

SPORTS

Patterson shines, Vikings whip Rams 34-6

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Like any other game, Mike Zimmer took a little Pepto-Bismol to calm the stomach. It was business as usual, even if it was his first time calling the shots.

“Honestly, it wasn’t that bad,” the Minnesota Vikings’ new coach said after beating the St. Louis Rams 34-6 and getting a celebratory ice bath on Sunday.

“I felt good about the game, I felt good about the game plan, I felt good about the players, felt good about how we practiced,” the 58-year-old Zimmer said. “I was probably more nervous for the first preseason game.”

The Vikings were 4-0 in the preseason and they opened with a bang, too. Wide receiver Cordarrelle Patterson ran for 102 yards on just three carries, with a

67-yard scoring run off a simple pitchout the backbreaker, and the defense stuffed a team down to its third quarterback after the first half.

“We hear about their defense all the time, especially their front four,” Patterson said. “The offensive lineman did a great job of standing them up and I say hats off to those guys.”

Zimmer was a defensive coordinator with Dallas, Atlanta and Cincinnati the previous 14 seasons and inherited a 5-10-1 team. A defense that surrendered the most points in the NFL last year clicked right away, holding St. Louis to 170



Cordarrelle Patterson

yards the first three quarters.

PLAYMAKER DELUXE

Naturally, the Rams keyed on Adrian Peterson. They held him down just fine, holding the Vikings star to 75 yards on 21 carries. But they got burned big-time by Patterson, who broke at least four tackles on the game-breaking 67-yarder that made it 20-3. He had carries of 23 and 12 yards in the first half to go with three receptions for 26 yards.

“He’s a tremendous talent,” Peterson said. “As soon as he got that pitch and I saw that great block by Matt (Kalil) I pretty much threw my hands up.

“I knew he had the ability to take it the distance.”

QUARTERBACK WOES

Shaun Hill stood on the sideline with arms crossed far away from the action

most of the second half and deferred injury updates to coach Jeff Fisher. The Rams signed Case Keenum last week but if Hill can’t go, Austin Davis will make his first career start next week at Tampa Bay.

Davis, who backed up Kellen Clemens the last nine games in 2013, was 16 for 23 for 192 yards in his NFL debut. But he had an interception returned 81 yards by Harrison Smith for a tack-on TD late in the game.

BIG LEG

As a rookie in 2012, Blair Walsh kicked three field goals of 50-plus yards in a victory at St. Louis. He got the Vikings on the board early with a 52-yarder and added a 46-yarder in the opening minute of the second quarter. That was the only scoring before the Vikings capitalized on Josh

Robinson’s interception and Matt Cassel threw an 8-yard TD pass to Greg Jennings just before halftime.

Rams kicker Greg Zuerlein had been 7 for 13 from 50-plus before hooking a 50-yarder in the first quarter. He later connected from 56 and 46 yards.

SIDELINE DUTY

Rams offensive lineman Greg Robinson was the second overall pick of the draft and was supposed to open the season as a starting guard. He alternated at guard and tackle throughout training camp, partly as insurance in case Jake Long wasn’t ready coming off a knee injury. So far, he’s mastered neither spot. He filled in at guard after Rodger Saffold left with a neck injury in the fourth quarter, but before that had been used only on special teams.

MOVING ON

Understandably, the Vikings’ locker room was exuberant. Defensive end Everson Griffin, who had two sacks, gushed that his team had “the best game plan in the world.” But Zimmer was careful not to get carried away.

“They played well today,” the coach said. “That was today and next week will be a different week.”

Even after losing Bradford, the Rams had been optimistic about a breakthrough season. They were far too sloppy in the opener with 13 penalties for 121 yards along with numerous missed tackles, and Vikings fans drowned out the few thousand partisans who stuck it out.

“I told the team this is not going to define our season, it’s just the opener,” Fisher said. “We’ve got work to do.”

