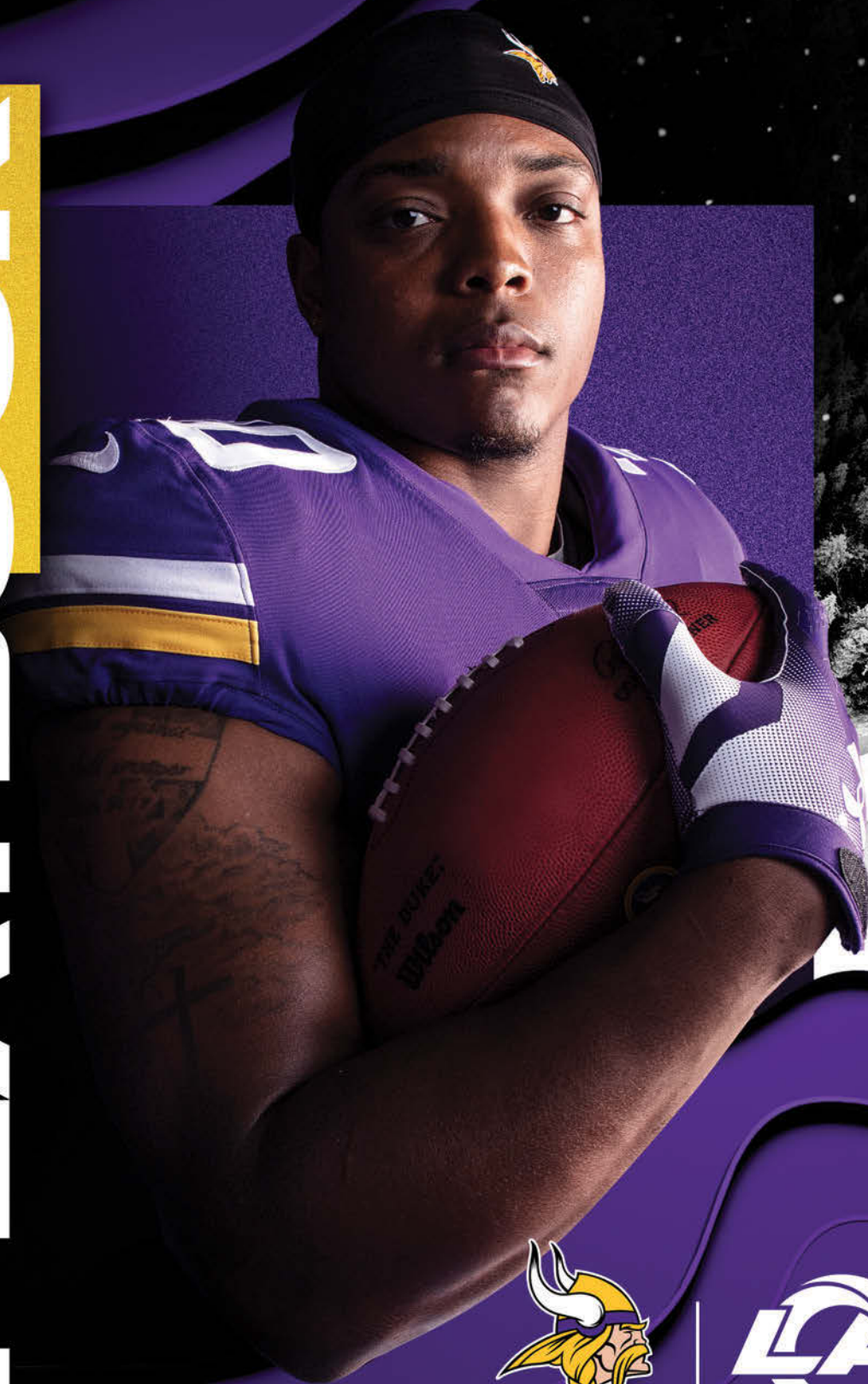


LAR AT MIN | 12.26.21 | U.S. BANK STADIUM

PLAYBOOK



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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.

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EDITOR: Craig Peters

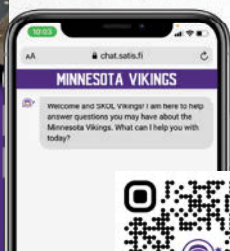
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QUESTIONS AT THE GAME?

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

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We have the best fans in the NFL. To ensure that all fans have a pleasant game-day experience, each patron should act responsibly and be considerate of others.

TO REPORT ISSUES: TEXT VIKES (SPACE), THE ISSUE AND LOCATION TO 612-777-8977

A man and a young boy are playing football in a park. The boy, wearing a blue hoodie, is in the foreground with his back to the camera, ready to catch a football. The man, wearing a dark blue sweater and grey pants, is in the background, having just thrown the ball. The ground is covered in brown autumn leaves, and there are trees and a house in the background.

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VIKINGS VS. RAMS

SUNDAY, DEC. 26, 2021 | U.S. BANK STADIUM

This matchup between teams vying for the NFC Playoff spots is a case of short rest and shorter rest. Minnesota is welcoming Los Angeles on the heels of a 17-9 win at Chicago on Monday. The Rams were initially scheduled to face the Seahawks last Sunday, but the game was postponed until Tuesday (after the print deadline).

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Air Force veteran and jazz musician Johnny Holliday will perform the National Anthem. Holliday played trumpet for the Air Force's show band Tops in Blue during his service.

COLOR GUARD

United States Air Force

HALFTIME

Corgi races – A dozen corgis who have previously raced at Canterbury Park will participate in a race called by "Voice of the Vikings" Paul Allen.

TODAY'S GAME ELEMENTS

Scan the code with your smart phone for more information on today's game entertainment.



GOING PRO BOWLING

Three Vikings – running back Dalvin Cook, receiver Justin Jefferson and safety Harrison Smith – are going Pro Bowling, the NFL and ESPN announced before Minnesota played Chicago on *Monday Night Football*.

This is the third selection in a row for Cook and the second in as many possible years for Jefferson, who was informed by Vikings Ring of Honor and Pro Football Hall of Fame receiver Randy Moss as part of ESPN's pregame coverage.

Smith is an all-star for the sixth time. He previously participated in five straight from 2015-19. The 10-year pro led NFC safeties in fan votes.

DALVIN COOK

Cook dazzled in Week 14 against Pittsburgh, rushing for 205 yards and two touchdowns to earn FedEx Ground Player of the Week honors. He is the fifth Vikings running back with at least three Pro Bowls, joining Tommy Mason (1962-64), Bill Brown (1964-65 and 1967-68), Chuck Foreman (1973-77) and Adrian Peterson (2007-10, 2012-13 and 2015).

JUSTIN JEFFERSON

Jefferson joined Moss (1998-99) and Sammy White (1976-77) as the only Vikings receivers to garner the honor in their first two NFL seasons. He has set new career highs with 89 receptions and nine touchdowns so far in 2021.

HARRISON SMITH

Smith has tied Paul Krause and Joey Browner for the most Pro Bowl honors by a Vikings DB all-time. He also is tied for the second-most Pro Bowl recognitions among NFL DBs since 2012 and only trails teammate Patrick Peterson, who has been to seven in that span.



MINNESOTA VIKINGS FOUNDATION

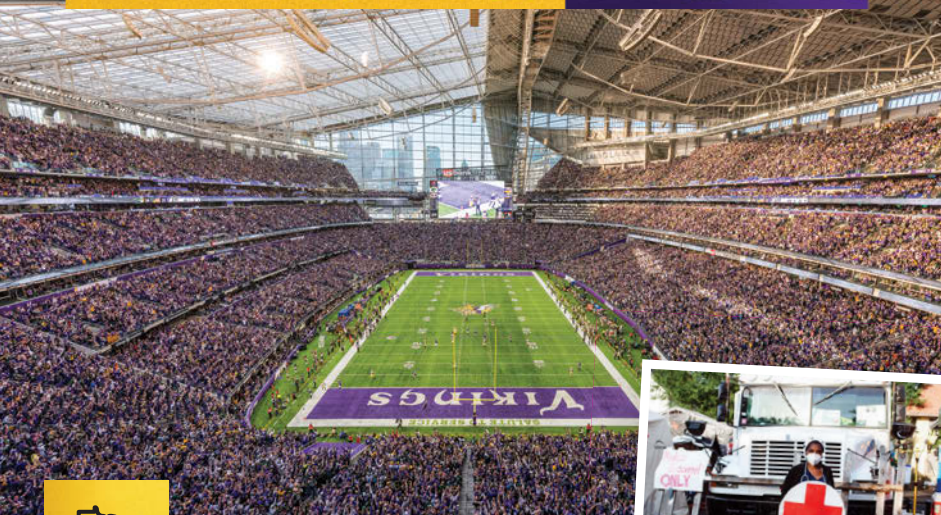
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TO SHARE THE JACKPOT!**

Purchase your raffle tickets with a debit card from sellers at kiosks or roaming throughout the concourse. Winning ticket will be selected by a random drawing and posted online after the game. Winner has 30 days to claim the prize.

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YOUTH HEALTH AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES.**

TODAY'S PROMOTIONS



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. The program honors individuals who have gone to extraordinary measures to make positive differences in the community. Today's Hometown Hero is Jeanette Rupert, an ICU nurse at Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park. Jeanette has started a health care nonprofit called 612 MASH, which includes a heated structure and van stocked with medical gear to provide basic care and education in the community. Jeannette also rendered aid to a 2021 MLB All-Star Game attendee who suffered a seizure.

**Photo courtesy of Rachel Austin at Chasing Joy Photography*



OPENING DRIVE SWEEPSTAKES

PRESENTED BY KWIK TRIP

Today's Kwik Trip opening drive contestant is Nicholas McKay from Fountain. Nicholas 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. Nicholas also has the chance to win a Ford Bronco Sport from Northland Ford Dealers at the end of the season. Enter today at any Minnesota Kwik Trip store.

Kwik Trip

#VIKINGSHAIR

PRESENTED BY
SPALON MONTAGE

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

SPALON
EST. 1991



BEANIES THAT BENEFIT

PRESENTED BY POLARIS

This season, the Minnesota Vikings and Polaris are partnering with Minnesota-based children's food charity, Every Meal, to create a limited-edition beanie hat. With a minimum donation of \$20.00, you will receive a free "Beanies That Benefit" hat 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 for more info!

POLARIS
Think Outside

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.



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 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!



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.



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.



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.



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.



