

SPORTS

Marcus Sherels  
back for another  
year with Vikings

EDEN PRAIRIE (AP) — On his best day, Marcus Sherels stands 5-foot-9 and probably weighed in just after Thanksgiving dinner to get to his listed weight of 175 pounds.

He played in college at the football afterthought that is Minnesota as a member of one of the worst defenses the NCAA has ever seen. So maybe that's why Sherels has always had a Plan B in mind, ready to implement the minute his career ends.

Truth be told, Sherels has always been Plan B for the Minnesota Vikings as well, and even lower than that when he stepped onto a tryout field in 2010 just hoping for an invite to training camp.

Four seasons later, the Little Cornerback That Could keeps finding ways to stick around.

After a superb showing in the Vikings' preseason finale last week, and an injury to his biggest competition for the last cornerback spot on the roster, Sherels survived the final cut and is now preparing for his fourth season in the NFL.

"It's exciting," Sherels said Monday. "Now I don't have to worry about all that and can just get ready for Detroit and the season."

It was his most trying preseason yet. He lost his father earlier in August. He appeared to be slightly behind Bobby Felder on the depth chart going into the last exhibition game. But Sherels responded with a 109-yard kickoff return for a touchdown and an interception against the Titans. The performance, coupled with an ankle injury to Felder, sealed Sherels' roster spot.

"Marcus really solidified some things in that game, but I don't want to put it on just that game," coach Leslie Frazier said. "He had done a good job all the way up to that point."

The fight and tenacity Sherels has shown in his four years here was patterned after former Vikings cornerback Antoine Winfield, another undersized player who never let shortcomings in height and weight deter him from becoming one of the best tackling cornerbacks the league has seen.

"Antoine was awesome on and off the field," Sherels said. "He was good to every single person, up and down the roster. He's a great guy and I'll always look up to him."

Winfield spent nine seasons in Minnesota, but was stunned when the Vikings



Marcus Sherels

cut him this spring in a cost-saving move. The Vikings tried to bring him back at a lower salary, but the proud veteran would have none

of it. He turned down \$3 million guaranteed from Minnesota for \$1 million guaranteed from the Seattle Seahawks.

But Winfield lost a competition with Walter Thurmond for the nickel cornerback job, then decided to retire after 14 years in the NFL.

The Vikings are short on experienced cornerbacks, so Frazier was asked if they would try to convince Winfield to return one more time.

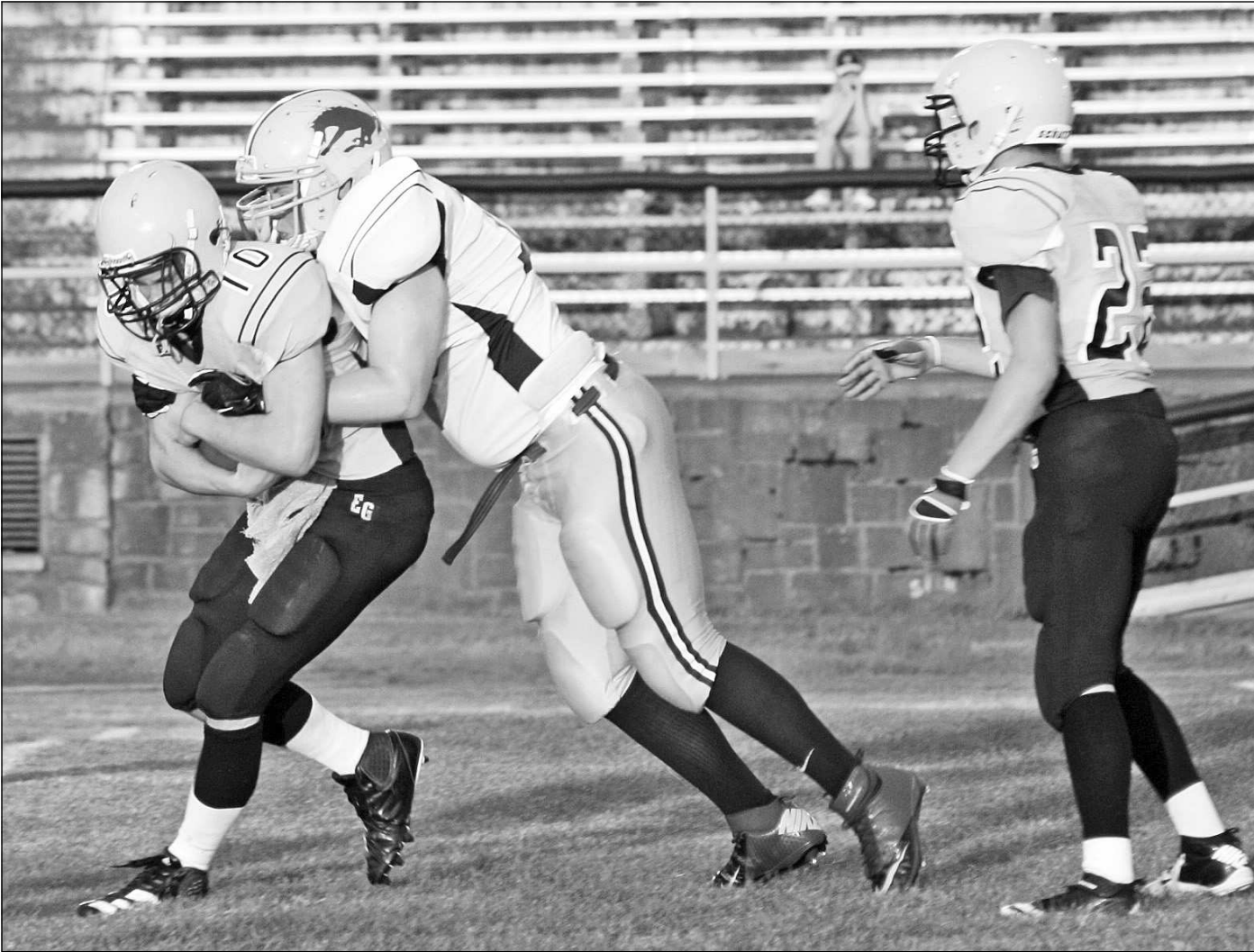
"He did a lot of good things for us here, had a great career here in Minnesota and really helped me look good at times with some of the plays he made," Frazier said. "I have a deep affection for him, but if he wanted to play, I'd welcome the opportunity to work with Antoine again if that's what he wanted to do."

