MPR News | Minnesota Now Wild start season first in their division, Wolves begin regular season Wednesday 01M5AWDPBT6AP6W7EDMR0NXFGB

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NINA MOINI: The Minnesota Vikings were off this weekend, but the Wild were on. They beat the Columbus Blue Jackets and forward Kirill Kaprizov is breaking records. And as the Vikings come off their bye week, they'll face the Indianapolis Colts, who just this morning announced they have fired their general manager. Lots going on. Here to talk about it are sports contributors Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson. Hey, guys. Happy Monday.

ERIC NELSON: Yeah, same to you, Nina.

WALLY LANGFELLOW: Happy Monday, Nina.

NINA MOINI: So Wally, the Wild, what happened last night.

WALLY LANGFELLOW: Well, they got another goal from Kirill the thrill. Kirill Kaprizov now with 10 goals is the fastest player in Wild history, which, of course, goes back to 2001, to reach 10 goals. And it's been a great run for him. This is just nine games that they've played, and he has 10 goals.

NINA MOINI: Wow.

WALLY LANGFELLOW: Of course, he the hat trick last weekend. So, yeah, he's on a roll. They won 2-1. So he got one of their two goals last night.

And get this. Hold on Minnesota Wild fans or Minnesota fans in general. The Wild are in first place with 13 points in the Central Division.

NINA MOINI: Really hold on.

WALLY LANGFELLOW: They are one point-- yes. I know. Shall we move on to talk about other things or should we just talk about the Wild since they're in first? We'll take it.

Of course, the Vikings are in first as well, but you know how that goes. Anyway so they're one point ahead of Utah. They play Edmonton. That is tomorrow night in Canada. This is the start of a five-game road trip that brings Minnesota to Calgary, Seattle, Vancouver, and Utah. So it's going to be a long trip before they get home later on this month.

But for now, for now, the Minnesota Wild are in first place, and they're off to a great start. It's been fun to-- it's been fun to watch and see how they have done so far. Of course, the big question when are they going to sign signed Quinn Hughes, and hopefully they sign him to that extension sooner rather than later. But as folks are saying, just enjoy the ride right now while you've got Quinn Hughes and hopefully it works out and he stays here long term.

NINA MOINI: That's the way to do it. Got to be in the moment. Eric--

WALLY LANGFELLOW: Exactly.

NINA MOINI: Eric, we talked about the Vikings had their bye week this past weekend, and then they're going to play the Indianapolis Colts. What are you going to be watching for going into that game?

ERIC NELSON: Yeah, Nina, from the Vikings' perspective, hopefully they're well rested and healed up. They've been dealing with some key injuries, and Indianapolis will come into Minneapolis on Sunday. And, boy, the Colts they are lame to put it bluntly.

The record is 2 and 4. They lost to Tennessee 26-20 yesterday. The Titans entered that game 0-5, so they get their first victory. And it happened in downtown Indianapolis, and the Colts fans were letting out the boos. They were not happy with the performance of their team.

Now a couple of things to look for some ex-Minnesota Vikings on the Colts. Quarterback Daniel Jones used to wear purple as did safety Cam Bynum. And you mentioned it at the top. The general manager, Chris Ballard, was let go after spending nine-plus seasons with Indianapolis. In that span, the Colts were just 72 wins, 82 losses, and a tie. They made the playoffs only twice, and on his watch, they had just one postseason victory.

Again, the Vikings are 5 and 0. They're one of just three perfect teams in the NFL. Kansas City is 5 and 0 after a 22-6 win on Sunday against the winless LA Chargers. San Francisco is 5 and 0, too. The 49ers play Washington tonight in Santa Clara on Monday Night Football.

And around the NFC North this week, Chicago Bears knocked off Atlanta. The Bears are 4 and 2. Green Bay gets a win over Dallas on NBC Sunday Night Football last night 23-13. The Packers are also 4 and 2. Detroit had a bye.

