

NINA MOINI: Hockey and basketball fans in Minnesota are in the middle of a playoff bonanza. For the first time ever, the Timberwolves and the Wild have both advanced to second rounds in the same year, and the Minnesota Frost have just begun their playoff run. *Minnesota Now* sports contributor Eric Nelson joins me today with the details. Hey, Eric.

ERIC NELSON: Nina, happy Monday.

NINA MOINI: Happy Monday. We're Wally-less today. We normally have Eric and Wally. But we're going to do just great with just Eric, so thank you.

ERIC NELSON: Yeah, I'll try to plow through this. There's a lot to get into.

NINA MOINI: It's a heavy lift this week. Thanks for doing it. Let's start with hockey. The Wild had a high-scoring game in Colorado yesterday, but not quite high enough, it sounds like. What happened?

ERIC NELSON: Nina, this was a true Colorado Avalanche. The Minnesota Wild were buried by a flurry of goals. So game one of the second round Stanley Cup playoff series was really video game hockey, as Colorado wanted over Minnesota 9 to 6. This is just the 10th playoff game ever with at least 15 combined goals and just the second since 1994. There were five goals in each period. Minnesota actually overcame a 3-0 deficit go up 5-4 briefly in the second period, but Colorado came back to win as Cale Makar scored two goals in the third period.

And really, no one saw this coming because the Avalanche goalie, Scott Wedgewood, had the top goals against average in the NHL this season. But he gave up one more goal last night than he did in four playoff games against Los Angeles in round one. Meanwhile, the Wild's Jesper Wallstedt was outstanding against Dallas in the opening round of the playoffs but clearly struggled against a Colorado team that has a potent offense.

So the Wild were without forward Joel Eriksson Ek and defenseman Jonas Brodin. They've been ruled out for game 2, which is Tuesday night in Denver. That will start at 7:00 PM Central time. And I'll tell you what, Nina, Minnesota needs to avoid getting into another shootout against a Colorado team that has enough firepower to melt a glacier in the Rocky Mountains. They are good.

NINA MOINI: Beautiful imagery. Thank you. So as I mentioned, there at the top, the Frost just started round one of-- this is the Professional Women's Hockey League playoffs. How'd they do against Montreal?

ERIC NELSON: Yeah, they're going for the three-peat. That would be three straight titles. And they win game 1 Saturday up in Quebec against Montreal 5 to 4 in overtime, second highest scoring game in PWHL playoff history. In fact, Minnesota's last six postseason games have all gone to overtime, and the Frost are pretty good when they play bonus hockey. They're 6 and 2 all-time in their almost three years now in the PWHL.

Jincy Roesse scored the game-winning goal in OT for the Frost 4 minutes and 30 seconds into the period. The Victoire's Laura Stacey scored three goals, logging the first postseason hat trick in PWHL history. Game 2 is tomorrow night in Montreal. That will start at 6:00 PM Central time. And Nina, let's not forget, this is a best of five series. First team to win three will move on.

NINA MOINI: Let's get back to the Wolves, Minnesota Timberwolves. They have their first game against the San Antonio Spurs in the Western Conference Semifinals tonight. They beat Denver in the previous round, despite some injuries. Do you know if Anthony Edwards, Ant, will be playing tonight?

ERIC NELSON: There's a chance He's got a knee injury. But he's been cleared to play. He's listed as a game-time decision, as is Ayo Dosunmu, the hero of game 5 for Minnesota against Denver. And according to the *San Antonio Express News*, Ant has posted a video about his recovery on his YouTube channel-- this came out Sunday-- titled, "Don't Count Me Out." So this guy wants to play. Ant is not a guy who believes in load management and taking games off, especially when you look at this series, where now, you're in the Elite Eight of the NBA, so to speak.

And the real angle here is the French connection. I know you're a global person, Nina. How about Minnesota with Rudy Gobert, their center? He's 7 feet 1 inches tall. They call him the Stifle Tower because he blocks a lot of shots. He's going to go against fellow countryman Victor Wembanyama of San Antonio. He's 7' 4". He's the Eiffel Tower.

Gobert has been a great player since 2013 in the NBA. Wemby is a young guy, just starting to blossom into a superstar. He's an MVP candidate, and he's really a unicorn. He's a freak. He can play down low, but he can also bring the ball up the floor like a point guard. And when he was a young kid in France, he would contact Rudy Gobert and ask him questions on how do I get better? Well, now here they are in the playoffs, and Gobert might regret telling him some of this stuff because he's got his hands full, as these two French towers will square off down there in Texas. By the way, it's an 8:30 PM tip off, so you got to stay up late if you want to watch it.

NINA MOINI: Let's check in on the Twins. Pitcher Joe Ryan had to leave yesterday's game with an injury, but they beat the Toronto Blue Jays. What happened in that game?

ERIC NELSON: That was a bizarre game, Nina. I was at that one and also on Saturday, sun-drenched day at Target Field, finally, some good weather. Ryan is an All-Star pitcher. He leaves in the first inning after throwing just nine pitches and getting one out. He had a sore right elbow. We don't know if he's going to miss his next start. So that put the game in the hands of Minnesota's beleaguered bullpen, which is blowing a bunch of leads this season, including one Saturday against the Blue Jays.

But these relief pitchers actually came through, five guys combined to get the win for Minnesota against the defending American League Champion Blue Jays. Andrew Morris was the star. He threw 3 and 2/3 innings of scoreless baseball because he had to come on when Ryan left, and he was not prepared or ready. He didn't think he'd be coming in until much later, if at all. Luke Keaschall had a couple of hits, including an RBI double for the Twins, who did win it 4 to 3.

And I do want to give some love to our neighbors up north. The Canadian coup d'etat took place over the weekend. There were thousands of Blue Jays fans who flocked to Minneapolis for the series. They came from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, all points north to see the Jays. And believe me, they pumped a lot of money into the bars, restaurants, and hotels in the Twin Cities, and they made a lot of noise at the ballpark.

NINA MOINI: Well, that's good. We appreciate them. I understand there's also some big news in the Minnesota golf world, a top player coming to the 3M Open in Blaine this summer. Tell us more.

ERIC NELSON: Yeah, this just broke earlier today. And this is huge news if you're a golf fan. The 3M Open announced that world number one Scottie Scheffler has committed to play in the 2026 3M Open. That tournament takes place July 20 through July 26 at TPC Twin Cities in Blaine, northern suburbs. Scheffler is the reigning PGA Championship and Open Championship winner, and he's going to make his debut at the 3M Open. And this is one of the top players ever to play in this tournament, which is about seven years old now.

This guy is a superstar. He's got 20 PGA TOUR wins. He's won four majors, including two Masters wins down in Augusta, Georgia. And he's the third on the list of top money makers in the history of golf. He's made over \$110 million. So getting Scottie Scheffler to play-- because keep in mind, the tournament before the 3M Open is the British Open over there in the UK, and a lot of golfers don't want to come right back and golf right away. And that's the problem we've had here in Minnesota. So to get Scheffler, wow. That's all I can say. Good job, 3M Open.

NINA MOINI: All right, Eric, thanks so much. Have a great week.

ERIC NELSON: OK, Nina See you.

NINA MOINI: Eric Nelson is co-host of the *10,000 Takes* sports talk show and the Minnesota Vikings reporter for Infinity's *Gridiron Gameday* and Sirius XM.