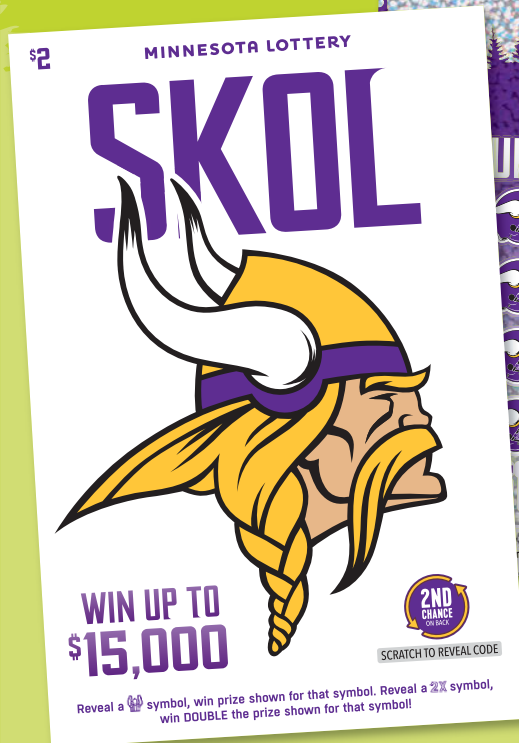
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FRIDAY FOOTBALL FEAST

9AM - NOON AT



**BUFFALO
WILD
WINGS**

**DON'T MISS THE
FINAL SHOWS OF THE
REGULAR SEASON**

AT
GB

12.31 | PLYMOUTH

VS.

CHI

01.07 | EAGAN



AWAY - WHITE HOME - YELLOW

SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

HARRISON

SMITH

SAFETY

6'2" | 211 LBS

10TH SEASON

COLLEGE: NOTRE DAME

2021 SCHEDULE

@CIN
WK1 | L, 27-24

@LAC
WK10 | W, 27-20

@ARI
WK2 | L, 34-33

GB
WK11 | W, 34-31

SEA
WK3 | W, 30-17

@SF
WK12 | L, 34-26

CLE
WK4 | L, 14-7

@DET
WK13 | L, 29-27

DET
WK5 | W, 19-17

PIT
WK14 | W, 36-28

@CAR
WK6 | W, 34-28

@CHI
WK15 | W, 17-9

BYE WEEK

LAR
WK16 | DEC. 26

DAL
WK8 | L, 20-16

@GB
WK17 | JAN. 2

@BAL
WK9 | L, 34-31

CHI
WK18 | JAN. 9

THE LONG RUN

Smith has four career interceptions returned for touchdowns. The longest – 81 yards – occurred against the Rams on Sept. 7, 2014, in Head Coach Mike Zimmer's first game with the Vikings.

PLAYER HIGHLIGHT

The last time Smith set foot on the U.S. Bank Stadium turf, he had just caused a pass breakup on the game's final play to preserve a 36-28 victory over Pittsburgh.

Now he's back to help Minnesota play a potent Rams offense quarterbacked by former Lions QB Matthew Stafford, who is scheduled to face the Vikings for the 22nd time of his career.

Smith was able to intercept Stafford in his final game with Detroit, and there's no doubt that Stafford is well aware of Smith's impact on games,

from his ability to disguise before the snap to effects during plays once the ball is snapped.

Earlier this season Smith recorded his 29th career interception, which tied Carl Lee for sixth in Vikings history. He's also extended his franchise record for sacks by a DB to 16.5, which includes 1.0 of Stafford back in October 2015.



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
7	Patrick Peterson	CB	6-1	198	11	LSU	Fort Lauderdale, FL
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
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
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
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
31	Wayne Gallman	RB	6-0	210	5	Clemson	Loganville, GA
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
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
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

#	NAME	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	HOMETOWN
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

2	Darrius Shepherd	WR	5-11	186	3	NDSU	Kansas City, MO
5	Tye Smith	CB	6-0	190	6	Towson	Raleigh, NC
34	Jake Bargas	FB	6-2	245	2	North Carolina	Boca Raton, FL
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
66	Eddie Yarbrough	DE	6-3	259	4	Wyoming	Aurora, CO
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

12	Chad Beebe	WR	5-10	187	4	Northern Illinois	Aurora, IL
13	Blake Proehl	WR	6-1	190	R	East Carolina	Charlotte, NC
14	Nate Stanley	QB	6-4	233	1	Iowa	Menomonie, WI
57	Ryan Connelly	LB	6-2	234	3	Wisconsin	Eden Prairie, MN
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 & PRACTICE SQUAD RESERVE/COVID-19

9	Trishton Jackson (PS)	WR	6-1	191	1	Syracuse	West Bloomfield, MI
12	Dede Westbrook	WR	6-0	178	5	Oklahoma	Cameron, TX
25	Alexander Mattison	RB	5-11	215	3	Boise State	San Bernardino, CA
36	A.J. Rose Jr. (PS)	RB	6-1	212	R	Kentucky	Cleveland, OH
68	Kyle Hinton (PS)	G	6-2	315	2	Washburn	Peoria, AZ
85	Dan Chisena	WR	6-3	203	2	Penn State	Downington, PA

THE BEST DEFENSE *FVP* IS A GOOD OFFENSE. CHECK YOUR BATTERY TODAY.



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OFFICIAL PARTNER OF THE MINNESOTA VIKINGS.



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


RAMS DEFENSE



11
CORNERBACK
Darius Williams



99
DEFENSIVE TACKLE
Aaron Donald




91
NOSE TACKLE
Greg Gaines




94
DEFENSIVE END
A'Shawn Robinson




5
CORNERBACK
Jalen Ramsey



40
LINEBACKER
Von Miller



51
LINEBACKER
Troy Reeder



50
LINEBACKER
Ernest Jones



54
LINEBACKER
Leonard Floyd



4
SAFETY
Jordan Fuller



24
SAFETY
Taylor Rapp

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

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

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



59
LINEBACKER
Nick Vigil



23
SAFETY
Xavier Woods



54
LINEBACKER
Eric Kendricks



22
SAFETY
Harrison Smith



55
LINEBACKER
Anthony Barr



27
CORNERBACK
Cameron Dantzler



90
DEFENSIVE END
Sheldon Richardson



58
NOSE TACKLE
Michael Pierce



94
DEFENSIVE TACKLE
Dalvin Tomlinson



98
DEFENSIVE END
D.J. Wonnum



7
CORNERBACK
Patrick Peterson

VIKINGS DEFENSE



10
WIDE RECEIVER
Cooper Kupp



77
LEFT TACKLE
Andrew Whitworth



73
LEFT GUARD
David Edwards



55
CENTER
Brian Allen



63
RIGHT GUARD
Austin Corbett



79
RIGHT TACKLE
Rob Havenstein



89
TIGHT END
Tyler Higbee



3
WIDE RECEIVER
Odell Beckham Jr.



9
QUARTERBACK
Matthew Stafford



27
RUNNING BACK
Darrell Henderson Jr.



12
WIDE RECEIVER
Van Jefferson

RAMS OFFENSE

RAMS SPECIAL TEAMS



8
KICKER
Matt Gay



6
PUNTER
Johnny Hekker



42
LONG SNAPPER
Matthew Orzech



17
PUNT RETURNER
J.J. Koski



38
KICK RETURNER
Buddy Howell



RAMS DEPTH CHART

RAMS OFFENSE

WR	Cooper Kupp	J.J. Koski
LT	Andrew Whitworth	Joe Noteboom
LG	David Edwards	Tremayne Anchrum Jr.
C	Brian Allen	Coleman Shelton
RG	Austin Corbett	Bobby Evans
RT	Rob Havenstein	Alaric Jackson
TE	Tyler Higbee	Kendall Blanton Brycen Hopkins
WR	Van Jefferson	
WR	Odell Beckham Jr.	Ben Skowronek
QB	Matthew Stafford	John Wolford Bryce Perkins
RB	Darrell Henderson Jr.	Sony Michel Buddy Howell

RAMS DEFENSE

DT	Aarond Donald	Michael Hoect
NT	Greg Gaines	Bobby Brown III
DE	A'Shawn Robinson	Marquise Copeland
OLB	Von Miller	Terrell Lewis Jamir Jones
ILB	Troy Reeder	Antoine Brooks Jr.
ILB	Ernest Jones	Christian Rozeboom
OLB	Leonard Floyd	Ogbonnia Okoronkwo Chris Garrett
LCB	Darius Williams	Robert Rochell Dont'e Deayon
RCB	Jalen Ramsey	David Long Jr.
SS	Jordan Fuller	Nick Scott
FS	Taylor Rapp	Terrell Burgess Juju Hughes



THIS IS
OUR TEAM

COOPER

KUPP

RECEIVER
6'2" | 208 LBS
5TH SEASON
COLLEGE: EASTERN
WASHINGTON

2021 SCHEDULE

CHI
WK1 | W, 34-14

@SF
WK10 | L, 31-10

@IND
WK2 | W, 27-24

BYE WEEK

TB
WK3 | W, 34-24

@GB
WK12 | L, 36-28

ARI
WK4 | L, 37-20

JAX
WK13 | W, 37-7

@SEA
WK5 | W, 26-17

@ARI
WK14 | W, 30-23

@NYG
WK6 | W, 38-11

SEA
WK15 | DEC. 21

DET
WK7 | W, 28-19

@MIN
WK16 | DEC. 26

@HOU
WK8 | W, 38-22

@BAL
WK17 | JAN. 2

TEN
WK9 | W, 28-16

SF
WK18 | JAN. 9

VERSUS VIKINGS

KUPP'S DONE WELL AGAINST THE VIKINGS.

NOV. 19, 2017 IN MINNESOTA:
 6 CATCHES, 64 YARDS

SEPT. 27, 2018 AT LOS ANGELES:
 9 CATCHES, 162 YARDS, 2 TDs

PLAYER HIGHLIGHT

Kupp entered Week 15 leading the NFL in receptions (113), receiving yards (1,489), touchdowns (12) and yards per game (114.5).

Those totals already have passed the receiver's

bests in a season of 94 catches, 1,161 yards and 10 touchdowns in 2019. Kupp's previous best per-game average (72.6) also occurred in 2019.

Kupp has done a tremendous job after the catch, racking up an NFL-best 647 through Week 14.

Originally selected in the third round of the 2017 NFL Draft, Kupp followed in the football

footsteps of his grandfather and father.

Jake Kupp was drafted by the Cowboys in the ninth round in 1964 and played 154 total games at guard or tight end for Dallas, Washington, Atlanta and New Orleans. The Giants drafted Craig Kupp in 1990, but the QB's only appearance was for the Cardinals in 1991.



