



The Purple People Eaters: The Ten-Year High Point Of Minnesota Vikings History: 1967-78

Dan Flaherty

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It was the glory years of Minnesota Vikings history. It was the time when Bud Grant built an expansion franchise into a team that went to four Super Bowls. It was the time of Fran Tarkenton, of Gene Washington and John Gilliam. It was the time of Bill Brown and Chuck Foreman, of Mick Tingelhoff and Ron Yary. But above all, it was the time of a defensive front called The Purple People Eaters.

They were Carl Eller, Alan Page, Jim Marshall and, for most of the years, Gary Larsen. They lived by a simple motto—meet at the quarterback. And they spent plenty of time doing just that.

Together, this team, anchored by the Purple People Eaters defense, were the best in the NFC over a ten-year period. The Purple People Eaters, a collection of ten articles from TheSportsNotebook.com, will take you on a game-by-game ride through every season from 1967-78, looking at the context of each game, the playoff picture and how each game was perceived at the time it was played. The Purple People Eaters gives the reader the chance to walk in the shoes of Viking fans for the greatest ten years.

You'll walk through the following...

*Grant's arrival and the abrupt trading of Tarkenton, the building of the team with defense and making a Super Bowl in 1969.

*The reacquiring of Tarkenton when he was a missing link and a subsequent four-year run that saw three more Super Bowl trips and an MVP season for the future Hall of Fame quarterback.

*The NFC rivalries with teams like the Dallas Cowboys, Los Angeles Rams and Washington Redskins.

*The ability of Minnesota to consistently keep division rivals, from Detroit to Green Bay to Chicago, at arm's length and win nine division titles in this ten-year span.

*The heartbreak of not ultimately winning the Super Bowl—from the frustrating four defeats, to years like 1970 and 1975, when the door seemed open, but untimely playoff defeats left the fans heartbroken once more.

*The big defensive plays that swung games, from those made by the front four, to the big playmaking ability of Bobby Bryant, Ed Sharockman and others.

Minnesota Vikings fans have endured their share of heartbreak over the years and have never seen a Super Bowl championship. But the years of The Purple People Eaters were very good indeed.

Download it today and let a great era of Vikings history, along with a defense and quarterback that have their own place in NFL lore for everyone, come to life.

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