

Long season for Chiefs possible

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — If things don't get better fast, it'll be a long season for the Kansas City Chiefs and Chicago Bears.

Mistakes, penalties and missed assignments were the order of the day during the Chiefs' 10-9 exhibition victory Saturday night.

A good example was Mikhael Ricks. The Kansas City tight end made the play of the night with a 30-yard touchdown catch from Trent Green.

But he also failed to run the correct route on a later play and let quarterback Todd Collins get clobbered from his blind side.

"I thought both teams were a bit sloppy," Bears coach Dick Jauron said.

"It was low scoring, and both teams were struggling to get the ball in the end zone. We've got three weeks to get ready for the opening game."

The Bears, 1-2 in exhibition play, were flagged 9 times for 80 yards in penalties while the Chiefs drew 9 flags for 45 yards. The Chiefs had four fumbles but got them all back.

"It was not as clean a game as we had hoped," said coach Dick Vermeil.

Two long gainers for the Chiefs were wiped out. Derrick Alexander's apparent 46-yard gain in the first quarter was challenged by the Bears and ruled no catch.

Rookie Marvin Minnis' apparent 82-yard touchdown catch in the fourth was called back because of an ineligible receiver downfield.

Bears punter Brad Maynard shanked two kicks. But he also unloaded a 47-yarder in the third period that pinned the Chiefs on their 3-yard line and added a 50-yarder to put Kansas City



on its 7 in the fourth.

The most optimistic note for the Chiefs was that their defense has not allowed a touchdown. They shut out Washington 20-0 and allowed the Bears only three Paul Edinger field goals.

"It's always significant when you keep guys out of the end zone," said cornerback Ray Crockett, one of several key newcomers Vermeil has brought in.

"However you look at it, that's a great start, preseason or no preseason. They're still professionals out there getting paid."

Green, in his first season with the Chiefs, was 7-of-12 for 104 yards. In the two exhibition games, he is 13-of-23 for 201 yards and two touchdowns

and has not been intercepted.

"We still have a ways to go, but I think that the big thing is from our wide receiver standpoint," Green said. "We've been nicked up at the wide receiver spot. We've had some guys injured. It seems that they've all kind of taken their turn."

Shane Matthews, slated to be the Bears' starting quarterback with the demotion and possible trade of former first-round pick Cade McNown, was 10-of-18 for 94 yards. McNown, who appeared in the first two exhibitions, did not play.

Backup quarterback Jim Miller, in his first action since being slowed by a pulled groin muscle, was 4-of-10 for 35 yards.

Running back James Allen, who has been slowed by injury, had three catches for 37 yards.

"It was good to see James back," said Jauron. "I thought that he ran the ball well. He showed just what he is. He ran great with the ball and he can catch it. Other than that, it was a long night."

The Bears' return game was also positive. Jerry Azumah took the second-half kickoff 51 yards to the Kansas City 45 and R.W. McQuarters broke loose for 38 yards on a Chiefs punt, setting up Edinger's 45-yard field goal that made it 7-6 with 10:33 left in the third period.

"I thought our return game and our coverages were great," said Jauron. "We just need to get back to work."

First scrimmage



RANDY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Colby High School quarterback Jared Cranston handed off to Ryan Arensdorf in the first full contact scrimmage of the season Saturday at Dennen Field. Brent McCoy also provided a timely lead block on Chris Griggs. Although stats weren't kept, the Colby team won.

Injured Packers take on Broncos

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — The Green Bay Packers already have lost one half of their tailback tandem, so they're going to be careful with Ahman Green's slightly pulled groin.

Green might sit out tonight's game against Denver, joining Dorsey Levens on the sideline. Levens broke his left hand against Cleveland last week and is out for the remainder of training camp.

Green, who sat out of practice Sunday, said he might feel good enough to play Monday but realized he and the Packers can ill afford to risk aggravating the injury. The Packers play again Saturday, against Miami.

"Right now, we've got to be safe," Green said. "I could go out there and make it worse and I don't want to do that."

Offensive coordinator Tom Rossley didn't want to tip his hand, calling Green's injury mild.

"We'd like to get him some snaps if we could. We'll be safe if there's any-

thing to it, but it's mild from what I understand," Rossley said.

Besides, this would provide them a good chance to see Rondell Mealey, Herbert Goodman and De'Mond Parker fight for a roster spot.

The Packers are eager to improve offensively after their 10-3 loss to the Browns last week, but they're not about to risk their season.

An interesting sidelight to the game is it's Ray Rhodes' first return to Lmbeau Field since he was fired after going 8-8 in 1999 in his only season as coach.

Rhodes is the Broncos' new defensive coordinator, and several Packers, including Brett Favre and LeRoy Butler can't wait to see him.

Butler credits Rhodes with helping become a star in the NFL, and Favre said Rhodes remains one of the league's class acts.

"I have a tremendous amount of respect for Ray Rhodes and that will never change," Favre said. "But you

know the NFL's a revolving door. And I'm sure for Ray Rhodes, it's just another game. Obviously I wouldn't think there'd be any revenge in his mind, there shouldn't be."

If Rhodes feels otherwise, he's not saying. He announced on the first day of training camp that he wasn't going to talk to reporters the rest of the season.

He said he wanted to put all his energy into restoring the defensive credibility that has dissolved since Denver won consecutive Super Bowls in the 1997 and '98 seasons.

After his firing by Ron Wolf, Rhodes affirmed his worth in Washington by helping the Redskins improve from 30th in overall defense in 1999 to fourth last season.

He replaced Greg Robinson in Denver eight months ago.

Favre said nobody on the team blames Rhodes for the disappointing season two years ago, which ended a string of six straight playoff berths.

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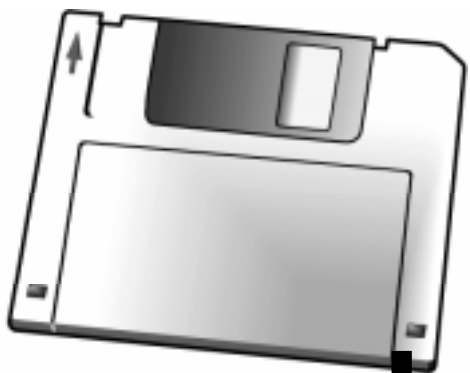
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