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NHL

That Was Wild

Kaprizov, Eriksson Ek each record hat tricks, 6-point games in 10-7 win.



by Heather Rule February 19, 2024



The Minnesota Wild celebrate a 10-7 victory over the Vancouver Canucks on Feb. 19, 2024. Seven of the Wild's goals were scored in the third period. (MHM Photo / Heather Rule)

ST. PAUL — What in the Wild world of sports just happened?

Some form of that question was likely uttered by anyone who witnessed one of the craziest, most improbable games – and third periods – in Minnesota Wild history.

In a final score that looked more like a baseball or football game result, the Wild pulled off a 10-7 victory Monday afternoon over one of the NHL's best squads this season, the Vancouver Canucks. The final score seemed improbable for many reasons, at many points during the game.

But that was before a pair of hat tricks from Joel Eriksson Ek and Kirill Kaprizov, plus a seven-goal third period for the home team on the way to its fifth victory in the past six games. Eriksson Ek and Kaprizov each scored three goals and three assists. They join Marian Gaborik as the only players in franchise history to record six-point games, according to Minnesota Wild PR.

Ten goals in a game. Had Wild players been part of such an offensive outburst before?

"When I was maybe 5 years old," Kaprizov said, with a laugh.

Seventeen combined goals in the game were a new franchise high for the Wild (actually, it was a franchise high at 14 goals), and the Wild also set a new franchise record for goals scored when it reached nine goals. The Wild scored their 10 goals on just 27 shots for a 37.0 shooting percentage, which marked the best single-game shooting percentage by a team with 25-plus shots on goal since the start of the 2000-01 NHL season (also the Wild's first season), according to Minnesota Wild PR.

The Wild trailed 2-0 in the first period on Vancouver's first two shots on goal. In hindsight, this was a sign of the save-percentage woes and shooting-percentage wins that would follow throughout the game for both teams. Although, the Wild also missed lots of opportunities – and nets – in the first period, too.

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third period, too.

But then Eriksson Ek tied his career-high in goals for a season (26) to make it a 2-1 game at the first intermission. Halfway through the game, the Wild trailed 4-1 on the way to J.T. Miller's hat trick. Yes, the 17 combined goals included a trio of hat tricks.

Cashing in with the two-man advantage

The Canucks kept their foot on the gas, which resulted in both goals and many trips to the penalty box. Throughout the game, the Wild had four lengthy 5-on-3 power-play advantages. Minnesota cashed in with four consecutive power-play goals, starting with Mats Zuccarello scoring with 32.1 seconds left in the second period for a 5-3 game.

Then, buckle up for the start of the third period (which also included a Wild goaltender change, bringing in Marc-Andre Fleury after Filip Gustavsson gave up five goals on 16 shots), which started with another 48 seconds of potential 5-on-3 power play time for the Wild. Only 29 seconds in, Eriksson Ek set his new career-high in goals. Then after Miller threw the puck over the glass for a delay of game penalty, the two-man advantage for the Wild started up again.

At 1:23 of the third, Kaprizov tied the game 5-5. Twenty-one seconds later, Eriksson Ek completed his hat trick as he gave the Wild the lead it wouldn't give up. So, Zuccarello in the final minute of the second period, Eriksson Ek, Kaprizov and then Eriksson Ek again for the four power-play goals and a Wild lead.

"It was important for us to be able to capitalize on the power plays, cut the lead and then get to the game that, the attack game that we talked about," said Wild coach John Hynes.

That's a lot of goals. And boy, this game wasn't done delivering them.

Marco Rossi scored. Kaprizov scored his second of the game. The Wild had an 8-5 lead.

Then later the Canucks pulled their goaltender with 2:20 left in regulation and an offensive-zone faceoff. It only took 12 seconds for them to make it a one-goal game again. But Jonas Brodin fired a puck into the empty net from the other end of the ice, and Kaprizov wrapped up his hat trick just barely, with an empty-net goal when only 1.9 seconds remained in the game.

"Yeah, it's nuts," said Matt Boldy, who scored a goal and three assists. "It's weird. I don't think I've ever been part of something like that where they just kept going, one after another, I guess."

Add it all up, it's a 10-7 Wild victory as the Presidents Day, matinee crowd roared at Xcel Energy Center.

Seriously though, what the Ek just happened?

By the numbers

This game was filled with notable stats, keeping the [Wild's PR social media account](#) busy during and after the game. Here are some of the notable items:

Eriksson Ek: Six-point game (3-3—6), career-long four-game goal streak, 13 multi-point games this season (ranks second on the team), second career hat trick (Oct. 19, 2021 vs. Winnipeg).

Boldy: 20 goals in consecutive seasons, tied his career high with a four-point game (1-3—4).

Zuccarello: Four-point game (1-3—4), tying his career high.

Kaprizov: First career six-point game (3-3—6), fourth career regular-season hat trick.

Jacob Lucchini: First NHL assist on Marco Rossi's goal to make it a 7-5 Wild lead.

Wild: A new franchise record for the fastest four goals scored, in a span of two minutes, 17 seconds to erase the 5-2 deficit (previous record: 3:28 span on March 6, 2018); new franchise record for goals in a single game (previous record: 8 goals); seven goals in the third was a new franchise record for goals in a period

According to NHL Stats:

Fastest six goals by one team, NHL history:

4:24 – Montreal Canadiens (Dec. 6, 1982)

4:47 – Washington Capitals (Feb. 3, 1999)

5:02 – Pittsburgh Penguins (Nov. 22, 1972)

5:45 – Minnesota Wild (Feb. 19, 2024)





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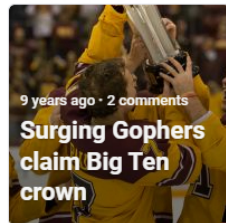
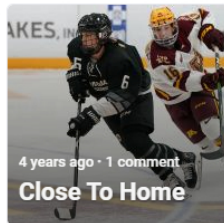
Heather's love for watching hockey started when the Minnesota Wild came to town in 2000. Before that, she caught a few Minnesota Moose games as a youngster, and more recently she's kept up with the Austin Bruins and Fargo Force. She's a writer, freelance journalist and blogger who previously worked as 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/X [@hrule](#) or Instagram [@hrule](#).

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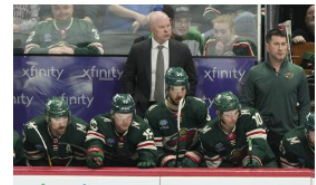
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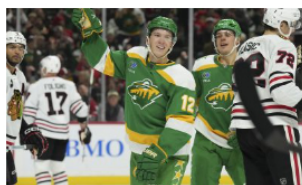
Wild Questions

Zulgad: The Minnesota Wild will enter the offseason with many questions.



Wild Trades

Wild GM eliminated his chance to make impact moves at deadline.



Back In The Mix

Wild's playoff run ultimately might be counterproductive.