RAMS ROSTER

ROSTER RAMS

#	NAME	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	HOMETOWN	#	NAME	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	HOMETOWN
3	Odell Beckham Jr.	WR	5-11	198	8	LSU	New Orleans, LA	41	Greg Stroman	DB	6-0	182	4	Virginia Tech	Bristow, VA
5	Jalen Ramsey	CB	6-1	208	6	Florida State	Smyrna, TN	46	Grant Haley	DB	5-9	190	3	Penn State	Atlanta, GA
6	Johnny Hekker	P	6-5	241	10	Oregon State	Bothell, WA	47	Kyle Markway	TE	6-4	250	1	South Carolina	St. Louis, MO
8	Matt Gay	K	6-0	232	3	Utah	Orem, UT	49	Carson Tinker	LS	6-0	237	7	Alabama	Decatur, AL
9	Matthew Stafford	QB	6-3	220	13	Georgia	Highland Park, TX	57	Anthony Hines	LB	6-3	226	R	Texas A&M	Plano, TX
10	Cooper Kupp	WR	6-2	208	5	Eastern Washington	Yakima, WA	59	Jackson, Drake	OL	6-2	292	R	Kentucky	Versailles, KY
11	Darious Williams	CB	5-9	187	4	AL-Birmingham	Jacksonville, FL	60	Jeremiah Kolone	OL	6-3	316	1	San Jose State	Fallbrook, CA
12	Van Jefferson	WR	6-1	200	2	Florida	Brentwood, TN	62	Austin Reiter	OL	6-3	300	6	South Florida	Arlington, TX
13	John Wolford	QB	6-1	200	2	Wake Forest	Jacksonville, FL	64	Adrian Ealy	OL	6-6	321	R	Oklahoma	Gonzales, LA
16	Bryce Perkins	QB	6-3	214	1	Virginia	Queen Creek, AZ	66	Max Pircher	OL	6-7	300	R	Innsbruck	Brixen, Italy
18	Ben Skowronek	WR	6-3	224	R	Notre Dame	Fort Wayne, IN	67	Chandler Brewer	OL	6-6	320	2	Middle Tenn. State	Florence, AL
21	Dont'e Deayon	CB	5-9	159	4	Boise State	Rialto, CA	83	Warren Jackson	WR	6-6	219	R	Colorado State	Mission Hills, CA
22	David Long Jr.	CB	5-11	196	3	Michigan	Los Angeles, CA	84	Landen Akers	WR	6-0	191	R	Iowa State	Cedar Rapids, IA
24	Taylor Rapp	S	6-0	208	3	Washington	Bellingham, WA	90	Earnest Brown IV	DL	6-5	270	R	Northwestern	Aubrey, TX
25	Sony Michel	RB	5-11	215	4	Georgia	Plantation, FL	RESERVE/NON-FOOTBALL INJURY							
27	Darrell Henderson Jr.	RB	5-8	208	3	Memphis	Batesville, MS	2	Robert Woods	WR	6-0	195	9	USC	Gardena, CA
33	Nick Scott	S	5-11	201	3	Penn State	Fairfax, VA	15	TuTu Atwell	WR	5-9	165	R	Louisville	Miami, FL
36	Mekhi Sargent	RB	5-8	208	R	Iowa	Key West, FL	23	Cam Akers	RB	5-10	217	2	Florida State	Clinton, MS
42	Matt Orzech	LS	6-3	245	2	Azusa Pacific	Menifee, CA	25	Xavier Jones	RB	5-11	208	2	SMU	Spring, TX
44	Jamir Jones	LB	6-3	255	1	Notre Dame	Rochester, NY	30	Raymond Calais	RB	5-8	188	2	Louisiana-Laf.	Breaux Bridge, LA
48	Chris Garrett	OLB	6-4	245	R	Concordia-St. Paul	Milwaukee, WI	32	Travin Howard	ILB	6-1	219	2	Texas Christian	Longview, TX
50	Ernest Jones	LB	6-2	230	R	South Carolina	Waycross, GA	34	Jake Funk	RB	5-10	205	R	Maryland	Gaithersburg, MD
52	Terrell Lewis	OLB	6-5	262	2	Alabama	Washington, D.C.	38	Buddy Howell	RB	6-1	218	4	Florida Atlantic	Coconut Grove, FL
54	Leonard Floyd	OLB	6-5	240	6	Georgia	Eastman, GA	87	Jacob Harris	WR	6-5	211	R	UCF	Palm Harbor, FL
55	Brian Allen	OL	6-2	303	4	Michigan State	Hinsdale, IL	RESERVE/COVID-19 & PRACTICE SQUAD RESERVE/COVID-19							
58	Justin Hollins	LB	6-5	248	3	Oregon	Arlington, TX	4	Jordan Fuller	S	6-2	203	2	Ohio State	Old Tappan, NJ
63	Austin Corbett	OL	6-4	306	4	Nevada	Sparks, NV	23	Juju Hughes	S	5-11	188	2	Fresno State	Hanford, CA
65	Coleman Shelton	OL	6-4	299	3	Washington	Pasadena, CA	26	Terrell Burgess	S	5-11	202	2	Utah	San Marcos, CA
68	Alaric Jackson	OL	6-7	285	R	Iowa	Detroit, MI	31	Robert Rochell	DB	6-2	195	R	Central Arkansas	Shreveport, LA
73	David Edwards	OL	6-6	308	3	Wisconsin	Downers Grove, IL	37	Tyler Hall (PS)	DB	5-10	190	R	Wyoming	Hawthorne, CA
77	Andrew Whitworth	OL	6-7	330	16	LSU	Monroe, LA	39	Antoine Brooks Jr.	LB	5-11	215	1	Maryland	Lanham, MD
86	Kendall Blanton	TE	6-6	262	1	Missouri	Blue Springs, MO	40	Von Miller	OLB	6-3	250	11	Texas A&M	Dallas, TX
88	Brycen Hopkins	TE	6-4	245	2	Purdue	Nashville, TN	43	Jake Gervase (PS)	S	6-1	212	1	Iowa	Davenport, IA
91	Greg Gaines	DL	6-1	312	3	Washington	La Habra, CA	45	Ogbonnia Okoronkwo	OLB	6-2	253	3	Oklahoma	Houston, TX
93	Marquise Copeland	DL	6-2	287	1	Cincinnati	Cleveland, OH	51	Troy Reeder	ILB	6-3	245	3	Delaware	Hockessin, DE
94	A'Shawn Robinson	DL	6-4	330	6	Alabama	Fort Worth, TX	53	Justin Lawler (PS)	OLB	6-4	265	2	SMU	Pottsboro, TX
95	Bobby Brown III	DL	6-4	324	R	Texas A&M	Arlington, TX	56	Christian Rozeboom	LB	6-2	230	1	SDSU	Sioux Center, IA
96	Michael Hoecht	DL	6-4	310	1	Brown	Oakwood, OH	64	Jamil Demby	OL	6-5	321	2	Maine	Vineland, NJ
99	Aaron Donald	DL	6-1	280	8	Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh, PA	69	Sebastian Joseph-Day	DL	6-4	310	3	Rutgers	Stroudsburg, PA
PRACTICE SQUAD								70	Joe Noteboom	OL	6-5	321	4	Texas Christian	Plano, TX
1	Ryan Santoso	K	6-5	260	1	Minnesota	Pace, FL	71	Bobby Evans	OL	6-4	312	3	Oklahoma	Allen, TX
14	Javian Hawkins	RB	5-9	196	R	Louisville	Titusville, FL	72	Tremayne Anchrum Jr.	OL	6-2	314	2	Clemson	Powder Springs, GA
17	J.J. Koski	WR	6-1	195	1	Cal Poly	Danville, CA	79	Rob Havenstein	OL	6-8	330	7	Wisconsin	Mount Airy, MD
19	Brandon Powell	WR	5-8	181	4	Florida	Deerfield Beach, FL	81	Jared Pinkney (PS)	TE	6-4	257	1	Vanderbilt	Norcross, GA
20	Delrick Abrams	DB	6-3	180	1	Colorado	Bogalusa, LA	82	Johnny Mundt	TE	6-4	233	4	Oregon	Modesto, CA
30	Damarious Randall	DB	5-11	196	7	Arizona State	Pensacola, FL	89	Tyler Higbee	TE	6-6	255	6	Western Kentucky	Clearwater, FL
35	Kareem Orr	DB	5-11	195	2	Chattanooga	Chattanooga, TN	92	Jonah Williams (PS)	DL	6-5	275	1	Weber State	Meridian, ID

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SERIES HISTORY



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ALL-TIME RESULTS

**VIKINGS ARE
27-17-2
IN 46 GAMES**

LONGEST WIN STREAK

6 GAMES

BY MINNESOTA VIKINGS
(Sept. 20, 1987 – Sept. 13, 1998)

4 GAMES

BY LOS ANGELES RAMS
(Oct. 15, 1978 – Oct. 6, 1985)

FIRST MEETING

NOV. 5, 1961 | @ LAR
RAMS 31, VIKINGS 17

Fran Tarkenton rushed for a career-high 99 yards (including a 52-yard touchdown), but the Rams got at least 40 rushing yards and a touchdown from four different players. L.A. totaled 295 rushing yards.

LAST MEETING

SEPT. 27, 2018 | @ LAR
RAMS 38, VIKINGS 31

The teams combined for 1,002 net yards and eight touchdowns, but the Rams took control by outscoring the Vikings 31-21 over the second and third quarters. Vikings QB Kirk Cousins passed for 422 yards and three touchdowns.

ON THIS DAY: DEC. 26

Today will be the fourth time the Vikings and Rams have met on Dec. 26. The first three games all were NFC Playoff Games won by Minnesota.

1976 NFC CHAMPIONSHIP

VIKINGS 24, RAMS 13 | MET STADIUM
Bobby Bryant returned a blocked field goal 90 yards for a touchdown for the first points of the game and recorded two interceptions.

1977 DIVISIONAL ROUND

VIKINGS 14, RAMS 7 | L.A. MEMORIAL COLISEUM
Minnesota's defense shut out Los Angeles for the game's first 59 minutes. Nate Allen, Paul Krause and Jeff Wright recorded interceptions during a rainstorm that led to "The Mud Bowl" becoming the nickname for this game.

1988 WILD CARD

VIKINGS 28, RAMS 17 | METRODOME
Alfred Anderson rushed for two touchdowns (7 yards and 1 yard), Joey Browner recorded two interceptions, and Scott Studwell snagged another.

TOP 2 AGAINST RAMS

RUSHING YARDS

- 212** Adrian Peterson on 24 attempts at STL (12.16.12)
179 Robert Smith on 23 attempts at STL (09.13.98)

PASSING YARDS

- 422** Kirk Cousins on 36-of-50 passing at LAR (09.27.18)
330 Daunte Culpepper on 33-of-47 passing at STL (11.30.03)

RECEIVING YARDS

- 160** Randy Moss on 10 catches at STL (11.30.03)
139 Sammy White on nine catches in MIN (09.19.76)

AGAINST VIKINGS

RUSHING YARDS

- 142** Steven Jackson on 25 attempts in MIN (12.31.06)
135 Marshall Faulk on 25 attempts at STL (12.10.00)

PASSING YARDS

- 465** Jared Goff on 26-of-33 passing at LAR (09.27.18)
377 Sam Bradford on 35-of-55 passing at STL (12.16.12)

RECEIVING YARDS

- 192** Isaac Bruce on 11 catches at STL (09.13.98)
172 Torry Holt on nine catches at STL (12.10.00)

Note: Regular-season games only

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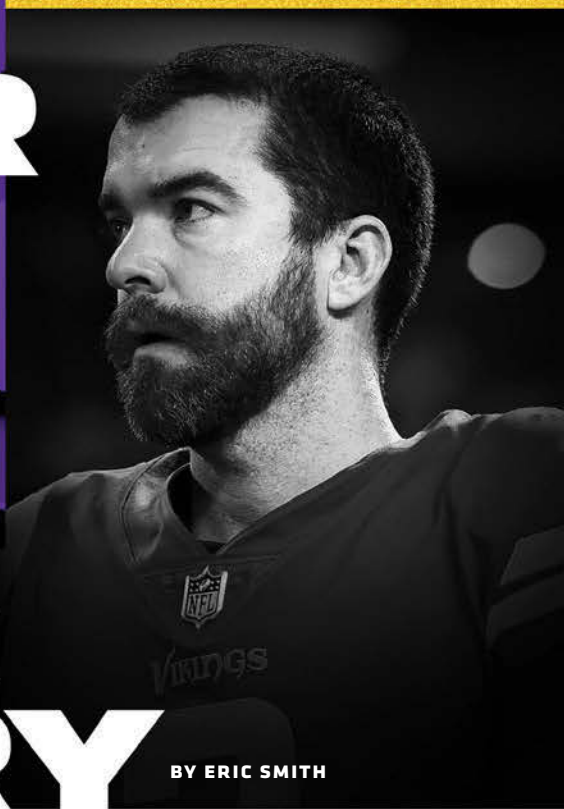
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JORDAN BERRY

BY ERIC SMITH



Jordan Berry's transition from Pittsburgh to Minnesota has gone smoothly both on and off the field.

