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Sports
Minneapolis Star and Tribune
Wednesday
August 31/1983
1D.

Vikings pick up 49er Mularkey

Dan Steneking
Staff Writer

The Vikings announced their final 45-player roster Tuesday with one last touch of mularkey. Mike Mularkey, a 6-foot-4, 245-pound tight end cut Monday by the San Francisco 49ers was a surprise addition at the end of a day that featured the expected and unexpected.

Yesterday began with a surprise at 8:45 a.m. when soccer-style placekicker Benny Ricardo engaged in an exclusive tryout behind the Vikings' Eden Prairie training facility. Ricardo, a five-year NFL veteran who had kicked for Detroit and New Orleans and recently was cut by the Raiders, flew all night from Los Angeles. Leaving at 12:30 a.m., he arrived at 6 a.m. and after kicking 39 of 39 — including six of six from 50 yards — was signed to a contract.

Apparently there was no redeye from San Francisco. Mularkey, a ninth-round draft pick of the 49ers who had 29 catches for 356 yards and one TD for Florida last year, won't join the team until today.

"He's a big, strong hard-working kid who our scouts saw during the preseason and were impressed," said Vikings Coach Bud Grant. "Except for that I can't tell you much until I see him other than he's a rookie."

The Vikings have six rookies, including safety Joey Browner, the No. 1 draft pick, linebacker Walker Lee Ashley (third round), wide receiver Mike Jones (sixth) and defensive back Carl Lee (seventh, a small surprise) and tight end Norris Brown (eighth).

As of yesterday — and after yesterday who could rule out other roster changes in the next few days — they are listed with Mularkey on the team that will open the season Sunday in Cleveland.

So is Ricardo, 28, the Vikings' first soccer-style kicker. He will take Rick Danmeier's spot. Danmeier, a seven-year veteran, was placed on injured reserve.

"I've got nothing against sidewinders, blacks or Jews or anything else," said Grant.

Danmeier's injured reserve status because of a sore back was a smart shock, although not totally unexpected. He was one of five players placed on injured reserve. The others included tight end Joe Senser, who is recovering from knee surgery; wide receiver Sam McCullum, recovering from thumb surgery; rookie linebacker Mark Stewart (fifth round), Achilles' tendon; and defensive lineman Ray Yakavonis, recovering from elbow surgery.

Players on injured reserve are unavailable for four weeks. And unless they were on the original 49-man roster, they must be waived before they can return to the active roster, although each club has three free moves off injured reserve. Other than Yakavonis, who spent most of

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Vikings roster, schedule appears in Football '83, Section P

Final Viking cuts, injured reserve

Vikings cut Tuesday

Bill Stephanos (C)
Sam Harrell (RB)
Greg Starr (LB)
Mo Turner (WR)*
Rick Bell (WR)*
Gene Gilles (WR)*
Steve Schonert (K)*

Injured reserve

Joe Senser (TE—knee)
Sam McCullum (WR—thumb)
Rick Danmeier (K—back)
Rey Yakavonis (NT—elbow)
Mark Stewart (LB—tendon)*

*Designates rookie.

Tigers avenge loss to Twins

By Doug Grow
Staff Writer

Detroit, Mich.
The cry of "we wuz robbed" echoed throughout Tiger Stadium in Detroit for the second night in succession Tuesday.

This time it was the Minnesota Twins, who had lost 4-3 to the Detroit Tigers, who were claiming a game had been stolen from them. On Monday night, the Tigers claimed they had been victimized by a bad call in their 5-4, 11-inning loss to the Twins.

In both cases, the umpire was Durwood Merrill. And in both cases, it appeared the teams had valid complaints.

Last night, Merrill called Kent Hrbek out at first base at the completion of what Merrill saw as a double play. The double play ended the eighth inning for the Twins and wiped out what would have been the tying run.

"I went out there and told him Ray Charles could have made that call," said a livid Billy Gardner, the Twins' manager, after the game.

Gardner, still quivering with anger 30 minutes after the game, went on to say that Merrill was more interested in keeping the American League's Eastern Division race close than he was in calling plays objectively.

"He looked up at the scoreboard," said Gardner, "and saw that Baltimore had won so he knew the pressure was on."

On Monday night, Tigers Manager Sparky Anderson had called reporters into his office to show them replays of the Twins' Tom Brunansky, who eventually scored the game winning run, sliding into second base on a wild pitch. On the replays, it appeared that Brunansky was thrown out on the play. But Merrill had called him safe.

"Go over and have Sparky show you the replay of this call," Gardner told reporters last night. "Sparky says his guys don't get any of the breaks. That's a damn shame. What's he sayin' tonight?"

Not surprisingly, Anderson was smiling as he spoke last night. "We just changed corners," said Anderson of Gardner's outburst.

Want to show replays, Sparky?

"No replays tonight," said Anderson,

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Associated Press

A trainer attended to Gary Ward after the Twins left fielder was hit in the face by a pitch from Detroit's Dan Petry Tuesday in Tiger Stadium. Ward suffered a broken nose.

