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Wild's Season Ends in Embarrassing Fashion with Another Shutout



Mandatory Credit: James Carey Lauder-USA TODAY Sports



By [Heather Rule](#) - April 20, 2018

At the 1992 Indianapolis 500, pole sitter Roberto Guerrero spun out on the pace lap, before the real racing began. There's a saying in racing that you can't win a race on the first lap, but you can lose it. In Friday's Game 5, an elimination game for the Minnesota Wild, the hockey team pulled a Guerrero.

The game was basically over before it started. Or more accurately, 31 seconds into the game.

Yes, the Wild (1-4) bowed out of the 2017-18 season with a lackluster, mistake-filled effort in a 5-0 loss to the Winnipeg Jets (4-1) on the road in Game 5. The Jets won the first-round Stanley Cup Playoff series 4-1 behind another [Connor Hellebuyck](#) shutout and goals from five players.

For the series, they outscored the Wild 16-9.

Head coach Bruce Boudreau: Wild were rattled early



The start probably caught a lot of people off guard, including Wild head coach [Bruce Boudreau](#).

"I didn't expect that," Boudreau said. "I thought we were pretty ready.

"We couldn't handle the puck very well. We weren't making our passes in the first 10 minutes. It looked like we were nervous out there. And they obviously took advantage of that."

Netminder [Devan Dubnyk](#) was pulled in the first period with a bunch of players in front of him who didn't look like they wanted to be there either. The Jets grabbed a 4-0 lead by the first intermission, and the Wild never had a chance. The problems started with [Jacob Trouba's](#) goal 31 seconds in after [Charlie Coyle](#) lost a puck battle. The Jets scored first in every game of the series.

"It couldn't have gone any worse at the start for us," said forward [Eric Staal](#). "You get behind the 8-ball here, and it's tough. ... It was a tough night for all of us."

Wild's Staal on series loss: 'We needed more from everybody'



Things didn't improve for the Wild either.

[Bryan Little](#) deflected a puck into the net at the 5:42 mark for a 2-0 lead. Then [Brandon Tanev](#) scored an unassisted goal off a bad [Jonas Brodin](#) turnover in the Wild's zone at 11:10. [Joel Armia](#) made it 4-0 just 49 seconds later, prompting Boudreau to switch out his goaltender for [Alex Stalock](#), even if everything wasn't his fault.

Dubnyk gave up four goals on 10 shots in 11:59 of ice time. That's not a great ratio, regardless of how his teammates played in front of him. Boudreau said after the game that pulling Dubnyk wasn't something he wanted to do, but he could see the goaltender was rattled.

"I went in there after the first period and said to everybody that this was not on Devan," Boudreau said. "He's been our rock all year, and we let him down a little bit."

If the Wild had any hope of getting back into the game and scoring four goals in the third period, those hopes were dashed 32 seconds into the final frame with a [Mark Scheifele](#) goal, his fourth of the series. For the second game in a row, the Hellebuyck stopped all 30 of the Wild's shots.

In the big picture, it's the same old story for the Wild. The same old result. A team that signed a couple of superstars to lengthy contracts almost six years ago and has made the playoffs for six straight seasons has now been bounced from the first round for the third year in a row. They haven't made it past the second round since 2003.



Michael Russo

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Most lopsided (5-0) road loss in [#mnwild](#) playoff history

Wild now 5-18 on the road since 2013

Wild now have lost 16 of their past 20 playoff games

Wild finished the playoffs with no goals in 141:37

Changes have to be coming

Congrats to these Jets for advancing for 1st time

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Losing in the first round has become the Wild's identity.

Two seasons in a row they recorded more than 100 points in the regular season, only to go out with a whimper when things mattered the most each spring. The Wild have a 4-16 record in their past four playoff series – all losses – over the past four seasons. They're 4-12 the past three years in the first-round bounces.

Overall in the past six seasons, the Wild are 15-29 with just two series victories.

Injuries to [Ryan Suter](#) and [Zach Parise](#) aside, which are significant absences, the Wild simply did not get enough production out of multiple players. It will be the focus again that [Jason Zucker](#), [Nino Niederreiter](#) and Coyle did not register a point between them in this series. Staal scored 42 goals this season but only managed one in the playoffs. Same goes for [Mikael Granlund](#). [Mikko Koivu](#) had four assists but no goals.

Instead, guys like [Marcus Foligno](#) and [Jordan Greenway](#) scored goals in their playoff debuts this series.

After the game, [Matt Cullen](#), the league's oldest player who came back to the Wild after winning back-to-back Stanley Cups with Pittsburgh, not surprisingly didn't give any answers when it comes to

his hockey future.

"My only thought was getting it back home for Game 6, so I don't really have an answer right now... it's an important decision," Cullen said.

Plenty of decisions will be made in the coming months now that the offseason has arrived in April again. Last year, then-Wild player [Erik Haula](#) was frustrated with the team's playoff exit.

"What is this, five years in a row? I'm sick of this," Haula said, after the Wild lost in five games with home-ice advantage to St. Louis.

Now, he's heading to the second round with Vegas after the expansion team's sweep of Los Angeles this spring. The Wild will head back to St. Paul with their tails between their legs.

Wild's Cullen hasn't made a decision about his future



In goal:

- Dubnyk (1-4) with six saves on 10 shots in 11:59 during the first period; Stalock with 15 saves on 16 shots in 48:01 from the first period on. Hellebuyck (4-1) with 30 saves on 30 shots.

Tidbits:

- [Kyle Rau](#) recorded two hits and a blocked shot in 10:05 of ice time during his playoff debut. Defenseman [Ryan Murphy](#) has two shots on goal and played 16:37, including 2:42 on the power play.
- Staal led the Wild in shots on goal with four, for what it's worth.

- The Wild outshot the Jets 30-26.
- The Wild went 0 for 3 on the power play.
- The Jets really doubled up on the hits this time, outhitting the Wild 30-14 for the game.
- The Wild fall to 11-9 all-time in elimination games and 4-7 in game fives.
- The Wild lost games one and two by scores of 3-2 and 4-1, followed by a game three home victory 6-2, then 2-0 and 5-0 losses.

Up next:

Once the snow melts, Wild players will be able to hit the golf courses around Minnesota.

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