

Vermeil insists defense will get better

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — A Kansas City defense ranked dead last in the NFL is starting to cause tempers to flare around Arrowhead Stadium.

Coach Dick Vermeil lashed out at a reporter Monday who asked if he still had confidence in defensive coordinator Greg Robinson.

"He is my defensive coordinator. I brought him here. He's a damn good football coach," Vermeil snapped.

With Brian Griese throwing for a career-best 376 yards Sunday and Shannon Sharpe setting a tight end record with 214 yards receiving, the Denver Broncos beat the Chiefs 37-34 in overtime. It was the second straight game in which the Kansas City offense, ranked No. 2 overall, scored 34 points in a losing effort and the sixth time in seven games an opposing quarterback threw for more than 300 yards.

Robinson, who was fired at Denver before Vermeil hired him last year as his defensive coordinator, has come under increasing criticism from fans and media for having a complicated scheme that is not suited to his personnel.

"The other coaches who work with him are responsible for the performance of the defense, and I am No. 1 responsible for the defense," Vermeil said.

"I'm not going to sit here and criticize my coaches for you. If you already have your story written, write it," he said.

The morale of the defense has been sagging week after week of continued failure. The Chiefs are only 3-4 despite having one of the most prolific offenses in the league, including the No. 1 rushing attack.

They've scored a league-high 239 points, more than anyone else. But they lost a 10-point lead against San Diego two weeks ago in the fourth quarter and failed to protect a 14-point fourth-quarter advantage over the Broncos.

Kingsbury labors without respect

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Texas Tech coach Mike Leach figures he must have the most underappreciated quarterback in America.

Whenever so-called Heisman Trophy polls come out, Kliff Kingsbury is hardly ever listed. Yet, no quarterback has thrown for more yards.

"His numbers are hands-down the best in the country," Leach said Monday during the Big 12 coaches' call. "There's not a quarterback in the country who has better numbers than Kliff, period."

All the Texas Tech senior has done, among other things, is become the first quarterback in Texas — a state that is rich in football heritage — to pass for more than 10,000 career yards.

In Saturday's victory over Missouri, Kingsbury hit a whopping 49-of-70 passes for five touchdowns and a conference-record 510 yards and was declared Big 12 player of the week.

He leads the nation this season with 2,916 yards passing and 28 touchdowns.

But perhaps Kingsbury's most amazing stat is his number of interceptions. Defenses know full well he's going to throw the ball 40 to 50 times a game. Yet, they've picked him off only six times.

That's 419 passes and six interceptions.

"I have a lot of respect for Greg Robinson. That's why I brought him here," Vermeil said. "We have problems on defense, but they're not all coaching problems. Sometimes we just don't do what we're supposed to do."

Vermeil insisted the defense can still get better.

"Whatever we're doing, it isn't good enough," Vermeil said. "Whether it's coaching, playing or whatever I'm doing, it's not good enough. We know that. But there's a process that goes to make it better, and it's not blaming the defensive coordinator."

Safety Jason Belser, in the meantime, said there is no danger of a split developing between the offense and defense.

"It comes from the head man. That's

where it starts, a family atmosphere," said Belser, who spent most of his career at Indianapolis.

If the coach doesn't play one faction against another, Belser added, "it doesn't become contagious, and that's the way coach Vermeil functions. We try to learn from our mistakes but we don't beat our teammates down when something goes wrong. It will tear your team up. Eventually, the team will separate."

There was good news on the injury front for the Chiefs. Safety Greg Wesley, who has missed two weeks with a deep shoulder bruise, was expected to be back this week for Oakland. Backup tight end Jason Dunn, out almost a month with a bad shoulder, is also expected to be ready to go.

remarkable player. I see him week in and week out, he gets hit, he gets back up and makes great throws. I don't think he gets enough credit for what he's done."

Kingsbury should not be dismissed because he throws so many passes, Slocum said.

"They say it's just the system: 'Anybody can do that. If you throw the ball 70 times, you're going to have a bunch of yards.'"

