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12/5 RECAP: Former Wild Star Gaborik Scores 400th Goal as Kings Beat Wild



By [Heather Rule](#) - December 6, 2017

Marian Gaborik is one of the best players in Minnesota Wild history. He's still the all-time franchise leader in goals, power-play goals and game-winning goals. He played 502 games in a Wild sweater after getting picked by the team third overall in 2000.

Now he's a career 400-goal scorer – and he scored goals No. 399 and 400 against his former team as the Los Angeles Kings (18-8-3) beat the Wild (13-11-3) by a 5-2 margin. For Gaborik, he missed the start of the season with an injury; Tuesday's game was just his seventh of the season and he doubled his season goal total in one night.

Maybe it was just one of those charmed nights for the Kings – they extended their winning streak to six games with the victory, in the process outscoring opponents 23-8.

It resulted in a 4-2 Kings lead and a big face-palm for Wild fans.

It was the first time this season the Wild lost in regulation when leading after two periods (6-1-2). Both teams came in with their best period (by goals) being the third period, but the Kings won the battle.

They've now outscored opponents 40-13 in the third period.

"Not good enough... they're patient," said Wild forward Tyler Ennis. "We got away from it in the third, and it cost us."

The second half of the game turned from a defensive chess match into a flurry of open-ice goals. The Wild allowed three Kings goals in the final 20 minutes. Gaborik scored his first of the game on a 2-on-1 rush, as he and Anze Kopitar beat faked out defenseman Ryan Suter and Devan Dubnyk.

The next two goals were just not pretty to watch. The Kings took the lead on an own-goal off Jonas Brodin in front of the net. Dubnyk poke-checked the puck away from him, but it deflected right off Brodin's stick as he battled with an opponent to Dubnyk's left. Gaborik's 400th goal came when the puck came out off a faceoff and Gaborik's quick shot went off Matt Dumba's stick before it went into the net.

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The turn of the third period, traditionally a strength for the Wild this year, was all the more frustrating based on the success they had in the second, taking a 2-1 lead into the second intermission. The second periods have been rough for the Wild this season. It's the period where they've scored the least goals this season (17) and have simply struggled to play decent hockey in many of these middle frames.

It was a scoreless first 20 minutes, which could be summed up with the old cliché: It was a good road period. The defense was solid and Dubnyk made a few big saves (with some help from the post, too) to keep the Kings off the board. The only real excitement though was a fight between Chris Stewart and Kurtis MacDermid. It was actually a pretty good tussle. The Wild also killed a penalty in the period.

The play finally started turning around and sped up in the next 20 minutes.

Charlie Coyle, who has at least a point in each of the last five games, got his second goal of the season to put the Wild up 1-0 more than halfway through the second period. The play was set up off the rush when Daniel Winnik made a drop pass to Stewart who then tossed the puck to the goal mouth. All Coyle had to do was get to the blue paint and have his stick down on the ice.

The Kings tied it up a few minutes later with a Jake Muzzin blast from the point.

Just 1:10 later, the Wild grabbed the lead back on Ennis' fifth tally of the season. With the puck cycled behind the net, he jammed away at the loose puck a couple times on the left post to get it past Jonathan Quick. It was a fourth-line effort for the goal, with Zack Mitchell getting his second assist of the season and Matt Cullen earning his fifth.

The Wild tried to come back in the closing minutes, pulling Dubnyk with about 2:15 to play, but Eric Staal took a hooking penalty to put the Kings on the power play for the rest of regulation. Kopitar completed a three-point night with an empty-net goal with 55.8 ticks left on the clock. He extended his team points lead to 34. Drew Doughty also had a three-assist night, tying him with Kopitar for the team lead at 19.

It was all Kings in the third; the Wild only registered five shots on goal.

"We got to make sure we're doing the right things defensively," Coyle said. "We've got to find a way. It's disappointing."

In goal:

- Dubnyk (11-8-2) with 23 saves. Quick (14-8-1) with 19 saves.

Tidbits:

- Stewart's assist on Coyle's goal was his 10th point of the season.
- The Wild are 10-3-2 when scoring first.
- Jason Zucker's six-game point streak ended. The team's goal leader came in with points in 12 of his last 14 games.
- Mikko Koivu hasn't scored a goal in 18 games.
- The Wild haven't scored a power-play goal in four games after scoring 10 in six games. They went 0-for-1 against the Kings.
- Kopitar's assist on Gaborik's second goal was No. 500.

Up next:

The Wild will feel a little more California love with a game Friday night in Anaheim, a homecoming for former coach Bruce Boudreau.