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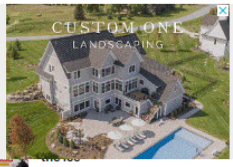

May 21, 2024

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2024 Little Wild Learn to Play Program Registration Opens May 20

By **Heather Rule @hlrule / Wild.com**
February 10, 2024

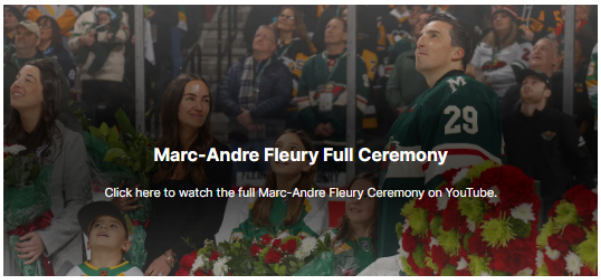
Marc-Andre Fleury didn't wear his "special tie" to the arena Friday. The tie was a Christmas gift from his daughter, Estelle, something she mentioned during a tribute video including the three Fleury children to their dad as part of Marc-Andre Fleury Night at Xcel Energy Center, honoring the Minnesota Wild goaltender for his 1,000 career NHL games and milestone 552 career victories.

"Papa, you know how before you go to your game, I ask you to wear that tie I got you for Christmas? And how I say it's lucky and magical?" said Estelle, via the pre-recorded tribute during a pregame ceremony. "Well, it's not the tie that's magical. It's you. I'm so proud of you. Congrats."

Words like that were enough to undoubtedly make those watching a little teary-eyed, including dear old dad.

"I feel like I've gotten softer and softer with the years, and then seeing my kids on the ice and on the jumbotron talking, too," Fleury said. "I don't know, it gets me."

The pregame ceremony ahead of Friday's Pittsburgh vs. Wild game in St. Paul honored one of the most accomplished goaltenders in NHL history.



Fleury was the fourth NHL goaltender, and 10th player in Wild history, to play 1,000 career games, a milestone reached on Dec. 31, 2023, in a loss to the Winnipeg Jets. Also in that game, his 20th of the night was his 26,000th career save. Only three NHL goaltenders have saved that many pucks in their careers.

Fleury spent the bulk of his career with the Pittsburgh Penguins, the team that selected him first overall in the 2003 NHL Draft. How fitting that the Wild selected Friday's game – with the Penguins as the opponent – for Marc-Andre Fleury Night.

Fleury said it was funny to see some of the older highlights on the videoboard, with him wearing the yellow gear in Pittsburgh when he started.

"It doesn't feel long time ago, but it's 20 years," Fleury said. "So, it's crazy how time just goes by so quick."

During pregame warmups Friday, the Wild wore commemorative jerseys with Fleury's name and number on the back of the sweaters and each player's number on the sleeves. Fleury and each player will sign the jerseys and become part of an online auction running through Feb. 19, with proceeds benefiting the Minnesota Wild Foundation.

Fleury's mom, sister, wife and three children, along with Wild owner Craig Leipold and general manager Bill Guerin, were all on the ice for the pregame ceremony. As Fleury joined them, they stood on a carpet just off to the side of Fleury's home in goal. Surrounding the group on the ice were two colorful flower displays: the numbers 1,000 and 552.

Fleury was also presented with an engraved silver stick for his 1,000 career games, plus a custom-designed mask marked with each of the four NHL teams he's played for in his career.

An ovation and cheers from the crowd turned into "Fleury! Fleury! Fleury!" chants that also popped up throughout the night.

goaltender – that sparked some vintage "Flower" play in between the pipes. With Fleury-themed elements throughout the game, one of the video packages on the scoreboard was a montage of many spectacular Fleury saves from throughout his career. The ending of Friday's game could be added at the end of those clips. Fleury came up with some big saves, and his defensemen blocked shots in front, as the Penguins scrambled to tie the game but came up just short.

May 13, 2024

Hlavaj Shines as Team Slovakia Upsets USA

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PIT@MIN: Fleury with a great save

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In the second period, Fleury added a bit of flair to a wrist-shot save when he bounced the puck to himself, transferring it from stick to his glove to get the whistle for a stoppage in play. That little extra on the save spurred fans to give him another "Fleury! Fleury! Fleury!" chant during the TV timeout that followed.

Video tributes were shown during the ceremony, at the first television timeout in the first period and during intermissions. Goaltenders Martin Brodeur, Patrick Roy and Roberto Luongo offered some kind words. Fleury also heard from former teammates like Crosby, Patrick Kane, Kris Letang and Evgeni Malkin.

Celebrate Marc-Andre Fleury pregame vs. the Penguins

Crosby said after the game what a nice ceremony it was to honor Fleury.

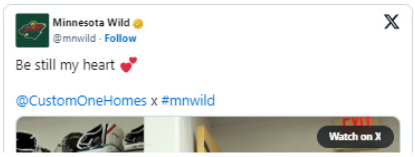
"I thought they did a great job recognizing what he's accomplished," Crosby said. "It was great to be a part of that, but you still want to have the bragging rights at the end of the night."

Filip Gustavsson, Wild captain Jared Spurgeon and Kaprizov also shared their congratulations in the video tributes. There were even a couple of tributes in French, including from his current Wild teammate Frederick Gaudreau.

Wild players throughout the season have talked about what a special player, and person, Fleury is, and they were all pulling hard for him during the game, Zach Bogosian said.

"People like him don't come around often," Bogosian said. "The caliber of player that he is as well, so pretty special."

In addition to the video tribute, Fleury's children also read the lineup card in the Wild dressing room before the game and delivered the Let's Play Hockey! call before the puck drop. Along with Estelle mentioning the magical tie in the video, her sister Scarlett also congratulated him on his milestones.



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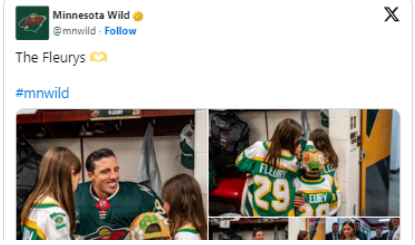
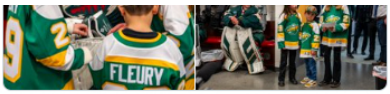
Youngest son, James, ended with a simple: "I'm proud of you, Dad. You're the best."





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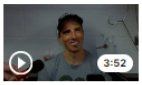

Fleury Postgame vs. PIT 2/9

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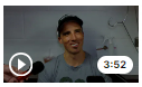

Fleury Postgame vs. PIT 2/9

Feb 09, 2024

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