

Kirk Cousins will start in Raiders' opener against Miami

BY MARK ANDERSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

HENDERSON, Nev. — Kirk Cousins, as expected, will be the Raiders' starting quarterback when Las Vegas opens its season at home Sept. 13 against Miami, coach Klint Kubiak announced Wednesday.

Cousins ran the first-team offense nearly the entire preseason with rookie and No. 1 overall draft pick Fernando Mendoza working mostly with the second unit.

The Raiders kept three quarterbacks; Aidan O'Connell returns for his fourth season.

"I'm really happy with all three of our quarterbacks," Kubiak said. "Kirk's had a really good offseason, a very good (training) camp, and he's earned it."

The Raiders signed Cousins, who enters his 15th season, to a two-year deal with \$20 million in guaranteed money. His previous club, the Atlanta Falcons, is responsible for \$8.7 million this season.

Acquiring Cousins was a way to ease Mendoza into the NFL without expecting him to try to lead the offense right away. But Cousins



JOHN LOCHER/Associated Press

The Las Vegas Raiders will start veteran quarterback Kirk Cousins (8) over No. 1 draft pick Fernando Mendoza in the NFL season opener Sept. 13.

wasn't brought to Las Vegas to simply be a mentor. He has experience in Kubiak's system and is expected to carry what has been a positive training camp into the season.

He is 88-77-2 as a starter with Washington, Minnesota and Atlanta. His greatest success came in 2022 when Cousins quarterbacked the Vikings to a 13-4 record.

"I think you can see the constant things in ... film study," Kubiak said. "Where I've seen him grow is in his leadership and his command."

Though this announcement was hardly a surprise, it's unclear when and if Mendoza will see the field this season. The Heisman Trophy winner, who also led Indiana to the national championship, showed

flashes of why the Raiders took him at the top of the draft. He also exhibited the inconsistencies of someone who has never taken a snap in an NFL regular-season game.

Now the challenge will be to make sure Mendoza gets the necessary preparation for when he is called to go into a game. That won't be easy with Cousins receiving the first-team repetitions as the Raiders go into regular-season mode.

"Every player that is not starting the first game, then they're helping us on the (scout) team," Kubiak said. "We're just trying to find every edge we can find to continue to get him better and his teammates better."

When asked if Mendoza would play this season, Kubiak was succinct.

"We'll get to Miami first," he said.

JEANTY MIGHT PLAY IN OPENER

Running back Ashton Jeanty, who suffered an injury in practice Aug. 23, could be ready to go in the opener.

When asked if he was optimistic that Jeanty would play against the Dolphins, a

smiling Kubiak said, "Yes."

Should Jeanty not be ready, rookie Mike Washington Jr. will start. He had a promising preseason, and general manager John Spytek said Kubiak "stood on a table" to argue that Washington should be drafted in the fourth round.

"I've been wrong about a lot of players too, and Mike is a rookie, hasn't played one game," Kubiak said. "Our scouting department has done a phenomenal job bringing in these young guys, and I know we talk a lot about Mike, but our entire draft class, I'm extremely excited about. We're counting on those guys."

ROOKIE DE OUT FOR SEASON

Defensive end Keyron Crawford, selected in the third round this year, is out for the season because of an Achilles injury. He worked his way into the rotation and appeared set to receive significant playing time.

"He's come a long way," Kubiak said. "He's an extremely hard worker, a guy that has a bright future ahead of him, and he'll continue to develop even this year. When he's rehabbing, he's going to be dialed into the meetings and he'll still improve. But I'm excited about getting him healthy for next season."



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PUBLIC HEARING**

The City of Radcliff Board of Adjustment will hold a public hearing on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. (EST) / 4:00 p.m. (CST), at Radcliff City Hall, 411 W. Lincoln Trail Blvd., 2nd Floor, Radcliff, Kentucky. This hearing is being conducted to solicit information on the following:

1. Case #260765: Administrative Appeal Application of disapproved Home Occupation Permit Application for the property located at 103 Bright Side Drive, Elizabethtown, Kentucky (Bright Side Estates, Section 1, Lots 1 & 2, PVA# 182-20-03-002) requested by Daniel Brian Humphrey.



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