

NINA MOINI: The Wolves are undefeated. Yes, we know they've only played three games but so are the Vikings a third of the way through their season. Joining me to talk about this hopeful stage in Minnesota sports, our weekly sports contributors, Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson. Hey, guys, happy Monday.

ERIC NELSON: Yeah.

WALLY Happy Monday to you, Nina.

LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: Wally, I feel like you're going to be really happy about this. Well, hearing from those Timberwolves fans, it's not Twins season, right?

[LAUGHING]

WALLY Well, shall I recap for you?

LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: What was your giveaway?

WALLY Shall I recap for you?

LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: Yeah, go for it.

WALLY Well, OK, let's do this. All three of our current men's pro teams are in first place as of this moment.

LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: There's the jinx, no?

WALLY Well, sorry, you had to throw it out there. The Wild are in first, the Vikings, obviously, unbeaten and first, and,

LANGFELLOW: yes, the Timberwolves at 3 and 0 are in first. They won convincingly last night over Toronto at Target Center 117, 94. I was there last night. It was a full house.

NINA MOINI: Nice.

WALLY It was the first opportunity for fans during the regular season to see LaMelo Ball, the newest Timberwolf. His

LANGFELLOW: Target Center debut was spectacular at times, with some alley oop dunks that he threw to his teammates. He had 8 assists, 15 points. Anthony Edwards, oh, by the way, led all scorers. He had 26.

NINA MOINI: Ant.

WALLY And then they had three other guys in double figures. If they're able to spread the wealth like that-- and LaMelo

LANGFELLOW: Ball was in foul trouble. So he didn't even play 20 minutes. He played less than 20 minutes in the game and still had a big effect on the basketball game. Jonathan Kuminga had 13. There's another new Timberwolf-- Jaden McDaniels, 14. TJ Shannon, Jr. had 15.

So they spread the wealth. They looked good. They're 3 and 0. They have one-- get this. Here's an interesting stat for you.

NINA MOINI: Yeah?

WALLY They're the first team since 2004, 2005 Utah Jazz to go 3 and 0 and win all three games by 20 or more points.
LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: Wow.

WALLY That's pretty impressive.

LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: Huge.

WALLY So you're blowing people out here early. Yeah, so I heard rumblings in the hallways-- 82 and 0. Are they going to
LANGFELLOW: win all 82? No, they're not going to win all 82.

NINA MOINI: [LAUGHING] That's a stretch from three. [LAUGHING]

WALLY Yeah, it is a big stretch, three down, 79 to go. But they do play again tonight. They have Cleveland, which was a
LANGFELLOW: Final Four team. They lost in the Eastern Conference Finals to the Knicks last year. Cleveland is 1 and 1 so far. They're in Cleveland tonight-- Cleveland, as I said, 1 and 1 with a loss to LeBron and the 76ers and a win over the Nets. So they'll have a challenge tonight.

But I think that the Wolves are better than Cleveland. I think that they should win again tonight. Anthony Edwards is going to go off on James Harden, who will not be able to guard Anthony Edwards. So it should be interesting. But yes, all good things from Target Center last night.

NINA MOINI: Yeah, it's fun when folks are doing well, when our teams are doing well. And the Vikings, still undefeated, won their sixth game of the season against the Indianapolis Colts yesterday. How did they pull that off, Eric?

ERIC NELSON: Yeah, Ninan, well, they won it 16 to 10. And then there was one, the perfect Purple-- you said it. They're 6 and 0-- are the only undefeated team in the NFL.

NINA MOINI: Wow.

ERIC NELSON: Both San Francisco and Kansas City lost their first games yesterday. So Minnesota resides alone in Perfectville. And as it has been all year, the Vikings trademark is outstanding defense. And that is how Minnesota won, as the Minnesota Mayhem-- that defense, orchestrated by Brian Flores, their defensive coordinator, was on full display at US Bank Stadium.

How about Blake Cashman? Here's a guy who went to Eden Prairie High School, played at the U of M. He had 12 tackles, 2 sacks--

NINA MOINI: Wow.

ERIC NELSON: --4 pass knockdowns and 3 hits. And here's the key stat. The Purple have given up just 74 points this season, the lowest in the NFL. Now Harrison Smith, Old Man River, he sealed the deal with an interception late in the game. The Hit Man, as they call him, now has 40 career picks and 22 sacks-- impressive numbers for a safety who someday will be in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

NINA MOINI: Yeah.

ERIC NELSON: I did have a chance to talk to Harrison Smith after the game. And he says he still has a passion for playing in the NFL, Nina. This is his 15th season in the League.

NINA MOINI: Amazing.

ERIC NELSON: And his young teammate, Dallas Turner, calls him an active dinosaur still making plays.