The Vikings first-year punter has been solid in his first year in Purple after quickly bonding with kicker Greg Joseph and long snapper Andrew DePaola.

"I kind of had an idea that was the way things would go, but when it happened it was all pretty quick," Berry said of joining the Vikings on Sept. 2. "I was at [Steelers] practice and next thing I know I'm getting on a plane here and meeting with the guys and signing all the paperwork."

"And there were only [a few] sessions before the first game, so it was difficult, but the guys here are very professional," Berry added. "I couldn't have asked for a better spot. We have great facilities, and the guys have been really fun to hang out and work with."

But that change doesn't even rank among the toughest of Berry's life, as the Australia native moved from Melbourne after high

school to attend Eastern Kentucky University.

The move from Australia's second-largest metropolitan area to Richmond, Kentucky, was more of a jolt.

"It was a bit of a culture shock," Berry said. "I had spent my whole life in Australia, and had come from the city of Melbourne. That city now has about 5 million people, so it's a bustling city and I went to school right in the middle of it all."

"I think Richmond had maybe 20,000 people, so making that transition – not only country-to-country, but also to a small town – it was a big adjustment," Berry added.

And not only did Berry have to adjust his life, but the former Aussie football player had to learn a few new ways to kick, too.

Berry now has a diverse arsenal of kicks at his disposal, depending on where the Vikings are on the field or what they need. But back then, Berry was all about line drives.

"In Australian football, you're using a punt to pass the ball because throwing it is a

penalty in that sport," Berry said. "It's a lot of end-over-end kicks, but they are very low. A lot of the time, the ball really isn't going more than head-high and you're kicking it flat to the ground."

Berry's interest in American football grew when he was in high school, and he then decided to take a leap of faith into the college ranks. After making it with the Steelers and spending six years in Pittsburgh, he's now happy to call Minnesota home.

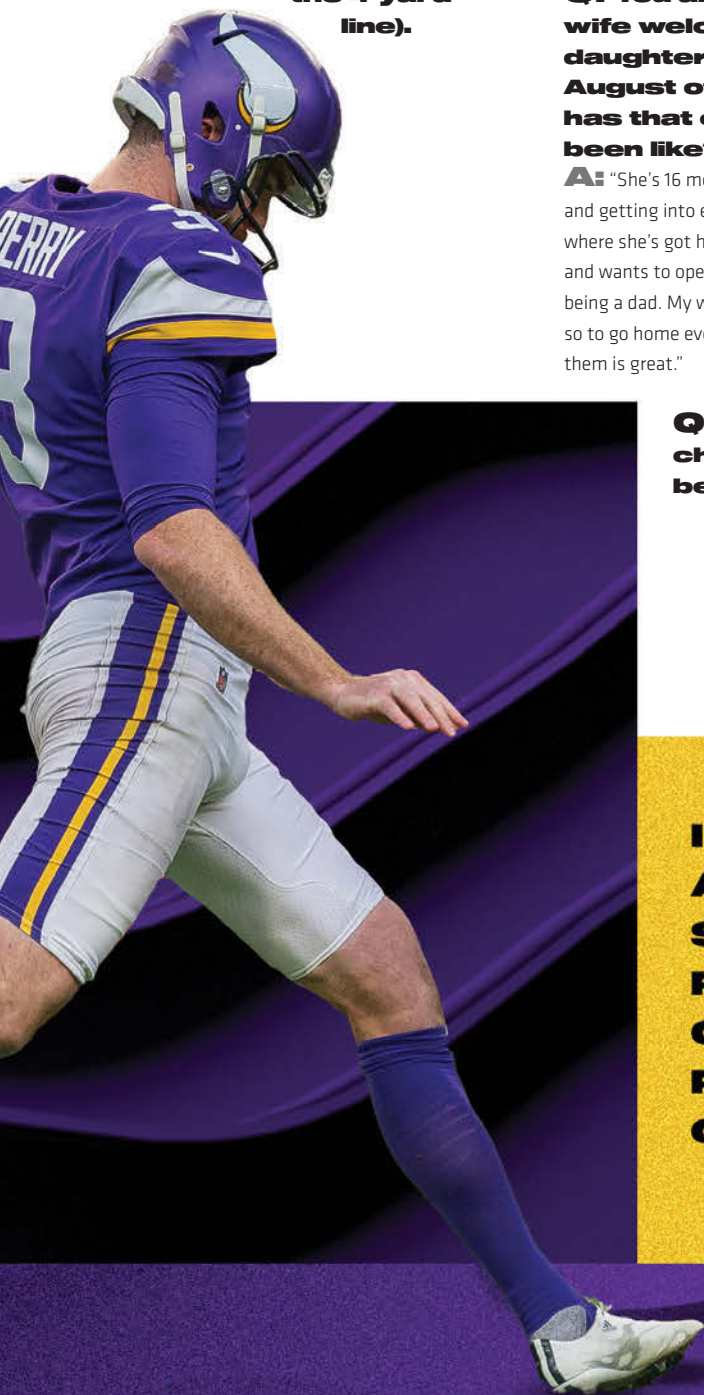
But even Berry admitted that it's still a bit surreal that a kid from Australia has managed to stick around in the NFL for so long.

"I had a goal when I decided to make the changeover [from Aussie football to American football]," Berry said. "Making the pros for Australian football seemed like it was going to be a jump, and I wasn't going to make that."

"Now I'm over 30 and still hanging around ... it's pretty cool," Berry added.

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

Q: You got a game ball for your Week 14 performance against the Steelers. What did that honor mean to you? (Berry had three punts for 146 yards, with his final kick going 51 yards and pinning Pittsburgh at the 4-yard line).



A: "It definitely meant a lot, especially that last punt at the end. It was one of the best punts I've had in terms of hang time and the end results of a play. Being able to perform like that in a tight finish and against my old team, I was very happy with that. To have the guys get around me and pump me up at the end, it was pretty cool."

Q: You and your wife welcomed your daughter, Charlotte, in August of 2020. What has that experience been like?

A: "She's 16 months now ... just getting big and getting into everything. She's at that point where she's got her hands up on all the counters and wants to open all the doors. I really enjoy being a dad. My wife and her are up here now, so to go home every day and hang out with them is great."

Q: Did your life change once you became a dad?

A: "It's more that you just have less free time. I spend my time with Charlotte. She has a ton of energy so I try to wear her out so she'll go to sleep at night."

Q: Australia celebrates Christmas in the summer. What was that like and how are you doing with your first Minnesota winter thus far?

A: "Growing up, I lived in Perth for a few years. So Christmas there was waking up and going to the beach and catching a few waves in the morning then hanging around the house with the family. Here, you go outside, and it's really cold."

Q: Do you still surf or is that in your past?

A: "Oh, no. We moved around a few times, so Perth was in ninth and 10th grade, and our school was just a few blocks from the beach. For our gym class, we had a surfing class. But no surfing lately."

I COULDN'T HAVE ASKED FOR A BETTER SPOT. WE HAVE GREAT FACILITIES, AND THE GUYS HAVE BEEN REALLY FUN TO HANG OUT AND WORK WITH."

- JORDAN BERRY

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BY LINDSEY YOUNG



WHEN CALISHA AND HER SIX CHILDREN STEP FROM THE FROSTY WINTER AIR INTO THE OMNI VIKINGS HOTEL, THEY'RE MET WARMLY BY STEPHANIE HAM, WIFE OF VIKINGS FULLBACK C.J. HAM.

Though heightened COVID-19 protocols prohibited C.J. from joining the group in-person, his giving spirit was tangibly displayed through the pile of different-sized boxes, all wrapped in shiny gold paper, spilling out from beneath a sparkling evergreen tree.

The Hams said it "wasn't a question" whether or not to provide the local family a Christmas they won't forget amidst the ongoing pandemic.

"When you put it into perspective, it's a tough time for everybody. We're all dealing with different challenges," C.J. said. "To be able to help in this time, it's special. Especially for a family of six children with a mother, whom I assume probably works very hard to make sure her kids are fed, clothed and have everything that they need."

Parents themselves to Skylar (5), Stella (3) and Trip (10 months), C.J. and Steph have been "adopting" a Twin Cities family since 2018. Steph always finds herself drawn to the parent or guardian of the youngsters.

This time around is no different, as she keeps her eyes on Calisha, who is watching her children unwrap individually labeled gifts.

"I'm excited to connect because she's around our age," Steph said. "I mean, we know how hard it is for three kids, and then to have double that responsibility, as a single mother, she's Superwoman."

"Every year, they've teared up. That's what gets me every time, is to see their reactions," Steph added. "Half the time, the mom or grandma will sit there and leave their gifts and just watch their kiddos open theirs, and that's pretty special."

The Hams enjoy the intimate experience with one family, ensuring the adults and children alike have an opportunity to connect with one another.

C.J. and Steph's oldest daughter, Skylar, turned 5 this summer and has started to better understand the importance of giving and the heart behind the family tradition.

"She is kind of realizing, 'Oh, these aren't my toys' and she'll ask, 'Oh, where are they going?' She was helping wrap the gifts, too," Steph said. "It's fun in that aspect to include her in things and explain what we're doing and why we're doing it."

Chat with any of the families from the past three holiday seasons, and they'll likely all tell you the same thing: This act of generosity comes so naturally for the Hams. There's no seeking of the spotlight, no expectation of anything in return.

C.J. and Steph simply hope to make a difference.

Growing up in Duluth, Minnesota, C.J. and his sister were thankful each year for gifts and holiday celebrations with their parents. But amid the receiving, they also were taught by Tina and Cortez, Sr., the importance of giving.

"My mom and dad would take people in and make sure they had clothes on their back, food to eat if they needed help," C.J. recalled. "That mindset is something I've kept with me."

"I think as a family now, we've learned that we are blessed to be a blessing," C.J. added.

"And if we have the opportunity to bless somebody, we should do that. We're blessed to be a blessing, and hopefully that blessing continues to multiply."

Rewarding Feeling

The "blessed" mindset is one C.J. consistently maintains, from family movie nights at their Farmington home to electrifying game days.

