SPORTS

Vikings can't hold early lead, lose 16-14 to Lions

DETROIT (AP) — After being overwhelmed by Detroit's pass rush in Minnesota's earlier meeting with the Lions, Teddy Bridgewater confidently led the Vikings to two early touchdowns in the rematch.

That alone was progress — but it wasn't enough for an upset victory.

Bridgewater went 31 of 41 for 315 yards with a touchdown, but his two interceptions in the second quarter helped start Detroit's rally, and the Lions ended up beating Minnesota 16-14 on Sunday. Blair Walsh missed a 68-yard field goal on the final play that could have won it for the Vikings.

"As I told the team, I'm not into moral victories but these guys fought and played and scratched and clawed and gave a great effort today," Minnesota coach Mike Zimmer said. "I thought we did an awful lot of good things."

Bridgewater was sacked eight times in a 17-3 loss to the Lions in October. Detroit had four sacks Sunday, but Minnesota's rookie quarterback was difficult to rattle.

The Vikings (6-8) held Detroit to 11 first downs, but after Jason Jones blocked Walsh's 26-yard field goal attempt with 7:43 left, the Lions drove 65 yards to set up Matt Prater's third short field goal of the game. His 33-yarder put the Lions ahead 16-14 with 3:38 remaining.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY ERIC ANDRE

Vikings quarterback Teddy Bridgewater (5) slides on the turf before being tackled by Lions linebacker Tahir Whitehead (59) in Sunday's game at Ford Field.

Detroit (10-4) then withstood two more tense possessions for the Vikings.

Trailing for the first time all day, the Vikings had a good chance to take the lead again after Cordarrelle Patterson returned the ensuing kickoff to the Minnesota 49. But a holding call pushed the Vikings back, and Bridgewater eventually threw incomplete on fourth down.

The Vikings got the ball again at their 30 with 45 seconds left, but could only make it far enough to set up Walsh's long attempt at a game winner. Zimmer decided to go for the field goal instead of a last-ditch pass.

"Either one is kind of a shot in the dark, but Blair has hit 70-yarders in practice before," Zimmer said. "So I figured that was the best chance to win."

Walsh couldn't convert. He also missed from 53 yards earlier in the game.

Matthew Stafford threw for 153 yards and a touchdown for the Lions, who pulled into a first-place tie with Green Bay in the NFC North.

In its last home game of the regular season, Detroit looked flat in the first half, falling behind by two touchdowns and drawing boos from the crowd at Ford Field. The Lions couldn't manage a first down until the second quarter, on their fifth offensive possession.

Matt Asiata opened the scoring with a 2-yard touchdown run. Bridgewater added an 8-yard TD pass to Greg Jennings in the second quarter to make it 14-0. The Vikings were in Detroit territory again when Glover Quin intercepted Bridgewater and returned it 56 yards to the Minnesota 11.

"We did everything we could to hurt ourselves in the first half, in every phase, but GQ made a huge play to get us back into the game," Stafford said.

Stafford threw a 7-yard touchdown pass to Golden Tate, and Bridgewater's next pass was behind Jennings and intercepted by Darius Slay, giving the Lions the ball at the Minnesota 32.

"The second one was just a horrible throw," Bridgewater said. "I was late. When you're late for an out route, I left the ball inside. So I just have to continue to work."

Prater's field goal made it 14-10 at halftime.

Prater, who helped stabilize Detroit's terrible kicking game when he joined the Lions in October, connected from 30 yards in the third quarter to cut the deficit to one. Jones' block in the fourth meant Detroit only needed a field goal to take the lead.

NOTES: The Lions went 7-1 at home during the regular season. The previous time that happened was 1995, when the team still played at the Silverdome. ... Walsh's career long field goal is 56 yards.

Vikings see progress, through a defeat

EDEN PRAIRIE (AP) — The frustrating losses in coach Mike Zimmer's first year with Minnesota have piled up higher than the signature wins.

The latest example came on Sunday at Detroit, when the Vikings let a two-touchdown lead in the second quarter slip into a narrow defeat by the Lions.

The Vikings controlled much of the game against the NFC North co-leaders, a stark contrast from the first matchup the Lions dominated two months ago, but they were ultimately done in by a handful of mistakes.

The patchwork offensive line played capably against one of the best fronts in the league, Teddy Bridgewater completed a career-high 31 passes and the defense allowed only 233 total yards. But two interceptions and three missed field goals proved to be more than the Vikings could overcome in the 16-14 loss.

"Bottom line is we want to be a playoff team. We want to be one of those teams in the race or leading the division," defensive end Brian Robison said. "When we play a team like that, we know that's the type of ball that we can play."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY ERIC ANDRE

From right, Lions quarterback Matthew Stafford (9) runs with the football while being pursued by Vikings defensive end Brian Robison (96) in Sunday's game at Ford Field.

