

**MPR News | Minnesota Now Wolves win in Boston for first time since 2005, high school boy's basketball tourney tips off Tuesday 01KME37Q0AB9DS4S16E8CK9ATD**

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**NINA MOINI:** We are going to turn to our regular weekly sports segment, which begins on a somber note. Minnesota's sports world is mourning the loss of hockey reporter Jessi Pierce. She and her three children were killed in a house fire this weekend at their home in White Bear Lake. Her former colleagues and the organizations she covered, the NHL, the Wild, the Frost, posted tributes to social media describing her as kind, a caring person dedicated to hockey. *Pioneer Press* sportswriter Jess Meyers shared his memory of Pierce on *Morning Edition* earlier today.

**JESS MYERS:** Just brought a joy to everything she did, brought a smile to everybody. Came to work every day, loving-- loving this life that she had made for herself. But that was secondary. The biggest thing in her life was she was a mom to her three kids and loved to talk about all the fun stuff they would do together, all of their activities. So it's just a crushing loss in so many ways.

**NINA MOINI:** Absolutely. Certainly thinking of their family and her husband today. Joining me now are sports contributors Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson. Thanks for being here, guys.

**WALLY** Yeah, thanks, Nina.

**LANGFELLOW:**

**ERIC NELSON:** Thank you, Nina.

**NINA MOINI:** I understand you both knew Jessi Pierce. It seems like by all accounts she was just a beloved member of the sports journalism community. Wally, what should people about her and her career?

**WALLY** Well, as you've already articulated, just a long-time person who covered the game of hockey, who loved covering  
**LANGFELLOW:** the game of hockey and the Minnesota Wild. I'm going to start calling them the Wild Jessi's team because it really was. And she came to us about nine years ago on a recommendation from a friend at a local hockey magazine, said that she writes for the magazine, and she writes for, and they said I think she'd be great on the radio.

And so I teased her because we were the first people to ever have her on the air, on radio, and she ended up going on and doing podcasts. And she did radio appearances with Eric and I for years now. For the last nine years, she would come on at the drop of a hat. And this is the hockey end of it and the reporting end of it, but as you heard Jess Myers say, just beloved mom and with her three kids.

And a matter of fact, I saw her a couple of weeks ago at the Let's Play Hockey Expo. She and her son came up to our booth we had there, and we talked for a little while. And it was just like old times. And to get that news on Saturday morning was it's just devastating. The people in the hockey community are hurting over this, and as I posted, I said the media world, the hockey world, and the world in general lost really a shining star.

**NINA MOINI:** Anything you wanted to add, Eric?

**ERIC NELSON:** Yeah, just that when I would go to Wild games at Grand Casino Arena, I was there Thursday night when Minnesota played Chicago. There were certain things or people you knew you were going to see. Jess Myers, we just heard from him, from the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, you're going to see Jess. You're going to see the *Minnesota Star Tribune* beat reporter. You're going to see certain broadcasters connected with the team like Anthony Lapanta and Tom Reid.

But you knew Jessi was going to be there. She was one of those media anchors, and she would have the same spot in the press box high above the ice. And like Wally said, she was a beacon. She was a bright light. She absolutely had a passion for hockey, and her knowledge was superior to most of us.

And then her kids, I remember doing Zoom interviews, and her kids would be in the background running around. And she would be saying, hey, you gotta calm down. I'm on the radio now. So, yeah, it's a haymaker.

And it got national play. ESPN had headlines on this. So it's not just a Minnesota story. It's all over the NHL map.

**NINA MOINI:** A huge loss for the state for the sports world. Thank you both so much for sharing about Jessi Pierce. We really appreciate it.

Let's continue on with some hockey news for the audience here. Wally, the Wild beat the Dallas Stars at home on Saturday. They're away this week. What's next for them?

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:** Yeah, Jessi's team will be in Florida this week. They play at Tampa on Tuesday taking on the Panthers. The Wild now with 92 points, 5 points still behind Dallas with 11 games to go. So it's looking like the Wild are going to play Dallas in the opening round. I think that that's a done deal, and it's also looking like Dallas will have home ice.

They did as you mentioned beat Dallas, but Dallas got a point out of them, the cockamamie system that the NHL has where you get a point for losing a game. I don't understand it. I never will, but they give them a point for losing in overtime.

But big game against the Lightning tomorrow. Lightning are second in the Atlantic Division, third best record in the East with 91 points, so they're right on par with the Wild's 92 points. And then they play the Florida Panthers later on this week. That's on Thursday.

