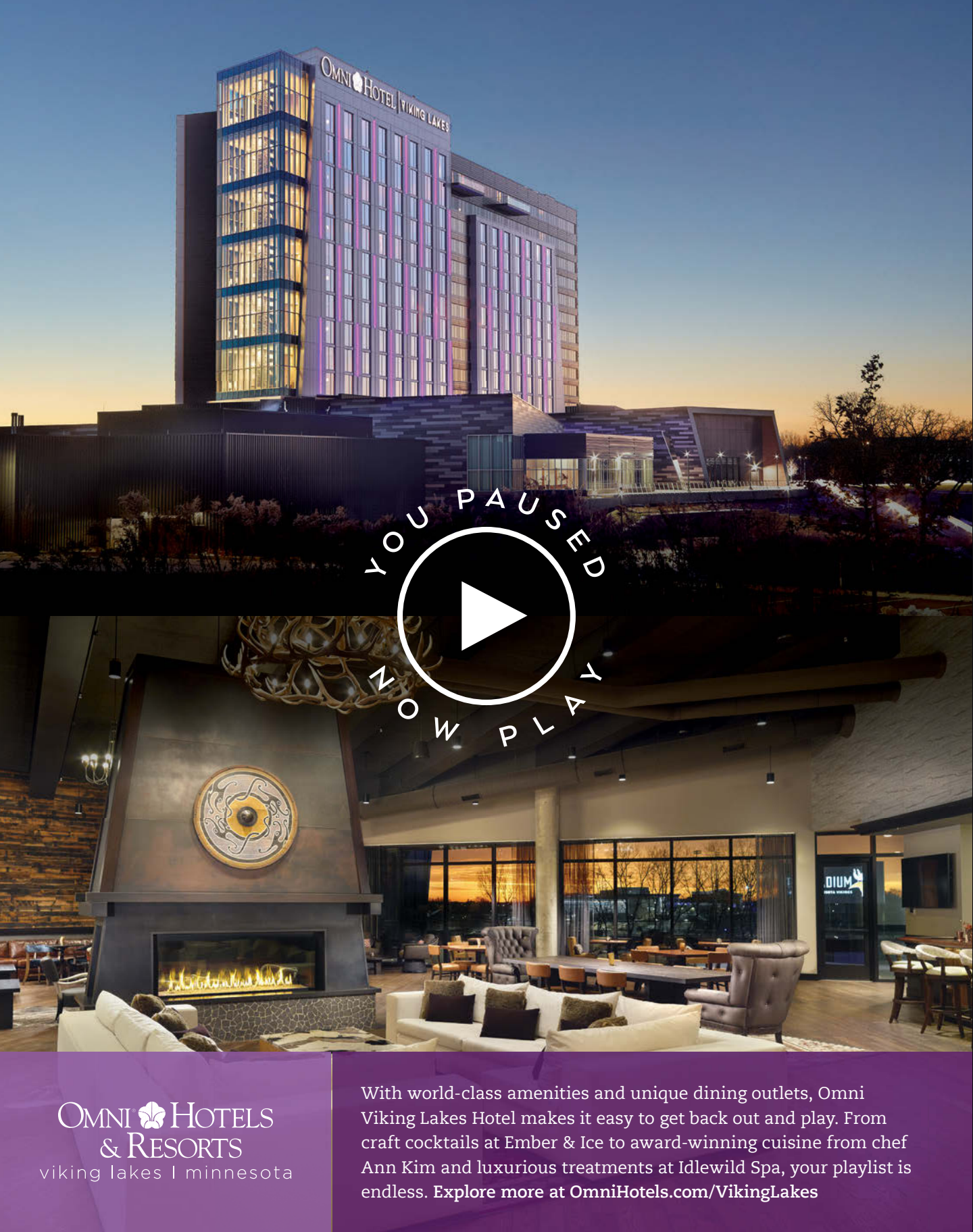
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**TYLER'S  
GRANDPA  
THURMAN**

## TYLER CONKLIN

### REMEMBERING GRANDPARENTS WITH CUSTOM CLEATS

Tyler Conklin's grandparents will be on his mind and his heart tonight when he takes the field against the Steelers.

