

NINA MOINI: The high school boys basketball championships this weekend had it all-- a storybook ending for a Cinderella team and a last-second steal by a powerhouse. In class 4A, Chaska had been on a winning streak that had capped off with an unlikely state title, unlikely because Chaska only won 21 games combined the past two seasons, and they were fifth seed going into the tournament. A fifth seed had never before won a class 4A title. Junior guard Kalin Jochum said the team's turnaround was unbelievable.

KALIN JOCHUM: I mean, the last two years, we had 10 wins, 11 wins. And just to get here after all this, being with Tyler, being with all these guys, it means the world to me.

NINA MOINI: Chaska beat Apple Valley 63 to 55. And in class 3A, Totino-Grace came away with its fourth state title in five seasons, thanks to a last-second steal that gave Totino-Grace a 72-70 win over DeLaSalle. Minnehaha Academy defeated top-seeded Goodhue to take the class 2A championship. Minnehaha Academy dominated with 53 points in the second half, led by juniors Ayden Greene and Kellen Troup. Here's Troup on the win.

KELLEN TROUP: Our expectation was to win it. We were the underdogs. Even though we were the three seed, no one believed in us. They had us losing first round in Waseca, but we just came in, and we believed-- everyone believed in each other, and we just got it done.

NINA MOINI: In class A, Hills-Beaver Creek upset the favorite by defeating Janesville-Waldorf Pemberton 64 to 33. Senior forward Jamin Metzger said the team knew they could prevail.

JAMIN METZGER: I mean, it was a little nerve-wracking. But we've been in these tough games. We've been in the intensity of this, and we just played right through it.

NINA MOINI: As winning schools celebrate a triumphant end to their season, the Minnesota Twins are getting back into the swing of things. Their home opener's this coming Friday. Joining me to talk about it and other sports news are sports contributors Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson. Hey, guys.

WALLY Hey, Nina.

LANGFELLOW:

ERIC NELSON: Happy Monday, Nina.

NINA MOINI: There I went again with a little sportscast-- was trying to impress the both of you. [LAUGHS]

WALLY Very impressive.

LANGFELLOW:

ERIC NELSON: Mission accomplished.

NINA MOINI: Thank you. Now we can move on. So, Wally, the Twins began their season in Baltimore last week. How'd it go?

WALLY Well, up and down-- they lost their opener, but they have won a game on Saturday before losing again

LANGFELLOW: yesterday. So they lost 2 out of 3 in Baltimore. They lost 8 to 6 yesterday afternoon. They had a 4-0 lead in the game yesterday, but they let it slip away.

Here's an interesting side note to how this game ended. The new automated balls-and-strikes challenge system-- so there are literally cameras all over the stadiums now in Major League Baseball. And if you're a batter and the umpire calls a ball-- or calls a strike and you think it was a ball, you can turn to the-- you could tap your hat, turn to the umpire, and say, I'd like to challenge the call.

Now, each team gets two challenges within the game, and you lose a challenge if you are mistaken in your call. Well, there were 10 challenges in the game. In other words, the umpires were missing some calls. Seven of them were overturned. So they missed 7 out of those 10 that the calls were made.

And get this. There was a huge call in the ninth inning that led to a Twin striking out instead of getting a walk. New manager Derek Shelton took exception, and he argued that the challenge was made by the pitcher too late. He was subsequently ejected from the game, so he earns his first ejection as a Minnesota Twins manager.

Twins are now 1 and 2 on the season, one win, two losses. The ball-and-strike challenge system didn't work out very well for the Twins yesterday. They are in Kansas City this afternoon for the Royals home opener. Royals are also 1 and 2. They lost 2 of 3 in Atlanta to the Braves this past weekend.

As for today's game, Simeon Woods Richardson will be on the mound for Minnesota today against the Royals' Kris Bubic. That is a 3:00 PM first pitch for the Twins and Royals in Kansas City today.

NINA MOINI: Eric, what should people know heading into the home opener here on Friday?

ERIC NELSON: Well, first and foremost for the Minnesota Twins, enjoy the heat in Missouri. It's going to be 88 today in KC, in the 70s tomorrow. They'll finish up the series on Thursday when the temp drops to 50, and it'll get colder as they come north for the home opener.

I don't want to be Donnie Downer, because the home opener is normally a festive day. Everyone is jubilant. Baseball is back. Spring is in the air. But it will be Tampa Bay and Minnesota playing on Friday. That's a 3:10 PM start, but the weather could put a damper on things. The predicted high is 42 degrees, low of 32.

Saturday, the Rays and Twins play a 6:10 PM game. That's baffling to me. Normally, the Twins don't play night games on Saturday until well into the summer when we know that thermometer has shot up. And how about your high on Saturday-- 39, low of 30, and 75% chance of a rain-snow mix in the forecast.

And then Easter Sunday, the high is 46 degrees, 1:10 PM start. So if you're going to go out to Target Field, bundle up, prepare. But I'm trying to look at this, Nina, optimistically. These are not ideal conditions.

NINA MOINI: Yeah, and you never know. Yeah, you never know. And it's early April, so you really don't. You just don't what's going to happen.

ERIC NELSON: Well, and think of it this way. Tampa Bay is the opponent. They play in the Florida sunshine or in their cushy dome down in St. Petersburg. The Rays will be ill equipped, perhaps, to deal with these temperatures--

NINA MOINI: Let's hope. Let's hope.

ERIC NELSON: --and coming up.

NINA MOINI: Oh, Wally, I'm sad that we have sad news again this week in the world of sports, in the football world-- two Viking legends who lost their lives over the weekend. Can you tell us about Joey Browner and Jeff Siemon?

WALLY Yeah, it is sad, and they both go on the same day. They both passed away on Saturday, both former Viking
LANGFELLOW: greats. And I don't think I'm misstepping by saying that Browner was just 65 years old. He passed after a long illness.

He was a first-round pick of the Vikings out of USC back in 1983. He played from 1983 to 1991 with the Vikings and then one year with Tampa before he retired. He's in the Vikings Ring of Honor. He's a great candidate to be in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

I hope that he is considered along with Chuck Foreman and Jim Marshall. These are guys that need to be in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He was a four-time first-team All Pro. He was a six-time Pro Bowl selection. He's on the NFL's 1980's All-Decade team. He's a Minnesota Vikings Ring of Honor.

He's one of the 50 greatest. I mean, the accolades go on and on. And I really like Joey Browner. Both Eric and I had personal relationships with Joey Browner over the years. And he's a terrific person-- and sad to see his passing.

And then Jeff Siemon 75 years old, he played for the Vikings from 1972 to '82. So his entire career was with the Vikings. And he was in three of those Super Bowl losses, all three Super Bowl losses in the '70s. He was on those teams.

He was a four-time Pro Bowler. He too is a member of the Vikings 50 greatest players of all time. So yeah, really a sad weekend for Vikings and the Viking fans.

NINA MOINI: And, Eric, Gopher wrestling also lost a great, former Coach Jay Robinson. Will you tell us about him?

ERIC NELSON: Yeah. I mean, Nina, if you were going to build a Mount Rushmore of coaching legends over there in Dinkytown on the U of M campus, I think Jay Robinson is going to be on it. I mean, he was iconic. We lose him at age 79, I believe, on Saturday.

He built a powerhouse program at the U of M. He was the Gopher coach for 30 years. In 2005, Robinson was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. He led Minnesota to three NCAA national championships-- 2001, 2002, 2007. He was NCAA Coach of the Year three times.

Robinson coached 63 All-Americans. His Gophers won six Big Ten titles. He had 49 individual conference champions. And let's spin it way back. He wrestled in the 1972 Olympics in Munich, went to college at Oklahoma State. They're a perennial power. He also coached at Iowa with Dan Gable, who might be the greatest wrestling coach ever. And he won four NCAA titles while wrestling at Oklahoma State-- so a huge loss for the Gopher program.

NINA MOINI: Oh, all this talent-- it's lovely to hear about them though and the impact that they made. We only have about a minute left. Wally, do you want to just touch on Detroit beat the Timberwolves over the weekend? What happened there, and what's next for the Wolves?

WALLY Down a couple of players-- Jaden McDaniels didn't play. Of course Anthony Edwards has been out for six-straight
LANGFELLOW: games. They do play in Dallas tonight, so they hope to get back on track tonight.

Edwards has been upgraded to questionable, so it's hopeful that he'll play. But Jaden McDaniels remains out. That's the latest word today-- so hopefully that they can get back on track and win tonight in Dallas because they're fighting for playoff positioning right now, currently tied for the fifth spot in the West.

NINA MOINI: OK. And then, Eric, what's the latest with the Wild and Frost here?

ERIC NELSON: Yeah, they went all for Boston. It was the Boston Bruins 6, Minnesota Wild 3 Saturday in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Wild have now lost 6 of 9. But they're still in third place in the NHL Central Division with 94 points. But they trailed Dallas and Colorado. Thursday, Vancouver at Minnesota in St. Paul-- Canucks are the worst team in the NHL, 50 points. Quinn Hughes, who was dealt from Vancouver to Minnesota in December, sees his old team.

And the Frost lose to Boston yesterday at Grand Casino Arena, 4 to 2. Minnesota has 42 points in 23 games. But the good news is Kelly Pannek has the most points in the PWHL with 23. Taylor Heise leads the league with 15 assists this season.

NINA MOINI: All right. Sports contributors Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson, thank you both so much, as always.

ERIC NELSON: Thanks, Nina.

NINA MOINI: And thank you all for listening. Hope you'll join us back here tomorrow at noon.

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