"But not many people can complete 50 of 71 passes for 500 yards," Slocum added. "He does it so often, you get to think it's not that big a deal. But it really is a pretty big deal. To complete 50 of 70 against air is good."

bowling results

Happy Our Bowling Report

Oct. 17
Nelson Spicels over Pocket Rockets 3 to 1; Rasure Do It Center over B&B Electric 4 to 0; KMA over Collinwood 4 to 0.

High Game Team Rasure Do It Center 862; High Game Ind. Brent Wood 263; High Series Team Rasure Do It center 2469; High Series Ind Brent Wood 732

Standings		
KMA	24	4
Rasure Do It Center	19	9
Collinwood	15	13

Jordan scores eight in win over Nuggets

DENVER (AP) — Hoping to accelerate his timing and conditioning, Michael Jordan made a surprise appearance, playing in his first pre-season game.

Being Michael Jordan, he hit the first shot he took.

Jordan, who earlier indicated he might skip all of the Washington Wizards' exhibition games to rest his surgically repaired right knee, played 14 minutes and scored eight points Monday night in the Wizards' 96-73 win over the Denver Nuggets.

Jordan missed Washington's first five exhibitions but was growing concerned about getting his timing back for the regular season.

"It's hard to start the season cold turkey," Jordan said before the game.

Jordan entered the game with 7:13 left in the second quarter and played the rest of the period. He hit a turnaround jumper about three minutes after entering.

He played the first 7:15 of the third quarter, scoring a team-high six points in the quarter including a steal and a fastbreak layup on the other end.

He hit 3-of-8 shots and had one rebound, one assist, one foul, two steals and two turnovers.

Coach Doug Collins said before the game that he planned to play Jordan about 14 minutes.

Jordan also will play in Washington's final two exhibitions. The regular-season opener is Oct. 30 in Toronto.

"I moved well and I don't think I favored anything," Jordan, 39, said after the game. "My timing was off, but it's going to take some time to adjust. I'm pleased."

"The thing I heard all summer was not to overdo it early and just gradually keep working on it. The things I've done to this point allowed me to feel good for those 15 minutes. I'm not going to do some-

thing stupid like playing 20 minutes.

"So I'm sticking to the game plan. My minutes will increase in the next game and the following game, and I'm sure that when the season comes, I'll work my way into it."

Jordan's return dovetailed with Collins' desire to shore up his playing rotation in the final three pre-season games.

"We've been practicing, and Michael came up to me and said, 'My timing is off. I want to get some kind of timing before we have to go to Toronto and play.' And I agree with that completely," Collins said.

Collins envisions playing Jordan off the bench as a sixth man this season, which hopefully would alleviate the wear and tear that plagued his star last season, when Jordan came out of retirement for the second time.

"I played with one of the best sixth men in basketball, Bobby Jones," Collins said. "Bobby would sit the first eight minutes of the game and basically the first eight minutes of the third quarter. So the most he could ever play was 32 minutes. It's a great way to keep someone's minutes down."

"We've got to keep Michael's minutes down. We let it get away from us last year. We got off to a horrible start, and we played him too much."

After the game, Collins said Jordan "felt strong and he did fine. He was aggressive on defense, and I thought he moved well. He needs to work on his timing and getting himself into a little bit better shape. He has gotten much stronger in the last 10 to 12 days."

The Nuggets were expecting Jordan to play Monday night. They advertised his visit to Denver and promised fans a regular-season ticket if he didn't play.

The Nuggets also offered the Wizards a \$200,000 incentive if Jordan played Monday night.

world series

WORLD SERIES

By The Associated Press

Saturday

San Francisco 4, Anaheim 3

Sunday

Anaheim 11, San Francisco 10, series tied 1-1

Tonight

Anaheim (Ra.Ortiz 15-9) at San Francisco (Hernandez 12-16), 6:27 p.m.

Wednesday

Anaheim (Lackey 9-4) at San Francisco (Rueter 14-8), 6:35 p.m.

Thursday

Anaheim (Washburn 18-6) at San Francisco (Schmidt 13-8), 6:22 p.m.

Saturday

San Francisco at Anaheim, 5:58 p.m., if necessary

Sunday

San Francisco at Anaheim, 6:02 p.m., if necessary

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