

SPORTS

Vikings Clinch Playoffs With Win

With disaster avoided, the Minnesota Vikings finally have guaranteed themselves another chance - maybe their last chance - to get coach Dennis Green his first playoff victory.

The Vikings ended a five-game losing streak and qualified for the postseason for the fifth time in Green's six seasons Sunday with their highest-scoring game of the season, a 39-28 win over the Indianapolis Colts.

"This is a huge relief," said Randall Cunningham, who will be the fifth different quarterback to start a play-off game under Green. "We were able to go out and do what we needed to do to get into the playoffs."

"We're really excited," Green said. "The playoffs for us means a second chance."

Cunningham offset three interceptions with four touchdown passes, three of them to Cris Carter, who tied a career high. The Vikings (9-7) also got 160 yards rushing from Robert Smith and turned three interceptions, their most of the season, into 15 points.

It was the first win since Nov. 9 for Minnesota, which will play either the New York Giants, Tampa Bay or

Detroit in a first-round playoff game next weekend. The Vikings are 0-4 in the playoffs during Green's tenure.

With the team for sale and his midseason threat to sue for control of the team still lingering, there is a good chance the Vikings will have a new coach next season.

"Guys love playing for coach Green," receiver Chris Walsh said. "If he's not the best, he's one of the three or four best coaches in the league."

With Washington beating Philadelphia, the Vikings needed to win to be assured of giving Green another chance in the playoffs. They did it by knocking Jim Harbaugh out of the game twice, first with a head injury that tied to a 22-point second quarter and again after Harbaugh rallied the Colts within eight points in the fourth quarter.

"In and out, hurt all the time, playing with pain. (Harbaugh) gave a great account of himself out there," Colts coach Lindy Infante said.

Harbaugh experienced numbness on his left side throughout the game and will be examined for a disk problem in his neck.

Knicks' Ewing out for the season

New York Knicks' All-Star center Patrick Ewing had surgery on his dislocated right wrist on Sunday and will be out for the season, the team.

Ewing, 35, injured his wrist in a fall Saturday night in the second quarter of the Milwaukee Bucks' 98-78 victory.

"Losing Patrick for the rest of the

Ewing has been the centerpiece of the franchise since the Knicks made him the top overall pick in the 1985 draft.

He sat out 51 games in his first two seasons but just 20 in 10 seasons since.

Chosen last year as one of the NBA's 50 Greatest Players, Ewing

"Losing Patrick for the rest of the year is a definite blow, but injuries, and overcoming them, are part of this game,"

year is a definite blow, but injuries, and overcoming them, are part of this game," said Knicks president and general manager Ernie Grunfeld.

"While our immediate thoughts are with Patrick, we have a great group of guys and have a tremendous amount of depth on this team. Everyone must now step up and help to fill the void that Patrick's injury has left."

"A lot of teams have got the job done with their good players out of the lineup," Knicks coach Jeff Van Gundy said Saturday night in Milwaukee.

Ewing, an 11-time All-Star, leads the Knicks in scoring and rebounding.

He signed a four-year, \$68 million contract prior to this season and has not missed more than six games in any of his last 10 seasons.

Blazers Place O'Neil on Injured List Sunday's Injury has him out until Jan. 2

The Portland Trail Blazers placed forward Jermaine O'Neil on the injured list Sunday with a strained left calf muscle.

O'Neil, averaging 3.3 points and 2.2 rebounds in 11.4 minutes per game, was injured at the end of practice Saturday. He did not travel with the team to Vancouver on Sunday for Portland's game against the Grizzlies.

To fill O'Neil's spot on the roster, the Blazers activated center Alton Lister, on the injured list Oct. 30 with an infection in his right shoulder.

Lister, in his 16th NBA season, played only in four exhibition games for the Blazers.

Under NBA rules, O'Neil won't be able to rejoin the Blazers' roster until their Jan. 2 game at San Antonio.

POWER LOSES AFTER 4 GAME WINNING STREAK

Adrienne Goodson scored 23 points and grabbed nine rebounds as the Philadelphia Rage snapped the Portland Power's four-game winning streak with a 68-56 victory.

Dawn Staley netted 11 points and dished out seven assists.

Markita Aldridge added 11 points and Taj McWilliams pulled down 12 rebounds for the Rage (10-15), who shot 43 percent (26-of-61) from the field.

"We've been waiting for this a long time," said Staley. "There were two good things. We played together as a team and we did it as a team."

"We finally put it together," agreed Goodson. "We are starting to gel a bit and understand what we need to do to go."

The Power (17-9) hit just 39

percent (25-of-64) of its shots and wasted a 17 points, 17 rebound effort from Natalie Williams. Lisa Harrison scored 12 points for the Power, who committed 17 turnovers and scored a meagre nine points in fourth quarter.

"When you don't put it in the hole you get beat,"

"When you don't put it in the hole you get beat," said Portland head coach Lin Dunn. "The thing that is so frustrating is that we had so many open shots and we didn't hit them. I don't think we looked hungry; it didn't look like it mattered. We seemed ho-hum when the game started."

Philadelphia, the last-place team in the Eastern Conference, took a 9-6 lead early in the game and never trailed en route to its first road win against the Power.

"We're making strides," Rage

head coach Lisa Boyer said. "Portland is the West leader, so this is a big win for us. We showed team effort and stuck with the game plan. We also did better on the boards."

Portland were within five points with 3:51 left, but the Rage pulled away down the stretch, with Goodson's three-point play with 34 seconds left finishing off Portland for good.

The Rage scored in spurts throughout the first half. A 6-0 run gave them their first lead, another 6-0 run put them up 15-9 and a 9-0 spurt made the score 28-19 late in the first half. Philadelphia led 34-17 at halftime.

Portland managed to tie the game twice, at 17-17 and 19-19, and got within two at 39-37 when Katy Steding converted a layup with 33 seconds left in the third quarter. But Aldridge sank a



Katy Steding

three-pointer to push Philadelphia's lead back to five, 52-47. Portland never got closer than five points the rest of the way.

Lions' Brown Has Surgery On Neck

Detroit linebacker Reggie Brown's football career appears to be over after sustaining a neck injury during the Lions' victory over the New York Jets on Sunday.

Dr. David Collon, the team physician, said during a Monday news conference that Brown was undergoing surgery at Detroit's Henry Ford Hos-

pital to fuse the first and second vertebra of his neck. Brown will remain in a neck brace known as a halo for the next three months, Collon said.

"At this point, it is hard to say how serious and how permanent his injury is," Collon said. "The first 72 hours after such an injury are important. The next two weeks also will tell

us a lot."

Collon was asked if Brown's career was over.

"I guess you could make that supposition," Collon said.

Brown, 23, who was carried off the Silverdome field in an ambu-

lance, regained consciousness at a Pontiac hospital, Collon said. After about 45 minutes, Brown was transported to Henry Ford Hospital.

"Reggie was very happy that we won the game," Ross said. "It wasn't a long conversation."

76ers trade Stackhouse

Finally putting to rest numerous rumors over the past few weeks, the Philadelphia 76ers today traded guard Jerry Stackhouse to the Detroit Pistons in a four-player deal.

The 76ers announced that Stackhouse and oft-traded center Eric Montross have been dealt to the Pis-

tons for forward Theo Ratliff and guard Aaron McKie. Philadelphia also gets a conditional first-round pick.

"It brings two quality young men that are going to fit the way that Larry (Brown) likes to coach," Sixers vice president of basketball administration Billy King said.

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