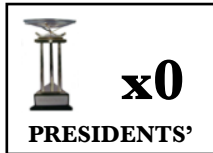




MINNESOTA WILD

Central Division

Preseason Power Ranking **21**



897
FRANCHISE WINS

39-34-9
87 Points
2023-24 SEASON

6th
DIVISION

Saint Paul, MN - Xcel Energy Center (17,954)
Head Coach: John Hynes (34-24-5, 2nd Season)

2023-24: Missed Playoffs

Young Superstars Guide the Wild

An NHL team has resided in Minnesota, the "State of Hockey", for 49 seasons. The Minnesota North Stars were there from 1967 to 1993 before moving to Dallas and the expansion Wild have called the state capital home since 2001. Yet, the state that produces more U.S. hockey players than any other has seen its two franchises go without a Stanley Cup and there has been just one appearance in the Finals. The Wild have had plenty of regular season success, making the postseason 10 of the last 12 years. However, they have just two series wins in that time and are coming off a 6th place finish in the Central division.

Forwards

Minnesota found superstar **Kirill Kaprizov** in the 5th round of the 2015 draft. In his four NHL seasons since coming over from Russia, he has won a Rookie of the Year and put up more than a point per game (330 in 278 career games). Last year was another fantastic season for him with 46 goals and 96 points. **Mats Zuccarello** is the only current Norwegian player in the NHL and he's still going strong at age 37, with 63 points last year. "Zucc" is a prolific passer with 45+ assists in each of the last three seasons. **Matt Boldy** and **Marco Rossi** were Minnesota's 1st round picks in 2019 and 2020 and both were major contributors last year. Rossi spent his first full season in the NHL and proved himself as a key piece going forward with 21 goals. Boldy set career highs in assists (40) and points (69), his 2nd straight season with more than 60 points. Also coming off a career season is **Joel Eriksson Ek**, who put up 30 goals for the first time. Eriksson Ek showed his versatility and skill as a two-way player, playing on both the power play and penalty kill. Veteran **Marcus Johansson** has excellent speed, but doesn't really provide the offense expected from a second line forward with just 30 points last year.

Minnesota hopes that **Ryan Hartman** can return to the production of his breakout '21-22 season that saw him score 34 goals and 65 points. His numbers the last two years have been far below that, though he did manage to score 21 goals last year. 22-year-old **Marat Khusnutdinov** made his NHL debut late last season and impressed by doing well in the faceoff circle and blocking a high volume of shots. He also showed good passing ability while playing in Russia. **Marcus Foligno** is a solid defensive player, but doesn't add much offense and his defensive game started to slip a bit last season. **Yakov Trenin** helped the Colorado 4th line last postseason and is a solid bottom-6 forward. **Frederick Gaudreau** had a sharp regression last year with his point total dropping from 38 to just 15.

Defense/Goaltending

22-year-old **Brock Faber** is coming off a fantastic rookie season. He finished second in the Rookie of the Year voting and tied Connor Bedard for the rookie lead in assists. He finished second behind Bedard in rookie points and proved himself responsible enough defensively to play a team-high 25 minutes per game. Minnesota locked Faber up to an 8-year extension and he will be a crucial piece of the Wild's future. **Jonas Brodin's** +22 plus-minus led the team and he contributed 27 points. Captain **Jared Spurgeon** missed nearly all of last year and Minnesota sorely missed his defensive contributions, allowing 38 more goals than they did in '22-23. When healthy that year, Spurgeon finished 12th in the NHL in plus-minus and 6th in blocked shots. **Jacob Middleton** led the team in blocked shots and was third in hits while also putting up 25 points. 34-year-old **Zach Bogosian** has seen better days; he's never been an offensive force and he takes a lot of penalties on the defensive end.

Filip Gustavsson will enter his 3rd season with Minnesota as the starting goaltender. He was fantastic in '22-23 with a .931 save percentage and a 2.10 GAA, both of which were second in the league. His numbers dropped drastically last year, however, with his GAA rising by nearly a full goal all the way to 3.06. His save percentage dropped to .899. The version of Gustavsson that Minnesota gets this year will play a big part in determining how successful they can be. There isn't a more accomplished backup goaltender in the league than **Marc-Andre Fleury**, who will play the 22nd and final season of his incredible career this year. The future Hall-of-Famer is second all-time in goalie wins and a 3-time champion. Fleury's numbers were a bit below average last year but he's still capable, even at age 39.

The Bottom Line

The Wild are an intriguing team to watch for the '24-25 season. There is a good mix of veterans and youth on the team, including a true superstar in Kaprizov and three superb young players in Faber, Rossi, and Boldy that look like they can be franchise cornerstones for years to come. After the top players, though, the offensive depth looks a bit shaky. The defense should be improved with the return of Spurgeon and the possibility of even more growth from Faber. Overall, this team has enough talent to sneak into the postseason as a wild card team, but there are more talented teams in the Central Division and Minnesota might not have enough to keep up with them.

