

SPORTS

SIJHL HOCKEY

Meyer scores twice in Lakers’ season-opening win

FHS grad then scores game-winner

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Forward Mason Meyer of International Falls scored twice Friday night when the defending Superior International Junior Hockey League-champion Fort Frances Lakers began the defense of their league title with a 5-3 home victory over the Thunder Bay North Stars at Ice for Kids Arena.

Prior to the start of the game, Fort Frances raised its championship banner to the rafters at IFK to commemorate the first title in franchise history won last season.

Matthias Gardiman gave the visiting North Stars the lead with the lone goal of the opening period.

The Lakers scored four times in the second period to lead 4-2 after 40 minutes by getting goals from Miles Nolan, Colton Spicer, Meyer and Dylan Kooner, while Brandon Wolframe scored for Thunder Bay.

Each team added a third-period goal on the power play to round out the scoring with Wolframe and Meyer each ending up with two goals on the evening.

Devin Tappenden made 29 saves to record the win in net for Fort Frances, while Eric Mann faced 34 shots in

a losing cause for the North Stars.

LAKERS 4, IRON RANGERS 3

Meyer, a 2012 FHS graduate who is playing his third season for Fort Frances, scored the game-winning goal with less than a minute remaining Sunday afternoon to lift the visiting Lakers to a 4-3 victory over the Minnesota Iron Rangers in SIJHL play at Hoyt Lakes Arena.

Drew Millis gave the Iron Rangers an early lead when he scored the only goal of the opening period.

Nolan tied it for the Lakers with the first of three power-play goals on the day for Fort Frances at 2:26 of the second period.

A man-advantage goal by Minnesota’s Hunter Routheau put the Rangers back on top six minutes later, only to see the Lakers’ Jake Holland score on the power play to tie the game at 11:02.

Fort Frances took its first lead of the day with a goal in the final seconds of the second period when Carter Chorney connected on the power play before time expired.

A.J. Rupert tied things up for Minnesota five and a half minutes into the third,



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From right, Lakers forward Mason Meyer of International Falls unloads a shot while being guarded by Thunder Bay’s Brandon Wolframe (23) to score his second goal of Friday night’s game at Ice for Kids Arena in Fort Frances.

but with overtime looming, Meyer finished off a feed by Alex Rezansoff to give the Lakers the victory.

Tappenden made 39 saves in net for Fort Frances to register the win.

Chase Gorman faced 30

shots in defeat for the Iron Rangers.

The 2-0 Lakers return to action today when they

travel to Dryden to take on the also 2-0 Ice Dogs in a 7:30 p.m. start at Memorial Arena.

As Bridgewater takes over, several Viking starters hurting

EDEN PRAIRIE (AP) — The Minnesota Vikings have begun the week in ambiguous mode, stung by injuries and disappointed by a second straight defeat yet buoyed by the earlier-than-anticipated arrival of their rookie quarterback.

The offense around Teddy Bridgewater has been depleted of several starters, but maybe the kid will be all right. Like any debuting first-round draft pick, Bridgewater brings not a boost of optimism for the team as well as an undetermined ceiling for his performance.

“A lot of poise for a rookie. I mean, an incredible amount, and he can throw the ball around the field,” center John Sullivan said. “So we’re excited.”

Sullivan went even further in response to a question about the team’s confidence in Bridgewater.

“We should win every single game we play with him at quarterback,” he



Teddy Bridgewater



Kyle Rudolph

said.

Well, that would’ve been a tall task, obviously, even at full strength. Bridgewater’s first NFL start this Sunday against Atlanta, with Matt Cassel sidelined for a while because of broken bones in his left foot, will have the benefit of being at home. He will likely, however, be without the No. 1 running back, No. 1 tight end, No. 3 wide receiver and starting right guard the Vikings expected to have at this point in the season.

“You never plan on having this many injuries as you have, but we’re not go-

ing to make excuses about it,” coach Mike Zimmer said Monday.

Running back Adrian Peterson remains out indefinitely, of course, with the charge of child abuse pending against him in Texas. This was going to be the week that wide receiver Jerome Simpson returned from a three-game suspension, but the Vikings released him Thursday after news broke of more off-the-field trouble.

Then Sunday in New Orleans, the Vikings lost more than just by the 20-9 margin. Five key players had to leave the game because they were hurt:

■ Tight end Kyle Rudolph aggravated an abdominal injury that had been bothering him since early in the preseason. Rudolph is expected to miss about six weeks but wanted to have surgery as soon as possible to try and return in time for the second half of the season.

Rudolph signed a five-year contract extension in July and was poised for a breakout season under new offensive coordinator Norv Turner.

“I’ve always tried to demonstrate that these times can define you as a person. This latest setback will be no different,” Rudolph tweeted. “I will prove that my determination and dedication to this team, city, and most importantly, our fans, will carry me back to where I belong.”

■ Cassel will see a specialist Thursday before a timetable for his recovery is determined. Zimmer said signing another quarterback, and tight end, was under consideration.

■ Right guard Brandon Fusco hurt his pectoral muscle, in the chest area, and was slated for a second medical opinion.

■ Nickel cornerback Josh Robinson hurt his right hamstring, the muscle that limited him for

much of training camp.

■ Linebacker Chad Greenway, who also played against the Saints with a broken left hand, aggravated a rib injury he was already dealing with last week. Asked whether Greenway could play through that against the Falcons, Zimmer said, “Not like he did this week.”

Elaborating, Zimmer second-guessed himself for allowing Greenway to play after being in too much pain to practice during the week.

“He had a hard game yesterday. It’s my fault,” Zimmer said.

The defense played well for much of the afternoon but had a rough start and a costly stretch late in the game with the Saints clinging to a 13-9 lead. Captain Munnerlyn’s wrestling-style takedown of Drew Brees for third-down sack drew an unnecessary roughness penalty, and the Saints converted two more

third-and-long situations on their way to the insurance touchdown.

“It was a bad call. The referee, he never blew the whistle,” Munnerlyn said, vowing to appeal a fine. He added: “I feel like it changed the game for my team. So I’ve just got to learn from it and try not to make that mistake again.”

On offense, the Peterson-less ground game has been punchless. Protection by the offensive line, particularly left tackle Matt Kalil, has become an increasing concern.

“He allows one play to affect the second play sometimes,” Zimmer said, adding: “It’s like a golfer when he misses a putt and then he goes up on the tee box and has a bad drive. We’re all going to have bad plays. He has enough athletic ability and physical skills and mental toughness. He has all those things. Now, he can’t compound it by making another mistake.”

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