

SPORTS

VIKINGS-DOLPHINS PREVIEW

Miami seeks to snap losing streak against Minnesota

BY JEFF MEZYDLO
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Even if the Miami Dolphins can turn things around in the final two weeks of the season, that might not be enough to save Joe Philbin's job.

The Dolphins and their embattled coach look to avoid a third straight defeat when they host the pesky Minnesota Vikings on Sunday.

Miami (7-7) appeared to be in decent shape to end its five-year playoff drought while sitting at 5-3 at the halfway mark. The second half of the season hasn't gone nearly as well, and the Dolphins have been outscored 69-26 in the last two weeks.

A 41-13 loss at New England last Sunday further fueled speculation that Philbin will be fired after the season. He met with owner Stephen Ross following the game and the two expect to talk more this week.

"Players were disappointed. Coaches are disappointed. Owners are disappointed," said Philbin, 22-24 in three seasons with the Dolphins. "I think that's understandable."

Naturally, Philbin would rather focus on the present and not his future.

"Right now what's relevant is getting our team to play up to their potential for 60 minutes against the Minnesota Vikings," he said. "That's really all that is important to me right now."

Though Philbin's days



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY ERIC ANDRE

From left, Vikings running back Matt Asiata (44) runs with the football while being pursued by Lions safety James Ihedigbo (32) in Sunday's game at Ford Field.

in South Florida might be numbered, his team still has a chance to make the postseason. Miami must win Sunday and at home against the lowly New York Jets, plus receive plenty of help to get in.

"I believe in the players. I have confidence in the players," Philbin said. "We have an outstanding locker room. Our staff has an excellent working relationship with the players. It's a mutual thing."

What isn't close to excellent is an offense that hasn't scored more than 16 points and been held to 213 rushing yards in the last three contests. Ryan Tannehill has thrown two touchdowns and three interceptions in those three games and been sacked 10 times in the last two.

Jarvis Landry has been one of Miami's few recent

offensive bright spots and continued his strong rookie season with eight catches for 99 yards against the Patriots. Landry leads the Dolphins with 71 receptions and is second with 672 yards and five receiving touchdowns.

"He has so many of the qualities — the toughness, the hands, the instincts — that some of the great receivers have," assistant wide receivers coach Phil McGeoghan told the team's official website. "But at the same time, he's still very unique."

Miami has forced only five turnovers in six games and recorded six sacks in the last five. The Dolphins gave up 661 rushing yards at 5.8 per carry in three games before yielding 108 and 3.7 against New England.

The Patriots, however, went 8 of 13 on third down.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Voyageurs drain Leech Lake, 109-93

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Rainy River Community College men's basketball team picked up a victory by scoring over the century mark.

RRCC won Wednesday's road game over Leech Lake Tribal College, 109-93.

"It was an awesome team effort (on offense)," said Voyageurs head coach Kristofer Babler, who noted 11 players scored points.

However, Babler also pointed out he would have liked to have seen RRCC with a better effort on defense. The Voyageurs led 47-42 at halftime and then outscored Leech Lake in the second half, 62-51.

Five RRCC players scored

in double figures led by Sam Stirgus with 30 points, which included four 3-pointers. Sheldon O'Neal came off the bench and added 16 points, which included three 3-pointers. Antoine Tobias and Darius Johnson had 14 points apiece, while Ahmad Poche scored 11 more.

The win improved the Voyageurs' season record to 5-4 going into this weekend's Central Lakes Tournament, in which RRCC is playing its final two games before the holiday break.



Sam Stirgus

YOUTH HOCKEY

Falls Squirt Purple 1-2

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The International Falls Squirt Purple hockey team has played three games so far this season and compiled a 1-2 record going into this weekend's action.

The Squirt Purple opened the season Nov. 29 by hosting Lake of the Woods' Squirt A team, which defeated the Falls, 9-1. Pierce Gouin tallied the lone goal for the Falls unassisted with 6:48 left in the first period.

The Falls' goaltender, Carter McBride, recorded 28 saves in the loss.

V. WHITE 8, F. PURPLE 0
The Falls Purple team trav-

eled to Virginia on Nov. 30 and was shut out by the Virginia White team, 8-0.

The Virginia White outshot the Falls Purple, 40-18. McBride stopped 32 shots in the loss.

F. PURPLE 5, G. WHITE 3
The Falls Purple team hosted the Greenway Raiders White team on Dec. 6 and won, 5-3.

Will Gilbert scored twice and Gavin Loveless had a hat trick for the Falls. McBride made 25 saves to record the win in goal.

Next up for the Falls Purple is a game today against Lake of the Woods, followed up Sunday by two games at Hibbing.

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