

SPORTS

Kill looks on as Minnesota tops Northwestern 20-17

EVANSTON, Ill. (AP) — Minnesota coach Jerry Kill may be on a health-related leave but he wasn't about be stuck at home Saturday.

So Kill hopped in a car with his wife, Rebecca, at the wheel and arrived at Northwestern's Ryan Field in time to give his Golden Gopher team an unexpected lift.

With the third-year coach watching from a skybox, Minnesota rallied in the second half to upend the host Wildcats 20-17.

"If the coach can make the effort to get here and drive, we can dig a little bit deeper and play just a little bit harder," acting Gophers coach Tracy Claeys said. "It would be special to be able to finish it off. I'm so proud of them that they did that against a good football team."

Kill, sidelined indefinitely as he deals with recent series of epileptic seizures, addressed his players at halftime and after the game.

"We saw him at half-time and it was shocker," linebacker James Manuel said. "And then at the end of the game it was a special moment for the team, as a whole, hearing him speak. Having his presence there just really gave us a tremendous boost going into the second half."

The Gophers (5-2, 1-2) turned two second half turnovers into scores as they snapped a two-game losing streak en route to their first Big Ten win.

Manuel broke a 7-7 tie with a 24-yard third quarter interception return and Chris Hawthorne turned another Wildcat turnover into a 34-yard field goal in the fourth.

Kill watched Manuel pick off Wildcat quarterback Trevor Siemian with 1:22 for a go-ahead score. The Gophers made it 17-7 just 87 seconds later on Hawthorne's field goal after recovering a Wildcat fumble.

Hawthorne's 38-yard field goal with 5:24 remaining made it 20-10. Northwestern cut the deficit to 20-17 on a 10-yard touchdown strike from Siemian to Tony Jones with 2:07 remaining.

Northwestern (4-3, 0-3) dropped its third straight but Wildcat coach Pat Fitzgerald remained upbeat.

"If we just go out and make a few more plays this thing turns right around," he said. "We have five more games left to play, we've got five great opportunities ahead of us and that's the way we've got to approach it."

Gopher quarterback



Jerry Kill

Philip Nelson was 8-of-11 for 112 yards, including a touchdown strike to Derrick Engel. Running back David Cobb rushed 20 times for 103 yards.

Siemian completed 25 of 46 passes for 234 yards but was picked off twice and fumbled once. Jones had eight catches for 84 yards.

Northwestern opened the scoring on Stephen Buckley's first career touchdown with 1:53 left in the first quarter. Buckley's 3-yard score capped a drive on which he had a 33-yard reception and an 11-yard run.

Minnesota tied the game at 7-7 as Nelson hit Engel hit on a 29-yard touchdown pass with 6:48 left in the first half.

Hawthorne's try for a go-ahead 44-yard field goal just before halftime sailed wide left.

Minnesota's defense shut down a promising Northwestern drive deep into Gopher territory early in the final frame. The Wildcats settled for a 35-yard Jeff Budzien field goal that cut the Gopher lead to 17-10 with 11:09 left in regulation.

After Hawthorne's second field goal, Northwestern converted on three fourth downs in a 75-yard scoring drive that culminated in Jones' 10-yard TD reception.

That proved to be the Wildcats' last stand.

"We know we're a good football team, a really, really good football team," Wildcat linebacker Collin Ellis said. "Right now there's a bad taste in our mouth; everyone is upset. As hard as we practiced last week, we have to practice that much harder this week."

Two key Northwestern players were sidelined with reported ankle injuries: tailback Venric Mark and quarterback Kain Colter, who was dressed but only available in an emergency role.

Minnesota hosts Nebraska next Saturday while Northwestern travels to Iowa.

Giants get 1st win, beat sloppy Vikings 23-7

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — With six losses on their resume, the New York Giants could have been wondering if they would ever win a game this season.

Instead, they searched within to see what they are made of.

"The players and coaches have great pride in what we're doing," Eli Manning said Monday night after — at last — the team's first victory, 23-7 over the Minnesota Vikings. "We just had to keep going, get rid of some of the mistakes, and play the way we need to play."

They were efficient, if not overwhelming, which is all they needed to be against the mistake-prone Vikings (1-5).

The Giants began the season as the team turning over the ball (minus-16 difference) while showing little penchant for playing defense. But against the Vikings, they had three takeaways to one lost fumble.

Adrian Peterson, the league's MVP last season and a 2,000-yard rusher, was held to 28 yards five days after his 2-year-old son was buried in South Dakota. The man accused in the death was indicted on second-degree murder and manslaughter charges, prosecutors said Monday.

"It was tough sledding. We couldn't get anything established up front," Peterson said.

"I was focused on preparing for the game, unfortunately it didn't work out the way we wanted to. It was tough. The defense made it hard."

