

# Vikings Set To Say Goodbye To Metrodome

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — For close to half of the Metrodome's 32-year life, the Minnesota Vikings pushed for a new place to play.

In 2016, they'll break in a new, sleek stadium on the same downtown site. Perhaps they'll enjoy the same edge they often had at the dated, cramped dome.

When it's torn down next month, though, the Vikings will leave a whole lot of home-field advantage in the rubble. They play their final game at the Metrodome on Dec. 29 against the Detroit Lions.

"It's a building that the Vikings and their fans probably don't look forward to going to, but I'll guarantee you the visitor hates it even more," former center Matt Birk said.

The rival Green Bay Packers are at the top of that list. Brett Favre needed six tries to win his first game there and finished 6-10 as the opposing quarterback, losing there in 1996 with the eventual Super Bowl champions. Former Chicago Bears coach Mike Ditka loathed the Metrodome so much he declared it fit for no better than a roller skating rink.

"The volume in that stadium,



JEFF WHEELER/MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE/MCT  
Vikings fan Syd Davy of Winnipeg, Canada, cheers as Minnesota's Matt Asiata scores a touchdown during last Sunday's game at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome.

when the fans get rocking, you can't even have a conversation on the sidelines. It wasn't just the snap count and the communication on the field. It's trying to communicate on the sideline to fix something, and you just couldn't do it," said retired

kicker Ryan Longwell, who like Favre played for both the Packers and Vikings. "We'd walk out of here with a great team — and a loss. It obviously got into our heads a little bit."

Then-Packers coach Mike Holmgren accused the Vikings of enhanc-

ing the crowd noise by playing recordings through the speaker system, but the inflated Teflon cover was going to trap and amplify the cheering, shouting and chanting regardless of manipulation. The circulated air was dry, and unaccustomed opponents could quickly dehydrate.

The Vikings, too, frequently had rosters built to thrive on the artificial turf in the controlled climate.

From Chris Doleman to John Randle to Jared Allen, they've had some of the most dominant pass-rushers in the NFL. For the offensive tackles who strained to hear the cadence and left his stance a half-second late, thwarting a sack became a greater challenge.

When the Vikings had a quarterback who could consistently complete deep passes, like Tommy Kramer, Warren Moon, Randall Cunningham, Daunte Culpepper and Favre, they had some of the league's best offenses without having to worry about limiting late-season weather. When Cris Carter and Randy Moss were the wide receivers, the

DOMES | PAGE 9

## Frazier: Focus On Winning Final Game Is 'Important'

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. (AP) — Leslie Frazier looked glum. His voice sounded softer than usual.

The Minnesota Vikings coach didn't acknowledge any worry about his job status, though, at his regular Monday news conference following the team's most lopsided loss of the season. One game remains this year. Naturally, all Frazier wanted to talk about was winning it.

He said neither he nor his agent has spoken with the organization about his future.

Asked how he's been able over the past month to block out rumors and speculation he'll soon be fired, Frazier said he's simply tried to set a good example.

"For our players, it's important that they focus on the task," Frazier said. "That's what I'm asking them to do, and I need to do the same thing. It's very, very important if you want to have a chance to win these games down the stretch that I stay focused on what's involved with leading our team, and I want them to follow. It's important I handle it the right way."

Until the 42-14 defeat Sunday at Cincinnati, the Vikings were finishing strong, despite myriad injuries leaving them depleted at several positions, and in light of their elimination from playoff contention. They're 3-3-1 in the second half of the season, with a game this weekend against Detroit.

That might not be enough for Frazier to stay. He has one year left on his contract, but the Vikings (4-10-1) will finish with at least 10 losses for the second time in three full seasons with him in charge. Fair or not, in the ultra-competitive NFL, that's a standard formula for a coach firing. The Vikings went 3-13 in 2011 and are 20-33-1 under Frazier, including six games as the 2010 interim coach after Brad Childress was replaced, and one defeat in the playoffs after the 10-6 finish in 2012.

