

# Peterson Never Doubted Playing In Vikes Opener

MANKATO, Minn. (AP) — The NFL season starts for Minnesota on Sept. 9, barely eight months after Adrian Peterson had reconstructive surgery on his ripped-up left knee.

Despite the medical advances that have made comebacks from anterior cruciate ligament quicker than ever, Peterson's return for the opener against the Jaguars was always on an optimistic timetable. But for the star Vikings running back, that hasn't really been a goal.

Belief is more like it.

"Despite what everyone else had to say, that was my vision," said Peterson, who also tore the medial col-

lateral ligament when he was hit during a game last Dec. 24 at Washington. "I knew it was going to be a journey, a path, to get closer to that vision, and I'm closer. I see it. It's closer now. It was far away in the beginning, but I've been working hard and just moving forward.

"So hopefully here in a couple weeks — here in a couple weeks, not hopefully — that vision will be right there in front of me in my lap."

Peterson has cleared every hurdle in his rehabilitation either ahead of time or on schedule. As nervous as the Vikings must be — and as skeptical as some observers around the

league might be — he is probably as capable as anyone of taking the ball right at his tacklers without hesitation in Week 1.

"You don't really want to put parameters on his rehabilitation. You want to just let it go and see where it takes us," coach Leslie Frazier said. "Our medical staff talked all along about what this process would look like and what's necessary. We're in that process right now, so we still have to take it day by day."

Despite the evolution of the league into a passing-dominated game, Peterson is far too valuable for Minnesota (No. 29 in AP Pro32) to

risk him getting hit the wrong way in some meaningless drill. He wore full pads in Tuesday's practice for the first time since his injury, but Frazier went out of his way to warn the defense not to touch him.

On Peterson's first carry, he realized this wasn't going to be a normal play.

"These guys are definitely not going to put their hands on me. I didn't really like that too much," he said.

The defensive players light-heartedly complained to their coach that

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## Official: USD-NDSU Football Ticket Sales Going Well

VERMILLION — With two months remaining before the University of South Dakota football team takes on defending FCS champion North Dakota State in Sioux Falls, ticket sales continue to improve, according to one USD official.

The Oct. 20 showdown at Howard Wood Field in Sioux Falls continues to draw in fans from both sides, according to Brad Simons, USD's coordinator of Ticket Operations and Sales.

"They've gone very well. We're well over halfway sold out," Simons said Wednesday. "We've still some good tickets left, but it's starting to fill in, that's for sure."

Simons said he was not sure how many tickets have been scooped up by NDSU fans, but that aside from the Bison team allotment, anything else in the stadium is "open for sale."

USD also had a Coyote Special Pack promotion where \$35 would include a ticket to the NDSU game in Sioux Falls and to the Sept. 8 home opener against Colgate. The promotion ended July 31.

"We sold a lot of tickets to that," Simons said. "It really turned out to be a good promotion for us."

## Golf: Harrisburg Wins DV Invite

DAKOTA DUNES — The Harrisburg Tigers put two golfers under 75 and three among the top 10 finishers to win the team boys' golf title at Wednesday's Dakota Valley Invite at Two Rivers Golf Course in Dakota Dunes.

Brooklyn Devries was the overall champion with a round of 69 to lead the Tigers, who carded a team score of 303.

Dell Rapids was second at 315, followed by Dakota Valley at 325.

Harrisburg's Luke Rezac was second overall at 74, one shot in front of Dell Rapids' Ted LaCourse. West Central's Dylan From shot a 76, while four golfers finished at 77 — among them, Dakota Valley's Ben Williams and Tyler Schrunk.

Vermillion finished seventh in the team race at 358, led by Andrew Heine's 20th place round of 83.

TEAM SCORES: Harrisburg 303, Dell Rapids 315, Dakota Valley 325, Sioux Falls Christian 327, West Central 343, Canton 345, Vermillion 358, Tea Area 376, Elk Point-Jefferson 389, Beresford 389.

TOP 20: 1, Brooklyn Devries, Harrisburg 69; 2, Luke Rezac, Harrisburg 74; 3, Ted LaCourse, Dell Rapids 75; 4, Dylan From, West Central 76; 5, Ben Williams, Dakota Valley 77; 6, Zach Schroeder, Dell Rapids 77; 7, Caleb Ranschau, Canton 77; 8, Tyler Schrunk, Dakota Valley 77; 9, Gunar Rang, Harrisburg 78; 10, Lee Wynja, S.F. Christian 79; 11, Kory Diefendorf, Beresford 80; 12, Ty Hoglund, Dell Rapids 80; 13, Andy Huntington, S.F. Christian 81; 14, Cade McLaughlin, Harrisburg 82; 15, Joe Fuhr, Harrisburg 82; 16, Devon Weber, Dell Rapids 83; 17, Tommy Kenny, Dakota Valley 83; 18, Nick Stern, S.F. Christian 83; 19, Landon Hillman, Tri-Valley 83; 20, Andrew Heine, Vermillion 83.

## Giants' Cabrera Suspended For Positive Drug Test

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Melky Cabrera was suspended 50 games Wednesday following a positive test for testosterone, putting an abrupt end to what had been an MVP-caliber regular season and throwing the San Francisco Giants' playoff hopes into doubt.

Cabrera leads the National League with 159 hits, and is second in batting average behind Pittsburgh's Andrew McCutchen. Cabrera's penalty was the first for a high-profile player since last year's NL MVP, Ryan Braun, had his suspension overturned by an arbitrator last winter.

"My positive test was the result of my use of a substance I should not have used," Cabrera said in a statement released by the union. "I accept my suspension under the Joint Drug Program and I will try to move on with my life. I am deeply sorry for my mistake and I apologize to my teammates, to the San Francisco Giants organization and to the fans for letting them down."

