

Vikings' unsung hero could be Brian Maser

On every successful hockey team there are players who do their job in an inconspicuous manner and don't get the headlines that their superstar team-mates receive.

Over the years, this type of player has picked up the tag, "Unsung hero."

There are plenty of players who fall into that category. When you think about Philadelphia Flyers winning the Stanley Cup, the names that come to mind are Bobby Clarke and Bernie Parent. But players like Gary Dornhoefer and Ed Van Impe are important cogs in the Flyers' machine.

On Montreal Canadiens, the big names are Guy Lafleur, Yvon Cournoyer, and Pete Mahovlich. But, what about guys like Jim Roberts and Larry Robinson who do their jobs so well, you don't even notice them.

GOOD CANDIDATE

In fact, most teams now have an unsung player award. Winner of that award on Vernon Vikings last year was goalie Darrell Furmanek. A likely candidate this year could be defenceman Brian Maser.

Maser, a rookie with the Vikings, played junior B last year with the Red Cliff Cubs.

Although just 17 years old, the rugged-blue liner already weighs 207 pounds.

Vikings' coach Joe Tennant compares Maser to Owen Lloyd. Lloyd, also a big boy at 200 pounds, played with Vikings last year and moved up to Medicine Hat Tigers this season.

Tennant said, "Although Brian probably doesn't move the puck as well as Lloyd, he is smarter than Owen, and perhaps stronger."

TOUGH GUY

That is quite a compliment to Maser as Lloyd picked up 268 minutes in penalties last year with the Vikings and isn't exactly a patsie this year with the Tigers. However, Maser probably deserves the tag of tough guy.

Although he hasn't been involved in many fights so far this year, Maser has left no doubt he can handle himself.

Medicine Hat Coach Jack Shupe told the Daily News he hopes Maser matures into a



BRIAN MASER
... does his job

player the Tigers can use next season.

Shupe said, "We'll have one

or two holes in our defence next year, and right now, Brian is a prime candidate to fill one of those spots."

Tennant said Maser green at the start of the year but he has learned a lot.

Tennant said, "He still has a long way to go. But, he's anxious to learn and he's one of the biggest 17-year-olds I have ever coached."

All these compliments and you could probably sit through a whole game and not notice Maser.

He doesn't pack the puck near as well as his defensive mates Terry Anaka and Brian Griese, he has an adequate shot from the point but not a howitzer, and he doesn't throw out crunching mid-ice bodychecks as Lloyd did in his stay there.

However, he does keep the front of his net clear of opposing players, he moves the puck out of trouble sensibly, and works hard.

Next game, watch him for a while!

QB Tarkenton Pro Bowl starter

NEW YORK (AP) — Fran Tarkenton of Minnesota Vikings has been named starting quarterback for the National Conference team when it takes on the American Conference team in the National Football League's annual Pro Bowl on Jan. 26.

Tarkenton leads seven Minnesota players into the starting lineup for the game at the Superdome in New Orleans. Other Vikings named to start on offence are wide receiver John Gilliam, tackle Ron Yary, guard Ed White and running back Chuck Foreman.

Minnesota's contributions to the defence are tackle Alan Page and middle linebacker Jeff Siemon.

St. Louis Cardinals has six starters, including wide receiver Mel Gray, tackle Dan Dierdorf, guard Conrad Dobler, centre Tom Banks and running back Terry Metcalf on offence and cornerback Roger Wehrli on defense.

With Minnesota and St. Louis dominating the offence, the lone outsider is tight end Charles Young of Philadelphia Eagles.

Other defensive starters are ends Jack Youngblood of Los Angeles Rams and Cedrick Hardman of San Francisco 49ers, tackle Merlin Olsen of the Rams, outside linebackers Chris Hanburger of Washington Redskins and Isiah Robertson of Los Angeles.

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