

Allen Happy He's With Vikings, In Final Year Of Deal

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. (AP) — Jared Allen has entered the final season of his mega contract without any guarantee from the Minnesota Vikings of an extension.

The five-time Pro Bowl defensive end, of course, would rather have already signed a new deal with the team that traded a first-round draft pick and a pair of third-round selections to Kansas City for him in 2008.

But in the NFL even a guy with 117 career sacks, the second-most among active players, can get cut.

"I was in an organization previously that didn't respect where I was at in my contract," Allen said Wednesday, referring to the Chiefs. "They promised me a lot of stuff and didn't deliver. And here, I don't have that problem."

Allen turned 31 in April. His salary for 2013 is more than \$14 million, before the bonuses he'll likely collect. That's a huge

hit on a club's salary cap, and the Vikings could've forced him to take a pay cut as they did with defensive tackle Kevin Williams, left guard Charlie Johnson and tight end John Carlson. Or they could've released him, like veteran cornerback Antoine Winfield.

Two of the other pass-rushing specialists in the current top five on the active career sack list, John Abraham and Dwight Freeney, were recently dumped by their teams.

"A lot of guys get let go in the last year or restructure the last year," Allen said, adding: "They want to honor it. So that's great for me. I have no beefs, quarrels, nothing."

Asked whether he'd be open to a new deal during the season, Allen didn't answer the question directly but indicated his disinterest in considering such matters while the games are going on.

"We're all on the same page," Allen said, praising his relationship with coach Leslie Frazier, general manager Rick Spielman and owner Zygi Wilf. "You know what? I'm excited they're letting me play my contract out. ... I feel like I've got plenty of good football left in me. But that's a decision we'll sit down and make when the time is right."

Williams is also in the final season of his contract. So are fellow defensive ends Everson Griffen and Brian Robison. That's created an intriguing dynamic among a group that has been one of the team's strongest positions for the last half-decade.

"If we sit there and worry about the contract thing and things like that, it's not going to do anything but hurt our play," Robison said. "I mean, I think any guy will tell you as long as your mind is on playing football and you're playing well, every-

thing else will take care of itself."

With 22 sacks in 2011, Allen just missed the NFL single-season record. Last year, he had 12 sacks. Perhaps that's a sign of some decline, but Allen played in all 17 games (including the postseason loss at Green Bay) with a torn labrum in his left shoulder. Allen had surgery to repair that a little more than four months ago, also undergoing a minor procedure for the meniscus cartilage in his right knee at the same time.

He joined his teammates this week for the second round of on-field practices, known in league parlance as organized team activities, but he's only an observer.

"We probably won't see him until training camp," Frazier said. "But ... medically he is doing great and there won't be any problems when we get to training camp. The fact that he's in town, he's doing his rehab here, he's coming out to our prac-

tices, that's a good thing."

He's finally sleeping through the night, too. The shoulder injury, he said, happened in the middle of the 2011 season. He was able to play through the condition, but it caused plenty of sharp pain.

"I'd wake up every night tossing and turning," he said, then describing his euphoria a few months ago when he opened his eyes and realized it was morning, having not been jolted awake by the discomfort.

Allen estimated his flexibility in the joint at 97 percent.

"I feel good. Just trying to build strength up now," he said, adding: "Just trying to make sure I'm in the best shape possible and I can get back out there with the guys."

Perhaps for the final time in purple.

USD's Dennis Misses Finals In Women's Javelin

EUGENE, Ore. — South Dakota freshman Meghan Dennis placed tenth in her flight and 20th overall in the women's javelin throw at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships on Wednesday in Eugene, Ore.

Dennis recorded tosses of 135-5 and 143-3 on her first two tosses. She fouled on her final attempt.

Dennis came in with the 17th-best throw in the 24-person field with a USD and South Dakota state record of 159-3.

Dennis was one of five USD student-athletes qualified the national meet, and one of three first-time competitors at the national level. Three more Coyotes will compete on Friday, when both Bethany Buell and Emily Grove will compete in the women's pole vault, and Cody Snyder will compete in the men's discus.