And thanks to the NFL's My Cause My Cleats initiative, portraits of Tyler's Grandma Judy and Grandpa Thurman Winfred Garner also will be on his feet.

Tyler this year is representing the Dementia Society of America, as he hopes to raise awareness around the condition that ultimately took his grandparents' lives.

The outside of the cleat that features Judith's face framed in loose curls includes a hummingbird – her favorite – and a brown cowboy boot in memory of Thurman, a North Carolina native.

Family means a lot to Tyler, who is grateful for the opportunity to have known both of his maternal grandparents, before and after their initial diagnosis.

According to the World Health Organization, dementia is a syndrome in which there is deterioration in cognitive function beyond what might be expected from the usual consequences of biological aging. Dementia results from a variety of diseases and injuries that primarily or

secondarily affect the brain. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia and may contribute to 60-70 percent of cases.

Judith passed away relatively quickly – Tyler clearly remembers hearing the news as a 16-year-old, on the eve his high school basketball team played in the semifinals. He has fewer memories of directly interacting with Judith, though during his childhood she often spent more time with the family.

Grandpa Thurman, he recalled, was a little more aloof in those years. So when his condition slowly deteriorated three years ago and his daughter Diana (Tyler's mom) moved him to Michigan to live with them, it provided an unexpected opportunity for relationship-building before his passing in April 2021.

"Even during quarantine and all of that, COVID, he was with us through it all," Tyler added. "I got to really get to know him and spend a lot of time with him."

Though decades separated him and his grandpa, Tyler has heard many times during his life about

similarities they shared. Look at photos of the two together, and a couple of those likenesses can't be missed.

Tyler has become known by Vikings fans for the locks of dark hair that flow beneath his helmet on game days. While the length surpassed that of his grandpa's, Thurman boasted a head full of thick hair long past the days it grayed.

"And we both have bushy eyebrows," Tyler quipped.

"My girlfriend Scottie always messages me about how I do stuff just like him," he added. "As we got older, we just had a lot of good times together."





# ANTHONY BARR

BY CRAIG PETERS



I N V E S T O R   I N   D R E A M S

**ANTHONY BARR  
goes beyond  
seeing dreamers.  
He believes in  
them, anticipates  
their brighter  
futures, invests  
in their journeys,  
encourages  
them through  
challenges and  
celebrates their  
successes.**

The 29-year-old has committed to tackling poverty two generations at a time through his Raise the Barr foundation.

The cornerstone of his efforts is supporting single-parent students with scholarships and emergency grants that allow them to focus on their studies and families while reducing the amount they need to borrow or preventing an economic pitfall that could derail a semester of progress.

It's lofty and ambitious work for the 29-year-old, but it's also incredibly rewarding — not that recognition has ever been sought by the low-key linebacker.

Instead, he smiles when he sees families experience upward trajectories.

"It's always been about others," Anthony said. "It's never really been about me, whether it's football, family or community."

The Vikings on Tuesday proudly announced Anthony as the 2021 Vikings Community Man of the Year and the team's nominee for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award.

#### **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND EMPOWERMENT**

In some ways, it seems like just yesterday when Raise the Barr began its relationship

with Jeremiah Program with his very first visit in downtown Minneapolis.

He entertained youth with an animated reading of *The Pout-Pout Fish* and willed his 6-foot-5, 257-pound frame to crawl through a play tunnel at Jeremiah Program. Formidable on the field, Anthony is relatable and approachable to the children and their parents.

"I've kind of watched some kids grow up from when they were infants and now they're 4, 5 and 6 years old," Anthony said. "Seeing the moms establish themselves in the community as students and professionals and kind of take control of their own lives has been really cool.

"It's really about empowering people and giving people opportunities to succeed," he continued.

It was only natural that multiple Jeremiah Program residents and Raise the Barr scholarship recipients, some of whom overlap, helped deliver the news of Anthony's selection in surprise fashion.

They gathered on the concourse of TCO Stadium one Saturday this fall, the day before Anthony made his 2021 debut against Detroit after rehabbing a knee injury he suffered this summer and a torn pectoral muscle that cost him all but six quarters of 2020.

