

Vikings 29, Bengals 21

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enjoyed revealing to a national audience. Not tonight, Lynn spoke briefly to an underling and, in no time, a security guard could be seen snatching the banner and rolling it into a ball.

Lynn getting that banner confiscated did not seem to be the act of a man ready to shoulder the blame of the Vikings had missed the playoffs, now did it. Barmes?

Lynn would have needed a surgeon. Management Miller's demand to the contrary, there is a chance Lynn was ready to negotiate the departure of Barmes.

"We think we do a good job as coaches," Barmes said. "We feel like we know what we're doing. But if we look back on our careers, I don't think we'd be broken down. Who knows what would've happened."

Staff Photo by Jeff Hershner

Tight end Brent Novosky celebrated his clinching TD catch.

Ultimately, the Vikings beat the Bengals by negotiating what has been the toughest road to victory in the season — the last yard before the goal line.

The Vikings can thank the old coach, Barmes, for giving them the chance to try it. The media and fans can take all the shots we want at Barmes, (and let's face it: The Bengals didn't survive nearly four decades in the coaching business by lacking it).

Last night, when his team's season — and maybe his coaching

field goal would have given the Vikings a four-point lead. The Bengals would have needed a touchdown drive to win it.

The other reason was the history of failing to score from its three-point deficit. The Vikings have done that 11 times in 13 seasons. The Bengals have done that 11 times in 13 seasons.

And now, the Bengals had caught up to the Vikings. They had scored on a rushing play in the second quarter. The Vikings had scored on a rushing play in the second quarter.

Two years ago, the Vikings made a

quarterback to modify. Barmes' offense began to feel better in the Vikings' defense. When this started to happen, the fans started to boo Wilson. You figure it out.

Anyway, Cincinnati was the team on the go. It cut the Vikings' lead to one point. The way Barmes was wiring it, Barmes could've seen the Vikings could keep Cincinnati out of the end zone.

So, the old coach put the word on his face and told the Vikings to go for it on fourth down. Wilson tried to get the ball to a tight end.

The guy Wilson found in the right corner was Brent Novosky, who was cut by the Packers before coming to Minnesota. There wasn't much room between Novosky and the chalk, but Wilson squeezed the pass in there — over the defender — and the backup tight end squeezed the ball for the winning touchdown.

The did it. The Vikings had their first division title since 1962. They were in the playoffs for the third consecutive year.

"It was a heck of a catch by

Novosky, and a heck of a play by Wade, too... a heck of a drive," Barmes said.

It was also a heck of a gutsy move by an old coach to let the Vikings go for it. If his son had backed the Barmes, he might have been working with Novosky.

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MARTIN: Carew remembers a teacher

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Baltimore and with unspecified off-the-field problems.

Last night, 20 years later, Griffitt maintained he never fired Martin.

"He said Martin simply left."

"He told (then-Minneapolis Tribune Sports columnist) Ed Smith that (he) didn't have a job," Griffitt said. "I never fired him. He just didn't have a job. If he couldn't get that job, he should've found it elsewhere."

But Horman said yesterday that Griffitt was disturbed with parts of Martin's 1989 press conference when then-traveling secretary Howard Fox was interviewed in Martin's apartment. In a previous year, Fox, who was unavailable for comment last

night, and Martin had fought.

Fired or not, good reasons or bad, five of Martin's removal in October 1989 caused — what else? — controversy.

Bumper stickers were posted in the Twin Cities that read "Bring Back Billy" and "Support The Twin Cities." Hundreds of phone calls swamped Griffitt's office. Several letters were sent to the Tribune.

Carew called the dismissal then "a case of bad timing." Last night, Carew was blunt. "I don't know what the hell was going on. I don't know what the hell was going on. I don't know what the hell was going on."

"One of the reasons he was fired in 1989 was he was always angry up for his players," Billy said. "I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't do it."

Then, he'd take the highway. Or he

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Star Tribune

the seat. Why did he get getting fired? Carew would like to know. He'd like to know. He'd like to know. He'd like to know.

And, in 1983, Smalley said, Martin's off-the-field life had become a major part of his life. The Vikings finished third. Martin was let go.

"I think unfortunately in '83, it was a real tough time for Billy," Smalley said. "The extra-curricular stuff was heavy on that."

That "stuff" often caused people around Martin to worry about the man's health.

"Of course, I never thought of him dying," Smalley said. "But — and I thought of him. During my turbulent years, he was always there for me. Always asks me about Billy when he reads things about him. I say to her, 'When you get to know Billy, that's your Billy.'"

The Billy Martin Chronology

1967: Moves and marries. Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1968: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1969: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1970: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1971: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1972: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1973: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1974: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1975: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

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1981: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1982: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1983: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1984: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1985: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1986: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1987: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1988: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

1989: Moves to New York. Moves to New York. Moves to New York.

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