Now as routine as slipping into his shoulder pads and tightly tying his cleats, C.J. smears eye black onto his cheeks in the shape of a cross. His Christian faith fuels the fullback on and off the field, and the symbol serves as a reminder – to himself and to fans – of the perspective he plays with.

C.J. was mic'd up for the Vikings-Packers game in Week 11; a video of the day's highlights later revealed the fullback shouting as he raced out of the tunnel at U.S. Bank Stadium:

"I'm blessed! I'm blessed! I'm blessed!"

Had it not been for the microphone threaded beneath his purple jersey that day, no one would hear C.J.'s message over the roar of 66,000 fans. The two-word phrase, though, acts as a personal fight song for the 28-year-old.

C.J. never could have imagined when he first started playing football in elementary school that he'd be where he is now.

From high school ball to playing running back at a Division II school, to earning a spot on the Vikings practice squad in 2016 after attending rookie minicamp on a tryout basis, to switching to fullback, to now playing a significant role in





Photo by Joe Lemke

Minnesota's offense.

"We have more than I can ever imagine," C.J. said. "Especially on game day, to have all the fans out there, to be playing a sport for my job, a game that I started playing as an 11-year-old ... You can never take anything for granted.

"This game doesn't last forever, so when I'm out there, I'm blessed, and I'm gonna go out there and give it my all," he added.

A fullback's job isn't flashy, and that suits C.J. just fine.

To be sure, transitioning from running back, a role in which he scored 29 rushing touchdowns at Augustana University, proved to be an adjustment. But he's come to love the unique – and sometimes overlooked – position that is an NFL fullback.

"Playing running back my whole life, scoring a bunch of touchdowns, I used to think that was the greatest," C.J. said. "But now switching roles and being a blocker for some of these touchdowns, it's honestly almost even more rewarding. To lay a big block and see Dalvin [Cook] go right past you into the end zone, it feels amazing.

"I definitely enjoy assisting touchdowns just as much – or even more – than scoring touchdowns," he added.

C.J. is a man of many talents, though, and Vikings fans have seen that on full display.

Throughout the 2021 campaign, he's been utilized in multiple ways. In addition to fullback, Vikings Offensive Coordinator Klint Kubiak has lined him up at fullback, running back and tight end. He's rushed, blocked and caught passes out of the backfield.

Take, for instance, the Vikings Week 9 contest at Baltimore. With just over two minutes remaining in the game and Minnesota trailing by a touchdown, Kirk Cousins threw downfield to C.J., who made a leaping catch along the sideline that gained 27 yards on third-and-3.

The Vikings ultimately came up short against the Ravens, but C.J.'s grab nonetheless garnered plenty of attention from fans and teammates alike.

"I was like, 'You might as well come to the receivers now!' You make a big catch on somebody's head, you gotta come to the receivers," Justin Jefferson said of the play.

Coaches and teammates are confident C.J. knows the full offense and could chip in practically anywhere.

"He comes to work every day on time, knows what he needs to do, his assignments," Cook said. "If you want to know something at running back, you can ask him. He knows both positions."

Cousins pointed out that C.J. has added depth as a fill-in tight end in the absence of Irv Smith, Jr., who landed on Injured Reserve early in the season.

"He's tremendous. When Irv went down, we said, 'Now you're going to play Y,'" Cousins said. "He can do it all. If we lined him up at X or Z (receiver), I bet he could run a route and win. As a quarterback, it's such a comfort to have a player like that.

"There are times when I'm asking him what responsibilities, 'Did I call that play right?' Or, 'What's the motion here?' And he'll get me right," Cousins continued. "That just says the world about C.J. and what he's capable of athletically and also mentally. He's a great teammate."

According to center Garrett Bradbury, some in the locker room refer to C.J. as "The Eraser" because of his ability to make good on another player's misstep.

"He's a weapon. He cleans things up for us," Bradbury said. "Anything that's not right, he'll come in, just kind of blow it up, and Dalvin will find a crease and go.

Bradbury added that C.J. does a lot of dirty work not necessarily evident to fans watching a game on TV.

"He's so important to what we do," Bradbury said. "He's an awesome player."

Know-name game

C.J.'s impact on the field is felt far beyond the walls of Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center. The way he plays the game has earned respect from peers and pundits alike across the league.

Another highlight of C.J.'s mic'd up segment showed him sitting on the bench talking to Cook about a recent interaction.

"Aaron Rodgers knows my name. He said, 'What up, Hammer?'" C.J. tells Cook, smiling. "I said, 'Oh Lord, I done made it!'"

Asked later about the candid moment caught for fans, C.J. laughed. He called the exchange with the Packers Pro Bowler "very subtle" but memorable.

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"I think it was special teams, a kickoff play, and we kicked it through the end zone, so I'm kind of trottin' past, and Green Bay's offense is running out to the field, and he just gave me a little nod and said, 'What's up, Hammer?' I was like, 'Oh! That's pretty sweet.' That was pretty cool," C.J. said.

He's had similar moments against various defenders whom he respected long before he made it to the NFL himself.

C.J. recalled playing against fellow Minnesota native Terrell Suggs, linebacker Luke Kuechly and All-Pro defensive end Julius Peppers during the 2017 season.

"That was one that was huge for me," C.J. said. "I remember lining up against [Peppers] on punts, and he was about to rush my side, and I was thinking in my head, 'All right, this dude is massive. I'm gonna need some help.'"

He's received mutual admiration from fellow Pro Bowl fullbacks Kyle Juszczyk (49ers) and Patrick Ricard (Ravens), the latter of whom connected with C.J. in January 2020 at the all-star game in Orlando.

There may not be an official Fullbacks Club, but there's certainly an unspoken connection among those playing the position across the league.

"I think every fullback knows every other fullback in the league, just because, you know, there is only one on each team, and some teams don't use them at all. So we watch each other," Ricard told Vikings.com. "And at the end of the day, we know how physical of a position it is, how demanding it is and how underutilized or undervalued it is.

"I think guys like myself, C.J., Kyle and there's a number of other fullbacks in the league, have been really showing how much you can utilize a fullback and how you can use them in modern-day offenses," Ricard continued. "It's not just being in the backfield and lead-blocking. There's so much more we can do. I think us three, especially, have shown that. And we've made our offenses more versatile – we're able to do more with the offenses because of guys like us."

Ricard has a unique backstory himself, having played as a defensive lineman for Maine, an FCS school, before signing with the Ravens as an undrafted free agent in 2017 and making the transition to fullback.

The converts instantly connected at the 2020 Pro Bowl.

"He was just a great guy. An awesome guy," said Ricard. "His last name is perfect – Ham, a.k.a. 'Hammer.' He lays the hammer when he plays. I have a lot of respect for his game. He can do a lot. I mean, when he played us this year, he had that phenomenal catch against us at a crucial part of the game, and I was just so happy for him."

C.J. also secured high – and repeated – praise from FOX Sports' Mark Sanchez during his call of the Vikings-Seahawks game in Week 3 and against the Chargers in Week 10.

Standard Setter

Even more fulfilling than the NFL fame for C.J. is being recognized for the impact he and his family make on others.

"He's the kind of person you want in this organization because he sets the standard for so many guys," Cousins said. "If you say, 'How do we do things around here?' Go look at C.J. Ham. That's how we do things."

Just say C.J.'s name around Cook, and it'll prompt an immediate grin from the running back.

"C.J. is one of those guys that is just him. You love that about him. He's just C.J. Ham," Cook said. "Off the field, the things he does in the community are outstanding. He's a dad, and the things he does with his kids are amazing.

"I look up to him as a big brother, so that's my guy right there," Cook added, his eyes glistening. "You're about to make me cry talking about my guy."

Like Cook said, C.J. is just C.J.

While ramped-up COVID-19 protocols affected his ability to personally spend time with Calisha and her children, C.J.'s influence over the entire evening certainly was felt.

Nearing the end of his sixth season with the Vikings, C.J. wants to keep improving as a player but also to maintain his off-field contributions.

"Whether we're winning, we're losing, this is something that we try to do, and it's outside of football. It's bigger than football," C.J. said. "To be able to bring somebody joy, to be able to help somebody out, is bigger than football. I'm just happy that we have the opportunity to be able to do it."



“

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He's just
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- DALVIN COOK



YOU HAVE TO BE PATIENT FOR SUCCESS. YOU HAVE TO BE PATIENT FOR GREAT THINGS TO HAPPEN...

Patrick Peterson first unwrapped his unique gifts as a high school junior.

The teen was training with his cousin Bryant McFadden, William Gay, Ike Taylor and Deshaea Townsend and keeping pace with members of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

"That's when I kind of knew I had a special gift, a special talent, that it was meant for me to play on a big stage," Peterson said last week. "But then it was just up to me to stay the course, stay focused and stay patient. That's something that the last two generations, I believe, kind of forgot or don't know much about.

"You have to be patient for success. You have to be patient for great things to happen, and so many kids or so many people nowadays want everything to happen right now," Peterson added.

He said it was advantageous to see McFadden progress from Hollywood, Florida, to Florida State on the way to becoming a second-round pick of the Steelers in the 2005 NFL Draft. It gave him an idea of what to expect and what would be expected in order to thrive.

"Being able to train with them gave me the confidence, knowing I had the ability to play at a high level," Peterson said.

He headed for LSU and shined for the Tigers, becoming the second player in NCAA history to win the Chuck Bednarik and Jim Thorpe awards in the same season (joining Charles Woodson). Steelers safety Minkah Fitzpatrick became the third player to do so at Alabama.

Peterson had elite speed, height in the upper echelon of cornerbacks and strength to boot.

That combination of physical attributes raised eyebrows for scouts, and Arizona quickly tabbed him with the fifth overall pick of the 2011 NFL Draft.

Only three cornerbacks have been picked as high or higher since. Jacksonville tabbed Jalen Ramsey fifth overall in 2016 before eventually sending him to the Rams. Cleveland selected Denzel Ward fourth overall in 2018, and Detroit tabbed Jeff Okudah with the third pick in 2020.



BY CRAIG PETERS

MAN OF MANY TALENTS

Peterson made the Cardinals right, becoming an immediate starter at cornerback and dazzling with game-changing plays as a punt returner.

In addition to recording a pair of interceptions and 13 passes defended, Peterson returned four punts for touchdowns and led the NFL with 699 yards on punt returns. A 99-yarder against the Rams provided a walk-off win in overtime on Nov. 6, 2011.

Peterson suited up for all 154 regular-season games he played for Arizona but became a free agent this spring.

Despite being against the salary cap, Minnesota found a way to bring him here on a one-year deal. He's brought leadership to a young cornerbacks room and proven execution on the field.

New teammates quickly recognized Peterson, who made eight consecutive Pro Bowls to start his career and has garnered First-Team All-Pro designations three times, as the real deal.

"Corner is such a position of athleticism and confidence, and he has those things in spades," quarterback Kirk Cousins said. "He's also a very strong player. I don't think he gets beat up physically. He can take the fight to someone in coverage. Athleticism, intelligence, physicality, that combines to make you a great player on defense."

