

**NINA MOINI:**

We're going to turn now, as we do on Mondays, to sports. First, the Girls State High School Basketball Tournament crowned a couple of new champions this weekend, and two other schools held on to their titles. The Providence Academy Lions made Minnesota history as the first team to win five straight state titles, with a 95-to-60 win in the Class 2A final over the Duluth Marshall Hilltoppers. Maddyn Greenway is a Providence Academy senior who's committed to play for the Kentucky Wildcats in college. She sealed her high school legacy with five championships, closing out her career as the state's all-time leading scorer at 5,621 points.

[AUDIO PLAYBACK]

- I was just trying to soak it all in. I'll never get these years back with my best friends and my sisters, so just trying to enjoy it all. There was a lot of tears as you saw on the court, but I just love this program with everything in me. And I don't think I'd be half the player without it. So yeah, it sucks, but we ended it in the best way.

[END PLAYBACK]

**NINA MOINI:**

In Class 3A, the Benilde-St. Margaret's Red Knights beat the Stewartville Tigers, 75 to 63. With this win, the Red Knights avenged a January regular season loss to the Tigers and grabbed their fourth straight championship. In the 4A title game, the Rosemount Irish upset the defending champion, Hopkins Royals, 63 to 62. Here's 45TV with the call.

[AUDIO PLAYBACK]

- Erma Walker is right there in the middle, looming, as Diggs will inbound. Get it into Davis, back to Diggs. Shot is blocked. Ball is loose. Davis has it, off the glass. There's the buzzer! It's the Irish who are royal! Rosemount wins their first title.

[END PLAYBACK]

**NINA MOINI:**

Junior guard Gianna Carpentier called the win surreal.

[AUDIO PLAYBACK]

- This is every game you dream of as a kid. I mean, a 1-point game is everyone's dream to play in. This state tournament game was awesome. I'm sure everyone had fun here. I had fun. Such a close game. My team pushed through so hard. I'm so proud of us.

[END PLAYBACK]

**NINA MOINI:**

In Class A, the Sleepy Eye Saint Mary's Knights also won their first state title. They defeated the Mountain Iron-Buhl Rangers, 80 to 63.

(SINGING) They're playing basketball

We love that basketball

**NINA MOINI:**

That's right. We're going to keep talking basketball now with sports contributors Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson. Hey, guys.

**ERIC NELSON:**

Very happy.

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:**

How are you today?

**NINA MOINI:**

I'm good. How about me doing that sports bit before you guys came on?

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:**

Wow.

**ERIC NELSON:**

Yeah.

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:**

It's in your DNA.

**ERIC NELSON:**

I'm impressed.

**NINA MOINI:**

[LAUGHS] I was hoping for some support. Yeah, thank you guys.

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:**

Well, and the other thing I'm impressed with is your producer picking Kurtis Blow's basketball to lead into the segments.

**NINA MOINI:**

It's never been done.

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:**

Awesome.

**NINA MOINI:**

No, we love it. We love it here. The brackets are out for the NCAA men's and women's tournaments, of course. And, Wally, some of the women's games are coming here to Minnesota. So what do Minnesota fans need to know going into the tournament?

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:**

Well, I mean, it's a great opportunity for the University of Minnesota. The lady Gophers are going to be hosting a first round tournament. So they'll play Friday, and it's a 5 o'clock tip-off. For the Gophers, they'll be playing against the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. And really, the Gophers and Mark Coyle had kind of planned and hoped on this. He talked to Dawn Plitzuweit, the Gopher women's head basketball coach.

What happens in the women's basketball tournament, the home sites in the first round of the tournament are not determined until the seedings are determined. And so Minnesota literally had to reserve Williams Arena in order to be able to host. And they did that. Mark Coyle went out and told the Minnesota State High School League, hey, you can't play the Minnesota boys basketball tournament next weekend because we're going to potentially host a first round NCAA tournament--

**NINA MOINI:**

Wow.

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:**

--situation. And so that's what happened. That's why the boys tournament is not this weekend. It has been pushed to the following weekend, which is really late. But that's what's going to happen. So Mark Coyle, Dawn Plitzuweit, they had the foresight to get this done. And so they are hosting. This is a big deal. They get potentially two games at home. If they win, they'll play the winner of Mississippi and Gonzaga.

Mississippi is the number 5 seed. Gonzaga is the number 12 seed. And that would be on Sunday. So if Minnesota beats Green Bay, and they are heavily favored to do so, Las Vegas is telling us they're a 22-point favorite, so whatever you want to do with that. But Minnesota is very good at home. They were 13 and 3 at home this year. Green Bay overall, 25 and 8. They won the Horizon League.

But for Minnesota, this is a big deal. They get a home tournament game for the first time since 2005, and it's their first appearance in the NCAA tournament since 2018. So this is a really big deal, and I'm happy to see it for them. Also, one other college basketball note, St. Thomas, the men's team, in their first year of Division I postseason eligibility, they get an NIT bid. They will play in Seattle tomorrow night against Seattle University. So congratulations to Johnny Tauer and his group.

**NINA MOINI:**

OK. Eric, let's turn to the Timberwolves. They've had kind of a bumpy road in their last few away games. What's the latest there?

**ERIC NELSON:**

Yeah, Nina. Everything was not OK yesterday in OKC as the Timberwolves lost to Oklahoma City, 116 to 103. The Thunder have won eight straight. And they are the defending NBA Champions. And they overwhelmed the Timberwolves, outscoring them by 19 points in the second half. Minnesota actually had a 7-point lead in the third quarter, but that evaporated.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander-- he goes by the moniker SGA-- scored 20 for the Thunder. He also had 10 assists. And SGA is the reigning MVP. And he's now scored, and this is remarkable, 20 points or more in 128 straight games.

