

- NINA MOINI:** You may have heard the Minnesota Vikings named Kyler Murray starting quarterback for the upcoming season. They played their first preseason game against the New York Giants this weekend and won. Joining me to check in on how the team is shaping up and other Minnesota sports news, our sports contributors, Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson. Hey, guys. Happy Monday.
- WALLY LANGFELLOW:** Happy Monday.
- ERIC NELSON:** Yeah, same to you, Nina.
- NINA MOINI:** Wally, I know we were talking about who's it going to be in terms of the quarterback they pick. What do you see in the Vikings preseason opener, though, this weekend? What are you seeing?
- WALLY LANGFELLOW:** Well, I mean Kyler Murray was efficient, if nothing else. Just threw three passes. He was 2 of 3, just 10 yards. But they moved the football down the field. They got a field goal on that opening drive. It was a 10 play drive. The big takeaway, of course, was the running game Aaron Jones, Jordan Mason running the ball well, and I think that might be something that they lean on, particularly early on in the season, as Kyler Murray becomes more and more familiar with the offense and the schemes that Kevin O'Connell likes to run.
- Flip side, JJ McCarthy was so-so. 4 of 7, 31 yards. I mean, nothing certainly to write home to Mom about, but there's still a lot of indecision when he is throwing the football. But Carson Wentz looked pretty good. He was 9 of 14, 81 yards. He threw the game's only touchdown for the Vikings to Myles Price. Price made a spectacular one-handed grab, but Wentz put it exactly where he had to put it as far as that throw goes, and they got into the end zone, as I said, and it gave them the lead, and then they didn't look back. They won at 13 to 10.
- The other takeaway is an unfortunate one, the injury to Jamal Adams. Injury occurred early in the second quarter. Adams stumbled in pass coverage. It was a non-contact play. Fell to the turf at MetLife Stadium, which is field turf. It's not grass. He rolled over, grabbed his right knee, eventually was taken off the field to the locker room, but the knee injury is going to sideline him for the rest of the year. So they just signed him on the eve of training camp, just before training camp start, because he's familiar with general manager Nolan Teasley. Both of them were part of the Seattle Seahawks.
- But he will not be a factor this year for the Minnesota Vikings, unfortunately. Good news is they won. Kyler Murray looked good. Bad news is Adam is out for the year.
- NINA MOINI:** OK. That is too bad. So, Wally, I hear you using words like efficient, and I don't how excited you are about Murray, but do you think this is going to be the quarterback that gets the Vikings to the Super Bowl?
- WALLY LANGFELLOW:** Oh, boy. That's kind of a reach at this point because the Vikings haven't been to the Super Bowl in, hold your hat, 50 years. This is the 50th anniversary of the last time they were in the Super Bowl. He certainly has the talent to do it, Nina. Whether it's going to be health on that offensive line, the Brian O'Neills and Christian Darrisaws of the world. Those guys have to stay healthy. They're very good, but they haven't been out in the field all the time, and Kyler Murray's had trouble staying on the field.

So I think if they stay healthy, they'll certainly be a factor and should be and could be a playoff team. Whether they get all the way to the promised land, the Super Bowl, that remains to be seen. It's a long season, 17 games now. Murray has the talent, and let's just leave it at that. Let's see if all these other things can come together.

NINA MOINI: Well that's encouraging. Eric, what is next for the Vikings?

ERIC NELSON: Yeah, Nina, and before we get to that, I want to expound on that right knee injury to Jamal Adams that Wally talked about. This guy's been in the Pro Bowl three times, so he's very good. And it was a non-contact play, and no one yet is exactly sure what happened to Adams, but this has jump started or reignited a debate that's been going on in the NFL now for a few years. Field turf, artificial surface, versus grass.

Now, 16 NFL teams play on plastic grass. 16 play on natural grass. The Giants play on field turf at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, which is where the game on Saturday was played. This surface is considered one of the worst in the NFL, and the NFL Players Association takes surveys, and the players have said in the surveys, 92% of them want their games on grass.

And, remember, when the World Cup came to the US, Canada, and Mexico, FIFA told every stadium that had field turf like the one in New Jersey, yank it out. Put in real grass. So what we've learned is you can have grass in any stadium, including a dome. They did it in Inglewood, SoFi Stadium, home of the Rams and Chargers. That was a World Cup venue. The Las Vegas Raiders play in a dome. They actually have natural grass.

