



March 3, 2009

Club Members,

Well the fun has begun. I'm writing this on Saturday February 28<sup>th</sup> and at this time we have signed Sage Rosenfels and Jim Kleinsasser, there will be more changes daily. You have to love this time of year – every team is doing its best to make the final changes to become an elite team, (well maybe not Detroit, but you know what I mean). Everybody has their own idea of what we need and it seems that everybody always gets a part of what they wanted. So I thought I would take a few minutes to explain how I see the picture.

A story to start with: do you remember when Jeff Christy left – it was the “oh-no” we lost a pro bowler feeling (OK there were other changes as well that year; I'm just focusing on this one position). When in fact we had another center, Matt Birk, needing to get on the field and that turned out pretty well for the Vikes. Well don't be surprised if we have an offensive lineman on the team already with the ability to play. We Southern California residents had the pleasure of watching Drew Radovich develop into a pro caliber player; especially the High School coaches that are club members and all the USC fans. We have an inside track to some hidden talent on this team because of our location out here in the land of sunny and 70°. My point is – there is probably more talent on this team than we are aware of and the team obviously is. Does everyone remember all the pundits pointing out the poor play of our linebackers and the defense in general a few years back? Well look at last year; we lost E.J. a quarter of the way through and we still fielded a great defense. And talking about linebackers, E.J. has shown he is one of the elite linebackers in this league and the trio of Leber, Henderson and Greenway are one of the best linebacker groups in the league.

So I might as well get to the point: I believe the Wilf / Childress era has done an excellent job of addressing the team's weakest areas and transforming them into team strengths – I reference the linebackers and defense in general as evidence. At the time they were transforming the defense – it was the greatest need. I believe the team will accurately identify its weakest areas and improve on them. They have done this each year since arriving and I've seen nothing that changes my mind that this trend won't continue. This being said – not every spot or position can be fielded with an instant pro bowler like Allen, elite players may not be available in the year your trying to fill a hole. I'm not trying to say that every decision has worked out the way the team wanted or intended. What I am saying is: each year this team got better under the Wilf / Childress era and we are the North Champions again. My prediction is: the team improves again this year and that the team will address the areas they believe they can improve on with the available talent to choose from.

Training camp planning has started for next summer. At this time we don't know the Vikings game schedule and training camp schedule so as normal – we're planning around assumptions at this time. Here are the assumptions in case you need to notify your employer early regarding vacation planning. The Hall of Fame game is being played on August 9<sup>th</sup> meaning the pre-season schedule starts on the following weekend August 14<sup>th</sup> - August 16<sup>th</sup>. So here the assumptions start. Assuming the Vikings play at home on August 14<sup>th</sup> and break camp just prior to the first home game (as in the past) we would be in Mankato on August 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> (a Tuesday and Wednesday) for practice, in Minneapolis on August 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> with the 13<sup>th</sup> being Dome and Winter Park Tours along with our dinner Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> in the evening. We would then be attending the game on the 14<sup>th</sup>. This is a very speculative schedule at this point, but, it is based on a history of events and it's reasonable to assume this is at least one of this year's options. What I can promise you is a great time and the dinners give you more opportunities to talk with the guests and you really get to know Viking greats. The dinner is scheduled to be at Majors again this year – a relatively inexpensive place with great food. I do encourage every club member to attend one of our trips – we have a blast, the Vikings treat us great and I personally enjoy the dinners.