Vikings second-year receiver Justin Jefferson has known Peterson for more than a decade. He grew up near the LSU locker room while his older brother Jordan roomed and

teamed with Peterson (Jordan later served as the best man in Peterson's wedding). Middle brother Rickey Jefferson played for the Tigers, as well, before Justin dazzled on the way to becoming a 2020 first-round pick by Minnesota.

Justin Jefferson was asked earlier this offseason about practicing against Peterson, a player he and Jordan casually threw footballs with in college residence parking lots.

"I mean, he's the best of the best. Going up against him every single day helps me progress as a receiver – just asking him different ways to better myself, better my route, what things did he see in my route to trigger him to jump? He's taught me a lot, and I'm looking pretty good this season because of him."

Jefferson said he had tried to execute a double-move, but Peterson didn't bite.

"I asked him later that day, 'What made you not go for that move?' And he said something about me not running that route like I normally did on my first step. So, it didn't really trigger him as a much."

A SPECIAL APPRECIATION

Peterson has always tried to maximize his gifts – consider it a form of gratitude – and he's learned to blend them.

Time eventually catches up to everyone. When it does, players lean more heavily on their mental gifts.

"For sure, because at the end of the day, when you get older, a lot of things don't work the way they used to when you were 25 or 24 years old," Peterson said.

GIFTED & GRATEFUL

PATRICK PETERSON

"You have to rely on the techniques that you maybe have to change or work extremely hard on during your offseason to help you put yourself and your body in a better position.

"At the end of the day, you want to try to create muscle memory for yourself so that when you get into a game, it's kind of like second nature," he added. "When I'm training, I'm trying to do game-time movement, game-time situations."

Peterson has experienced the effects of applied knowledge. A few years ago, he was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes but was able to reverse its effects by incorporating dietary discipline and has been considered diabetes-free since 2018.

Earlier this season, Peterson hurt his hamstring late in Week 6 at Carolina and missed the following three games. They were the first three he had ever missed because of injury.

While aggressively attacking his rehab, Peterson stayed connected with the game plan. He stretched with teammates before practices, even on the chilly fall days that had him layering up, and he requested a headset to wear during games so he could hear the calls sent in from the sideline.

Peterson managed the frustration of missing time by gaining perspective on the way Head Coach Mike Zimmer calls the defense. Peterson had nearly played for Zimmer in Cincinnati as a rookie, but the Bengals opted for A.J. Green with the fourth overall pick in 2011.

"I understand how Coach calls the game throughout the flow of the game. You know, kind of get a beat, trying to get a feel for the offense and understand how you want to call certain defenses, understand when you want to send pressure," Peterson said. "When you're in the game, you can't really hear the calls. You're just waiting for the call to come out, so being on the sideline and able to hear the call and hear him relay the message to Nick [Vigil] or Anthony [Barr] was a lot more eye-opening for me to understand and kind of see where Coach is coming from when he calls certain things."

GIVER OF NICKNAMES

Peterson is comfortable going by Patrick, Pat, Pat P. or P2. The last one has a cool logo to go with it.

Former Cardinals and current Buccaneers Head Coach Bruce Arians went with "Five Star" in reference to his status as a recruit.

Peterson conversely enjoys giving

nicknames to teammates.

Former Cardinals safety Tony Jefferson?

"I named him Bobcat, because we had a safety blitz in his rookie year and he never got it right, and the blitz was for him," Peterson said.

Vikings running back Dalvin Cook?

"Oh man, Cookie Monster goes wild again," Peterson said the morning after Cook rushed for 205 yards against Pittsburgh. "When the Cookie Monster sees cookies, he goes wild. And a football is the Cookie's Monster's cookie."

Vikings receiver Adam Thielen is "Robin Hood because he just shares the wealth in the red zone," and tight end Tyler Conklin is Aquaman for his resemblance to actor Jason Momoa.

Vikings safeties Harrison Smith and Xavier Woods?

Smith already is widely known as The Hitman, but Peterson also recently referred to him as "The Commander."

"I call X the Silent Assassin, and Harry, he's The Commander. He's The Commander by not even saying much. He can just look at you, because first of all, he doesn't have a very loud voice. He doesn't come across very boisterous," Peterson explained. "Even in a game, you've got 60,000 people, and Harry's still talking like he's right next to you. I'm like, 'Harry, we're in a football game right now.' But his eyes, and his demeanor, and just his ability to impact the game the way he did [against Pittsburgh], it's special. He means a lot to this defense. He means a lot to this organization. It just goes to show, us old guys can still play."

TAKER OF FOOTBALLS

Peterson is set to suit up against the Rams today for the 21st time in his career. He hopes to continue the success he's had against the team, whether the games have been played in St. Louis, Arizona or Los Angeles.

Seven of his 28 regular-season interceptions have occurred on passes thrown by Rams QBs. Peterson returned one of two interceptions on Nov. 9, 2014, for a 30-yard touchdown. He also returned a punt for a touchdown in each of his first two games against the Rams.

"I don't know what it is about the Rams, but I've got three career touchdowns on them, a 99-yarder, an 80-yarder, so I guess the Rams have just been like a horseshoe to me, just very lucky to me," Peterson said. "Hopefully I want that juju to continue to roll over for me so I can have a big game."



AT THE END OF THE DAY, YOU WANT TO TRY TO CREATE MUSCLE MEMORY FOR YOURSELF SO THAT WHEN YOU GET INTO A GAME, IT'S KIND OF LIKE SECOND NATURE."

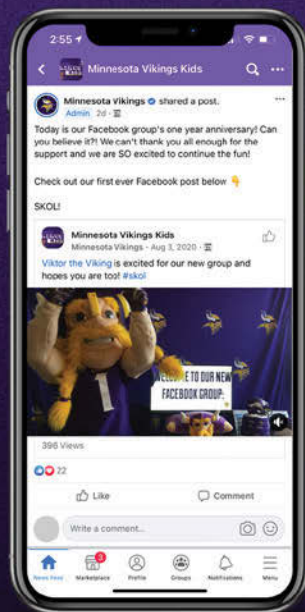


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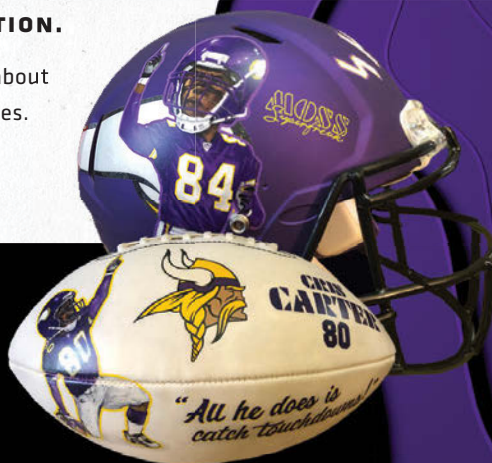
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Dawn
MITCHELL



THURSDAY
6PM



SUNDAY
HOME - 9:30A
AWAY - 10AM



SUNDAY
10:35P



'REAL VIKING' FRONTLINE WORKER SELECTED AS FAN OF THE YEAR

BY LINDSEY YOUNG

PRESENTED BY **Captain Morgan®**

Just your everyday post-practice team photo.

Or at least, that's what Olof Indridadottir thought as she posed with her son and his fourth-grade teammates following their youth football practice in October.

She suddenly noticed a hooded figure walk up beside her; turning to look, Olof's mouth dropped at the sight of Vikings star receiver – and her favorite player – Justin Jefferson.

The 22-year-old unzipped his jacket to unveil a Purple No. 18 jersey and smiled warmly at Olof.

"Congratulations – you've been selected as the Minnesota Vikings Fan of the Year!" Justin exclaimed.

He hugged Olof, who alternated between laughter and expressions of disbelief.

"Oh, wait. We have one more thing for you," said Justin, before reaching in his pocket and presenting Olof with two tickets to Super Bowl LVI, which will be played at SoFi Stadium on Feb. 13, 2022.

"It was too much of a surprise," Olof later laughed. "I was too shocked to say anything."

The Vikings are proud to draw fans from all over the world, and it's tough to find someone more deserving of the annual award given to one person from every NFL fanbase.

Olof is a mother of four and native of Iceland, having immigrated to the United States in 2016 – a "real Viking!" as Justin exclaimed.

Not only does Icelandic Viking blood run through Olof's veins, but she also fell in love with with the Minnesota Vikings and plays tackle football herself as a defensive end for the Women's Football Alliance's Minnesota Vixen.

Olof and her now-husband, Kyle, met in 2006 when Kyle moved to Iceland for a year-long sabbatical. At the time, Olof played handball and soccer for the Icelandic National Team and was introduced to American football and the NFL by Kyle. "We started [watching the Vikings together] in 2010," Olof said. "There was a six-hour difference, but it didn't matter."

The dedicated pair of fans even made a few international trips to Minneapolis from Iceland to watch the Vikings play before relocating permanently to the States.

Olof, scheduled to attend today's game, is not only dedicated to her Vikings but also to making a difference in the lives of others.

In addition to working in the Twin Cities community with young women on football training and development, she also is committed to and passionate about health care. Olof recently completed her doctorate in nursing at the University of Minnesota. Over the past two years, she has used her training in infectious diseases to impact not only her local community but also cities outside of Minnesota that have needed extra support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

She currently serves as an assistant professor of nursing at St. Catherine's University, where she enjoys pouring into the next generation of health care providers.

During summer break, though, she signed up through the U.S. Department of Health to help support facilities that were struggling through the COVID-19 pandemic. She traveled to work in Indiana and also was set to head to New York, but that trip was canceled last minute.

"Hearing her story is crazy. Being from Iceland, playing football playing defense and being a coach," Justin said.

"And she's a nurse, too, so she's been doing so many types of things. She's Superwoman."

HEARING HER STORY IS CRAZY. BEING FROM ICELAND, PLAYING FOOTBALL, PLAYING DEFENSE – AND BEING A COACH. SHE'S A NURSE, TOO, SO SHE'S BEEN DOING SO MANY TYPE OF THINGS. SHE'S

SUPER WOMAN.

–JUSTIN JEFFERSON



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PRINCETON



BY LINDSEY YOUNG

PURPLE Pups

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Michael Pierce watched numerous YouTube videos on dog breeds before making a decision.

He had no doubt he'd be getting a puppy – especially after navigating lockdown life early in the COVID-19 pandemic. But just what type of puppy, Pierce hadn't quite decided.

The Vikings defensive tackle did ample research and ultimately decided on a standard poodle.

Pierce cited the breed's intelligence as one of the primary draws.

"They're super smart dogs, super trainable," Pierce noted. "And he's does well in the cold, thank God."

Minnesota signed Pierce as a free agent in the spring of 2020, but he opted out of that season due to coronavirus concerns. Because of his history of asthma, Pierce took the utmost precautions prior to vaccines being available – which meant he spent a lot of time isolated away from friends and family.

"I wanted a companion. It was just me in a new house by myself," Pierce said. "I needed a best friend, and he's been more than a best friend to me. Kept me company, kept me active, and I love him to death. He's like a child."