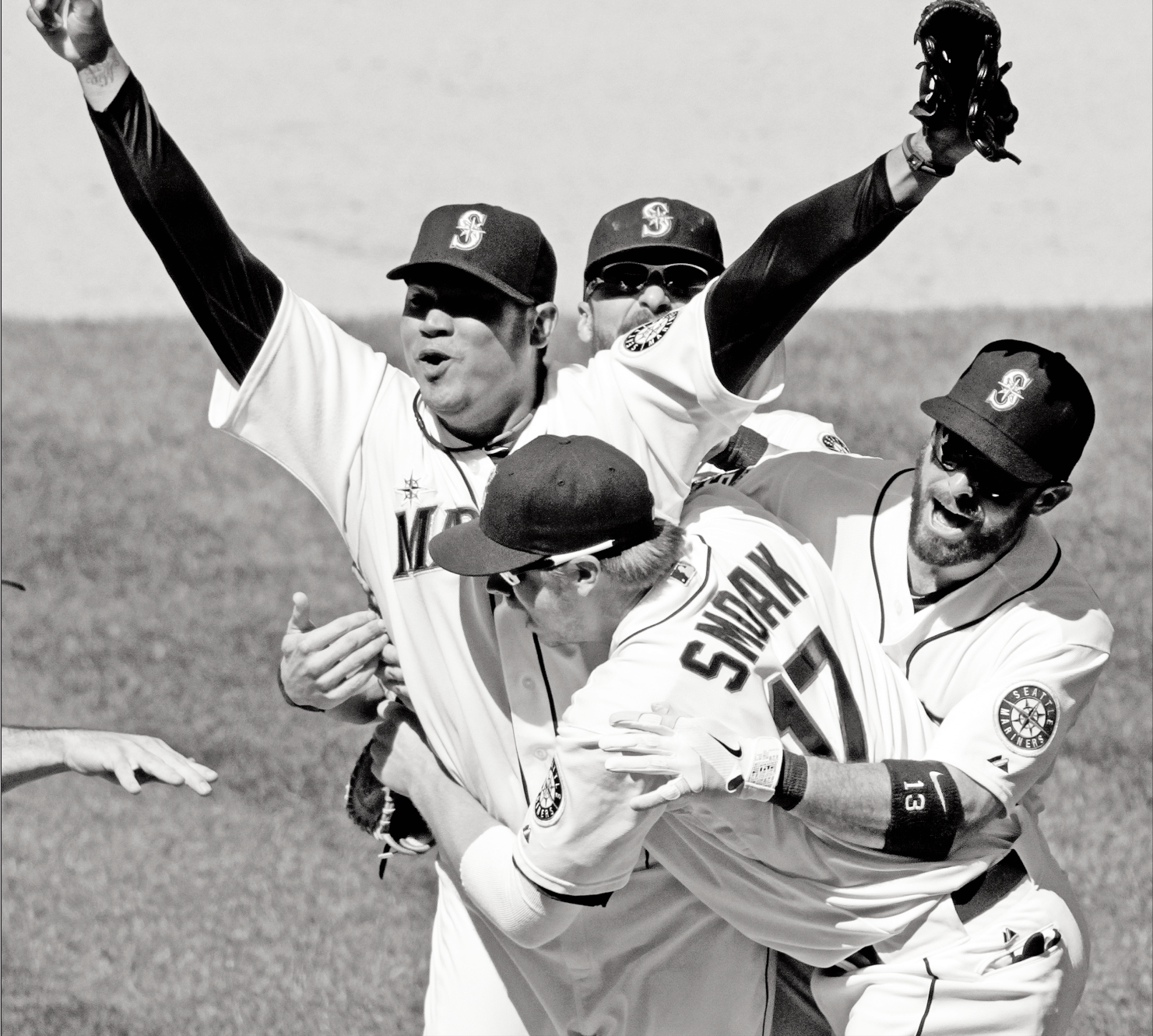
The suspension would extend into the playoffs if the Giants advance.

Cabrera is batting .346 with 11 home runs and 60 RBIs in his first season with San Francisco and is five hits shy of 1,000 in his big league career. Flashing bright orange spikes, he singled and hit a two-run homer last month in the National League's 8-0 win in the All-Star game, earning MVP honors for the game and securing homefield advantage for the World Series.

"It's disappointing. Obviously, Melky means a lot to all of us, was part of our championship and provided some really good moments here," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "It's something that everyone has to deal with and it's something baseball is trying to stay away from and it happened."

Cabrera could still win the NL batting title. He has 501 plate appearances, one less than the minimum required to win a batting championship for a player on a team playing 162 games. However, under 10.22(a) of the Official Baseball Rules, he would win the batting title if an extra hitless at-bat is added to his average and it remains higher than that of any other qualifying player.

He will miss the final 45 games of the regular season and serve the remainder of the suspension at the start of next season or during the postseason, depending on whether the Giants make the playoffs and how far they advance. If the Giants wanted him to become active in the middle of a playoff series, they would have to play a man short from the start of the series until the suspension ends because rosters can't be altered mid-series.



Seattle Mariners' Felix Hernandez celebrates with teammates after pitching a perfect game against the Tampa Bay Rays on Wednesday, August 15, 2012, at Safeco Field in Seattle, Wash. Mariners won, 1-0.

# Commentary: King Felix Finds A Perfect Throne

BY JERRY BREWER  
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SEATTLE — More than any team in baseball, the Tampa Bay Rays can appreciate what Felix Hernandez accomplished Wednesday. They've been victimized so many times by perfection that they should trademark the word perfect.

The Rays have done two things with regularity over the past half decade — win and inspire perfect games. They're working on their fifth straight winning season. In an odd contradiction, they've also been the victims of three perfect games and one no-hitter since 2009. Add the no-hitter former Rays pitcher Matt Garza threw for them in 2010, and scoreboards full of zeros are almost common.