"But if he's retired, I wish him nothing but the best. He's been a great player, a great person and he's going to enjoy retirement."

If Winfield does stay retired, the Vikings will go into the Sept. 8 opener against Detroit's powerful passing attack with fourth-year veteran Chris Cook, second-year pro Josh Robinson and rookie Xavier Rhodes as the top three cornerbacks.

"We got some young guys that are going to be playing, but we've got confidence they can do it," Frazier said. "We've just got to continue to let them evolve and develop. This will be a big week for them, but they'll do a good job. They'll be ready."

**NOTES:** DT Kevin Williams (knee) was the only player who did not practice Monday. Frazier said he would discuss injuries today, but it appears Williams has a long way to go to be prepared to play against the Lions. ... The Vikings claimed veteran OT J'Marcus Webb off waivers from Chicago to add some depth to their offensive line. ... The practice squad for the first week of the season: WR Adam Thielen, RB Joe Banyard, OL Kevin Murphy, G Travis Bond, WR Rodney Smith, TE Chase Ford, DT Everett Dawkins, DE Tristan Okpalaugo.



STAFF PHOTOS BY KEVIN BONESKE

Eveleth-Gilbert quarterback Sam Roberts (10) is tackled by Broncos defensive lineman Brandon Barras in the first half of Friday's season opener.

FOOTBALL

► continued from B1

final two touchdowns in the first 4 minutes of the third quarter.

After the Falls started the second half with the ball from its own 35-yard line, Ettestad scored his third rushing touchdown of the game when he found pay dirt from 25 yards away. The run for the 2-point conversion failed as the Falls led 42-0.

