

SPORTS

The Detroit News Monday, November 16, 2009 | Section B



Nowitzki powers Mavericks to victory

PISTONS, 3B

VIKINGS 27, LIONS 10

Lacking firepower

Detroit can't keep up with Minnesota's playmakers

BY JOHN NIYO
The Detroit News

Minneapolis — The Lions could've had Adrian Peterson. All day, in fact.

But that's the thing about game-breaking talent in the NFL: You can't have what you can't catch — or tackle. And the Lions, who fell to 1-8 — tied for the worst record in the NFL — after Sunday's 27-10 loss to the Vikings, simply don't have the kind of players that can right now.

"Are we where we need to be personnel-wise? No," coach Jim Schwartz acknowledged. "But we have NFL players. We've gotta find a way to get that done. They have to make the plays that come to 'em."

Sunday, the Lions' offense again failed to produce big plays, while the defense couldn't avoid them, much to the delight of a sellout crowd of 63,854 at the Metrodome.

Please see Lions, Page 5B



Daniel Mears/The Detroit News

Adrian Peterson rushed for 133 yards on 18 carries and also scored two touchdowns.



Daniel Mears/The Detroit News

Matthew Stafford gets upended by Ray Edwards for one of the Vikings' three sacks. Stafford, who threw for 224 yards and a touchdown, was hit 13 times.

Lions can't succeed without better line

Minneapolis
On one play in the fourth quarter, Matthew Stafford ducked and scrambled and fought off tacklers, then finally broke loose, half-running, half-crawling, falling forward, forward, forward.

And then he was down. And for all that effort, he got an 8-yard loss, and do I really need to describe much more?

The Lions perpetually are surrounded by bigger, faster bodies, and all they can do is search for daylight that's never there. This wasn't their worst effort, as they hung around and hung around before falling to

the first-place Vikings, 27-10.

But this was a revealing effort for what it showed, for how badly Stafford got beaten up, got back up, and got beaten up some more. The Lions' wobbly offensive line got thrashed by the Vikings' terrific defensive front, not a surprise. But if you're really going to build around a top-pick rookie quarterback who needs time, it'd help if the line gave him a little



BOB WOJNOWSKI

time.

Stafford and the offense had no real shot in this one, even as the Vikings kept committing penalties and huge turnovers. For all the big plays by Brett Favre, Adrian Peterson and Sidney Rice, the Vikings beat the Lions where they always beat them, where the Lions have lost 16 straight on the road and 31 of 33 overall — in the trenches.

Stafford hung in admirably. He threw 51 passes, completed 29 and didn't toss an interception, after his five-pick mess last week. He was sacked three times and clobbered a bunch more. He showed resiliency and tough-

ness, but how often do the Lions really plan to test the resiliency and toughness of their quarterback?

(That's a trick question and you're not required to answer, Mr. Schwartz).

"We got our quarterback killed way too much," coach Jim Schwartz said. "We weren't able to protect him, he wasn't able to make throws. I'm not worried about Matt. I mean, goodness gracious, we don't need to sit there and worry about him every single time. This is about the team."

Please see Wojo, Page 5B

Cada receives 'SNL' mention

First \$8.5 million, now a shout-out on "Saturday Night Live."

Oh, to be **Joe Cada** these days.

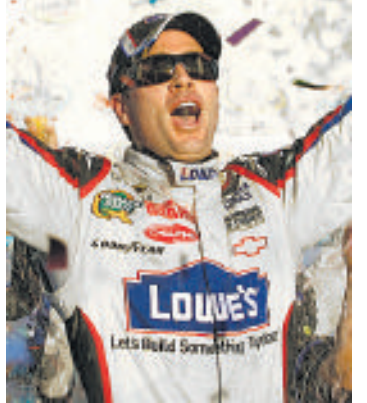
Cada, the Chesterfield Township 21-year-old who last week made history by becoming the youngest person ever to win the World Series of Poker's Main Event, made for a fine punch line during the show's popular faux news report, "Weekend Update."



Cada

Host **Seth Meyers** brought up the World Series championship, saying the win by Cada, who dropped out of college to pursue a poker career, provided an important message for youngsters everywhere: "Stay in school, cuz you're not that guy!"

Tony Paul



Jason Smith/Getty Images

Jimmie Johnson needs to finish 25th or better next week to win the Chase title.

Johnson dominates, moves closer to title

Jimmie Johnson rebounded from a rare bad race with a dominating victory Sunday at Phoenix International Raceway that pushed him to the edge of a NASCAR-record fourth consecutive title.

Johnson led 238 laps to win for the fourth time in the last five races at Phoenix. It stretched his lead to 108 points over Hendrick Motorsports teammate **Mark Martin** heading into the finale at Homestead-Miami Speedway.

Wie edges Creamer for first LGPA victory

Michelle Wie tapped in for birdie on the 18th to win the first LPGA event of her career Sunday. She shot a 3-under-par 69 to claim the **Lorena Ochoa** Invitational in Guadalajara, Mexico by two strokes over **Paula Creamer**.

"It's definitely off my back," Wie said. "I think that hopefully life will be a lot better."

More golf, 2B

Contact us

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Sunday scoreboard

Tennessee 41, Buffalo 17
Washington 27, Denver 17
Miami 25, Tampa Bay 23

Jacksonville 24, N.Y. Jets 22
Cincinnati 18, Pittsburgh 12
New Orleans 28, St. Louis 23

Carolina 28, Atlanta 19
Kansas City 16, Oakland 10
Green Bay 17, Dallas 7

San Diego 31, Philadelphia 23
Arizona 31, Seattle 20
Indianapolis 35, New England 34

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