NINA MOINI: So is it slipperier or what's the issue? Is it just more slippery?

ERIC NELSON: Well, it depends on, obviously, what kind of grass you're putting in and how they take care of it. I know in Vegas and Glendale, Arizona, the grass sits outside of the stadium on a tray and it gets natural sunlight.

NINA MOINI: Oh, I think we lost Eric. Do we have Wally?

WALLY Yeah, well, of course, we do. I'm not going anywhere.

LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: We lost Eric. He was just getting into the grass and the turf. It sounds like the players really prefer grass, but so let's move on to the Lynx, though. The Lynx played the defending champions, the Aces, in Las Vegas this weekend. It looks like it was a close game in the first half. Then what happened, Wally?

WALLY Well, your Lynx get a big win on the road. When you're playing the team that's the defending WNBA champions,
LANGFELLOW: you need all hands on deck, so to speak, and they got that. They got that from Nia Coffey, who came off the bench, scored 12 points.

And part of the reason that they needed Nia Coffey was Napheesa Collier got into some foul trouble, and so that gave Coffey an opportunity to come off the bench and chip in. And, as I said, she had 12 points. She, of course, is a graduate of Hopkins High School right here in the Twin Cities, same place that produced this young lady by the name of Paige Bueckers that nobody has ever heard of before.

[LAUGHS]

But back to Saturday's game. All five starters had at least 12 points. It really shows the balance that this team has. So if you're not stopping Napheesa Collier, if you're not stopping Olivia Miles, you better pay attention to the rest of that lineup, including Kayla McBride, including Olivia Miles. I mean, there's just so many-- they have so many weapons on this team.

Miles, by the way, had 23 points. She led all scorers. And they will be back at it again. They've got a couple of games coming up with Golden State. They've played the Valkyries on Wednesday. That is out there, and then they host the Valkyries one week from tonight at Target Center, and in between they will play the Mystics. That'll be Friday night. That one is on the road as well.

But still the best record in the WNBA at 29 and 7. They look like the team to beat. They should be the team to beat when the playoffs start. But we shall see as time rolls on. Remember, last year they were awfully good as well, and they did not make it to the finals last year, so--

NINA MOINI: OK. I understand we have Eric back. He was so upset about the turf that he hung up.

[LAUGHS]

But we've got your back on the line now. A grass field fan. Let's talk about the Twins, Eric. They came home from the Field of Dreams in Iowa to finish their series against the Phillies. How'd that go?

ERIC NELSON: Yeah, and I want to mention quickly, Nina, Vikings and Ravens Saturday, only home preseason game for Minnesota. High Noon kickoff, and they will have two joint practices at TCO Performance Center Wednesday and Thursday in Eagan. As for the Twins, yeah, they coughed up a 5-0 lead yesterday. Lost to the Phillies 7 to 5, so Philadelphia leaves the Twin Cities with brooms in their hands, because they swept the Twins in a three game series, and that does include the Corn Ball game in Iowa on Thursday.

Tough loss for Minnesota. The Twins squandered a first inning grand slam by Brooks Lee, but Alec Bohm keyed the Philadelphia rally with a 3 run tater in the sixth inning. Minnesota now 60 and 65, record-wise. Twins are tied with Cleveland for third place in the AL Central, and the Twins are a game and a half behind Baltimore in the final wild card spot in the American League. So as bad as they are, record-wise, they're still not out of it.

But the good news is, Nina, Minnesota's done playing Pennsylvania teams. The Twins are 0 and 6 against teams from the Keystone state. 0 and 3 against Pittsburgh. 0 and 3 against Philadelphia.

Tonight, though, doesn't get any easier. Atlanta comes into Target Field. Braves are 74 and 50, third best record in Major League Baseball. They have a lot of star power. Guys like Ronald Acuña Jr., Matt Olson, Drake Baldwin. So the Twins are going to have to beat a very good team if they're going to get out of this slump.

NINA MOINI: All right. Eric and Wally, appreciate you guys. Have a great week.

WALLY Thanks, Nina.

LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: Those are our sports contributors, Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson.