

## Fiery Halftime Talk

# Eller Lifts Vikings

*Dallas Morning News Dec 23, 1973*

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. (UPI)—Carl Eller, an off-season actor, put on an award-winning emotional performance at halftime Saturday to inspire his Minnesota Vikings teammates to a come-from-behind victory.

Eller's unusual outburst at halftime lifted the Vikings out of a rut to a 27-20 NFC playoff triumph over the Washington Redskins.

"Eller didn't write anything on the blackboard," explained running back Oscar Reed. "He punched it, tossed it around and kicked it. Man, he was really worked up. He told us to get off our dead behinds and start playing football."

**RESERVE DEFENSIVE** lineman Bob Lurtsema said, "He kept getting madder and madder as he talked. He told us that we had to go out there and take charge of the game. And we really came out smoking in that third period. That was the difference in the game."

John Gilliam, who caught two touchdown passes from Fran Tarkenton, said, "Eller told us we weren't mad enough in the first half. He got us going."

Eller said his half time talk was "a spur of the moment thing. I know it was kind of against protocol. Usually only the coaches talk at halftime. But we had lost in the playoffs before and last year was a particularly frustrating year for me and the team. Something like that stays with you a long time."

For George Allen the man whose motto is, "life is winning," defeat is never easy to accept.

But the Redskins' coach

still was proud of his team, saying, "There were a lot of adversities today but our team has come a long way. I'm very proud of our football team."

**THE MAIN** adversity was the injury to cornerback Pat Fischer, who suffered broken ribs in the first half. He tried to play with the injury but eventually had to leave because of the pain. Reserve cornerback Ted Vactor was also injured and the Redskins had to use their third-string cornerback, kickoff return man Speedy Duncan, in that slot.

Fischer suffered the injury while making a fine tackle on Oscar Reed, who had caught a Tarkenton pass, early in the second period.

Duncan was burned on a pair of touchdown catches by Gilliam that turned the game around in the fourth period—although the second one was a Tarkenton scramble that was extremely difficult to cover.

Allen said, "The loss of Fischer was extremely costly. John Gilliam is an all-pro receiver and even when our people are healthy, he's extremely difficult to cover."