

## Minnesota Now (MPR) | Minnesota Now Karl-Anthony Towns is back in the Timberwolves lineup, the road to the Frozen Four, and other Minnesota sports news 01GW7W8PGNBYQ1SPJTET0G5FDH

CATHY WURZER: Let us talk about sports right now. It's Thursday, so we have a lot of sports to talk about. Wally Langfellow, Eric Nelson. Wally's the founder of *MinnesotaScore* magazine and the co-host of *10,000Takes* sports talk show. Eric is the other host of *10,000Takes*. He's also the Minnesota Vikings reporter for CBS Sports Radio's *EyeonFootball*. Hey, you guys. How are you?

**WALLY** Good, Cathy. How are you?

**LANGFELLOW:**

**CATHY** I'm fine.

**WURZER:**

**ERIC NELSON:** Greetings, Cathy.

**CATHY** And greetings to you as well, Eric. Well, I think the story is what's happening with the Timberwolves, right? So it

**WURZER:** sounds like KAT is back. Is that correct?

**WALLY** KAT came out of his slumber for 52 games that lasted almost four months, yes. And he awakened the crowd of

**LANGFELLOW:** 17,000 plus last night at Target Center. I was there to cover it. 22 points, including the game winning free throws with 3.6 seconds to go-- kind of a wild celebration at the end, almost playoff-like in the celebration, almost playoff-like in the atmosphere.

Here's the key. They need Karl-Anthony Towns to be in the lineup for them to be successful going down the stretch and into the playoffs should they make the playoffs. Right now, they're in it. They are one of the play in teams right now. You've got to be in the top 10 to get in at all, the seven through 10 to get into the playoffs. So all that stuff aside, it's good to have Karl-Anthony Towns back. He had, like I said, the 22 points.

The other piece, of course, is Anthony Edwards, Ant. And he did not play last night, but there's a rumor that coming off his ankle sprain, he might be available this weekend. The Wolves have a big three game series on the road. They go to Golden State, Sacramento, and Phoenix. All these are teams that they are battling for playoff positioning with, so we'll see how it goes. It would be good to have Anthony Edwards back, but it's critical that Karl-Anthony Towns continues to play, and he played well last night.

**CATHY** OK. So by the way, Eric, before we talk about the Wild, do the Wolves have any hope of getting into the playoffs?

**WURZER:**

**WALLY** Oh, yeah. I mean, they're in right now. If the season ended today, they would be in the play in tournament, and

**LANGFELLOW:** they certainly have a chance. I mean, there's six or seven teams bunched up for the final spots. And if they win down the stretch here, they will get in, but they've just been hovering around 500 all year, and they're a 500 team right now.

**CATHY** Eric?

**WURZER:**

**ERIC NELSON:** Yeah. Well, the Minnesota Wild are going to be in the postseason, Cathy. There's no mystery there. The debate is what kind of a seed will they have? The Wild have been fire on ice recently. They are scorching hot. Right now if you look at the NHL's Central Division, Minnesota and Dallas are tied for first place, 90 points each.

And then right there in the rearview mirror, Colorado, the reigning Stanley Cup champion, Avalanche just two points behind the Wild and the Stars. So you've got a three team race for that division title, which will affect seeding in the postseason. Tonight, Minnesota plays in Philadelphia against a struggling Flyers team. One encouraging sign for the Wild-- and they really have been on a roll lately, Cathy.

They are winning without their superstar Kirill Kaprizov who's been banged up. He's been out of the lineup, missed a few games, and a lot of other guys are stepping up. Matt Boldy, the youngster who played at Boston College, had a hat trick on Sunday in a win over Washington. He had a walk off game-winning goal against New Jersey on Tuesday. That was a very good Devils team. The Wild were able to beat on the road.

The goaltending, which early in the season-- I mean, these guys were giving up a lot of goals. But since then, Filip Gustavsson and Marc-Andre Fleury, the future Hall of Fame goaltender-- they have really gotten better. The Wild's defense has improved. This is a solid hockey team right now, but all they've done really is put themselves in a position to win the division. They have a lot of work still ahead of them.

**CATHY**  
**WURZER:** No kidding. Hey, Wally-- well, both of you guys know that I love high school sports. The boys state high school basketball tournaments going on at Target Center, and it was over at Williams Arena this week, too. I don't know. Who do you like? Who can repeat?

**WALLY**  
**LANGFELLOW:** Well, Park Center has the opportunity to do that in Class 4A. Tonight, they take on Eastview. They are the five seed, Eastview is. Park Center is the number one seed. They won fairly handily in the quarterfinals on Tuesday. And should they win-- if Park Center does win and advance to Saturday night's championship game, this is class 4A, they will play either Wayzata and/or Lakeville North.