When Anthony walked onto the concourse, he was surprised

“

**“It's really about empowering  
people and giving people**

**OPPORTUNITIES  
TO SUCCEED.”**





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**NFL** WALTER PAYTON  
**MAN OF THE YEAR**  
N O M I N E E

families, his mother, Lori Barr, and grandmother Jean Barr.

Former college roommate and teammate Eric Kendricks, who joined the Vikings a year after Anthony and was named the 2020 Vikings Community Man of the Year, was among the crowd wearing custom No. 55 jerseys and clapping as Anthony realized what was happening and Jean approached to deliver the news.

"It is so exciting, heartwarming, very humbling to see where he started and what he's been able to accomplish," Jean said during an interview.

Having worked as a preschool teacher, Jean "saw a lot of children as they were growing up, and to know they are being helped in any way possible is a very worthwhile cause."

Jean and her late husband, John, were instrumental in helping raise Anthony while Lori navigated the challenges of being a single-mom and student.

Lori described the pride she felt in seeing Anthony receive news of his nomination.

"I was a little sad that my dad, who was such a big part of Anthony's upbringing, couldn't be here physically, but I know he's watching over Anthony and sharing this from up above," Lori said. "But to be able to have my mom here, who

able to share today with him and celebrate him, I think this honor is really special."

## TESTS OF PERSISTENCE

Lori and Anthony have long known that not everyone is blessed with the support they received. It's why they care so deeply about the cause and have been so committed to building authentic relationships in California and Minnesota, which has become his home away from home.

For a brief moment in the 2019 offseason, it appeared that Anthony was set to become a member of the New York Jets as a high-profile free agent.

But Anthony quickly became sickened at the idea of leaving Minnesota. He returned to the Vikings for less money and helped Minnesota return to the playoffs.

But 2020 hit, bringing the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought increased challenges to Raise the Barr's fundraising efforts and increased need.

The murder of George Floyd just a few miles from U.S. Bank Stadium caused a deep hurt and prompted Anthony and Kendricks to ask for a meeting with Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria

Arradondo to learn how they could help improve police and community relations and more importantly prevent such a tragedy from happening again.

Anthony and teammates spoke up about injustices. He participated in virtual conferences to guide youth football coaches and continued virtually visiting young people detained at the Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center.

Football season returned, but just six quarters in, Anthony tore a pectoral muscle at Indianapolis. He underwent the grueling rehab only to suffer a knee injury in August that sidelined him for Minnesota's first four games of 2021.

Anthony may not have verbalized the weight on his shoulders, but moms just know when their children are struggling.

"He's a very quiet person, and he carries his pain and his burdens deep within," Lori said. "It's been a real struggle. The last year was a real test of his will and his mental health.

"It was tough, but my thing to him has always been 'Eyes forward. God put eyes in the front of your head for a reason. Keep looking forward, keep working hard. There is a plan, and trust in it.' I think he did that, so he's here now," she continued.

## TESTIMONIALS OF SUCCESS

While Anthony shies away from self-promotion, the people he has helped readily credit his support for their success.

Tavia Paredes said scholarships have had meaning beyond the financial benefits. She has been able to balance caring for her 9-year-old son and her studies as a chemistry major



Pierre  
NOUJAIM

Ron  
JOHNSON

Hobie  
ARTIGUE

Jim  
RICH

Dawn  
MITCHELL



THURSDAY  
6PM



SUNDAY  
HOME - 9:30A  
AWAY - 10AM



SUNDAY  
10:35P

with a physics minor.

Paredes has been on the Dean's List since receiving her first scholarship from Raise the Barr. She is graduating and has an interest in pursuing a Master's degree in biogeochemistry at the University of Minnesota. She wants to apply that knowledge toward environmental science, social justice and tribal treaty law.

"I think the more abstract meaning behind [Raise the Barr's support] is faith and belief that I'm going to be successful," Paredes said. "That has been such a huge motivating factor, to have someone believe in you, especially when you are a non-traditional student and you feel like society is always going to doubt you for a lot of different reasons: being a mother, being a woman of color and studying sciences, being a first-generation college student."

Nikkia Collins originally enrolled in college with the goal of earning an associate's degree but decided she wanted to add a bachelor's degree.

"Financially, that probably wasn't the best move, being a low-income, single mom, so with the help of the scholarship, it allowed me to not have to pull out more loans and accumulate more debt," said Collins, who has a 3.91 GPA in her last semester of classes.

"It helps me to know that everything I'm doing is working and I'm on the right track," Collins said. "My goal every time I graduate or walk across that stage is to have the colored sash around me that shows I'm graduating with honors."

Collins intends to teach special education to help make sure needs are met.

Aaronica Jackson was able to finish her bachelor's degree a semester early because of the financial support from Raise the Barr. In addition to being an alumni scholar, she's also a Raise the Barr Board Member.

Jackson has launched her career in social work, helping people who are experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County.

"I've always been a person that has been of service to others. That was something that I made a pledge when I was really young is that no matter what I was doing, how much money I made, I was always going to be of service to others," Jackson said. "Right now, specifically in Hennepin County, in Minneapolis, we have a huge homeless population, so in any way I can give back to my community, then I'm going to do that."

Jackson, who first began college in 2013 and resumed it in 2018, said the nomination for Barr is validating for the work that continues. She also enjoyed seeing "the reveal and kind of seeing him a little bit uncomfortable" from receiving the recognition.

"That makes me want to go twice as hard because he doesn't really want the credit," Jackson said.

## A SPACE TO GROW AND THRIVE

This fall, Raise the Barr and Country Financial celebrated the opening of a new computer lab at the University of Minnesota's Student Parent HELP Center that is reserved solely for single-parent students. The dedicated space features state-of-the-art computers, ergonomic furniture and a high-efficiency printer available free of cost.

Student Parent HELP Center Director Susan Warfield has been at the University of Minnesota for 22 years and a social worker for 35 years. Warfield said Raise the Barr is "really changing the student-parent service field in this country."

Beyond the computer lab, Warfield credited Raise the Barr for listening attentively to learn how the organization could best help advancements in academics.

Raise the Barr provided \$65,000 for an in-depth research program evaluation, enabling years of data to be strategically studied.

"They funded that research, and now we can send that to any university in the country," Warfield said. "We get contacted all of the time for info on what programming a college should provide their student-parents, and I can just send them this full report that says exactly which of our services have had the most impact. It also will drive the evolution of our program."

Warfield was on-hand for the reveal and could only smile when the little tykes approached Anthony with an observable comfort.

"He's got what I like to call 'kid karma.' He's like a kid magnet, and it says that his heart is really in his philanthropic work."

Paredes said she liked seeing Anthony and Lori have a "sweet, quiet moment" during the reveal.

"It's kind of like, you realize she's his mom, and he's so proud of everything his mother accomplished," Paredes said. "I think Anthony probably grew up understanding what that means and the sacrifices his mother made in order to better herself and stand on her feet as a woman in this world in order to better support her son."

Whether it's the way Paredes can help restore and ensure environmental justice, Collins' commitment to students who are often marginalized at at-risk of not getting needed help, Jackson's drive to end homelessness, or dreams that will be fulfilled, Raise the Barr will continue to help brighter futures.

"I think there's so much talent and so much value in many lives that are essentially invisible," Lori said. "To know that Raise the Barr is a little part of bringing that to light, of giving them a space to really thrive in this community is an incredible source of pride. There's nothing better than to give somebody a space to grow and thrive."

## MY CAUSE MY CLEATS

*Anthony Barr knows the walk because he and his family lived it. Anthony grew up in a single-parent home watching and realizing the challenges single parents encounter and the sacrifices they make. He realizes how prone single parents are to setbacks that could derail dreams of completing college education. For these reasons, Anthony has committed to tackling poverty two generations at a time through his Raise the Barr foundation, which is featured on his cleats tonight. Raise the Barr has awarded more than 50 college scholarships, including renewals, and distributed emergency grants to help single-parent students.*





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# PURPLE Pups

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***When Simba and Diego first met, it was clear which was the little brother.***

Vikings defensive end D.J. Wonnum purchased Simba, an American pit bull terrier, in April at 8 weeks old and introduced him to 13-year-old Diego, his family's American bulldog.

It wasn't necessarily love at first sight, but the two dogs developed a bond.

"They get along pretty well, until Simba gets on Diego's nerves," Wonnum said. "Simba starts pestering him, bothering him, and Diego has to let him know, you know, 'This is my home.'"

"He'll be like, 'Relax. We can be friends, but just chill out a little bit,'" Wonnum added, laughing. "But other than that, they get along pretty well and play together."

While Diego lives back home in Georgia with Wonnum's parents, Simba keeps the defensive end company in his Eagan apartment.

Wonnum first decided to acquire a puppy due to increased isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, and although the duo encountered the expected learning curves early on, adding Simba to his life has made Wonnum's days exponentially better.

"He was biting everything. I've got chewed-up gloves, shoes. Pretty much chewed-up everything. He liked to nip a lot, too, so I had to get him away from that," Wonnum said, shaking his head. "But his favorite place is going under the bed. Under the bed is like his treasure spot. He'll take socks, all kinds of stuff, and just put them under the bed, and I find it all like a week or two later. I'm like, 'C'mon, man.'"



## SIMBA WONNUM



OWNER: **D.J. WONNUM**

**HAKUNA MATATA:**  
SIMBA IS NAMED AFTER THE  
CHARACTER IN *THE LION KING*

**BABY BRO:**  
SIMBA GETS ALONG WITH D.J.'S  
CHILDHOOD DOG DIEGO



**“He’s full of energy, and he gets along with pretty much everybody, every dog. It’s just a joy to be around him.”**

**- D.J. WONNUM ON SIMBA’S PERSONALITY**



“But he’s definitely outgoing. He’s, like, the life of the party,” he continued of Simba. “He’s full of energy, and he gets along with pretty much everybody, every dog. It’s just a joy to be around him.”

Wonnum named the tan-colored pup with a white marking on his chest because of *The Lion King*, one of his favorite Disney movies. And like the lion cub in the 1994 animated flick, Wonnum’s Simba can be a bit of a boundary tester from time to time.

The 24-year-old recalled a time when Simba left behind some smelly “surprises” hidden for Wonnum to find.

“Simba’s kind of sneaky. I have a two-bedroom apartment, and I take him outside, he goes outside and uses the bathroom, and that’s that,” Wonnum explained. “But maybe like a week later, I go in my guest bedroom, and it’s like five different piles of poop all over the room. And I’m like, ‘Bro. First of all, how’d you get in here? And second of all, you go outside and use the bathroom. How you gonna come back in the house and use the bathroom?’”

“I definitely got him for that,” he added. “But other than that, he’s been pretty good.”

Wonnum compared Simba’s personality to Vikings teammate Kris Boyd, saying they’re both full of energy and just love to be around people.

Simba has an appetite like an NFL player, too.

Wonnum said he’ll “eat anything,” though it’s not exactly a free-for-all as Simba would have it.

From Caribou Coffee Pup Cups, to chicken, to his favorite treat – peanut butter – Simba is a big fan of any snacks he can get his paws on.

He devours bones meant to last a few days and rips chew toys to shreds, but Simba doesn’t have a hostile bone in his body.

Anyone who meets the pup will immediately be welcomed by an affectionate tail wag and kisses, and it’s easy to see he’s all about the cuddles. Wonnum understands the stigma or hesitancy that sometimes accompanies the pit bull breed, but he emphasized that with the proper care and love, they’re just like any other dog.

“It’s all about how you raise them. I raised Simba around people and around a loving, caring family, and you can see how he is now – full of energy, never shows aggression at all,” Wonnum said. “Anybody that’s looking for a pit bull, they’re loving dogs.”

Wonnum did purchase Simba as a puppy but also is a major proponent of pet adoption.

He appreciates the partnership between Warrior Dog Rescue and the Purple Pups content series, and for tonight’s My Cause My Cleats game, he’ll be donning custom-designed kicks for another Twin Cities shelter, Secondhand Hounds.

Wonnum spent some time with Secondhand Hounds pups at a Community Tuesday event last this month and especially loved a young bulldog, Franny, who had been born with Spina Bifida.

