

'NOW AT QUARTERBACK FOR THE VIKINGS ... ?'

By Bruce Penton, February 12, 2018

Now the National Football League's fun season begins.

The Super Bowl champ has been decided, a bunch of coaching changes have been made, free agents are trying to decide where to go, the draft of college stars is a couple of months away and ... well, football news south of the border never really ends.

One of the most interesting situations is happening in Minnesota, where the Vikings have three quarterbacks, but, while three are currently on the roster, neither Case Keenum, Sam Bradford or Teddy Bridgewater are under contract for next year. How that QB situation will play out will be the focus of attention not only in the great state of Minnesota, but all around the NFL, where one move will have a serious domino effect.

Bridgewater was the young college phenom who almost instantly became the team's No. 1 QB in 2014. After an 11-win 2015 campaign, he suffered a horrendous knee injury on the eve of the 2016 season and suddenly, the Vikings were looking for someone to fill the gap.

They did so with the acquisition from Philadelphia of Bradford, who won the Heisman trophy as the best college player in 2009 and went No. 1 overall in the 2010 draft to the Rams. Philadelphia had picked him up from the Rams one season earlier before sending him along to the desperate Vikings for a slew of draft picks.

Enter Keenum. The career backup was signed as an emergency replacement while Bridgewater was recuperating but when Bradford went down with a knee injury this past October, Keenum took over, rattled off 11 wins in 14 games and resembled Joe Montana in leading the Vikes to the NFC championship game.

All three are now healthy. But unsigned. So what will the Vikings do? The website SB Nation said the Vikings will likely go all in with Bridgewater, who has youth on his side. If it comes down to Bradford vs. Keenum, the Vikes are likely to keep the healthier one (Keenum) rather than risk the position to Bradford and his history of wonky knees. Either way, all three quarterbacks will have healthy contracts in 2018. The only unknown will be in which cities they'll hang their helmets.

- **Robert Owens**, 66, to the Chicago Tribune, on his race strategy for the upcoming World Marathon Challenge — consisting of a 26.2-mile race per day for seven straight days on seven continents: "You just get off the plane and you start running."
- Tiger Tracker, on Twitter, after an overzealous fan screamed "GET IN THE HOLE" just as **Tiger Woods** was bringing his putter forward during the fourth round at Torrey Pines, leading to a bad miss: "Sources close to Tracker say that fan has been escorted to the Pit of Misery."
- **Janice Hough** of leftcoastsportsbabe.com, on Twitter: "Indians getting rid of #ChiefWahoo as 'offensive.' So now most offensive thing on the field in baseball will probably be the decimated Marlins."
- **Randy Turner** of the Winnipeg Free Press, on Twitter: "Weird Groundhog Day in Winnipeg. **Manitoba Merv** stuck his head out of the ground. **James Neal** chopped it off. Now we've got six more weeks of bitching about goalie interference."
- A past-tense version of a question posed by **Norman Chad** column reader **William Murray** of Chicago: "Did **Bill Belichick** hold a news conference to announce his Super Bowl officiating crew or did he simply issue a press release?"
- **Scott Ostler** of the San Francisco Chronicle: "MLB players rejected a 20-second pitch clock. OK. How about a big loudspeaker next to the mound. After 20 seconds: "THROW THE DAMN BALL, MEAT!"
- Ostler again: "Speed up the game? Shoot relievers out of a bullpen cannon."
- Another one from Ostler: "If **Tom Brady** can be at the top of his game at 40, why not a rebuilt **Tiger Woods** at 42? There's just too much accumulated golf knowledge, hunger and battle savvy packed into that bad-ass, free-safety body for Tiger to fade away. Plus, Woods never gets sacked, so to speak."
- **RJ Currie** of sportsdeke.com: "Injured Sharks forward **Joe Thornton** has apparently been told to keep weight off his knee. I'm thinking he could drop 10 pounds just by shaving the beard."
- NBC's **Jimmy Fallon**: "I saw that on StubHub, there was a Super Bowl ticket listed at over \$66,000. And the person who buys it will get to the stadium and say, "\$10 for a beer? That's crazy. Come on, man."
- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times: The Packers didn't bring back a bunch of assistant coaches, including QB coach **Alex Van Pelt**. Apparently Van Pelt wasn't quite as brilliant when **Aaron Rodgers** wasn't playing."
- SportsPickle.com: "Among the 10 most amazing aspects of the new XFL: Players who kneel for the anthem will be hit in the back of the head by a metal chair; and when someone catches the football, it will count as a catch."

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