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OK, Now the Minnesota Wild Swoon is Totally On



Photo Credit: Perry Nelson (USA Today Sports)



By [Heather Rule](#) - December 11, 2018

[Last week's entry](#) warned that Minnesota Wild shouldn't let a few frustrating games turn into a full December swoon. But the piece ended with this regarding the dreaded "swoon" word: "... the Wild have the potential to bring that word to the forefront if they don't take care of business and get some points against their Canadian friends."

Well, sound the alarms and break some hockey sticks, this year's edition of the Wild swoon has arrived. The Wild went 1-2-0 in a brief road trip to Canada last week, defeating Vancouver 3-2 in a one-goal contest and going 3-for-3 on the power play, before getting shut out in Calgary and embarrassed in a 7-2 loss in Edmonton.

The Wild (15-12-2) have dropped five of their last six games and have fallen to 10th in the Western Conference as of Monday night. It really wasn't that long ago that the Wild was in second place in the division/conference. They were in the playoff picture at Thanksgiving. Now, the Wild will once again need to dig out of a hole.

Boudreau concerned about 'every aspect' of Wild's game



A couple of big problems stand in the way, in addition to everything else, as they try to win games. First, captain Mikko Koivu was hurt in the Calgary game after a knee-on-knee hit from defenseman

Mark Giordano (who was later suspended for the incident). Koivu didn't even make the trip to Edmonton and instead flew back to the Twin Cities to talk things over with medical professionals.

Officially, Koivu's status is listed as day-to-day with a lower-body injury. [According to Brian Murphy of the Pioneer Press](#), Wild coach Bruce Boudreau said Monday that he is optimistic Koivu could play at some point during the upcoming four-game homestand. That sounds like positive news when one considers how devastating an injury can be when it's knee-on-knee.

Koivu has four goals and 17 assists this season, ranking him tied for third on the team in points. He's three goals shy of 200 for his career.

Minnesota Wild players on their leader Mikko Koivu



In his place, the Wild called up Luke Kunin from Iowa. The 21-year-old forward has eight goals and 15 points in 21 games with Iowa this season, good enough for second on the team in goals. He played 19 games with the Wild last season, registering 34 hits and a pair of goals and assists.

The other issue that stands in the Wild's way right now is goaltender Devan Dubnyk. He was pulled after giving up three goals on six shots against Edmonton. He was in net for 8 minutes, 42 seconds before giving way to Alex Stalock, who allowed four third-period goals. One of the goals Dubnyk allowed was a complete gimme, as he tried but couldn't cover the puck with his glove in the blue paint. Yikes.

For the Wild, Marcus Foligno scored his second of the season to get it to a 3-1 deficit just a couple minutes after the goalie change. Nino Niederreiter scored his fourth in the third period to get it to 4-2 before the floodgates opened.

Dubnyk (10-9-2) has played in 22 games this season, getting pulled twice, with a GAA that's up to 2.81 and a save percentage at .907. There's been speculation that he hasn't looked quite right in the net for a few weeks. Some have singled out that game against Washington on Nov. 13 when he took a hit from Tom Wilson. As Wilson and Ryan Suter came toward Dubnyk's net with speed, Wilson scored a goal but in the process, Dubnyk ended up in the back of his dislodged net, helmet ajar and was slow to get back up.



Giles Ferrell

@gilesferrell

Hello darkness, my old friend. #mnwild



34 10:34 PM - Dec 7, 2018

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Maybe he's been hurting. Or maybe it's too much to expect Dubnyk to play such solid hockey for so many games without a break. He started the season playing extremely well, so it makes sense that his play would level off. There's been a lot of – again, speculation – about Dubnyk potentially playing injured, plus the debate of his playing time versus getting backup Stalock in the cage. Whatever the reason, Dubnyk has given up 17 goals in his last five games, including four goals a game three times in a row. Going back to the Washington game, he's allowed at least three goals in seven of nine games.

The Wild will look to get back on the winning side of things with a home game against the Montreal Canadiens on Tuesday. For what it's worth, the Wild has a seven-game winning streak (outscoring them 28-9) against Montreal, beating the squad 6-3 at home and 3-0 on the road last season.

Part of the M.O. for the team's swoons has been that they just seem to get worse, in a fall-off-a-cliff kind of way, before things start to get better. They're already on a two-game losing streak at home, which is uncharacteristic; they haven't won at Xcel Energy Center since their 4-2 comeback win on Black Friday.

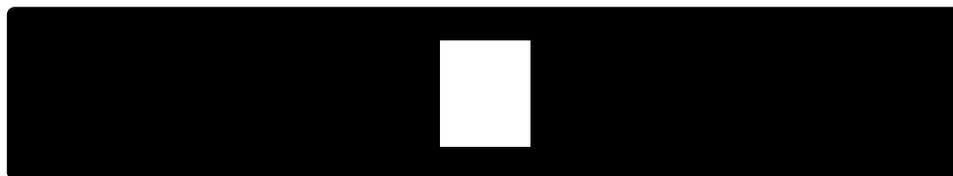
Let's see if Tuesday is a step in the right direction or just another step in the swoon process. Adversity is here, now the Wild have to figure out how to deal with it.



Giles Ferrell
@gilesferrell

New [@GatGWildPodcast](#). Discussing goaltending woes, Koivu's injury, Dumba's hit, GMCF's hiring, and more! [#mnwild](#)

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7:40 AM - Dec 10, 2018

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Tidbits:

- o Zach Parise's next point will give him 300 points in a Wild sweater. He's also just two games shy of 400 with the Wild. Friday against Edmonton marked his 900th career game in the NHL. He has eight points in his last 10 games.
- o Mikael Granlund has a goal and eight assists for nine points in his last eight games.
- o Matt Dumba still leads all NHL defensemen in goals with 10 of them.
- o In a stat that's becoming one of the most talked about this season, the Wild's opponents have scored first in 20 of their last 27 games. The Wild have the first goal in just nine of their 29 games this season and are 5-3-1 in those games. They're 10-9-1 when the other team takes a 1-0 lead.

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