Vikings defense makes dominant debut

EDEN PRAIRIE (AP) — One touchdown. Two interceptions. Five sacks. Six forced punts. Six points allowed.

The revamped Minnesota Vikings defense could hardly have made a better 2014 debut.

“It’s nice not to come in here and apologize things away,” linebacker Chad Greenway said on Monday.

Mike Zimmer’s first game as a head coach, a 34-6 victory by the Vikings at St. Louis, featured plenty of positive signs from a team that stumbled to a 1-7 start last year and finished in last place in the NFC North at 5-10-1.

The defense that allowed an NFL-most average of 30 points per game, albeit against a team that turned to third-string quarterback Austin Davis in the second half, was downright dominant.

The longest running play by the Rams went for 7 yards. Of the 318 total

yards allowed, 109 of them came late in the fourth quarter after the Vikings built a 27-3 lead. Only once did the Rams advance past the 20-yard line.

The system Zimmer uses is a basic 4-3 setup, but it’s built around frequently shifting alignments designed to keep the offense guessing. The disguises sure worked well in St. Louis.

“It’s awesome. They don’t know where we’re going to be,” defensive end Everson Griffin said. “We could be on the right. We could be on the left. It shows how much talent we have on this team and how they’re going to use us within the scheme.”

Seven new starters are only part of the new look that the Vikings defense



Mike Zimmer

took into the season.

They rotated their defensive linemen even more than in the past, with seven of them playing 25 percent or more of the snaps on Sunday.

Griffin, outside linebacker Anthony Barr and defensive end Brian Robison moved around to different spots often. Free safety Harrison Smith picked up a sack on a blitz from the outside, and Zimmer said the lopsided score in the fourth quarter prompted a reduction in the amount of times they sent a linebacker or a defensive back as an extra pass rusher.

“If we can be unpredictable and not allow them to just game-plan every single person on the field, put us in different positions, have different blitzes, show different ways and things like that,” Robison said, “it keeps them off balance.”

Even with Sam Bradford, whose knee injury knocked him out for the year, at quar-

terback the Rams have an ordinary-at-best offense that finished with the third-fewest total yards in the league last season. After backup Shaun Hill hurt his quadriceps, Davis, a third-year undrafted player from Southern Mississippi, took over.

Five weeks from now, the sample size on the Vikings defense will be more accurate.

In consecutive games starting this Sunday, they must face the following quarterbacks: Tom Brady (New England), Drew Brees (New Orleans), Matt Ryan (Atlanta), Aaron Rodgers (Green Bay) and Matthew Stafford (Detroit). About the only member of the NFL’s elite missing from that list is Peyton Manning.

Yikes.

“We’re going to worry about Tom Brady first, and then we’ll worry about the guys after that,” Robison said.

That might explain some

of the temperance of enthusiasm.

“Clearly there were many, many, many things that we have to clean up in order to be a good football team or to get to my expectation levels and the team’s expectation level,” Zimmer said. “But it was a good start, and we look forward to try to build on what we’ve done.”

Cornerback Captain Munnerylyn was bothered by the late yards the Vikings gave up.

“I know at the end of the day they only had six points, but I’m a guy who has pride in myself. I want to be the best. And I want us to be the best defense,” he said.

But look back at the scoreboard. This was an unquestionably encouraging start.

“Anytime you can go out there and not play a perfect game and have the result that we had, it kind of boosts your morale,” Robison said.

FOOTBALL

➤ continued from B1

Late in the first half, Falls’ running game, which included a 32-yard run by Tyler Coffield, advanced the Broncos near the end zone. However, the drive halted on a quarterback sack of Jakob Eide.

“We’ve just got to get that one or two plays that puts us in the end zone and we’ll be OK,” said Falls lineman Jack Bartkowski.

Coffield ended up with 54 yards rushing, while Nick Hedtke led the Falls with 59 yards on the ground.

“(The Lumberjacks) were a good team,” Hedtke said. “We had a lot of small mistakes.... We’ve just got to correct those and come out against Proctor next (Friday).”

Gerlach gave Cloquet a five-touchdown lead to start the second half when he returned the kickoff into the end zone from 75 yards away.

Cloquet then put together two fourth-quarter scoring drives, in which Niemi kicked a 27-yard field goal and Christian Pritchett had a 13-yard touchdown run.

Falls’ season record now stands at 0-2 overall and 0-1 in the Sea-Range Conference going into next Friday’s road game at Proctor, the first of three consecutive away games in three weeks.

EMO SPEEDWAY

Fan Appreciation Night wraps up 2014 season

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The final week of racing for 2014 wrapped up Saturday at the Emo Speedway with Fan Appreciation Night.

The feature winners in all three classes picked up sweeps by also winning

their respective heats as Gavin Paull took the top spot in the WISSOTA Modifieds, Paul Veert won in the WISSOTA Midwest Modifieds and Tylar Wilson finished first in the Street Stocks.

Next up is the annual awards banquet set for Oct. 11.

Emo Speedway September 6 Results SUMMARY

WISSOTA Modifieds

Feature - Gavin Paull, Jeff Davis, Greg Ferris, Tyler Brown, Glen Strachan, Garrett Gamsby, Lindsay Bourre, Ron Korpi.

Heat - Paull, Davis, Ferris, Brown, Strachan, Bourre, Gamsby, Korpi.

WISSOTA Midwest Modifieds

Feature - Paul Veert, John Hettinga, Anthony Visser, Cody Ossachuk, Terry Martin, Brody Strachan, Kenny Perry, Jake Rea, Ken Perry, Brendan Veert.

Heat 1 - Hettinga, Ossachuk, Visser, Ken Perry, Kenny Perry.

Heat 2 - P. Veert, Rea, Martin, Strachan, B. Veert.

Street Stocks

Feature - Tylar Wilson, Dean Kellar, Kyle Godin, Jeff Wickstrom, Andrew Trimble, Chris Shine, Devin Brown, Terry Henry, Libby Wilson, Jon Woodgate, Tyler Wickstrom, AJ Kellar.

Heat 1 - T. Wilson, Trimble, J. Wickstrom, Shine, Brown, T. Wickstrom.

Heat 2 - Godin, D. Kellar, L. Wilson, Woodgate, Henry, AJ Kellar.

Cloquet 45, Int'l Falls 0

Cloquet 14 14 7 10 - 45

Int'l Falls 0 0 0 0 - 0

Scoring: C: Zach Gerlach, 9-yard run (Nick Niemi kick); **C:** Gerlach, 67-yard pass from Nathan Weets (Niemi kick); **C:** Kyle Klatt, 1-yard run (Niemi kick); **C:** Gerlach 43-yard run (Niemi kick); **C:** Gerlach, 75-yard kickoff return (Niemi kick); **C:** Niemi, 27-yard field goal; **C:** Christian Pritchett, 13-yard run (Niemi kick).

Team statistics: IF: 94 yards rushing, 42 passing, 136 total. **C:** 254 yards rushing, 148 passing, 402 total.

Rushing: IF: Nick Hedtke, 12-59; Tyler Coffield, 12-54; Shane Nicholson, 4-19; Lane Skallman, 4-6; Ben Humbert, 2-1; Wyatt Helgeson, 2-4; Jakob Eide, 3-(-15); Riley Nemeck, 1-(-21).

Passing: IF: Eide, 5-8, 42 yards; Nemeck, 0-1, 0 yards.

Receiving: IF: Humbert, 2-26; Helgeson, 1-13; Aaron Bennett, 1-2; Riley Rasmussen, 1-1.

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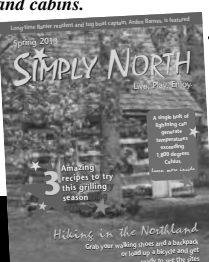
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