USD's Megan Glisar will compete in the women's high jump on Saturday.

Keselowski Unfazed By Latest Penalty

SPARTA, Ky. (AP) — Brad Keselowski's standing in the chase for his second consecutive NASCAR Sprint Cup Series championship is an encouraging sign of where his team is headed.

The Penske Racing driver foresees a better outlook once his team gets a handle on the circuit's rules process.

Keselowski was docked six points by NASCAR on Tuesday after his No. 2 Ford failed post-race inspection at Dover for being too low. Combined with April's 25-point penalty for having an illegal part at Texas, he enters this weekend's race at Pocono Raceway 10th in points instead of possibly fourth.

While neither the team nor Keselowski disputes NASCAR's latest punishment, Keselowski said it has them more determined to bounce back and earn their first victory of the season, which they believe is within reach.

"I completely understood this week's (penalty) and kind of stick up for NASCAR on that one. The other one, not so much," Keselowski said during a promotional stop Wednesday at Kentucky Speedway.

"But at this point, it kind of is what it is and you have to move forward and focus on the task at hand, which is having a strong run through the summer, winning races and be in position for the Chase."

Keselowski is coming off a fifth-place run at Dover, his fifth top-five this season and the first since Bristol in March. He jumped two spots to eighth in points before the penalty that dropped him back down to the 10th and final spot in the Chase.

Before returning to one of the five tracks he won on last season in a Dodge, Keselowski and the Penske team met in North Carolina to discuss the penalties that included a \$25,000 fine for crew chief Paul Wolfe.

Sunday marked the first race back for Wolfe and several crew members for Keselowski and teammate Joey Logano after serving a three-race suspension — reduced from six on appeal — for the Texas infraction. The team issued a statement Tuesday blaming a broken part for the violation but added that it won't appeal the penalty.

"Did it affect the car's performance and racing condition? Probably not," Keselowski said of the part's failure. "But the rules are what the rules are, and they said the car must return statically and the car didn't."

"It was just a simple installation issue that we addressed, and you kind of shrug your shoulders and say these things happen, let's try not to let them happen again and move on."

Tyndall, Lakers Split Pair



Tyndall third baseman Collin Moon, 17, takes out Yankton Lakers baserunner Jordan Kathol during their VFW Teener baseball game on Wednesday at Riverside Field.

Baseball: Yankton Takes Game Two 4-3

The Yankton Lakers and Tyndall split a VFW Teener baseball doubleheader on Wednesday at Yankton's Riverside Field.

Tyndall claimed the opener 4-2, scoring three runs in the third inning to take the victory.

For Yankton, Nate Stephenson led the way with a hit, a run scored and a run batted in. Jordan Kathol had a hit and a RBI. Chase Vogt posted a hit and a run scored. Michael Heine added a hit for the Lakers.

Heine took the loss. Yankton bounced back to take the nightcap 4-3.

Stephenson picked up the victory on the mound, and helped his cause with a 3-3 effort at the plate. He also drove in a run in the victory.

Also for Yankton, Tyler Payer had a hit and a RBI. Heine, Vogt and Drew Wendande also had hits for the Lakers.

The Lakers, now 6-2, travel to Sioux Falls to play in a tournament this weekend.

Dahlberg: Selig Finally Takes Stand In Steroid Fight

BY TIM DAHLBERG
AP Sports Columnist

If you believed Ryan Braun's first alibi — and a lot of Milwaukee baseball fans did — then maybe his tale about showing up in the records of a Miami anti-aging clinic because his lawyers needed more expertise on performance-enhancing drugs isn't so implausible after all.

Alex Rodriguez's claim that he only used steroids while employed by the Texas Rangers seemed pretty convincing at the time, too. He went on national television to blame his drug use on being young and naive, saying he didn't even know what he was taking.

There was a day when baseball would have taken both at their word, thanked them for their cooperation, and made sure they signed up for the next Home Run Derby. Bud Selig and the owners who pay his salary weren't terribly interested in busting superstars for steroid use, not when new stadiums were going up everywhere and television money kept pouring in.