“I decided to do this for my cleats because I love

dogs. I love animals,” Wonnum said. “This was an opportunity for me to spotlight those dogs that [might] have different problems or that are still [looking for homes].

“They deserve to be in loving, caring families. They deserve that opportunity,” he added.

Wonnum of course hopes he and Simba are in the Twin Cities through the postseason, but when the 2021 campaign wraps up, the pair will head back to Georgia for some quality family time.

And of course, to reunite Simba and Diego.

“I’m actually excited to see how they play together when we get back home, because Simba’s a lot bigger than the last time Diego saw him,” Wonnum quipped.

📌 **For every FREE Caribou Pup Cup added to your order this season, Caribou will make a donation to Warrior Dog Rescue.**





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SPORTS RADIO - FM 100.3

# FRIDAY FOOTBALL FEAST

9AM - NOON AT



**BUFFALO  
WILD  
WINGS**

AT  
**CIN**  
9.10  
PLYMOUTH

AT  
**ARI**  
9.17  
EAGAN

VS.  
**SEA**  
9.24  
SAVAGE

VS.  
**CLE**  
10.01  
ROSEVILLE

VS.  
**DET**  
10.08  
MONTICELLO

AT  
**CAR**  
10.15  
CHAMPLIN

**BYE  
WEEK**

VS.  
**DAL**  
10.29  
OAKDALE

AT  
**BAL**  
11.05  
ELK RIVER

AT  
**LAC**  
11.12  
COON RAPIDS

VS.  
**GB**  
11.19  
APPLE VALLEY

AT  
**SF**  
11.26  
BLAINE

AT  
**DET**  
12.03  
EDINA

VS.  
**PIT**  
12.10  
LAKEVILLE

AT  
**CHI**  
12.17  
ROSEVILLE

VS.  
**LAR**  
12.23\*  
SAVAGE

AT  
**GB**  
12.31  
PLYMOUTH

VS.  
**CHI**  
1.07  
EAGAN

AWAY - WHITE    HOME - YELLOW  
SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE





# MVC Hannelie

COMMITTED TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE



BY LINDSEY YOUNG

*More than 50 Vikings will don custom-designed cleats for tonight's Thursday Night Football game against the Steelers.*

*Tonight's My Cause My Cleats game means a lot to players but to many others, as well, including Minnesota Vikings Cheerleader rookie Hannelie.*

*A recent graduate of the University of St. Thomas, Hannelie earned her degree in neuroscience and is working as a medical scribe while looking ahead to medical school. In addition to work, med-school prep and practices and game days with the MVC, Hannelie creates time to make a difference in the lives of others.*

*Hannelie has been involved with 30 For Freedom (30FF) a movement dedicated to ending sex trafficking, for the past five years. We caught up with her to talk about 30FF, as well as her commitment to a unique dance club called Darby's Dancers.*

## **What draws you to this cause, and what ways do you stay engaged with 30 For Freedom?**

I first heard about this organization my freshman year of college when I met the incredible man who started it. My eyes were immediately opened to this horrific injustice that is still so present in our world, even in our own backyards. As I learned more about the reality of human trafficking today, and even met some survivors, my heart hurt for those who were trapped, and I knew I wanted to make a difference. Each year, I participate in an annual run held by 30FF to help raise awareness and funds to help end this injustice. I commit to running a specific distance for each dollar raised. ... As my involvement with this organization continues, it's amazing to see efforts pay off when even one more person is rescued and set free.

## **You also started a dance club in college called Darby's Dancers? Please tell me more about that.**

In high school I was part of a nonprofit organization called Darby's Dancers, a dance education program for kids with special needs. The program impacted my life so much that, upon going to college, I knew I wanted to start my own Darby's Dancers program at the University of St. Thomas. At the time, Darby's Dancers programs were established at dance



studios across the country but never at a college campus. After two years of hard work and dedication, we officially launched the first-ever Darby's Dancers program at a college campus. During my senior year at St. Thomas, I led weekly dance classes and watched the lives of other student volunteers be impacted. Truly, nothing is more fulfilling than watching these kids light up with joy when they hear music and get to dance alongside everyone as if it were any other dance class. We even held a recital at the end of the year where friends and family could watch their child perform a routine. When I graduated, I passed this program on to a friend of mine who has kept the program running ever since. Today, I am still involved with Darby's Dancers and volunteer to teach dance classes to kids with special needs every Saturday morning at a local dance studio.

