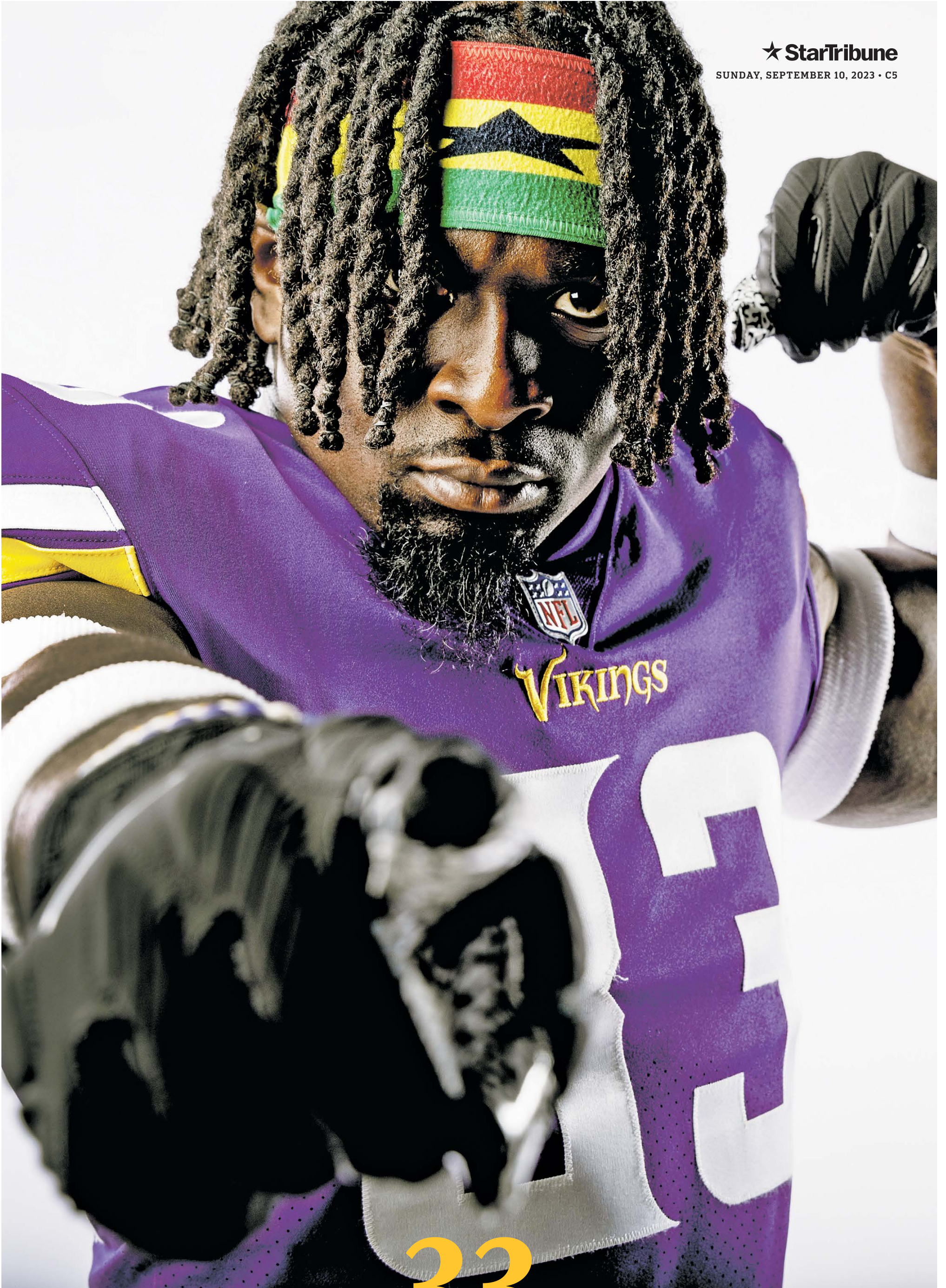


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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2023 • C5

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BRIAN ASAMOAH II LINEBACKER

With all eyes on an anticipated transformation of the Vikings defense, much of its success will rest on the second-year linebacker, who is taking on a new, expanded role in Brian Flores' scheme. Asamoah — whose headband represents Ghana, where his family is from — doesn't fit the physically imposing definition of his role, but his youthful energy, pure ferocity and football intelligence are reasons for confidence.

Photo by CARLOS GONZALEZ • carlos.gonzalez@startribune.com

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