NINA MOINI: [LAUGHING]

ERIC NELSON: I would say that, along with Paul Krause and Joey Browner, Smith is one of the most elite safeties in Minnesota Vikings history. Will Reichard, the moneyball kicker, had 3 more field goals. Now Kyler Murray and the offense, they are still not clicking, but they put up just enough points to win. Jonathan Taylor ran for 95 yards and a touchdown for Indianapolis.

Next week, it gets tougher, though. Minnesota at Detroit-- the Lions win over Green Bay yesterday in Pure Michigan. They are 4 and 2 this season. It's a huge game. And by the way, Nina, not everyone hopes the Vikings stay perfect.

NINA MOINI: Sure.

ERIC NELSON: The only team to ever win every game in a season is the 1972 Miami Dolphins. They went 17, 0. Each year, the remaining players and coaches from that Dolphins squad get together and pop the corks and have a champagne party when the last undefeated team loses. So they're pulling against Minnesota down there in South Florida.

NINA MOINI: I'm sure. Yeah, they want to hold on to that title.

ERIC NELSON: That's exactly right.

NINA MOINI: So after this weekend, too, the University of Minnesota, it's claimed the three Big Ten trophies-- amazing-- the Pig, the Jug, and the Ax-- the first time the team's had them all since 1978, Eric. That's pretty incredible, too.

ERIC NELSON: Yeah, the Gophers are on a trophy run. If you're going to be near the U of M and the athletic facilities in the next few days, take a snapshot of the trophy case. This might not happen again for--

NINA MOINI: Sure.

ERIC NELSON: --who knows-- another millennium or so. And they got the Pig on Saturday. Much like the Vikings and Colts, it was a defensive slugfest-- Minnesota 13, 15th-ranked Iowa, 10. Luke Drzewicki kicked a 46-yard field goal on the final play of the game, as the Gophers got a walk off win over the archrival, Hawkeyes. And I can tell you, I was on the field for the final few minutes. And after the kick, it was pure pandemonium in Dinkytown-- another field rush.

NINA MOINI: Oh, wow.

ERIC NELSON: Jubilation and joy for everyone cheering on the Gophers. Drzewicki is a transfer from New Mexico. He's 12 for 12 on field goals this season. And on our 10,000 Takes X site, we posted some videos of the field rush celebration. So if you want to see it, it's pretty cool. Just go to @10Takes.

Now this game-winning field goal was set up by a 38-yard pass late in the game, Drake Lindsay to Jaylon Smith. That got Minnesota into Iowa territory with just 38 seconds left. And the Gophers, of course, are-- they're giddy. But they got to come back to Earth. They play Indiana Saturday night in Bloomington, Indiana, the defending national champions. They're fifth ranked in the nation. So this is going to be a huge challenge against the Hoosiers. But if Minnesota can pull this off, who knows where this team is going to go?

NINA MOINI: Yeah, Quinn Hughes, too, helped the Minnesota Wild beat his former team yesterday, Wally. It's just joy and jubilation everywhere.

WALLY It is. Quinn Hughes returned to Vancouver last-- by the way, I watched the game. He was booed every time he
LANGFELLOW: touched the puck.

NINA MOINI: Oh, no. [LAUGHING]

WALLY Yeah, the fans in Vancouver aren't happy that he wanted out of Vancouver. He was traded to the Wild last
LANGFELLOW: December when the Wild sent Marco Rossi and a couple of others and a draft pick to the Canucks. But Hughes, last night, scored his 500th career point. It was a goal that made it 3 minus 0 Minnesota. He later added a really pretty assist to Caryl Kaprizov for point number 501. Kaprizov's goal made it a 4, 0 game. They hang on for the 4, 2 win.

Oh, by the way, Kaprizov now has 13 goals on the season. He is currently the NHL's leading goal scorer. The Wild are now in first place by 2 points over Utah. And guess who they play tomorrow night?

NINA MOINI: Who?

WALLY Utah.

LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: Oh, OK. Well, there you go.

WALLY In Salt Lake City. So yeah, it'll be set up for a battle for first place, so to speak, tomorrow night.

LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: Let's get this one in quick here. The Minnesota United, Houston Dynamo game was a good one for the goalies-- not quite a win though, right, Wally?

WALLY No, Jonathan Bond for Houston, he had 5 saves for his 12th clean sheet, as they call it, of the season. So Houston
LANGFELLOW: didn't allow Minnesota to score. But Drake Callender made one save for his sixth clean sheet of the season for Minnesota United. And yes, they played to a 0, 0 tie. Minnesota, oh, by the way, has played to a draw in three of its last four games.

NINA MOINI: Amazing. All right, well things are going well. I hope, when we check in next week, it's the same story, Wally.

WALLY Kumbaya.

LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: Thanks so much.

WALLY Yeah, Minnesota.

LANGFELLOW:

NINA MOINI: [LAUGHING] A peaceful Monday. All right, Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson, our weekly sports contributors.