## **Why is giving back such a big part of your life?**

Giving back is a way to bring more meaning to life. Sometimes it's easy to become so focused on ourselves and our own lives that we forget the world around us and the struggles others may be facing. ... [Giving back] puts your own personal problems into perspective when you realize there are millions of other people currently trapped in human trafficking, fighting life-threatening diseases, etc. To give up valuable time to help causes that are greater than yourself is an admirable thing to do and helps you realize that you are capable of making a difference. ... The lessons and values I have learned from these experiences are some that will stay with me forever.

## **THANK YOU MVC PARTNERS**

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**KISS**







# VIKTOR THE VIKING

Viktor the Viking invited kids to submit designs for his shoes to raise awareness for the American Heart Association and the Play 60 initiative. There were many awesome entries, but the design by 9-year-old Anthony R. was selected as the winner. Anthony and his family were invited to the game to see his design come to life in person, and he will get to keep Viktor's game-worn shoes after the fact.

**DESIGNER** Anthony R.

**PAINTER** Katelyn Krebsbach



@VIKTORTHEVIKING



VIKTOR THE VIKING



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**ANOTHER  
HARD SELTZER?  
YEAH, **BUT** WE'VE  
GOT ANTIOXIDANT  
VITAMIN C.**

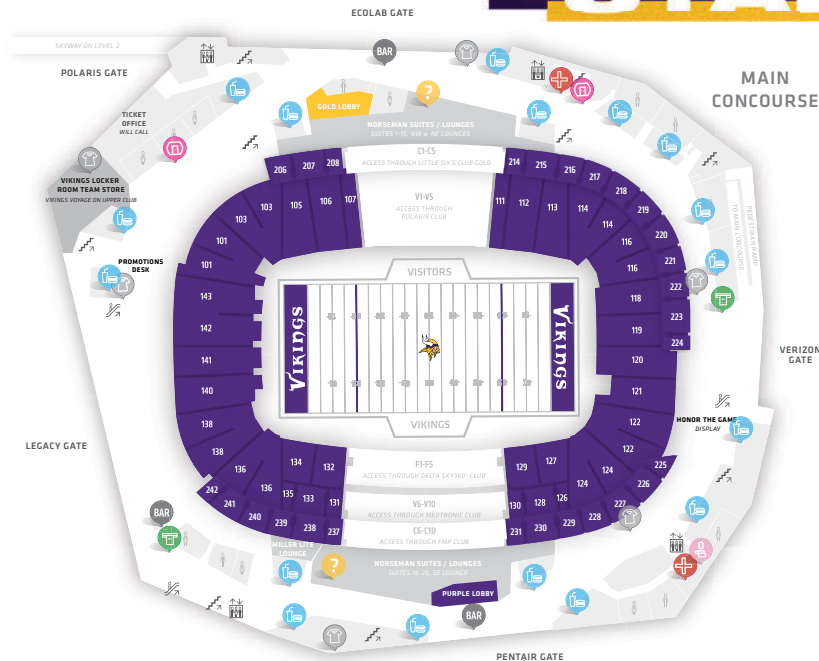


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## PURPLE LOBBY

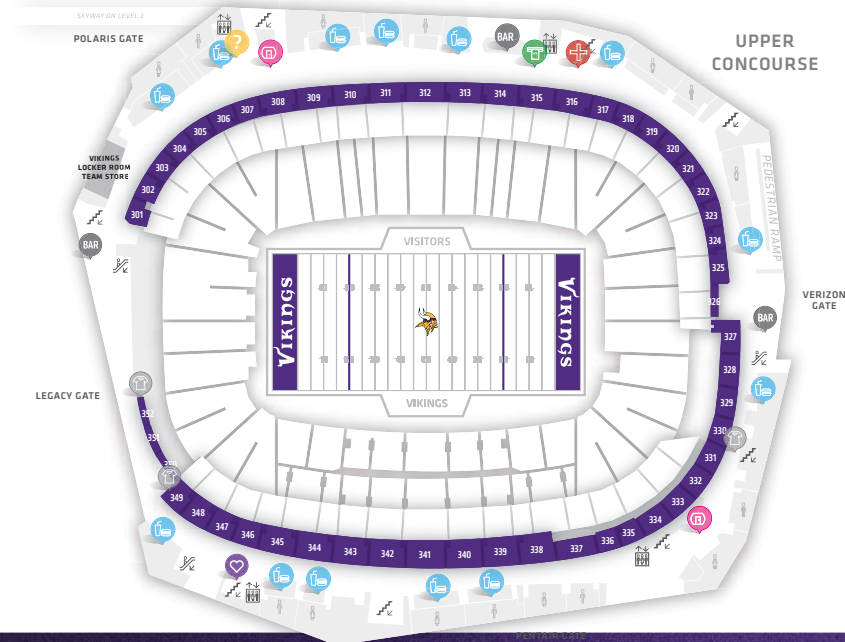
ACCESS TO THE FOLLOWING:

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- MEDTRONIC CLUB
- FMP CLUB
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- VALHALLA SUITES
- NORSEMAN SUITES 16-27
- SE NORSEMAN SUITES
- LOFT SUITES 28-46
- MILLER LITE LOUNGE

## GOLD LOBBY

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# STADIUM HIGHLIGHT



## MY CAUSE MY CLEATS HALFTIME WITH FLO RIDA

**THE SALVATION ARMY AND MINNESOTA VIKINGS ARE EXCITED TO WELCOME FOUR-TIME GRAMMY-NOMINATED RAPPER FLO RIDA TO OUR HOUSE TO PERFORM DURING HALFTIME OF TONIGHT'S GAME.**

Flo Rida has recorded four studio albums that have all charted on the Billboard Hot 100, and his debut song "Low" was No. 1 in the United States for 10 consecutive weeks. It set a record for digital downloads. Other hits include "Right Round," "Wild Ones," "Good Feeling," and "My House."

