

Vikings Have Little Time To Recover After Loss

DAVE CAMPBELL
AP Pro Football Writer

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. (AP) — Having posted their largest losing margin at home in 31 years, the Minnesota Vikings were given just three days to prepare for what's next.

Traveling to Arizona for a Thursday night game is about as far from a reprieve as the schedule could have afforded the Vikings following their 38-7 defeat by Seattle on Sunday that pushed them back into a first-place tie in the NFC North.

This final quarter of the season sure starts with a flurry.

"Hopefully getting our noses rubbed in it a little bit yesterday helps bring that chip back," tight end Kyle Rudolph said.

The Cardinals (10-2) have won six straight games, further establishing themselves as a serious Super Bowl contender. The Vikings (8-4) have been embarrassed often, for one reason or another, in recent prime-time games. Three key players on defense were out against the Seahawks with little time to recover from their injuries. Throw in the fact this is a trip halfway across the country, and the odds have been stacked high against

them.

Perhaps that can work in their favor, in light of their latest humbling loss.

"If it wasn't a challenge half of us wouldn't even be here right now. More of these guys like to fight than they like to go into an easy game," defensive tackle Sharif Floyd said. "So if it was easy, the pizza man would be doing it. But I'm glad we get the chance to do it."

Nose tackle Linval Joseph (foot) was previously ruled out and linebacker Anthony Barr (groin) and safety Harrison Smith (hamstring) each limped off during Seattle's first touchdown drive, depleting a usually sound unit. The Seahawks went on to rack up 433 yards.

"Not having them, obviously, we need them back," said Floyd, who moved over to fill Joseph's spot. "Everybody helps. Everybody counts. We've just got to man up and keep playing ball."

Coach Mike Zimmer produced the defining quote after the game: "We're not quite as good as we think we are."

The players weren't about to argue.

"You come out and get your teeth kicked in and you realize you're not as



DEAN RUTZ/SEATTLE TIMES/TNS
Seattle Seahawks' Luke Willson bobbles the catch before completing the play for 28 yards during the first quarter on Sunday at TCF Bank Stadium in Minneapolis.

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On The Blog

Press & Dakotan assistant sports editor Jeremy Hoeck examines the impact of Saturday's signature victory over Minnesota for the University of South Dakota men's basketball team.



Jeremy
HOECK

For the full blog entry, go to pressdakotan.wordpress.com

Included:
"It's a shot in the arm for players, particularly those from that state. It's a shot in the arm for the coaching staff. It's a shot in the arm for the athletic department."

Parker Hitter Gets Class B Nod

Volleyball: Chester Area, Warner Lead First Team

BY JACQUE SCOBY
Aberdeen American News

For three years, Warner volleyball ruled Class B volleyball with an iron fist.

For two years, the Chester Area Flyers were on the receiving end of that rule.

2015 changed all that.

Chester, on the strength of 26 kills from senior Jenna Reiff in the championship battle, ended the Monarchs' reign this season, dethroning the three-time defending state champion with a five-set thriller in the state title match.

Reiff highlights the Class B All-State team, as selected by the South Dakota Volleyball Coaches Association and released Tuesday.

Other First Team players include Peyton Ellingson and Alexis Boesl of Warner, Peyton Groft of Northwestern, Rylie Christensen of Parker and Bailee Steffensen of Arlington.

Reiff, a Northern State signee and one of just two seniors on the First Team, led all of Class B with 459 kills on the season, helping Chester to a 30-2 record and the first state championship in program history.

"Jenna has been passionate about the sport of volleyball for a long time now," said Flyers' head coach Jean Benson. "Her efforts have paid off. She has made herself into a phenomenal all-around player, front row, back row. She does it all."

For the Flyers to earn its spot at the top, however, Chester had to overcome the

1-2 punch of Warner's Ellingson and Boesl.

Ellingson, a sophomore, was a staple in the Monarchs' front line, hammering 434 total kills and notching 81 total blocks this season.

"In the second half of the season, Peyton became much more consistent and much more of an offensive leader for our team," said Warner head coach Kari Jung.

Boesl, meanwhile, patrolled the back line for Warner, anchoring a defense with more than 550 digs on the season from her libero slot. She also had 71 service aces, 52 assists and six kills for the Monarchs.

"Lexi has an incredible will to win and she is extremely good and making quick decisions to get to balls in fast-paced rallies," Jung said of her young libero.

Warner will have the services of both players next season. Ellingson concluded her sophomore campaign, while Boesl finished her junior season.

The duo is emblematic of a deep, young talent pool in District 2B. Groft, the second libero on the First Team, also concluded her sophomore season, finishing with 401 total digs, 67 aces, 91 assists and a 76 percent serve-receive rating while helping Northwestern to a 29-4 record. The Wildcats, ranked in the top five all season, finished as the runner-up to Warner in the District 2B tournament.