Peterson was not helped by a rusty Josh Freeman, making his debut as Vikings quarterback after being signed as a free agent when Tampa Bay cut the 2009 first-round draft pick. Freeman frequently missed open receivers, and several of his throws sailed yards beyond his targets.

Coach Leslie Frazier said he considered taking out Freeman, but that the score was close enough for him to stick with his new QB.

Josh Brown kicked three field goals and Rueben Randle caught a 24-yard TD pass for New York (1-6).

"For us, we can't look too much past a win and a step in the right direction," defensive tackle Cullen Jenkins said. "We can't look beyond the next step."

Marcus Sherels provided Minnesota's points with an



Josh Freeman

86-yard punt return, but his fumble without being hit during a runback midway in the third quarter set up New York at the Vikings 3.

Peyton Hillis, signed last Wednesday with the Giants in dire need of running backs, surged in from the 1 for a 17-7 lead — New York's biggest in 2013.

The lead grew on Brown's 23-yard field goal to finish off a 16-play, 75-yard drive, and to 23-7 on his 36-yarder. Another Vikings mistake handed those points to the Giants: Rookie Sharif Floyd, a defensive tackle of all things, fumbled at Minnesota's 18 while returning a short kickoff.

"We needed to get one on the board," defensive end Justin Tuck said. "I told (general manager) Jerry Reese that I think we have a shovel to start digging our way out of this hole. Hopefully, tonight is something we can build off. It's still a long way to climb out of this hole. But this was something that we could get the ball rolling."

The Giants controlled the clock and the ball for most of the opening quarter and led 3-0 when Sherels broke his spectacular punt return — the third against the Giants this season. He sped down the left side-

line virtually untouched, then twice faked out punter Steve Weatherford. By the time Weatherford reached Sherels, it was at the goal line — where Weatherford brought him down with a horse-collar tackle.

Minnesota had a total of 8 yards on punt runbacks heading into Monday night. But Sherels set a team mark with 119.

Before Sherels' sprint, New York had gone 17 plays and used up the first 9:36, but bogged down at the 16 and Brown made a 35-yard field goal.

And one play after Minnesota hurt itself on rookie Xavier Rhodes' 23-yard pass interference penalty, Manning threw a laser to a leaping Randle in the left corner of the end zone for a 10-7 lead.

It was the first time New York led at halftime all season. The defense held Peterson to 9 yards rushing on eight carries, and he didn't do much more in the second half.

Manning, who led the league with 15 interceptions, didn't throw one for the first time all season. And while Freeman was picked only one time, by Antrel Rolle, he looked like someone who hadn't played in more than a month.



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

RRCC defensive player Rebekah Ford advances the puck during a practice last week at Kerry Park Arena. Ford is one of three players on the Voyageurs' 2013-14 roster from International Falls along with forwards Bailey Bernard and Jordan Bright.

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the season at Bronco Arena this coming weekend when they host the four-team "Can Am Tournament," in which RRCC has its first game at 9 a.m.

Saturday against the Northern Stars.

Confederation College is then scheduled to play the Voyageurs at 4 p.m. Saturday. RRCC closes out the tournament at 11 a.m. Sunday against Lakehead University.

Minnesota Timberwolves season preview: A new hope

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The opening training camp practice of the season for the Minnesota Timberwolves lasted a little more than three hours. The day closed with a spirited scrimmage between the starters and the second unit.

Sixteen minutes into the scrimmage, the Timberwolves core of Kevin Love, Ricky Rubio and Nikola Pekovic had already spent more time on the floor together than they did all of last season.

That's right. The young core that is supposed to bury nine years of futility this season and get the Timberwolves back to the playoffs this season spent a grand total of 15 minutes on the floor together as a group last year. Love only played in 18 games because of a twice-broken hand, Rubio didn't get going until the middle of December while recovering from the torn ACL in his right knee suffered the previous March and the bruising Pekovic missed 20 games throughout the year with a variety of injuries that come from banging in the paint.

"It's great to play with those guys," Rubio said. "They have a lot of talent. It's easy to play with them. We just have to get back our chemistry that we had. Last year we couldn't play a lot of minutes because of the injuries. But we are on the same page, and that's going to help."

It better. The Wolves haven't made the playoffs since Kevin Garnett led them to the Western Conference finals in 2004.

They signed Pekovic to a five-year deal worth \$60 million this summer, showing that they believe the trio can eventually become a championship-level core. But there is a sense of urgency. Love can become a free agent in 2015, Rubio is under team control for two more years and coach Rick Adelman is 67 years old and considered retiring in the offseason to be with his wife, Mary Kay, who is being treated for seizures.

"We all know what happened last year and we just want to move forward and take care of the unfinished business," Love said.

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