During Flo Rida's performance, he will be joined by approximately 100 people who were invited to enjoy the show at the front of the stage because of their connections to organizations that Vikings players chose to support through the My Cause My Cleats initiative.



## T-REX COOKIES

**SECTION 336, CLUBS & SUITES**

After leaving a corporate job to return to her previous roots as a competitive baker, T-Rex Cookie Owner Tina Rexing has never looked back. Rexing has appeared on Shark Tank and traveled to Singapore to help kick-start another cookie enterprise. Her Sea Salt Caramel Chocolate Chip was ranked No. 1 in America in 2017. T-Rex Cookie ships nationwide. Visit [trexcookie.com](http://trexcookie.com) for details.

**SCAN THE QR CODE FOR A FULL LIST OF CONCESSIONS.**

## SKOL SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

The SKOL Service Program was developed to create a guest-focused culture for our game-day team members. Our SKOL Service mission is our commitment to create memorable experiences for our fans. SKOL Service is our purpose as team members at U.S. Bank Stadium to provide a safe and world-class sports environment for all.



### ASHLEY RAMACHER

As a lifelong Vikings fan, Ashley loves helping create wonderful experiences for fans on game days as a Memory Maker.

"There is no better feeling than the atmosphere at U.S. Bank Stadium on a Sunday," Ashley said. "I love being able to help create an everlasting memory for fans - whether it's their first game or 100th game."

Ashley excitedly joined the Minnesota Vikings team in 2019 as an intern during training camp. Having loved the opportunity to develop while working in sports, Ashley continued with the Vikings, working game days with the Minnesota Vikings Foundation before becoming a Memory Maker.

Outside of working for the Vikings and attending school at the University of Minnesota, Ashley enjoys running, traveling, and trying out new local breweries and restaurants.

***If you had a great experience with one of our team members, please share this with us by emailing [guestservices@vikings.nfl.net](mailto:guestservices@vikings.nfl.net)! SKOL!***



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*Miller*  
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**TWIN CITIES**  
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