After falling to 6-8, their long-shot wild-card bid now mathematically impossible, the Vikings have one tangible motivation left for 2014. They play at Miami this week and finish the year at home against Chicago, with another opportunity for Zimmer's first NFC North victory.

"To be even at .500, that's a good goal," left tackle Matt Kalil said, adding: "It's two games that we can definitely win."

Zimmer was irritated after the Vikings beat the New York Jets in overtime on Dec. 7, believing that game should have been sealed long before the winning score. This time, against a better opponent, the coach sounded more understanding and appreciative even as he was dissatisfied with another defeat.

"I get calls and texts from people and coaches, and they say what a good football team we look like and the things we're doing right and the things that we're doing," Zimmer said on Monday. "And maybe they're just telling me to be nice. I don't think that. But we're doing so many good things."

The interceptions and missed kicks aside, the Vikings still had two late drives to move into position for victory. But a holding penalty and a failure to get out of bounds and stop the clock, and the signs of a still-maturing team were apparent in the clutch.

"My mindset has not changed. As I told the team, we're going to stick with it, keep working on getting better because we've got something to build for the future," Zimmer said.

Bridgewater, fittingly, has been a microcosm of this team's status. For the third straight week, Bridgewater completed more than 70 percent of his passes. He turned in his second straight 300-yard game. But two errant throws in the second quarter were picked off by the Lions, leading to 10 points.

SIJHL HOCKEY

Lakers win two on road

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Fort Frances Lakers remain atop the five-team Superior International Junior Hockey League standings after winning two road games last weekend.

Forward Lucas DeBenedet of International Falls recorded a hat trick while Wyatt Cota dished out three assists Friday night when the Lakers defeated the Dryden Ice Dogs, 6-2, in an SIJHL contest held at Memorial Arena.

Fort Frances pulled out to a 3-0 lead after the first 20 minutes. DeBenedet scored the first goal on the power play 2:26 into the game and then gave the Lakers a 2-0 lead with his second goal about six minutes later.

Carter Chorney extended the Fort Frances lead to 3-0 at 12:01 of the opening period when he put the puck past Dryden goalie Tate Sproxton.

The Ice Dogs used the power play to get on the scoreboard 4:49 into the second period when Anthony Filoso picked up his second goal since joining the club a month ago.

Fort Frances pulled back in front by three goals when A.J. Kapcheck scored at 17:35 of the second period.

The Lakers then put the game away in the final period on goals from Dylan Robertson and DeBenedet, before Cole Golka scored for Dryden on the power play in the final minute to close out the scoring.

Devin Tappenden made 30 saves to record the win in net for Fort Frances, while Sproxton stopped 21 shots in the loss.

LAKERS 5, NORTH STARS 2

Fort Frances jumped out to a five-goal lead in the first period and held on from there Saturday night to defeat the Thunder Bay North Stars, 5-2, in SIJHL action at the Fort William Gardens.

Forward Mason Meyer of International Falls opened the scoring for the Lakers at 7:40 of the opening period before Cota extended the lead to 2-0 at 10:04.

Fort Frances scored three more times in the opening period on goals from Matt Vela, Josh Gouin and DeBenedet.

To Mason Hanover & The CINE 5 Crew

Thanks for another great year of entertainment at CINE 5!

We appreciate your support and kindness toward individuals with disabilities.

Rainy River Waivered Services, Inc.
Jim Hess, Raynita Houglum, Clients & Staff

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

at
Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
4:00 p.m.
on
Christmas Eve

PULL TABS • PULL TABS AVAILABLE • PULL TABS AVAILABLE • PULL TABS • PLAY PULL TABS • PLAY PULL TABS • PLAY PULL TABS • PLAY PULL TABS • PLAY PULL TABS • PLAY PULL TABS • PLAY PULL TABS • PLAY PULL TABS • PULL TABS AVAILABLE • PULL TABS AVAILABLE • PULL TABS

VFW Post

Friday & Saturday

December 19 & 20
Friday night Burgers 5-8 pm
VFW DJ

Daily Specials
Margarita's Tues. Late Night
Happy Hour Wed. Buckets of Beer & Free Pool
Thurs. Throw Back Beers Fri. Meat Raffle @ 6:30 pm
Loaded Bloody Mary's every Sunday starting at 10 am

RENT OUR BANQUET ROOM FOR A GREAT RATE!

BINGO
Every Tuesday at 7 pm
Now Play Electronic Pull tabs & Bingo!
Reg. games still available

Mon. 6:30 pm - Whist • Wed. 6:30 pm - Gin
Sat. 2:00 pm - Cribbage

Play Pull Tabs • VFW 2948 Gambling Lic. #A-00071