Panthers are a bottom feeder this year, and then they go to Boston on Saturday before returning home next week. So big road swing for the Wild this week, and it all starts tomorrow night as I said against a very good Tampa Bay Lightning team.

**NINA MOINI:** OK. Eric, when we talked last week about the Timberwolves, the Wolves have been struggling on the road, but they're coming off a win I understand in Boston yesterday. What happened with the Celtics there?

**ERIC NELSON:** Yeah. And I coined that phrase Wolves whiplash like Minnesota weather, and it's still very much applicable to this team. They lost to Portland on Friday in the Twin Cities, and Portland's not very good. So they go play Boston yesterday, one of the top teams in the NBA, and what do they do? They win by 10, 102-92. In fact, the Timberwolves win their first game in Boston, Nina, since 2005, snapping an 18-game losing streak in Beantown.

Let's put that into perspective. The last time Minnesota won in New England, Kevin Garnett was the Timberwolves star player and Flip Saunders was the head coach. So this was definitely a signature win for Minnesota because the Celtics are 47-24. They're the second best team in the East.

And how about this, no Anthony Edwards.

**NINA MOINI:** Oh.

**ERIC NELSON:** And they still win. Ant has been sidelined now for four straight games--

**NINA MOINI:** That's right.

**ERIC NELSON:** Because of right knee inflammation. So some guy named Bones supplied the scoring muscle for Minnesota. Bones Hyland had 23 points to pace the Timberwolves. Jaden McDaniels chipped in with 19.

And get ready Wednesday. Big one looming on the horizon, Houston at Minnesota. Huge game for both teams because the Rockets, Timberwolves, and the Denver Nuggets are all battling for that number 4 seed in the West, and you're going to have to stay up late though if you want to watch it. Television is the tail that wags the dog, and it's going to tip off at 8:30 PM. So both of these are Central time zone teams, and it's going to end probably about 11:00 PM, maybe later.

**NINA MOINI:** All right. I'll just wait to hear I guess what happened from you guys the following Monday. So, Eric--

**ERIC NELSON:** We'll give you the deets.

**NINA MOINI:** Yeah, five days later. Eric, so Minnesota United are also doing better than last time we talked. They just had their worst loss in franchise history. I remember that, but yesterday's game against the Seattle Sounders ended in a draw. What's standing out to you about this, Eric?

**ERIC NELSON:** Yeah, scoreless draw against Seattle. That game was in St. Paul. Well, I would say the goalkeeper Drake Callender, they call a shutout in soccer a clean sheet, so he was perfect. Seattle couldn't get any goals. That's the good news.

The bad news is Minnesota United has just 5 points, and the Loons are 12th right now in the MLS Western Conference. So they've got some work to do if they want to get into the playoff picture, and they've got a lot of matches left. But the Loons have now gone two straight matches, Nina, without scoring a goal.

So I'm not a math major, but if you don't score I don't think you can win. And it's not like hockey where hear-- they reward you just for getting a loss or a tie. So they need to figure that out, and hopefully they'll start scoring some goals soon.

**NINA MOINI:** OK. Got an exciting weekend coming up again for high school sports. The boys state tournament starts tomorrow, Wally. What are you going to be watching for?

**WALLY**  
**LANGFELLOW:** Oh, boy. Big day tomorrow in the boys state high school basketball tournament. The Class IV A tips off tomorrow at Target Center. Top seeded and number one and unbeaten Tartan will take on Blaine. That's a 10:00 AM start tomorrow at Target Center.

Noon has Chaska against fourth seeded Lakeville South. Then, 2:00 PM the state champions, the defending state champions from Wayzata, they're the number two seed and only because they lost a couple of games this year.

Tartan hasn't lost, so Tartan's number one. They take on Apple Valley. The defending champs do. And then the 4:00 PM game is Maple Grove. They are the three seed, and, oh, by the way they handed Wayzata both of those in-state Minnesota losses this year. They take on Alexandria, and I think that game is going to be an interesting one to watch because Alexandria is moving up from Class III A. So they moved up from the smaller schools into the bigger school class.

But they have played really well. They won their section, and here they are at state. And then the games continue Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and then it ends on Saturday.

**NINA MOINI:** All right. Thank you both so much, Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson. Appreciate you guys. Take care.

**WALLY** See you, Nina.

**LANGFELLOW:**