Just why that has changed is debatable. The fact that it has, isn't.

Investigators are going after the biggest stars of the game, and they've reeled in a big catch to get them. The same snake oil salesman in the Miami area that Braun claimed his lawyer hired as a consultant has agreed to cooperate with Major League Baseball, a development that has to be making a lot of players nervous.

Among them should be Braun, who took the day off Wednesday not because of all the headlines, his manager insisted, but because of a sore thumb. The night before, Braun refused to talk about the investigation, declaring it little more than the kind of distraction all ballplayers face.

"The truth has not changed," he said.

On that, we can all agree. And the truth is that Braun tested positive for elevated testosterone in October 2011, only to have a 50-game suspension overturned after his attorneys blamed it on a hapless sample collector who

didn't understand FedEx schedules.

No one declared him innocent of doping, though he acted as if that's exactly what happened. He got off on a technicality, something so infuriating to baseball that the arbitrator in the case was later fired by management.

The truth is also that A-Rod scammed his way to not one, but two, huge contracts that made him rich beyond belief. He's both an admitted juicer and a liar, and the fact he remains the highest-paid player in baseball at \$28 million this year is something that's wrong on so many levels.

Their day of reckoning may still come, though. MLB investigators now have persuaded clinic founder Anthony Bosch to talk, and there are reports that some 20 players could face possible suspensions for either using performance enhancing drugs or lying to baseball about them.

Whether any player ultimately is punished will depend a lot on the credibility of Bosch, the records he kept of transactions at the now-defunct Biogenesis of America clinic, and how hard the union representing baseball players will fight what may be the most widespread steroid scandal in the history of a sport long tarnished by drug use. Union chief Michael Weiner served notice Wednesday that there could be a fight ahead if baseball tries to impose suspensions on players who haven't tested positive for drugs.

"Every player has been or will be represented by an attorney from the players' association," Weiner said. "The players' association has every interest in both defending the rights of players and in defending the integrity of our joint (drug) program. We trust that the commissioner's office shares these interests."

Unfortunately for the players and the union,

the commissioner's office appears to have its own agenda. Selig seems determined to win a big battle in the steroid fight, and his investigators have done everything from going to court to buying documents from the Biogenesis clinic to do just that.

It might be out of anger of the Braun decision, or the embarrassment of no big stars being elected to the Hall of Fame this year because of steroids. Or simply that Selig, in the twilight of his career, finally understands that his legacy will forever be tied to the steroid era and he needs a major score.

Whatever it is, it's a major turnaround for a commissioner who for years was more concerned with making owners money than making sure the playing field was level. Selig stood by silently as players made a mockery of the game, even going so far as congratulating Barry Bonds on breaking Henry Aaron's career home run mark in 2007.

"I'm not passing judgment — nor should I," he said when asked at the time about the legitimacy of the record.

Actually that's exactly what he should have done, but he's not alone. His owners keep rewarding players with big contracts — see Melky Cabrera and Bartolo Colon — on the basis of numbers skewed by steroid use. And fans forgive and forget with each home run, as evidenced by the 45 percent of Brewers faithful who responded affirmatively to an online poll in the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel asking if they still had faith in Braun.

The slugger may wiggle out of this one, too, though he'll need a better excuse this time. Maybe he'll throw a clubhouse attendant or someone else under the bus the way he did the poor sample collector.

As for A-Rod, who really cares? He's an unpleasant reminder of everything that is wrong with baseball and pretty much washed up any-

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Lindsey Vonn Goes From Red Carpet To Drug Test

USADA Tested Skier At Fashion Designer Awards In N.Y.

NEW YORK (AP) — Talk about your random testing.

Lindsey Vonn took an unexpected detour during her evening at an awards show — off the red carpet and into the women's bathroom for drug testing.

The star skier was at the Council of Fashion Designers of America awards at Lincoln Center on Monday night when testers from the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency escorted her to the restroom to collect a urine sample.

The sample was sent to a lab and results weren't immediately available.

USADA and Vonn's spokesman confirmed Monday's test, which was first reported by the New York Post.

