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By **Heather Rule** Like 0 Tweet Pin It Updated: March 3, 2015



Minnesota's Matt Dumba chipped in a pair of goals in the Wild's 3-2 shootout win over Ottawa on Tuesday night at Xcel Energy Center. (MHM Photo / Jeff Wegge)

Matt Dumba scores twice as Minnesota wins Jordan Leopold debut

ST. PAUL — It took until the fifth round of a shootout, but the Minnesota Wild (34-22-7) finally cracked the code against the Ottawa Senators (27-23-11).

In a highly-anticipated game because of a couple trade-deadline acquisitions, the Wild beat the Senators 3-2 Tuesday in a shootout with the help of Matt Dumba's first NHL career multi-goal game and Charlie Coyle's game-winner.

It was the Wild's first win at home against the Senators in the past five meetings.

Dumba struck just 52 seconds into the middle frame to get the scoring started. Left alone in the circle, he fired a slapper up high after receiving a cross-ice pass from Mikael Granlund. At 8:05 of the period, the Wild took a 2-0 lead when Dumba drove to the net and accepted a picture-perfect pass from newcomer Chris Stewart behind the net.

"It was a good game tonight," Dumba said. "Really fun game to play in. We want to keep this going for sure."

But Ottawa didn't go away quietly. They chipped into the two-goal deficit just 28 seconds after Dumba's second goal. Mika Zibanejad scored from the slot. A couple minutes later, Bobby Ryan

ABOUT HEATHER RULE



Heather's love for watching hockey started when the Minnesota Wild came to town in 2000. Before that, she caught a few Minnesota Moose games as a youngster, and more recently she's kept up with the Austin Bruins and Fargo Force. She's a writer, freelance journalist and blogger who previously worked as a news reporter in Austin and Fergus Falls, Minn. She enjoys watching sports and closely follows the Wild, Minnesota Twins, IndyCar Series, tennis and prep sports. Heather keeps up her sports blog **Thoughts from the Stands**. You can follow her on Twitter @hrrule.

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...of Dumba, the goals were the first and sixth goals of the season. He had four goals in the past seven games. Despite the goals, Coach Mike Yeo said he liked Dumba's defensive game the most.

"Needless to say, it was a pretty strong game from him tonight," Yeo said. "He's showing that he can play some big minutes."

The possibility of a hat trick was on the table, but was that on Dumba's mind?

"No," he said. "I don't think anyone really thinks of that."

In the shootout, Mikko Koivu led off with his signature backhand move for a goal. Jason Pominville beat Ottawa goaltender Andrew Hammond glove side, and Coyle puck-handled his way toward the goal before taking a high, glove-side shot.



Wild goaltender Devan Dubnyk reacts after making the shootout-clinching save on Senators' rookie Mike Hoffman to seal his 16th win in 21 games with Minnesota. (MHM Photo / Jeff Wegge)

In goal, Devan Dubnyk set a franchise record by starting his 21st consecutive game. This week he was also the first player in Wild history to be named the NHL First Star of the Month. Dubnyk made 31 saves and is 16-3-1 with a 1.65 GAA and .937 save percentage with the Wild.

He not only came up with the final save in the shootout, he also helped keep the game tied late in the third, as his team killed a penalty. Ottawa clanged iron on two shots during that man

advantage situation.

Once that flurry was over, the Wild headed down to the other end and put on the pressure. Dumba hit Granlund with a pass on the rush, but Hammond made a spectacular save. He finished with 36 saves.

That last penalty kill and following Wild offensive zone pressure was arguably the most excitement the Xcel Energy Center saw during the first and third periods Tuesday.

Another contending moment was early in the game when Justin Fontaine had a chance to get the Wild on the board. With Hammond on his stomach, the bouncing puck found Fontaine's stick for a wide-open chance at the net. But he shot the puck right into the body of the goaltender.

The game included two players making their Wild debuts: Stewart, from Buffalo, and Jordan Leopold, from Columbus. Both were acquired before the trade deadline Monday.

Leopold, a Golden Valley native, has been the talk of the state of hockey with the trade returning him home. A lot of attention also went to a letter his young daughter wrote to the Wild coaches that went viral on social media.

"Absolutely wonderful feeling to be home," Leopold said. Then he quipped: "Well, we better keep winning, because I don't want anybody blaming it on me."

The defenseman has 67 goals and 146 assists in 678 NHL games spanning 12 seasons. The hometown player was a standout with the University of Minnesota hockey team, leading the Gophers to an NCAA National Championship in 2002.

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than the 34-year-old Leopold.

It's good to be home near family, Leopold said, and he knows there are a lot of people in the stands who are happy for his return.

But there's a flip side to that.

"There are a lot of kids out there that have no idea who the heck I am," he said.

In his Wild debut Tuesday, Leopold became the 21st Minnesotan to play a game with the Wild. He was a minus 1 with 17:19 of ice time, but some extra minutes could be attributed to Nate Prosser leaving the game early with an illness.

So, how did Leopold feel afterward?

"My back hurts," he said. "It's been a long day."



Former Gopher Jordan Leopold made is Wild debut on Tuesday in Minnesota's win over Ottawa at Xcel Energy Center. (MHM Photo / Jeff Wegge)



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