And I should duck in collegiately. The Minnesota Gophers were off last weekend. They'll play Iowa, Hawkeyes 5 and 1, Gophers 4 and 2, Saturday at Huntington Bank Stadium at 2:30 PM. Iowa's ranked 14th, Nina, in the Coaches Poll. It's a heated rivalry. The winner gets the Floyd of Rosedale Pig trophy.

NINA MOINI: Oh, it's a big one. That's a big deal, right?

WALLY LANGFELLOW: Absolutely It's a rivalry trophy.

NINA MOINI: That's the pig trophy. Yeah, exactly. Let's move on then to the Timberwolves who are going to officially start their season Wednesday. Wow. Wally, tell me about the season opener.

WALLY LANGFELLOW: It's already here. They'll be on the road. They're in Miami on Wednesday. They'll be playing against the Greek Freak Giannis Antetokounmpo in his new duds playing for the Miami Heat.

The Wolves just finished up their preseason. They were 3 and 3 in the preseason. They lost their last two games to Detroit and Chicago although none of the first string, which is Anthony Edwards, LaMelo Ball, Jayden McDaniels, and Jonathan Kuminga, none of those guys-- and Rudy Gobert-- played in that last game on Friday against the Bulls.

After Miami on Wednesday, the Wolves then travel to Orlando on Friday before coming to Target Center on Sunday for their home opener against Toronto. So the Vikings will be at one end of town at noon on Sunday, and then at 6:00 Sunday night can go to the West End of downtown and watch the Timberwolves. That is their home opener, and they will play against Toronto.

Oh, by the way, the oddsmakers have the Minnesota Timberwolves tied with four other teams as the seventh most likely team to win the NBA title this year. So we'll see if that comes to fruition. But it all gets started on Wednesday night.

NINA MOINI: Is seventh pretty good think?

WALLY LANGFELLOW: Yeah. it's going to depend how this-- how the-- how this goes with LaMelo Ball. The new player, they traded Julius Randle away and basically got nothing to open up some cap room so they could get LaMelo Ball. They traded away Nas Reid, who was a fan favorite. It's a dice roll.

And Tim Conley, the GM, has not been afraid to roll the dice. So we're going to find out and see if this experiment works. That's for sure.

NINA MOINI: So I know we got the Milwaukee Brewers fans in our audience, too, probably right now who are thrilled. We got some of them. They're going to the World Series. Eric, how'd that happen?

ERIC NELSON: Well, they blew away my team, the LA Dodgers. They swept them in four games in the NLCS. So congrats to the cheeseheads. And, yes, there is joy in America's Dairyland.

Think about this, Nina. The Milwaukee Brewers are going to the World Series for just the second time in franchise history, and they're going to host either Cleveland or Tampa Bay on Friday in game 1 at American Family Field in Milwaukee. And if you want to go, the cheapest ticket on the secondary market, $2,941.

So needless to say, the Brewers fan base is jubilant. They are excited. There is a Minnesota Twins connection on the team. Closer Trevor Megill, who was outstanding against the Dodgers, did spend the 2022 season with the Twins, and I thought I'd throw this in because we know Minnesota teams aren't typically playing for championships, Nina. And the last one on the male side was '91, The Twins.

NINA MOINI: Wow.

ERIC NELSON: This is the closest the World Series has been to Minnesota since the Twins played in the 1991 Fall Classic. The distance from Target Field in Minneapolis to American Family Field in Milwaukee is 335 miles east on I-94, so if you've got the money, go see a World Series game over there in Wisconsin.

NINA MOINI: Yeah, if that's what you want to do. That's great. Wally and Eric, thank you both so much. As always, I hope both of you have great weeks.

ERIC NELSON: Take care, Nina.

WALLY LANGFELLOW: Thanks, Nina.

NINA MOINI: Take care. That's Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson, our regular sports contributors for *Minnesota Now.*