Adrian Peterson loudly voiced his support for Frazier after the game Sunday.

"I'm definitely not an individual that's looking for dramatic change like that. It will hurt if he leaves," Peterson said.

The star running back took his endorsement one step further by promising to lobby ownership and the front office for keeping Frazier around.

"I'm going to give my input and see what they have to say," Peterson said.

Linebacker Chad Greenway has been another of Frazier's biggest fans.

"We realize that there is one week left in the fight. We need to get a win at home to put the Metrodome to sleep. We have to bring our best game," Greenway said.

Asked Monday what Peterson's commendation meant to him, Frazier flashed a faint smile before steering his answer away from the topic of his employment and on to the value Peterson has for the franchise. After the game Sunday was as close as Frazier has come all season to publicly acknowledging his uncertain status.

"We'll have some internal discussion, but I've got one more game in this season," he said Sunday. "I'm looking forward to hopefully coaching that final game and getting us a win at Mall of America Field as we close out the dome."

The Metrodome, now named after the sponsoring shopping center, will be torn down beginning next month. The answer to the trivia question about who the last Vikings starting quarterback at the Teflon-topped stadium was? Matt Cassel. He'll take the final turn on the 2013 carousel, with Christian Ponder the backup and Josh Freeman third.

"He picked up things well and worked hard in practice," Frazier said of Freeman. "He's still doing those things: picking up the offense, working hard, spending time with coaches doing all the things he needs to do."

## High School Basketball

# Cossacks Sweep Parker

PARKER — Tayt Vincent scored 19 points on 7-of-13 shooting to lead Sioux Valley past Parker 52-46 in boys' basketball action Monday in Parker.

Jake Larson and Spencer Hanson each scored nine points for the Cossacks (3-0), who broke a 30-30 tie after three quarters with a 6-point edge in the fourth.

For the hometown Pheasants (2-2), Zach O'Keefe scored 11 points, while Jake Anderson added 10 points and seven rebounds. Eric Hunstad posted 10 points, five rebounds and five assists.

Sioux Valley will next play Dell Rapids at the Swiftel Classic in Brookings on Sunday. Parker will next play in the Parkston Classic on Dec. 30.

SIUX VALLEY (3-0).....7 23 30 52  
PARKER (2-2).....9 19 30 46

### Saturday

## Randolph 48, Wynot 41

WYNOT, Neb. — The Randolph Cardinals held Wynot to six first-half points and held on for a 48-41 victory over the Blue Devils in Lewis & Clark Conference boys' basketball action on Saturday.

Randolph led 23-6 at the half and 38-18 after three quarters, then survived a furious Blue Devil flurry to hang on for the victory.

Luke Andrew had 12 points, Landyn Anderson posted nine points and Seth Lackas had nine rebounds for Randolph.

For Wyot, Jackson Sudbeck scored a game-high 15 points. Brady Stratman added 11 points.

Randolph, 5-0, hosts Winside in its holiday tournament, beginning Friday. Wynot, 4-2, plays Crofton in the Crofton Holiday Tournament on Friday.

RANDOLPH (5-0).....12 23 38 48  
WYNOT (4-2).....4 6 18 41

### Girls

## Sioux Valley 75, Parker 44

PARKER — Kaylee Granum hit seven of Sioux Valley's 10 three-pointers as the Cossacks coasted past Parker 75-44 in Monday afternoon girls' basketball action in Parker.

Granum finished with a game-high 21 points, while Carley Peterson added 17

points, four rebounds and four assists. Anna Keefe chipped in with 10 points and Natasha Halbersma grabbed eight rebounds.

Sioux Valley, now 3-1, led 44-18 at halftime.

In the loss for the Pheasants (0-5), Rylie Christensen scored 16 points and hauled in four rebounds. Lauren Hunstad had 12 points and four rebounds, while Shanya Burt had four points and four steals.

Sioux Valley will play Arlington in the Swiftel Classic on Dec. 30 and Parker will next face Bon Homme on Jan. 6 in Tyndall.

SIUX VALLEY (3-1).....19 44 58 75  
PARKER (0-5).....9 18 32 44

## Andes Central 31, Freeman Academy 25

LAKE ANDES — Jo Marie Garcia and Beulah Black Cloud had big nights in the paint to guide Andes Central past Freeman Academy 31-25 in a low-scoring girls' game in Lake AnDES.

Garcia recorded six points and 13 rebounds, while Black

HOOPS | PAGE 9

JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Parker guard Lauren Hunstad, 14, soars in for a layup during Monday afternoon's home game with Sioux Valley in Parker.



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Parker's Jake Anderson, right, flies in for a layup during Monday afternoon's home game against Sioux Valley in Parker.

# Manning Says TD Record Is Temporary In Today's NFL

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Peyton Manning says his 51-TD record will be short-lived, suggesting Tom Brady will take it back soon enough.

Or, for that matter, any number of other quarterbacks could break it should NFL owners get their way and expand the season to 18 games.

Perhaps he's just being pragmatic. Maybe he's just being modest.

"I think if it does go to 18 games, I think that is a practical assessment," said tight end Julius Thomas, who caught the record-breaker in Denver's 37-13 win at Houston on Sunday.

"Those two extra games would give a quarterback two additional opportunities to go out there and put more touchdowns on the board.

"I think that will skew a lot of records. But you know he's also a modest person. That's who he is. It's pretty remarkable to throw 51 touchdowns. I believe records are meant to be broken and most are broken. But that's one that could stand for a

while."

It will stand for a long time, suggested Eric Decker, who retrieved the record-breaking memento when Thomas nonchalantly dropped it, unaware of the famous football's emotional or even economic value.

"Of course he's being modest," Decker said Monday. "I think it's a tough feat. Fifty-plus touchdowns in a season, you've got to do something very, very special. (Dan) Marino had it for such a long time and then it went back and forth for a while. But I think with the game how it is now, it's more of an offensive game and you have more opportunities to maybe do something like this.

"But I think the numbers he has put up, I think it's tough to match those unless you have an unbelievable year."

That, Manning has. He began the season by becoming the first QB since 1969 to throw for seven TDs in a game, one of eight games this season in which he's

thrown for four or more touchdowns.

He's thrown a dozen TD passes to Julius Thomas and Demaryius Thomas and 10 each to Decker and Wes Welker.

After breaking Brady's single-season touchdown record of 50 on Sunday, Manning is 266 yards from breaking Drew Brees' single-season mark for yards passing. The Broncos are 18 points shy of setting a single-season scoring record and 28 points from becoming the league's first 600-point team.

They're already the first team in NFL history with five players with at least 10 touchdowns; running back Knowshon Moreno has 10 TD runs and two TD catches. Nobody else has had four players with double-digit TDs.

It's gotten to the point where it's expected that the Broncos will put up gaudy numbers week in and week out and when they don't march right down the field, fans wonder what's wrong.

"Yeah, we talked about that a little bit earlier in the season, if we punt,

man, we would get booed," Julius Thomas said. "But it just speaks to what we've done as an offense. We have no problem with people having high expectations of us because we have high expectations of ourselves."

Maybe that's why he didn't realize he had the record-holder in his hands when he caught No. 51 Sunday and just let it go instead of holding onto it. Decker picked up the ball and tucked it in the side of his jersey, where it remained as he walked off the field.

"It wouldn't have surprised me if Julius would have went and handed it to some babe up in the stands, trying to get her phone number in exchange for the ball," Manning joked. "That would be right up Julius' alley."

Decker, who was pranked by Manning in the offseason, when the quarterback invited him for a weekend passing camp at Duke and tricked him into thinking he had to pay thousands of dollars for doing so, saw an opportunity for payback.