For sure, the Rays know perfection. So when they laud Hernandez's performance, it means something.

"His stuff, man, is electric," said center fielder B.J. Upton, who was 0 for 3 with a strikeout. "That's just the bottom line."

The Rays, who didn't start regulars Desmond Jennings and Jeff Keppinger, entered the game with a common game plan against King Felix. They wanted to find a fastball early and swing away because they know his secondary pitches are often too tough to handle. They expected 60

percent of his pitches to be fastballs. Instead, of the 113 pitches that Hernandez threw, most were off speed. It was by design. Catcher John Jaso, formerly with the Rays, knew Tampa Bay's strategy, and he wanted Hernandez to throw the hitters off. And did he ever, with an array of curveballs, sliders and wicked change-ups, all as sharp as they've been all season.

"I've been on the Rays before," Jaso said. "I know their approach against Felix. It's to hit that fastball and hit it early. You don't want to go to the secondary stuff because that's what gets you out."

Hernandez kept the Rays off balance all game, struck out 12, yielded just three three-ball counts and allowed only a few batted balls that were potential hits.

Rays manager Joe Maddon was ejected in the seventh inning for arguing strike calls by umpire Rob Drake. After the game, he complained of Hernandez being allowed too big of a strike zone to left-handed hitters, but the manager also praised the pitcher for being "prodigious" on this day.

"I saw one (fastball) out of nine pitches," shortstop Elliot Johnson said. "They all look like fastballs out of his hand, but it winds up being a breaking ball, or that split-finger-looking changeup — whatever that thing is."

The Rays are perfect-game connoisseurs. They've tasted them from lefties (Mark Buehrle in 2009, Dallas Braden in 2010), and now a righty has aced them. There have been only 23 perfect games in major-league history. Six of them have come since 2009, and the Rays have been the victim in three of them. They're the first team ever to have fallen to three regular-season perfect games, and they've only been around for 15 years.

The Mariners, who were on the receiving end of Philip Humber's gem in April, have witnessed the pleasant side of perfection for the first time. This marks the first time in MLB history that a team has experienced both sides of perfection in the same season.

Both those perfect games occurred at Safeco Field, as did the Mariners' six-pitcher combined no-hitter against the Los Angeles Dodgers in June. It has been a wild year for pitching greatness in Seattle. And Hernandez's was the best one yet.

"I definitely didn't see this coming today," Upton said.

Later, he said of Hernandez, "He's going to go down in the history books."

The Rays could only tip their cap to Hernandez. During the past four seasons, they've had to do that quite a bit.

## Cabrera Hits 30th Homer As Scherzer, Tigers Beat Twins 5-1

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Miguel Cabrera became the first player in Tigers history to reach 30 home runs in five straight seasons and Max Scherzer threw seven scoreless innings for Detroit in a 5-1 victory over the Minnesota Twins on Wednesday.

Cabrera also singled in the fifth off Cole De Vries (2-4) to push his majors-leading total to 103 RBIs. His opposite-field solo shot in the first inning put the Tigers in front, and Scherzer (12-6) struck out 10 batters to move ahead of teammate Justin Verlander for the AL lead for at least a few days. Delmon Young added a two-run homer against his former team.

The Tigers began the day two

games behind Chicago in the AL Central, with seven contests remaining between them this season, and they kept the pressure on the White Sox — as well as the wild card leaders — with a well-rounded performance against a division rival that used to be a nemesis for them.

The Tigers have won 25 of their last 34 games against the Twins, who rallied to beat them out for the Central title in both 2006 and 2009. Overall, Detroit has won 27 of 43 since June 28, the best record in the league during that stretch.

Cabrera went 6 for 14 in this series and 10 for 24 on the road trip.