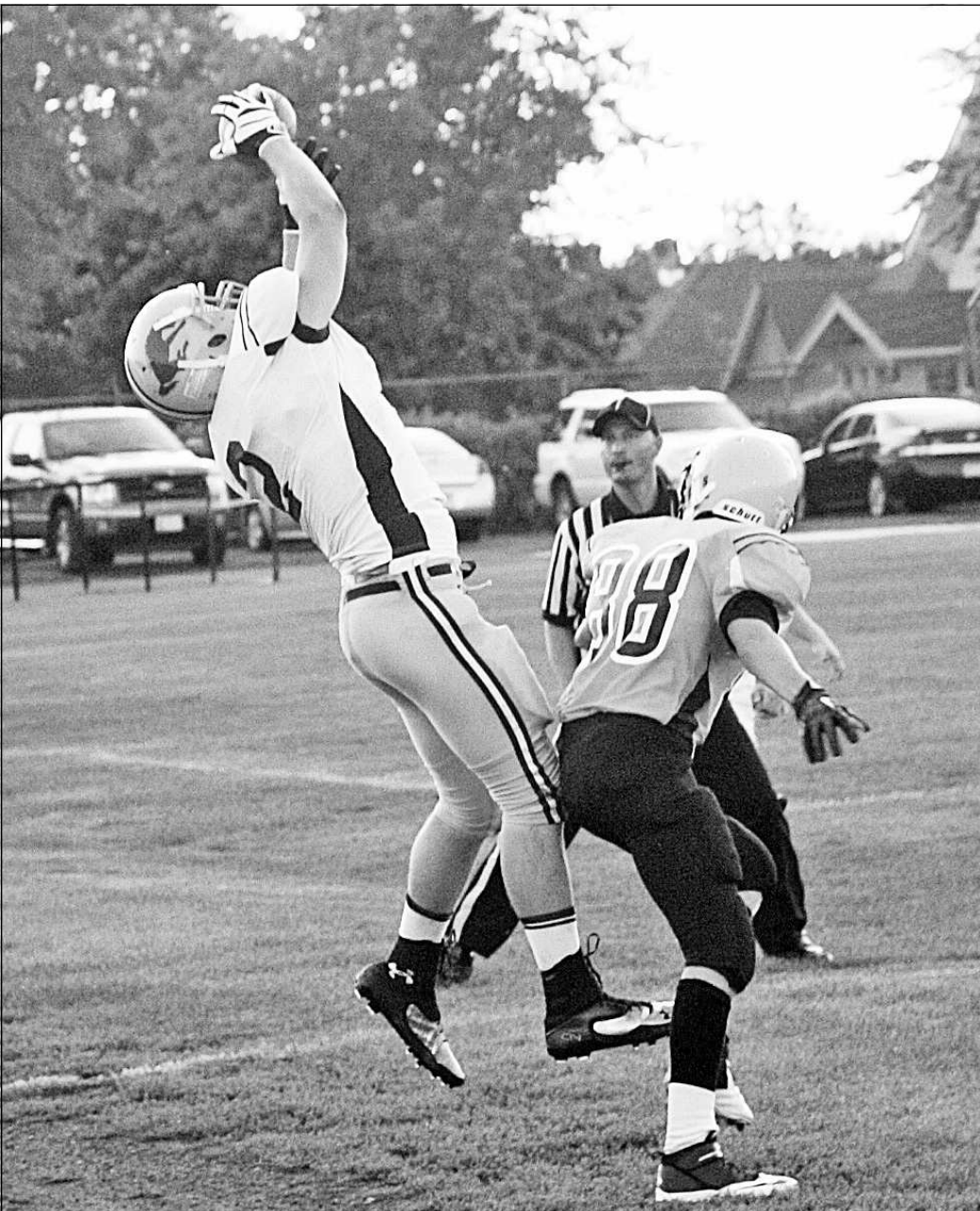
Eveleth-Gilbert fumbled the ensuing kickoff, which the Broncos recovered on the Golden Bears' 34-yard line. Falls freshman running back Nick Hedtker ran in the touchdown with 8:02 to play in the third quarter.

Spilde caught the 2-point conversion pass to extend the lead to 50-0 and then stayed down momentarily after he landed on the gravel road that goes across the end zones.

"I understand this is an old school — they do what they do — but, yeah, this is something that they definitely need to get fixed," Boyle said. "We worry about our guys — we had a few banged up because of it — but I think we came out of it alright."

Substitute players saw plenty of playing time for the Falls in the second half with running time taking effect in the fourth quarter.

"It was tough at the end trying to sub everybody — we had a few hiccups — but it was great for us, it's great for our younger guys," Boyle said. "As I said before, we need our younger players this season — they are



At left, the Broncos' Ben Humbert (2) leaps up to catch a 2-point conversion pass while being covered by Eveleth-Gilbert's Austin Erickson (88) in Friday's season-opening game at Eveleth.

our depth — so I was very happy that everyone got in and got to get the experience that they did."

The Falls, which improved to 1-0, plays next Friday at Cloquet, which

won its season opener over Esko, 19-18.

"It's going to be a step up in the competition next (Friday)," Boyle said. "Cloquet's got a lot of guys out for football. We're really going

to have to be ready to play tough because they're going to be platooning guys."

I. Falls	50	E-G	0
E-G	0	0	0
I. Falls	14	22	14
	0	0	50

For All Your Propane Needs Remember...

Propane • Cenex Lubricants

Propane Appliances Sales & Service

- Switch out your tank for our tank for **FREE!**
- Current customers receive a **FREE** propane safety check!

Please mention this ad when calling to set up your appointment!

**PROPANE**  
EXCEPTIONAL ENERGY®

Littlefork, MN 218-278-6682

Best Food!

Best View!

Join us every Wednesday for BBQ Ribs.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY DINNER FEATURE

Seafood Alfredo

*Shrimp & scallops over creamy alfredo fettuccini, topped with parmesan cheese. Served with fresh vegetables & choice of salad.*

**Thunderbird Lodge**  
~ ON FABULOUS RAINY LAKE ~  
10 miles east of Int'l Falls on Hwy. 11  
**218-286-3151**

Dine Daily ~ 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

www.thunderbirdrainylake.com

St. Thomas Aquinas

**Bingo**

**New-This Fall**

Higher Progressive Jackpot Starting At \$300

~Thursday~ September 12 7:00 PM

Doors Open at 5:45 PM

Bonanza Begins at 6:45 PM

~Pull-Tabs~

~Snack Bar~

Church of St. Thomas Aquinas  
International Falls, MN 56649  
Gambling Lic. #01336