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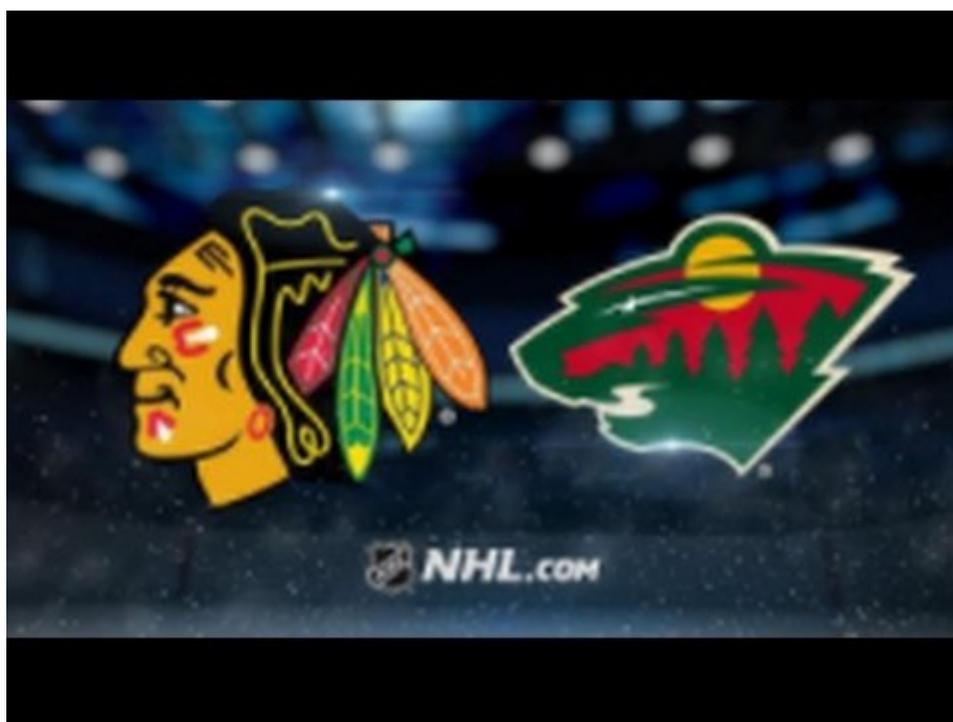
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WILD

Just Remain Calm



By [Heather Rule](#) - March 13, 2017

People are freaking out about the Minnesota Wild right now like it's January during the Mike Yeo era.

The Wild lost 4-2 on Sunday afternoon in Chicago. Devan Dubnyk gave up two goals on two shots and was promptly yanked from the net. The Blackhawks capitalized on their chances, which were usually also Wild mistakes. Meanwhile, the Minnesota boys put 44 shots into Corey Crawford and were only rewarded twice.

What followed was a bunch of fan angst about a sort-of slumping Wild. It's "sort of" because the Wild have been so solid throughout this season, a slump qualifies as losing two games in a row. Well, the Wild are 5-5 in the last 10 games. Their scoring has been down. The goaltending has looked shaky at times.

This year, the two teams sit at the top of the Central Division in the West, with the Wild occupying the top spot most of the time. They could end up facing each other in the playoffs. It would be exciting hockey, there's no doubt about that. Then again, if the Wild don't face the Blackhawks during the postseason, that's fine, too.

So why the angst? Sports seasons are long and no team wins every game. Well, it's extremely rare but not impossible. Like death and taxes, injuries and slumps are two items that every team has to deal with at some point during the season. Winning all the time just isn't realistic, so slumps will happen. Again, it's all relative. Losing a couple games and not scoring four goals a game raises a touch of concern this year. Other years, going .500 for a stretch probably didn't sound too bad.

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Not only that, there's the old standby comparison of the Twins not being able to beat the Yankees, while the Wild can't beat the Blackhawks. Sure, the Wild have lost multiple playoff series' to the Blackhawks. It could be a valid point, but it's also a little bit apples and oranges. Up until the last couple head-to-head games against Chicago, the Wild had won six straight regular-season games against them.

They lose a couple and the sky is falling.

Obviously, the playoffs and winning a cup are what it's all about. But regular-season games aren't meaningless. They still count for two points. They're still exciting for fans and build confidence and momentum for teams.

This regular season is unprecedented in Wild history. Their only division title was in 2007-08 with a 44-28-10 record. They won their most games in 2006-07 with 48; this season they're 43-17-6 under Bruce Boudreau. Division titles aren't everything, of course, especially in hockey when it's all about playoff seeds. Still, this just seems like a completely different year for the Wild in so many good ways.

That's why the fretting really isn't necessary right now. If they lose 10 in a row and are playing their worst hockey near the end of the regular season, then sure, get a little closer to that panic button. This team has shown it can win this year. Players have had breakout years. They should be able to find their way back to some solid hockey and prepare for the playoffs. (Who knows? Maybe they're just taking their foot off the gas before dialing it back up for the postseason.)

The Wild have 15 games left before the season wraps up in early April. There's time to work out whatever kinks they have going on right now. The playoffs are on the horizon. Just keep enjoying the ride.

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