Scherzer started the game in

fitting fashion, striking out the first two batters in the first inning and then walking the first two Twins he faced in the second. The 28-year-old has continued to fight persistent control problems and high pitch counts that hinder his ability to work deeper into games, but he's also become one of baseball's most powerful pitchers.

So what happened after those two walks to start the second? He struck out three straight to finish the inning.

Scherzer walked just those two batters and allowed four hits. The right-hander improved to 6-1 in his last nine starts and reached double-digit strikeouts for the fourth time this year. He threw 117 pitches, matching his third-

most this season.

Young was traded to the Tigers a year ago to the day, and he homered against the Twins that time, too. This, though, was only the second time he went deep in 113 at-bats since the All-Star break. He has 13 home runs this season.

De Vries stumbled badly the last time he took the mound, by far the worst of his 12 career starts, when he gave up eight runs, got only four outs and described the batting practice display by Tampa Bay as an "ambush job." The right-hander was a little better this time, but he failed to record an out in the fifth before Jeff Manship was summoned from the bullpen.

## Hernandez Hurls Perfect Game In 1-0 Home Victory

SEATTLE (AP) — His arms outstretched to the sky, about to be swallowed by anxious teammates who ignored him for most of nine innings, Felix Hernandez had finally done it.

Ever since his major league debut as a baby-faced 19-year-old with wild curly hair and a hat that never sat straight, he had chased perfection.

Now King Felix had his crowning achievement. No hits, no runs, nobody allowed on base.

"It was always in my mind, every game. 'I need to throw a perfect game.' For every pitcher, I think it's in their mind," Hernandez said. "Today it happened and it's something special. I don't have any words to explain this. This is pretty amazing. It doesn't happen every day."

Hernandez pitched the Seattle Mariners' first perfect game and the 23rd in baseball history, overpowering the Tampa Bay Rays in a brilliant 1-0 victory Wednesday.

The 2010 AL Cy Young Award winner has never hid his desire for pitching perfection. For a franchise on its way to an 11th straight season without a playoff appearance, Hernandez is the one constant keeping fans interested in Mariners baseball.

He's revered in the Pacific Northwest, not only for his performance on the mound, but for his willingness to stay. When he could have waited and sought a bigger payday elsewhere, Hernandez signed an extension in 2010 that will keep him in Seattle through the 2014 season.

So when the "King's Court" of yellow-shirted fans in the left-field corner began chanting "Let's Go Felix!" to start the eighth inning, it spread through the entire stadium. The crescendo of screams and yells finally reached its pinnacle at 3:02 p.m. PDT when Hernandez threw a called third strike past Sean Rodriguez to ignite the celebration.

Riding down in a crowded elevator after the game, Seattle general manager Jack Zduriencik jokingly held his cellphone to his ear and said "no, we're not trading Felix."

"It almost seems like a matter of time before this happens," Seattle catcher John Jaso said. "A little dribbler here or something it's ruined, but his competitive attitude and competitive mind he brings out to the mound each time he pitches, you know you have a guy out there who is going to give you a chance to win."

It was the third perfect game in baseball this season — a first — joining gems by Chicago's Philip Humber against the Mariners in April and San Francisco's Matt Cain versus Houston in June. More than half of all perfectos — 12 — have come in the last 25 seasons.

This also was the sixth no-hitter in the majors this season, three of them at Safeco Field. Humber threw his gem in Seattle, then six Mariners pitchers combined to hold the Los Angeles Dodgers hitless at the park on June 8. There have been seven no-hitters in a season twice since 1900. It happened in 1990 and again in 1991, with Nolan Ryan throwing two in those days.

For the Rays, it was an all-too-familiar feeling. This was the third time in four seasons they had a perfect game pitched against them, following efforts by Dallas Braden in 2010 and Mark Buehrle in 2009.

"The one thing I've learned is that no-hitters and perfect games don't mean anything about tomorrow, anyway," Rays manager Joe Maddon said.

Hernandez's dominance got stronger as the game progressed. He cruised for five innings, then