**NINA MOINI:** Wow.

**ERIC NELSON:** That's an NBA record. This guy is money in the bank if you want him to score 20 or more. As far as Minnesota goes, we've heard that phrase, Nina, especially the last few days in Minnesota, "weather whiplash."

**NINA MOINI:** Yeah.

**ERIC NELSON:** I'm coining a new one, "Wolves whiplash."

**NINA MOINI:** Sure.

**ERIC NELSON:** Because the Timberwolves are like the weather here in Minnesota, very hard to predict.

**NINA MOINI:** Right.

**ERIC NELSON:** They have hot streaks followed by cold streaks. They had a clunker loss to Orlando nine days ago here in the Twin Cities. Before that, they had won 5 in a row. Now, suddenly, they've lost, 4 out of 5. Minnesota right now is currently 41 and 27. Timberwolves are the sixth seed in the West, but only 1 and 1/2 games out of the third spot. And things are very bunched up in the Western Conference right now.

Phoenix is just 1 and 1/2 games behind Minnesota. And wouldn't you know it, the Suns and Timberwolves play Tuesday night, tomorrow, in Minneapolis. So this is a crucial game for both teams. We'll see which Minnesota Timberwolves team decides to show up.

**NINA MOINI:** All right, Wally. What about the Minnesota Frost and the Wild that played this weekend? What stood out to you in their games?

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:** Well, we could start with the good news or the bad news. Let's start with the bad, because I like ending on good, if you don't mind.

**NINA MOINI:** Sure, yeah.

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:** First, the bad news is the Wild. They have now gone three straight games without a win. And it's their first three-game winless streak in a while. They lost yesterday to the Maple Leafs, 4 to 2. They lost to the Rangers on Saturday, at home, oh, by the way, 4 to 2. They lost in a shootout in overtime on Thursday night to the Flyers, 3 to 2. So at least, they're consistent. We're scoring two goals a game.

But since beating the Utah Mammoth last Tuesday, they have dropped three in a row. And as I said, this is one of their low spots of the season. They will now move on to play the Chicago Blackhawks in two straight games, including one tomorrow night that will be in Chicago. So the winless streak at 3. And look, these are three straight teams that probably aren't going to be in the postseason. And that's kind of a low point for them.

And as I said, they were 0-2-1 back in early January. And, oh, by the way, those three games were also in St. Paul as well. All right. Now, the good news.

**NINA MOINI:**

All right.

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:**

Your Minnesota Frost, they were winners, 4 to 3, over New York. So the Frost get back into action with the W. And as I said, again, they are the two-time defending champions, hopefully trying to be Walter Cup champions for the third straight time.

**NINA MOINI:**

All right. And so, Eric, last week, I know you all talked about the anticipation over what moves the Vikings were going to be making as they start to build their roster for next season, especially when it comes to the quarterback position. What's going on there?

**ERIC NELSON:**

Yeah. So, Nina, last Thursday, Minnesota did sign quarterback Kyler Murray to a one-year deal. And that was really the speculation that most people thought Kyler would be coming to the Twin Cities. And boy, the Purple got Murray for a bargain. Minnesota will pay him the league minimum of \$1.3 million this season. And in the NFL, that's couch change.

**NINA MOINI:**

Sure.

**ERIC NELSON:**

That's nothing. Meanwhile, his old team, the Arizona Cardinals, have to pay Murray over \$35 million.

**NINA MOINI:**

Wow.

**ERIC NELSON:**

So the one thing in the deal that the Viking fan base needs to be aware of is they can't put a franchise tag on Murray after the season to stop him from becoming a free agent. However, that doesn't mean Minnesota can't resign Kyler Murray if things go well. What this is is a great audition opportunity for Murray. If he has an outstanding season, the Vikings are probably going to pony up and say, we can't let another Sam Darnold leave here. So here's the key to the [? mitt, ?] Kyler. Take what you want.

If he doesn't do that well, the Vikings may say goodbye, and he's on the open market again. One thing about Kyler Murray, he's only 5' 10", 210 pounds, but he's got a home-run arm. He can throw the deep ball. And he's a water bug type guy. He's elusive. He can extend plays. I think guys like Justin Jefferson and Jordan Addison are going to like having him at quarterback.

He grew up in Texas, Nina, but he didn't cheer for the Dallas Cowboys or the Houston Texans. His favorite team, the Minnesota Vikings.

**NINA MOINI:**

Huh!

**ERIC NELSON:**

And we don't want to forget also about J.J. McCarthy. He's in limbo now, but this is still a chance for him to keep grinding and working, learn the position, try to adjust to what it takes to being a quarterback in the NFL. And who knows, guys get injured all the time. So I think it'll be some good competition between J.J. and Kyler.

And one other note, Minnesota United, soccer, crushed Saturday in Vancouver by the Whitecaps. 6-0, that's the worst loss in franchise history. The Loons come back home Sunday against Seattle FC, the Sounders. So they'll have a chance to rebound as they try to recover from really a devastating defeat out there in British Columbia.

**NINA MOINI:**

All right, you guys. As always, we appreciate you coming by on a Monday to talk sports. Wishing you a great rest of your week. Thank you both.

**ERIC NELSON:**

All right. Thanks, Nina.

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:**

Thanks, Nina.

**NINA MOINI:**

Thank you. That is our sports contributors. Those are our sports contributors, Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson.