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For the Wild, There's Just Something About January



Photo Credit: Eric Hartline (USA Today Sports)



By [Heather Rule](#) - January 15, 2019

Sometimes there are arbitrary dates on a calendar that get remembered for various reasons. Jan. 14 is circled in Minnesota Wild history as the day goaltender Devan Dubnyk was traded to the team in one of the most successful trades ever for the franchise. After Monday night's game in Philadelphia for the Wild, however, maybe there's just something about this mid-January time period.

When the Wild acquired Dubnyk on Jan. 14, 2015, the Wild were reeling. They were sitting at perhaps their lowest point of that season in the middle of what's now become infamous with the team – a swoon.



Minnesota Wild

@mnwild

Four years ago today, #mnwild acquired Devan Dubnyk. He's posted a 151-85-23 record since then.



Tonight he backstops Minnesota in Philly → ow.ly/EEzn30njiKs



247 1:44 PM - Jan 14, 2019

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The Wild had lost six in a row before Dubnyk earned an easy 7-0 shutout in Buffalo on Jan. 15. Minnesota went from 16-11-1 to 18-19-5 from about mid-December to the game just before Dubnyk joined the team, a loss against Pittsburgh.

Of course, the rest is history with Dubnyk. He thrived in his new role with his new club, breathing life back into the hockey team. They rattled off winning streaks instead of losing streaks and made the playoffs before bowing out in the second round to Chicago. Dubnyk had a career season with the Wild, also becoming the fastest goalie to post four shutouts (in nine games) and five shutouts (16 games) with a team since 1967-68.

Dubnyk has been one of the best goaltenders in the league the past few seasons, helping the Wild to the playoffs each year. He's now preparing for his third All-Star Game in the past four seasons.

But he was also pulled after two periods in a 7-4 loss in Philadelphia on Monday night. His last road game was a 1-0 shutout, the 30th of his career and first of the season. This isn't an indictment of Dubnyk necessarily, but more on the team as a whole. The calendar is at mid-January again, and the Wild are at a loss for answers with a couple of glaring losses. While a blockbuster trade likely isn't in the cards to save the Wild's season like before, the play on the ice has been some of the most concerning in quite some time.

Wild's Dubnyk: Montreal one of my favorite places to play



Heck, even coach Bruce Boudreau called Saturday's 5-2 home loss to bottom-team Detroit the worst game he's seen from his Wild club since he's been in Minnesota. He was not happy with his team, and rightfully so. The Wild also surrendered hat tricks in each of the last two games. That's not great.

Since Dec. 15, the Wild are 5-8-1, which started with a five-game losing streak. Then they recovered for a brief three-game winning streak. But the recent setbacks now mean regulation losses in three of the past four games. It's not necessarily surprising to see the up-and-down nature from this team, but again, it comes back to how the losses are mounting that's really a tough one to swallow.

For what it's worth, they've been without top defenseman Matt Dumba for the past 13 games. It's clear he's missed, especially with his slapshot on the power play, but it's unlikely he'll play the rest of the season following surgery to repair a ruptured right pectoralis muscle. Not that they have, but the Wild can't use his absence as an excuse for poor play, power-play slumps or losing skids.



Giles Ferrell

@gilesferrell



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The Wild have endured a pair of 4-0 shutout losses during this month-long stretch. They had plenty of trouble scoring goals, getting just two from rookie Jordan Greenway in a span of three games. That was it; nobody else on the Wild roster scored. Also consider this stat: That Greenway scored his eighth of the season in a 3-2 victory over Winnipeg on Jan. 10, putting him ahead of teammates Charlie Coyle and Nino Niederreiter, who each has only seven tallies this season.

The Wild have seen awful individual stretches, too, from players like Eric Staal and Mikael Granlund. Staal, who has performed above expectations since being acquired by the Wild a couple years ago, was perhaps due for a letdown season after his 42-goal, 76-point effort last year when he nearly set a franchise record for goals. But this season he's made some questionable plays with the puck and has just 13 goals and 14 assists, which is more than half over.

Granlund's play-making skills have also gone relatively silent lately, though he still has 12 goals and 39 points (one off the team lead) this season. He has just one goal in his past 20 games.

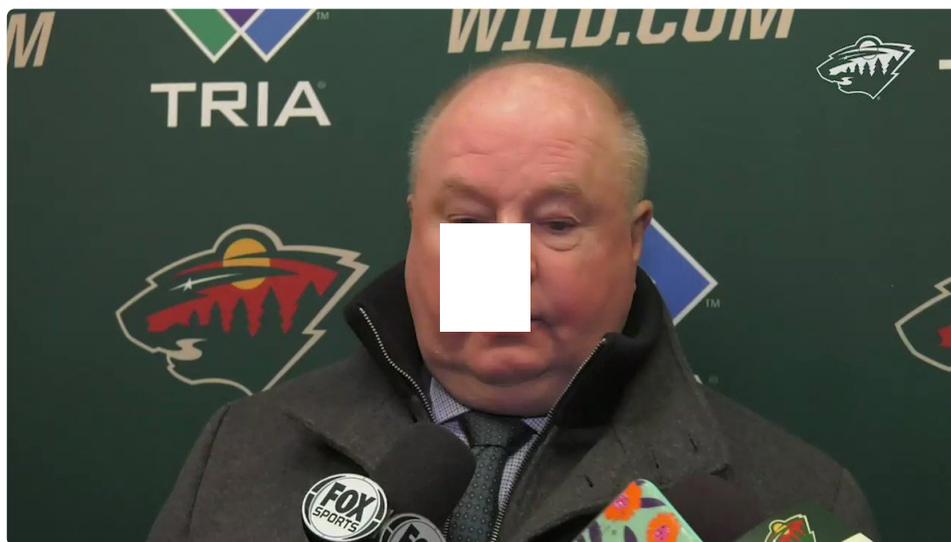
The game against the Flyers was the second time this season the Wild gave up a season-high seven goals to the opponent. Oh, and the Flyers occupy the basement of the Metropolitan Division in the Eastern Conference. Nothing against them exactly, but when two of your goal scorers are Marcus Foligno and Joel Eriksson Ek, that's usually a sign of something.



Minnesota Wild

@mnwild

"[Dubnyk's] played great for us and sometimes you have an off night. Today would've been classified as an off night. There was a lot of guys that weren't as good as we thought they should be." — Bruce Boudreau



44 9:27 PM - Jan 14, 2019

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The Wild should have had no trouble mustering four points against the Red Wings and Flyers. Instead, they come back home for the second night of a back-to-back to face Los Angeles having dropped two in a row and starting backup goaltender Alex Stalock.

The Wild are still in fifth place in their division, but St. Louis is closing, in having won three in a row and has 44 points to the Wild's 47. Anaheim and Vancouver also have 47 points, keeping the Wild around the playoff bubble again.

Dubnyk was the spark the team needed in 2014-15 to make the playoffs. But again, a trade like that is more of a right-time, right-place kind of thing. While it's interesting to compare the different ways

the Wild can struggle during this mid-season, pre-All-Star Break part of the schedule, getting out of the slump isn't going to be as easy as making a huge personnel change in the dressing room.

Getting Dubnyk was great for the Wild, but goaltending isn't the problem anymore. It's the whole package, and the Wild need to find a way to present it well if they want to avoid hearing more postgame comments from Boudreau like they did the past couple of games.

Tidbits:

- The Wild fell to 4-10-0 in Philadelphia. Last season, the Wild defeated the Flyers 1-0 on the road and 3-0 at home.
- The Wild are 3-5-0 on the first night of back-to-backs and 4-3-0 (before Tuesday's game) on the second night.
- Ryan Suter scored his first goal in 16 games on Monday. He's the team assists leader but has just five goals on the season.
- Six of Greenway's eight goals this season have been the first goal of the game.
- Blaine native Matt Hendricks, who had an assist against the Flyers, is one game away from 600 for his career. He'll be the 12th active Minnesota-born player to suit up for 600 NHL games. He's in and out of the lineup as a healthy scratch. He has no goals and two assists.

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