Ward hospitalized with broken nose after being hit by pitch

By Doug Grow
Staff Writer

Detroit, Mich.
With one out in the top half of the eighth inning Tuesday night, Tiger Stadium in Detroit suddenly was quiet.

Gary Ward, the Minnesota Twins' left fielder, was lying in a heap at home plate, struck in the head by a fast ball thrown by Dan Petry.

Ward, it was diagnosed later, had suffered a broken nose.

The pitch, the Twins said, had struck the bill of Ward's batting helmet before glancing across the bridge of his nose.

"He told me he wanted to stay in the game," said Twins Manager Billy Gardner. "I told him, 'you're out of here.'"

Ward was taken to Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit for X-rays. He was to meet his teammates last night at the airport for the Twins' charter flight to Boston.

"He's just lucky that it hit his helmet first," said Twins second baseman John Castino. "It could have killed him. His face was all puffed up as it was. Would have gone right through him if it didn't hit the helmet."

Kent Hrbek, who was on deck when Ward went down, said it appeared Ward was in shock as he was led off the field.

"It shocked me," said Hrbek. "I was stunned for a second, then I took off to him. All that blood ... The thing is, it didn't look like a solid smack."

Solid or not, Hrbek, Castino and other Twins said that for at least a few moments tonight in Boston all of the Twins will be more aware of the risk of being hit in the head.

"It's something that's never really out of your mind," said Hrbek. "Every time you get in there, you're a little bit scared."

Petry, whose fast ball has been clocked at 95 m.p.h., said he felt bad about the pitch.

"It was a 2-2 pitch," Petry recalled. "I needed a strikeout bad. Lance (Tigers catcher Lance Parrish) called for a fast ball inside because that's how we'd been trying to get him all night. It got away. It didn't rise him as much as it started right at him. I'm almost sure he was looking for a slider. Even if he wasn't looking for a slider I don't know if he could have gotten out of the way."

Reliable but vagabond toe of Benny Ricardo enlisted by Vikings

By Dan Steneking
Staff Writer

Benny Ricardo

The Minnesota Vikings' first soccer-style kicker, Benny Ricardo, is also the first to speak four languages, Spanish, English, Portugese and Guarani.

Guarani is an Indian dialect of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay where Ricardo was born 29 years ago.

But it was Ricardo's well-traveled right toe, which kicked for Detroit, Buffalo and New Orleans, and not his tongue that got him an 11th-hour tryout Tuesday and a place on the final 45-man roster.

"You keek the ball well and peek up the cheek," said Ricardo in a kidding Spanish accent.

Yesterday he kicked the ball well.

After a late telephone call Monday night from Floyd Reese, the Vikings' linebacker and specialty teams coach who coached Ricardo when they were with the Lions, Ricardo got on a 12:30 a.m. flight in Los Angeles, arriving in Minneapolis at 6 a.m.

"I do a lot of traveling in my job and I know how to catch some sleep on airplanes," said Ricardo. The five-year NFL veteran did not kick last year and recently was cut from the L.A. Raiders after losing a battle with Chris Bahr. Ricardo spent last season using his language talents in television work after the New Orleans Saints released him. He stayed in shape playing pro racquetball and amateur soccer.

By 8:45 a.m. yesterday he was behind the Vikings' Eden Prairie training facility. With Jerry Reichow, director of football operations, doing the holding and Frank Gilliam, director of player personnel, taking notes, Ricardo kicked 39 of 39 through the uprights. Starting at the 15 (a 25-yard field goal) and retreating 5 or 10 yards at a time, Ricardo launched six kicks from each stop. When he hit three of three from the 40 (a 50-yard field goal), the Vikings officials had seen enough and signed him to a contract. Veteran Rick Danmeier is on the injured reserve list with a sore back.

Ricardo kicked in white shoes (for a manufacturer he endorses) in the morning but was shod in Vikings black when he worked out in the afternoon. "I called my company and told them to send a bunch of black ones," Ricardo said.

"He's consistent, somebody who makes all of them from inside the 40," said Reese. "You know what you are going to get every time he kicks. In three years at Detroit, he never cost us a game. When I talked with the Raiders about him, they said the difference between him and Bahr was 1½ yards on kickoffs and Flores (Raider Coach Tom) wanted to stick with a kicker he knew."

Ricardo signed as a free agent with the Southern California Sun of the defunct World Football League in 1975 after getting a journalism degree from San Diego State. He owns the NFL record for consecutive field goals from inside the 40. He kicked 35 straight until 1980 when Vikings linebacker Matt Blair blocked No. 30.

"It was ironic (the way (the streak) ended," Ricardo said. "My regular holder was hurt. When Floyd (Reese) saw the other holder, he thought it was going to be a fake and was yelling for the Vikings to take the block off."

When the Sun set, Ricardo signed with Detroit in 1976. The Lions released him and then re-signed him after Buffalo claimed him and let him go after two games. He was with Detroit for three years, but his best season was 1978 when he had 30 of 38 field goals and 32 of 33 extra points for 92 points. "I was the second leading scorer in the league and wanted to be paid for it," he said.