Those are the second and third seeds, and both of those teams, again, dominated in the quarterfinals on Tuesday. Not really very good matchups at all on Tuesday. The quarterfinals were all blowouts except for Eastview just getting by Minnetonka. So it does set up for what should be a good night of semifinals tonight at 6:00. That's the Park Center Eastview game. And then at 8:00 is Wayzata and Lakeville North.

Right now going on at Target Center is Class 3A, and Alexandria is up on top seeded Totino-Grace. So if Totino-Grace is going to repeat, they're going to have to come back. And Totino-- get this. On Tuesday in the quarterfinals, they won by 50 points over Saint Francis, so this is somewhat of a surprise. The second game is De La Salle, and they are taking on Orono this afternoon at Target Center. That's class 3A.

**CATHY**  
**WURZER:** I always have a favorite team in any tournament my team this year is Cherry, little Cherry High School, tiny place.

**WALLY**  
**LANGFELLOW:** And their top player is going to go to the University of Minnesota, and he's a point guard.

**CATHY**  
**WURZER:** Yeah. I love that.

**WALLY**  
**LANGFELLOW:** Yeah. A guy from a tiny school is coming to the U of M. That's big news. It really is.

**CATHY** It is. I know. It's such a great story. Eric, of course, I also love hockey. Fargo, I guess, is just nuts this week with all the hockey fans there.

**ERIC NELSON:** You're exactly right, Cathy. Forget about Daytona Beach or South Padre Island or Palm Springs. The place to be this spring, this March, if you're a Minnesota hockey fan, is Fargo. Now, the good news is if your favorite team wins a couple of games, they'll end up in Tampa at the Frozen Four, and that's a couple of weeks from now. But right now, all eyes are on Fargo.

There are three college teams from the Land of Lakes in this year's NCAA tournament. They all play tonight at the Ralph in Fargo, home of North Dakota. It's quarterfinal action, so you have Minnesota State, the Mavericks, and Saint Cloud State-- they will play at 4:00 PM, so that is not too far away.

And then the nightcap at 9:00 PM this evening, top-ranked Minnesota against Canisius, a school located in Buffalo, New York. And what I love about this game, Cathy? It's a nicknamed delight. It's the Golden Griffins versus the Golden Gophers.

Look, the Golden Griffins are playing with house money. This would be a monumental upset if they could topple Minnesota. And I know Gopher fans don't want me to bring this up, but 20 years ago, they lost a game to Holy Cross in the tournament, and nobody's gotten over it. So Minnesota better hope that the Golden Griffins don't skate by the Golden Gophers. It would be--

**CATHY** Oh, that was just not a good loss that day.

**WURZER:**

**ERIC NELSON:** No.

**CATHY** All right. Before we go, we have to talk about the Twins.

**WURZER:**

**WALLY** Yes, and they are on the clock. One week from today, they will be in Kansas City for the opener. They will be without Jorge Polanco. He will not start the season. He is hurt, and so is Alex Kirilloff. The good news is Byron Buxton will play. The bad news is that Byron Buxton will only be de-aging. They're going to try to treat him with kid gloves. They want to keep him off the injured list, so he will not be roaming the outfield at least at the start of the season, says Rocco Baldelli. So I guess it's good that he's in the lineup. That's the main thing.

**CATHY** OK, good. We'll see how they do this year. All right, you guys. I got to run. Thank you so much.

**WURZER:**

**ERIC NELSON:** Thank you.

**WALLY** Thanks, Cathy.

**LANGFELLOW:**

**CATHY** Wally Langfellow, Eric Nelson. Wally's the founder of *Minnesota Score* magazine. He's also the co-host of *10,000*  
**WURZER:** *Takes* sports talk show, and Eric is the other host of that show. By the way, you can see that on TV, hear it on radio. And Eric's also the Minnesota Vikings reporter for CBS Sports Radio's *Eye On Football*.

Well, friends, that's going to do it for us here on *Minnesota Now* this week. We have a heck of a team that puts this show on every week. It's a lot of work. Our senior producer's Melissa Townsend. Our producers are Ellen Finn, Gretchen Brown, Britt Emmett, and Alanna Elder. Our technical director today, Alex Simpson. Take a bow, Alex.

And our theme music is composed by Minnesota-based musicians Aby Wolf and Joe Horton. We appreciate you, of course, listening to us every week. In case you missed something you want to hear, maybe a segment we had earlier in the week, we've got that podcast. Check it out wherever we get your podcasts. It's *Minnesota Now* here on MPR News. Have a good day.