Olympic athletes are subject to random testing and required to fill out forms notifying USADA of their whereabouts at all times.

Vonn's spokesman, Lewis Kay, says the test wasn't a big deal to the skier, who wore a deep V-neck white gown by Cynthia Rowley, the designer who accompanied Vonn to the event.

"She understands it is part of the job," Kay told The Associated Press in an email Wednesday.

The CFDA awards are consid-

ered the fashion industry's Oscars. Others attending the black-tie affair included Hillary Rodham Clinton, Jessica Chastain and Ralph Lauren.

CFDA organizers, who leave no stone unturned in the planning of their awards show, said they were unaware that Vonn had been tested.

USADA said Vonn has participated in its out-of-competition testing pool for more than 12 years. The testing program requires athletes to make themselves available for tests at any time, regardless of location.

"We appreciate her profes-

Potential Future Stars Fueling Hope For Twins

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — These days, many fans of the Twins are more excited about players like Miguel Sano and Byron Buxton than Joe Mauer, Justin Morneau or anyone else in Minnesota.

That's not even a slight to the former American League MVPs. Mauer is producing another All-Star performance at the plate.

Morneau's power has disappeared, but he's still on pace to drive in 100 runs. The Twins have made recent strides and crept close to the .500 mark after 195 combined losses over the last two seasons.

But the minors are the location for most of the promising action for this organization.

"It's hard to think that anyone has had a better year on the farm than the Twins have had," said J.J. Cooper, the managing editor at Baseball America, a magazine and website that extensively covers the minor leagues.

The story begins with Buxton, the second overall pick in the 2012 draft. The center fielder entered Wednesday batting .333 with 55 runs, seven homers, 39 RBIs and 26 stolen bases in 52 games for the Cedar Rapids Royals in low Class A. That's still four levels away from the limestone walls of Target Field, but the 19-year-old is exceeding expectations even for such a high draft pick.

This is what teams have to do with bad seasons in the majors: Turn terrible records into future stars. That's what they did with Mauer, the catcher and hometown kid taken at the top of the 2001 draft. This year, the Twins pick fourth, and the pressure is on. The draft begins on Thursday night.

"You just don't have that many chances in any venue to get the star player. You only have so much money internationally. You only have so many chances in the draft," vice president of player personnel Mike Radcliff said. "At fourth, it has to be a guy who can make an impact."

The same summer that Mauer turned pro, the Twins were emerging from a downturn that lasted nearly a decade, beginning soon after their last World Series title in 1991. The group of drafted-and-developed players like Tient Hunter, Corey Koskie and Doug Mientkiewicz led the turnaround.

By 2015, perhaps Sano will join Aaron Hicks and Oswaldo Arcia as the young hitters providing support for a rotation led by Kyle Gibson, Trevor May and Alex Meyer. Buxton probably won't be ready for the majors that soon, particularly given the conservative approach to promotion the Twins have long employed, but he ought to be close.

"I think it's nice for our players to get the recognition that they're getting," minor leagues director Brad Steil said. "We're just focusing on helping them continue their development and get to the next level in their career."

The high draft picks that come from losing are one way to rebuild, but that can't be it.

Sano, the third baseman in high Class A, was signed out of the Dominican Republic four years ago, a prime example of the improved scouting the Twins have devoted in recent years to that baseball-rich country. Sano entered Wednesday hitting .333 with 15 doubles, 14 home runs, 45 RBIs and eight steals in 54 games for the Fort Myers Miracle.

Then there are the trades the Twins made last winter, swapping center fielders Denard Span (to Washington) and Ben Revere (to Philadelphia) for Meyer and May.

Baseball America ranked the Twins' farm system the 10th-best in the game before the season began. Cooper said they'll be a lot higher on the next list. The key, of course, is acquiring players with star potential, not simply a deep collection of guys destined for utility roles or middle relief.

"There are just a number of players in that organization who are having really good years who are also prospects," Cooper said.

Starting pitching problems have been a major part of Minnesota's recent struggles, and a concerted effort has been made to restock the

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