

Eller Gave Thought to Similar Buffalo Bid

By Staff Writer

CHICAGO, Ill.—“I chose the Minnesota Vikings,” Carl Eller said, “because they will give me the best chance I know to develop as a professional football player and to live in a place I like.”

Eller spoke by telephone from New York, N.Y., minutes after signing to play for the Vikings in 1964.

His offer from Buffalo of the American Football League, he said, was similar to the Vikings’.

“Yes, I seriously considered it,” he said. “But I’ve said before that I wanted to play with the Vikings. They drafted me, and I’m glad to go with them.”

The experience of Bobby Bell at Kansas City (the 1962 Gopher star received a huge sum to sign but has been unable to make the starting lineup) did not influence Eller’s decision, he said.

Norm Van Brocklin was asked to compare the possibilities of Eller and Bell.

“CARL IS a bigger man,” he said. “He has a bigger physique, ideal for a defensive lineman.”

Having signed Eller, the Viking drafters turned nervously to watch the large screen in front of them, fretful that somebody would grab Hal Bedsole before Minnesota got its second-round option.

Already verbally committed to the Vikings, Bedsole had flown into Chicago Sunday afternoon, arriving in time to view the second half of the Bear-Viking game.

Rival NFL drafters sought his whereabouts. “We played ball,” Van Brocklin said. So the Dutchman gave Dallas and Chicago the number of Bedsole’s room in a nearby hotel, where assistant coach Darrell Brewster was acting as a custodian.

Bedsole told inquirers he was interested only in the Vikings in the NFL. He also had been drafted by Kansas City of the AFL.

AND SO IT happened that the Californian was still available when the second-round rotation reached Minnesota.

General Manager Bert Rose hastily handed the draft slip to Commissioner Pete Rozelle, and 15 minutes later Bedsole was escorted to the Vikings’ 26th floor headquarters in the Sheraton-Chicago hotel.

Bedsole is a blond, crew-cut with strong, bony features, a big frame and massive forearms.

He was asked about his performance slump in 1963 at Southern California.

“I dropped three passes in the big game with Oklahoma,” he said. “Some people remembered that.”

He lowered his voice.

“They remember it so much.

“I DIDN’T have a really bad season, I don’t think. I caught something like 25 passes.

“The American Football League talked to me before the season started, but I wasn’t in touch with Kansas City over the weekend. I’ve sort of implied that I wanted

to play in the NFL, and my preference has been with Norm Van Brocklin for a long time.”

Later, Bedsole dwelled on his difficulties of the early fall.

“I think I got a bad break in a couple of magazine articles. I was misquoted pretty badly. I tried to live that down, and as far as I’m concerned, it’s all gone and forgotten. I’ll go to camp with the Vikings ready to play.”

Bedsole plans to work on a master’s degree in the off-season. He is majoring in biological science.

“I’ve never been in Minnesota,” he smiled. “And I have to admit I don’t like snow.”

So saying, he walked out into a Chicago snowfall.



CARL ELLER

Happy with Vikings