Christensen, a junior, will

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JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
Parker's Rylie Christensen (24), shown here during last month's S.D. State Volleyball Tournament, was named to the Class B All-State first team. The team was selected by the South Dakota Volleyball Coaches Association.

Montana State's Choate: FCS What College Football Supposed To Be

BOZEMAN, Mont. (AP) — New Montana State football coach Jeff Choate says his philosophy focuses on character, accountability and toughness.

"The high standards of personal conduct and academic success that are established at this university are going to continue," Choate said Monday at his introductory news conference.

Choate comes to MSU after two seasons as defensive line coach and special teams coordinator at Washington. He also was an assistant to Chris Petersen at Boise State and has been an assistant at Florida, but said his one season with Eastern Illinois made him realize the FCS is what college football is supposed to be.

"The beautiful thing about coaching at the FCS level is there is some perspective," he said. "At Montana State we can really keep the student first. When they look back in 15 years, it's not going to be the things they did ... the thing they'll remember is who they become as a result of this experience."

He said he would continue to enhance MSU's reputation as a strong program in the classroom, in the community and on the field and he respects the rivalry with "the team over the hill."

"My objective here is to build a team to win," while also preparing the student-athletes for their life after college, Choate said.

Choate listed Butte natives Mick

Dennehy and Mick Delaney — his coaches at Montana Western — as mentors. Dennehy and Delaney both served as assistants at Montana State and later head coaches at Montana.

"Mick Delaney taught me how to treat people," Choate said.

He said Dennehy taught him toughness and how to connect with players.

"I need to build these young men for their life," Choate said. "That's what Mick and Mick did for me."

Choate was named head coach on Friday. He said he has been getting to know current players, asking what they like about Montana State and encouraging them to finish strong in the classroom this semester.

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Nebraska's Riley: Bowl Game All About Winning

ERIC OLSON
AP College Football Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Some coaches go into lower-tier bowl games with the primary goal of developing players for the future. Nebraska's Mike Riley isn't one of them.

The Cornhuskers' first-year coach said Monday he is glad to have 12 extra practices and he will get young players some extra work, but his No. 1 priority is to beat UCLA in the Foster Farms Bowl on Dec. 26.

"We really want to win this game," Riley told reporters during a teleconference. "With the season we've had, I think we've played competitively. Guys have been ready to play. We just didn't win the close games, and that's why we're in the situation we're in. I think a win is really important."

The Huskers received a postseason bid with a 5-7 record because of their high Academic Progress Rate score. There weren't enough teams with six-win, 500 records to fill 80 bowl slots, so Nebraska, Minnesota and San Jose State were allowed to round out the bowl field.

"We're certainly not going to apologize for being selected," Riley said. "They had a criteria and we were selected on it. We're just thankful to be in the bowl game."

The temptation for Riley after the Huskers' worst season since 2007 would be to

start looking ahead to 2016.

That's not the plan, he said.

"We would not do anything out of the box according to how we have guys slated to play," he said. "We're going to do everything we can to win the game."

Riley and assistant coaches are on the road recruiting, and players are doing strength and conditioning work this week. The team will begin practicing Friday and start installing the game plan for UCLA early next week.

He said redshirted players and scout-team members might get additional work after regular practices.

"It's obviously exciting to get to play in a bowl game," Riley said. "With our circumstances this year, we certainly couldn't count on this. But we're going to treat it like a tremendous bonus."

Nebraska and UCLA will be meeting for the 13th time and first in the postseason. The series is tied 6-6, with UCLA winning in 2012 and 2013.

Riley, as Oregon State coach, was 3-7 against UCLA over his 14 seasons with the Beavers over two stints. Riley won his only meeting against UCLA coach Jim Mora in 2012.

"This is a great opportunity to go out on a good note," Riley said. "We were on that proverbial roller coaster all year ... so this is a chance to finish out this season as best we can with a win."

International Experience



Yankton natives Lilly Purzol, 15 (left), and sister Isabella, 12, competed at a taekwondo tournament Nov. 22 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. They were the only competitors from the state of South Dakota. Lilly took first place in both forms and sparring, and third place in sparring Grand Championship. Isabella finished first in both forms and sparring in her age division. They were coached by Vernon Swenson of Dakota Taekwondo.

Unbeata-Bulls



The Yankton Bulls went 7-0 in their Yankton Bulls Annual Basketball Tournament held Dec. 5-6 in Yankton. Coached by Mark Ryken and James Grotenhuis, players left to right are: Rugby Ryken, Tyler Sohler, Cody Oswald, Beck Ryken, Michael Mors, Mac Ryken, Drew Ryken, and Cooper Ryken.