He got the salary he wanted but not until the Lions had shipped him to New Orleans where he kicked for two seasons. He was also the Saints' player representative when they released him the day before the strike-shortened 1982 season began.

His career field goal statistics are slightly less imposing than Danmeier's, who can't return to the active roster for four weeks. Ricardo has made 64 of 108 field goals, Danmeier 70 of 106. But Ricardo has an edge in extra points with 153 out of 140 to Danmeier's 154 of 167.

"The way I look at the situation (with Danmeier) is that it is four weeks for me to showcase my talents," said Ricardo.

McEnroe gets win—and fines—in Open

By Neil Amdur
New York Times

New York, N.Y.
John McEnroe threw sawdust at a spectator, was fined $1,650 but escaped in five sets, and Vitas Gerulaitis waved three match points and survived a five-setter Tuesday during another tumultuous start to the U.S. Open tennis championships.

A record opening-day crowd of 20,202 at the National Tennis Center (16,502 paid) also saw Tim Wilkison eliminate eighth-seeded Jose-Luis Clerc, 6-3, 4-3, 7-6; Eric Korita power past Brian Teacher in four sets; Chris Lewis recover from two sets down against Andy Andrews, and Chip Hooper retire with cramps in the fifth set against Fritz Buehning. Then last night, defending champion Jimmy Connors stopped India's Ramesh Krishnan 6-2, 6-4, 3-6, 6-2.

In women's singles, yesterday's winners included No. 3 Andrea Jaeger, No. 7 Sylvia Hanika of West Germany, No. 8 Hana Mandlikova of Czechoslovakia and No. 16 Kathy Jordan.

But the big news among the women came off-the-court when fourth-seeded Tracy Austin withdrew, still not recovered from back and rib injuries that have sidetracked her career. Austin's pullout opens the bottom half of the women's singles draw for Chris Evert Lloyd and Hana Mandlikova. Mandlikova won, 6-0, 6-3, from Nancy Yeargin yesterday.

"I have never allowed myself enough time to recover from my injuries and have put an unrealistic timetable on my return," Austin said, adding that she was looking toward a November return in Australia.

Yesterday's spectators got their money's worth, with the top-seeded McEnroe rallying against Trey Waltke, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4, 6-0, 6-1 while the 15th-seeded Gerulaitis bested Marcos Hocevar of Brazil. Gerulaitis saved one match point serving at 2-5 in the fourth set, and two more with Hocevar serving at 3-5. Gerulaitis won, 3-6, 3-6, 6-3, 7-5, 6-4, more because Hocevar could not finish when victory was at hand than because of any dramatic comeback.

McEnroe's victory over Waltke was anything but artistic. The Wimbledon champion, leading, 6-3, 4-1, lost his concentration and recovered only when Waltke admittedly lost the "spring" in his legs and felt twinges in his back during the fourth set of their 3-hour, 10-minute match.

McEnroe was warned once by umpire Stu Saphire for delay of game, was fined $250 for ball abuse, then penalized a point early in the fifth set for verbally abusing Saphire, which carried a $500 fine. But it was McEnroe's "abuse of a spectator" in the fifth game of the third set that broke his concentration. It also cost him $1,000 and could bring him greater grief in the remainder of the tournament.

New York crowds are among the most vocal on the men's circuit. At 2-all, 15-0, in the third set, McEnroe became so annoyed with one male courtside spectator who was talking to him that he flicked some sawdust at the spectator between the point. Players customarily keep sawdust in their pocket to rub on their hands and their racquet grips.

"The guy was egging me on," McEnroe later said. "I don't like people egging me on. I totally lost my concentration" and played poorly the rest of the set.

The fine pushed McEnroe closer to a possible 21- or 42-day suspension. His total fines for the circuit year had been $5,450, and $1,850 moved him to $7,300. $7,500 is allowed under code of conduct rules. Any more fines in this tournament probably would result in a suspension, although it would not take effect until after the Open.

Jimmy Arias, seeded No. 8, was more concerned with racquet problems during his four-set victory over

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Joe Soucheray

TV Guide magazine has managed to get its name in the sports pages of about every newspaper in the country this week because of an article in its Sept. 3 issue speculating that NFL games on television will run a little shorter this year. Politicians introducing him on their behalf used to make the same promise for Hubert Humphrey's speeches.

It turns out that TV Guide merely ran a piece by Mel Durslag of the Los Angeles Herald Examiner in which Jim Spence, the vice president of sports for ABC, suggested that local affiliates are not entirely pleased when Monday Night Football, for example, pushes local news past midnight in many markets. To extrapolate from that a notion that NFL games will run shorter this year was wishful thinking at best; there have been no changes in rules or procedures that would speed up NFL games this year.

"We've been working on moving the games along," Val Pinchbeck, the NFL's director of broadcasting, said from New York Tuesday. "It's not like we don't share a concern that the games should be moved along. We work very hard to make sure that kickoffs are at one minute past the hour. We work very hard to make sure that half times last 15 minutes, not 16 or 17 minutes. But there is nothing new in the rules this year that help to shorten the games."

"But what's your opinion?" Pinchbeck was asked. "Are the games too long?"

"We don't get any complaints about

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