"He brought a lot of love to my life. It got boring and lonely watching Vikings football at home alone," said Pierce, who added that his parents lived four hours away. "Just to have him there, sitting on the couch – even tearing stuff up, as that was

OWNER:

MICHAEL PIERCE

DEFENSIVE TACKLE

**STRAIGHT-A
STUDENT:**

POODLES ARE
KNOWN FOR THEIR
INTELLIGENCE

PRINCETON THE

PIRATE:

PRINCETON HAS
BEEN KNOWN TO
STEAL SOCKS...
AND SNACKS

POODLE IN

PURPLE:

PRINCETON HAS
HIS OWN VIKINGS
JERSEY

“ He goes in my laundry. He went in my travel bag recently and stole some socks. And he loves human food. I think he ate, like, 12 muffins once. ”

MICHAEL PIERCE ON PRINCETON'S OCCASIONAL MISCHIEF



a puppy – he just gave me a lot of love and a lot to do. A lot of stuff to teach him.”

This dog-loving Vikings writer, wanted to know: Aside from the alliterative way “Princeton Pierce” rolls off the tongue, was there anything else behind choosing the name?

Pierce laughed.

“They’re a British breed, so that’s where the name came from,” he explained.

He added with a smile, though: “I also like the double-P, so I normally call him that.”

Princeton has been a great partner for Pierce in more ways than one. Pierce explained that Princeton earlier this fall completed service dog training, meaning the pup can be by Pierce’s side during air travel.

“I have a little bit of anxiety,” Pierce said. “Planes kind of get me rowdy, a little erratic sometimes. So just to be able to travel with him – I do travel a lot, not only for football but just for life – and being able to have him on the plane with me [is helpful]. Being able to have him there with me, and being able to keep my eyes on him and know he’s going to be well-behaved and not have any issues is ideal for me and my lifestyle. That was very important for me.”

Princeton is well-trained and responds to a number of commands that ask him to sit, lie down, shake, jump up or lay his head in Pierce’s lap.

But to be fair, he did just turn 1 on Oct. 26, so Princeton occasionally falls back into those puppy behaviors – especially when it comes to socks or to the temptation of people food.

Consequently, Princeton earned a new nickname

last spring. When Pierce went to Minnesota for Organized Team Activities in May, he asked his parents to dog-sit Princeton until he found a more permanent home in the Twin Cities.

“He loves to steal stuff off the counters. And he’s a sock machine,” Pierce said. “He goes in my laundry. He went in my travel bag recently and stole some socks. And he loves human food. I think he ate, like, 12 muffins once.

“You leave food on the counter, we’re working on breaking him of that habit, but as of right now, that’ll get stolen,” Pierce added. “So my mom and dad know him as ‘Pirate.’ ”

Princeton may sometimes steal snacks, but he also steals plenty of hearts through his Instagram page, @princeton_the_poodle.

Pierce started the social media account shortly after he got Princeton in January 2021. And while he hasn’t posted as much as he’d like during the craziness of an NFL season, he promises there is quality content coming down the pike.

“We’ve got some stuff we’ll post soon,” he assured.

Pierce has enjoyed getting acclimated to a new city with Princeton by his side, and the two have thoroughly enjoyed life in Minnesota. The duo regularly takes walks through Minneapolis, and they often stop for some playtime on The Commons, with beautiful U.S. Bank Stadium soaring behind as a natural backdrop.

“It’s just being able to have parks right here. I live right down the street and walk him, let him run, all that stuff. It’s super, super clean, and that’s something that’s very unique to here,”

Pierce said. “I’ve lived in Baltimore, I’ve been to D.C., a lot of different cities, and you don’t always see [this cleanliness]. People pick up after their dogs [here] and all that kind of stuff, so you don’t have to worry about them eating different things off the ground.

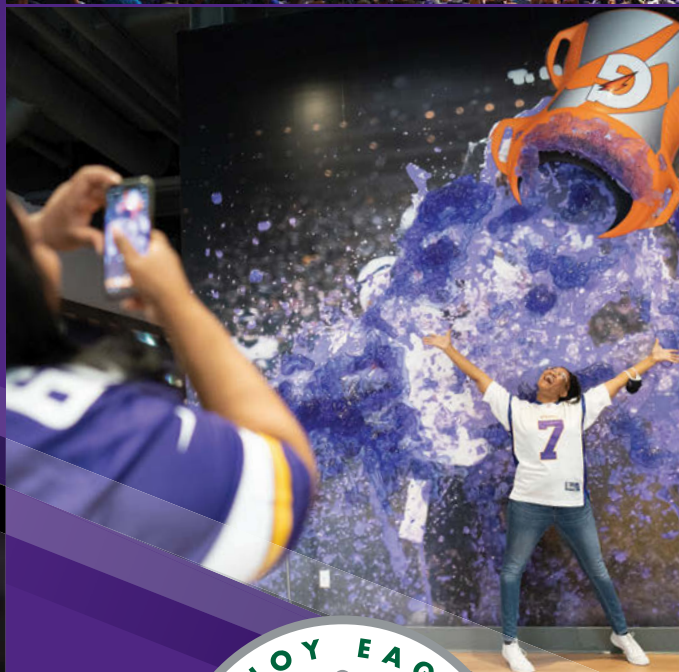
“It’s a very walkable city, which is great, and it’s very dog-friendly,” he added. “It’s probably the perfect place to have a dog, really.”



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Vikings Spread Holiday Cheer

BY CRAIG PETERS
& ERIC SMITH



Enhanced COVID-19 protocols implemented by the NFL on Dec. 17 limited the opportunity of in-person interactions and holiday events, postponing some efforts by Vikings players. This is a recap of events that occurred before the changes went into place.

THE VIKINGS AND SCHEELS JOINED FORCES

for multiple initiatives that brightened holidays for others. The efforts included the following:

☉ **An all-day drive for the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation with help from KFAN 100.3-FM**

☉ **Three \$1,000 shopping sprees with Vikings players Camryn Bynum, Brian O'Neill and Justin Jefferson thanks to Caribou Coffee**

☉ **Helping Adam Thielen sponsor families from The Salvation Army's Pathway of Hope program**

☉ **SCHEELS' donation of gift cards for families helped by People Serving People that Kirk Cousins is providing for**

"SCHEELS is so well known in the community for giving back, and that aligns with the Vikings and all of the parties involved, so any way we can help out and make someone's Christmas go further, it's what it's all about," SCHEELS Marketing and Events Lead Austin Link said. "It's why we're here and why we do what we do."

Bynum, O'Neill & Jefferson Join Fans for Scheels Sprees

Bynum, O'Neill and Jefferson each joined a family that had been selected in a drawing by Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities for a \$1,000 shopping spree at SCHEELS.

Tuesdays are usually off days, but Dec. 14 was a practice day because of Minnesota's Week 15 game on *Monday Night Football*.

Bynum really wanted to participate, so he showed up at 6 a.m. before his team commitments.

He was paired with a family that included a 16-year-old and 11-year-old twins, and the group

bonded over a shared love of music.

"One of [the twins] started singing, and I'm like, 'Whoa, you're actually *good* good.' So he started singing, and then the other one wanted to play piano," Bynum said. "I was like, 'I've got a second piano at my house.' So I offered to give that to him. ... And hopefully they can start playing music at a young age, like I wasn't able to do."

Bynum said he believes music is a great hobby for young people to explore and expand their creativity.

"That was the main motivation behind it, give a kid something to do besides just watching TV or doing stuff that, really, you're not working towards in life," Bynum said.

O'Neill and Jefferson were happy to join their families in exploring the SCHEELS store, which features a Ferris wheel, an animated John Randle figurine that talks and a Viktor the Viking made from LEGOs.

Their families focused mainly on clothes and boots.

"It's cool to see them enjoy this and to be able to spread a little holiday cheer, but I hope they get more out of it than I do," O'Neill said. "We do this for them. It's not for me to feel good about it, but I hope it means a lot to the [family]."

Don't think he didn't eye that Ferris wheel, though.

"There's probably a weight limit, but if there wasn't, I'd be in," the exuberant 6-foot-7, 310-pounder quipped.

Jefferson appreciated another opportunity to give back to the community. He's been doing so whenever possible despite limitations caused by COVID-19.

"I had to give her some tips on what drip to get, but it was cool to see the gifts she got for her kids and the boots I helped her pick out," Jefferson said.

Toys for Tots

The Vikings and KFAN 100.3-FM again partnered to boost the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, but they did so at the massive SCHEELS location in Eden Prairie Center for the first time.

Live radio broadcasts included guest appearances by Vikings Legends, as well as Bynum, O'Neill and Jefferson. The Minnesota Vikings Cheerleaders and Viktor the Viking also helped.

"It's super awesome, the fact that the Vikings reached out and wanted to work with us and have Toys for Tots here, not only with us but with KFAN, all of the families are bringing toys, stopping in to watch the shows, see the Vikings Cheerleaders and players," Link said. "Honestly, it's a dream come true and something that makes working here so enjoyable."





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Patrick Peterson Hosts 50 Youth

The Patrick Peterson Foundation for Success was established in 2012 and extended its work to the Twin Cities this year.

Peterson, Vikings teammates Tyler Conklin and Irv Smith, Jr., and former LSU teammate Jordan Jefferson walked the aisles and granted smiles to 50 Boys & Girls Clubs members as each young person was provided a gift card to pick out \$200 of merchandise. The selections by the young people ranged from toys and games to electronics, fitness sets and sports equipment.

After helping his group of young people fill carts, Peterson posted up at the register to interact with the youth as they went through the check-out line.

"This is my favorite event that I'm able to do every year with my foundation," Peterson said. "To see the smiles on their faces and the memories they're able to create is a joy for me every year."

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities Senior Director of Corporate and Public Relations Tim Schober said it was great to see members from all of the clubs enjoy some togetherness and "grow in the holiday spirit."

"Events like this really help reinforce what we're doing, so we have a whole host of academic programming we do," Schober said. "They come in, do a lot of literacy work with us, mathematics work. We do a lot of STEM activities, so being able to have something fun like this that we can use as a reward really backs up what we're doing. It helps us keep our kids engaged."

Darrisaw Makes Big Difference for 'Littles'

As 9-year-old Jamal pushed a full shopping cart toward the exit, he turned to say goodbye to Christian Darrisaw.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you," Jamal said to the left tackle.

Darrisaw smiled, knowing his first community event in the Twin Cities was a smashing success.

The first-round pick partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities, paying for a shopping spree for five Littles who were accompanied by their Bigs.

Darrisaw gave each Little a \$500 gift card to spend, and he also sent them home with an additional \$500 gift card for future use.

"It's just a great feeling to come out here and give back," Darrisaw said. "Not all kids are fortunate to get a bunch of stuff, so I was hoping this would put a smile on their faces. Walking up here and meeting the matches, they were like, 'We can get anything?!' It's just a great feeling."

Pat Sukhum, the CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities, said the organization was appreciative of Darrisaw's generous gesture.

"This is an incredible experience that Christian and the Vikings have brought to these matches," Sukhum said. "We are just thrilled ... to have something like this that is community-oriented where we can get out and laugh and smile."

Once the five Littles – Amalinalli, DeAnthony, Emilio, Jamal and Mari – were told of the surprise, they each took a cart with their name on it and cruised through the aisles.

Jamal picked up a few gifts for his family, as well as a toy racecar, books and candy.

Emilio, a 14-year-old Little, picked up some essentials such as clothes, but also chose a drone and an Xbox.

"It means a lot," Emilio said of Darrisaw's gesture. "I'm kind of at a loss for words, I guess."

Emilio's Big Brother, Ryan, added: "He was pretty pumped. Sometimes kids are more excited than they tell you."



Anthony Barr Celebrates with Jeremiah Program Family'

It just so happened that the outdoor holiday party that Anthony Barr threw for Jeremiah Program families fell on the coldest night of December 2021.

When better to warm hearts?

'Twas the night before Barr was announced by the NFL as Minnesota's nominee for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year and the selection as the 2021 Vikings Community Man of the Year.

The linebacker, his Raise the Barr foundation and the Vikings teamed to transform the parking lot at Jeremiah Program into a holiday wonderland with appearances by Santa and Viktor the Viking, music played by a DJ, a station for making ornaments and a spot where young people could toss footballs.

The Vikings Table food truck served up dinner, and Caribou Coffee provided warm cups of coffee and hot chocolate.

Barr arrived layered up in a pair of hoodies, and he instantly reconnected with moms and young people who have become extended members of his family for the past several years.

"There's a lot of familiar faces, a lot of kids I saw when they were infants," Barr said. "I feel like I'm going to my grandma's house, hanging out with my cousins, my siblings and aunts and uncles. It's just like home, really. We joke around, give each other a hard time, but it's all love at the end of the day. It's a very welcoming environment, one that's nurturing. It's molding the

future of these kids. I think what they do at Jeremiah and what we do at Raise the Barr is important.

"It's really about the relationships you make and the time you spend with the people in the community," Barr added. "When I walk up here and give the kids and moms hugs, it's a trust that's been built over the years."

Jeremiah Program Executive Director Patty Healy Janssen said Barr is part of the family at the residential community.

"We see him like that, and he sees himself like that," she said. "It's always so fun when we're not in COVID. Usually he does a holiday party and his mom, his grandma, his aunts all come because they feel part of the family, too. It's just been really great to have Anthony's whole family and Raise the Barr in partnership with Jeremiah.

"The thing about Anthony is when he's in, he's all-in and all-in in all ways. It is so authentic," Healy Janssen added. "He does this because it's what he wants to do. When he talks, he talks about wanting to give back. He watched what his mom did in raising him as a single mom and wants the opportunity to be able to support single moms who are working as hard as his mom did. He has volunteered, hosted events, spoken at things, supported our staff, supported me in this leadership role in ways that are so integrated."

📌 ***Thanks to Verizon, the Minnesota Vikings will be hosting single-parent students and their children that are supported by the Raise the Barr foundation. Attendees today will receive tickets to a Turf Suite, unlimited food & beverage, and visits from Vikings Legends.***



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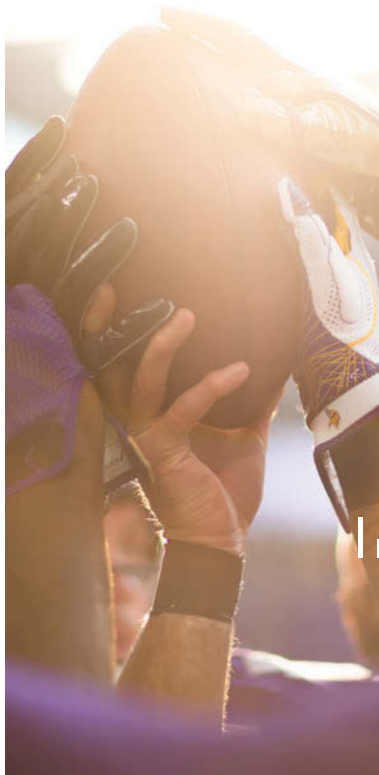


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MVC SPOTLIGHT

Whitney

BY LINDSEY YOUNG

A second-year MVC, Whitney first joined the Minnesota Vikings Cheerleaders for the 2018 season and returned this year for the 2021 season.

Whitney has always been thankful for the opportunity to be part of the MVC. Being with the team this season, nearly two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, has only deepened that sentiment.

"The COVID-19 pandemic put a lot of things in perspective for me," Whitney said. "I realized more than ever how valuable time is. It is extremely important for me to be mindful of who and what I am giving my energy to. I focus on surrounding myself with positive, supportive and motivating people as much as I can. I focus on activities that bring me genuine joy."

"At this time in my life, being an MVC has allowed me to not only take part in something I love to do, but also to surround myself with amazing people who constantly push me to be better," she added.

Whitney also shared with us her love for the holidays and how she's seeking to make a difference during a season that can be difficult for some.

Vikings players have been involved throughout the community during the holiday season. Are there any ways you've been able to make an impact around this time of year? My favorite way to give back during the holiday season is through my church volunteer program. This year I participated in the Great Christmas Give Together. Through this program, volunteers have an opportunity to participate in collection drives, pack food for families in need and deliver stockings to local partners. Being able to make someone's holiday season a little more special and give back to the community is extremely rewarding.

What is your favorite thing about the holidays?

My favorite part about the holiday season is spending extra intentional time with my family and friends. I love the holiday decor, music, food and get-togethers. Everyone seems to have an extra jump in their step, positive attitude and zest for life! I try my best to be very present during all the holiday gatherings and enjoy each moment with my loved ones.

How about when you were growing up? Did you have any special family traditions?

We have many family traditions that I have enjoyed taking part in over the years. My favorite tradition is cutting down a real Christmas tree each year. We go to the tree farm together the day after Thanksgiving and walk around for quite some time trying to find the "perfect" tree. When we finally find (and agree) on it, my dad cuts the tree down himself - which is always a hilarious sight to see! This tradition is something I look forward to each year and hope to continue with my own family one day.

What are you thankful for this holiday season?

This season I am very thankful for my family. I did not get to see them as much as I would have liked over the course of the pandemic - this really put in perspective how important my time with each family member is to me. I am lucky to have the most supportive and loving family that cheers me on in every endeavor that I take on. I look forward to experiencing our new and old holiday traditions all season long!



THANK YOU MVC PARTNERS

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VIKTOR THE VIKING

SNOWY SKETCH PAD

Viktor wants to see your holiday sketching skills! Draw a picture of your very best snowman (or your favorite player or Viktor or holiday activity or anything else you want!) in the space, take a photo of it and post it on Instagram or Twitter. Tag @viktortheviking



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The background of the entire page is a collage of purple and gold items. At the top left, there are puzzle pieces. Below them is a purple water bottle with a white cap and a 'SKOL' logo. To the right is a clear container filled with purple glitter. Further right is a purple apron with a white cloud and 'THE CHEF' text. In the center, there is a poster featuring three Vikings players. The main title 'VIKINGS KIDS CLUB' is prominently displayed in the upper middle.

VIKINGS KIDS CLUB

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The Vikings Kids Club gives young fans plenty to smile about by offering members exclusive engagement with players throughout the entire year via events and members-only contests, as well as monthly e-newsletters. Upon registration, members receive a special Vikings kit that includes the following:

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PURPLE LOBBY

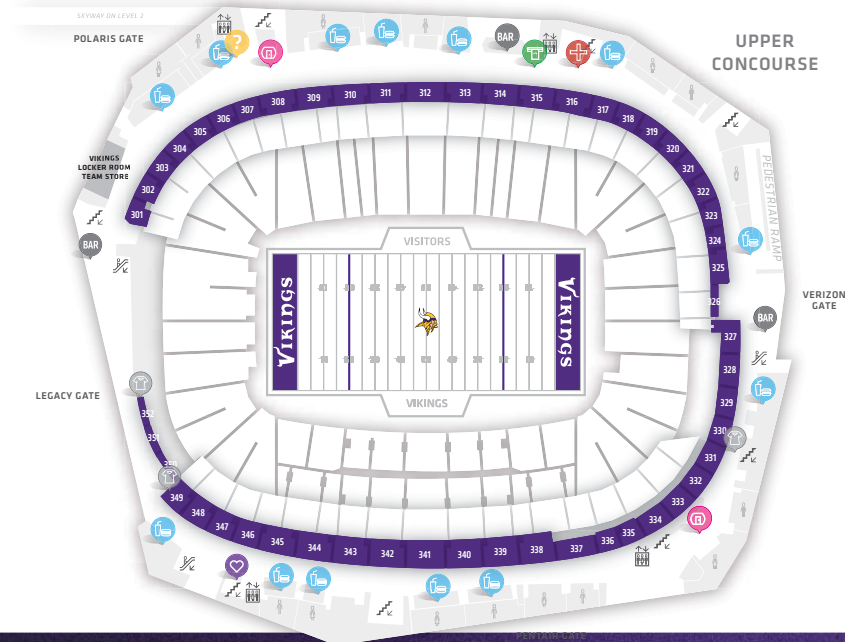
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- FMP CLUB
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- VALHALLA SUITES
- NORSEMAN SUITES 16-27
- SE NORSEMAN SUITES
- LOFT SUITES 28-46
- MILLER LITE LOUNGE

GOLD LOBBY

ACCESS TO THE FOLLOWING:

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- MYSTIC LAKE'S CLUB PURPLE
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STADIUM HIGHLIGHT



MINNESOTA VIKINGS FOUNDATION AUCTION

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Visit the Minnesota Vikings Foundation's Auction near Section 101 to browse the latest memorabilia up for bid. All bidding is online and can be accessed at vikings.com/auction. You don't need to be present to bid or win. Additional shipping fees apply for all items not picked up by the end of the game.

Don't miss an opportunity to add to your man cave or she shed while giving back to at-risk youth. Funds raised will support the Minnesota Vikings Foundation's advancement of health and education initiatives for youth.



CONCESSIONS

The FMP Club in U.S. Bank Stadium this year has featured the debut of Nashville Coop. Mohamed Omer and his wife, Nasra, offer multiple spice levels (listed from no heat to, well, you know): Minnesota Nice, Mini Coop, Coop, Growlin' and Cluckin' Hot. An abundance of flavor is provided by Ethiopian spices roasted in-house. Nashville Coop has locations in St. Paul and Uptown Minneapolis and offers catering.

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.

SKOL Service is built upon four main quality standards: safety, courtesy, appearance and efficiency.



QURAAN BATTLE

Quraan first joined the Allied Universal security team three years ago and now serves as First Shift Supervisor at U.S. Bank Stadium.

Quraan positively leads his team to ensure safety for all fans while delivering world-class service.

Since joining the team, Quraan has grown into a Minnesota Vikings fan and loves coming to game days to hear the SKOL Chant. Last year, he missed the energy that fans bring to the game-day experience. He has been excited to welcome our devoted fans back this season.

When Quraan is not at work, he loves to make music and play basketball with his friends.

If you had a great experience with one of our team members, please share this with us by emailing guestservices@vikings.nfl.net! SKOL!



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