2024-25 Projection: 40-35-7 (87 points) - 6th in Central

Marc-Andre Fleury



Photo via The Rink Live



Brock Faber



Photo via The Hockey Writers

WILD 5-YEAR POINT TREND

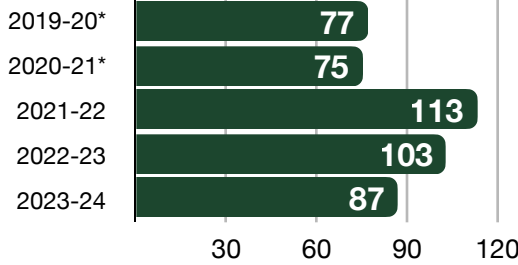


Photo via Tripadvisor

2024-25 Schedule

October 2024

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | | CBJ 10 8:00 | SEA 12 8:00 |
| WPG 13 6:00 | STL 15 7:30 | | | | CBJ 19 7:00 |
| | FLA 22 6:30 | | TB 24 7:00 | | PHI 26 1:00 |
| | PIT 29 7:00 | | | | |

November 2024

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | | TB 1 8:00 | |
| TOR 3 6:00 | LA 5 8:00 | | SJ 7 10:30 | ANA 8 10:00 | |
| CHI 10 7:00 | | | MTL 14 8:00 | | DAL 16 8:00 |
| | STL 19 8:00 | | EDM 21 9:00 | | CGY 23 4:00 |
| | WPG 25 8:00 | | BUF 27 7:00 | CHI 29 2:00 | NSH 30 8:00 |

December 2024

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | VAN 3 8:00 | | ANA 6 10:00 | LA 7 8:00 |
| | | UTA 10 9:30 | | EDM 12 8:30 | PHI 14 2:00 |
| VGK 15 6:00 | | | FLA 18 9:30 | UTA 20 8:00 | WPG 21 7:00 |
| | CHI 23 8:00 | | | DAL 27 8:00 | |
| OTT 29 8:00 | | NSH 31 8:00 | | | |

January 2025

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | | WSH 2 7:00 | CAR 4 7:00 |
| | | STL 7 8:00 | | COL 9 8:00 | SJ 11 10:00 |
| VGK 12 8:00 | | | EDM 15 8:30 | | NSH 18 8:00 |
| | COL 20 3:00 | | | UTA 23 8:00 | CGY 25 7:00 |
| CHI 26 7:00 | | | TOR 29 7:00 | MTL 30 7:00 | |

February 2025

| | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------|
| | | | | | OTT 1 7:00 |
| | | BOS 4 7:00 | | CAR 6 7:30 | NYI 8 8:00 |
| | | | | 2025 NHL 4 Nations Face-Off | |
| | | | | 2025 NHL 4 Nations Face-Off | |
| | | DET 25 8:00 | | UTA 27 9:00 | COL 28 9:00 |

March 2025

| | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | | | |
| BOS 2 3:30 | | SEA 4 10:00 | | VAN 7 10:00 | |
| PIT 9 3:30 | | COL 11 8:00 | | NYR 13 8:00 | STL 15 8:00 |
| | LA 17 8:00 | | SEA 19 9:30 | | BUF 22 2:00 |
| | DAL 24 8:00 | VGK 25 8:00 | | WSH 27 8:00 | NJ 29 6:00 |

March/April 2025

| | | | | | |
|---------------|---------|----------------|---------------|--|-----------------|
| | | | | | |
| | NJ 7:00 | | NYR 2 7:00 | | NYI 4 7:30 |
| DAL 6 3:00 | | | SJ 9 8:00 | | CGY 11 10:00 |
| | | ANA 15 8:00 | | | VAN 12 10:00 |

HOME

AWAY

Projected MIN Lineup

Forwards

| | Left Wing | Center | Right Wing |
|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Line 1 | 97 Kirill Kaprizov | 23 Marco Rossi | 36 Mats Zuccarello |
| Line 2 | 90 Marcus Johansson | 14 Joel Eriksson Ek | 12 Matt Boldy |
| Line 3 | 17 Marcus Foligno | 22 Marat Khusnutdinov | 38 Ryan Hartman |
| Line 4 | 94 Jakub Lauko | 89 Frederick Gaudreau | 13 Yakov Trenin |

Defense

| | | |
|--------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Line 1 | 25 Jonas Brodin | 7 Brock Faber |
| Line 2 | 5 Jacob Middleton | 46 Jared Spurgeon |
| Line 3 | 47 Declan Chisholm | 24 Zach Bogosian |

Goaltenders

| | |
|---------|----------------------|
| Starter | 32 Filip Gustavsson |
| Backup | 29 Marc-Andre Fleury |

2023-24 NHL Ranks

POINTS - 87 (20th)
 GF - 248 (21st)
 GA - 260 (20th)
 PP% - 22.71 (10th)
 PK% - 74.52 (30th)
 SV% - .893 (24th)

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT KIRILL KAPRIZOV - LW



2023-24 Statistics

| GP | G | A | PTS | +/- |
|----|----|----|-----|-----|
| 75 | 46 | 50 | 96 | +11 |

"Kirill the Thrill" loudly announced that he would be an NHL star in his very first game by scoring 3 points, including the game-winning goal in overtime. That was the start of a 51-point season, the most among rookies. In year 2, he got even better with 47 goals and 108 points, the 5th most in the NHL. He's put up 3 straight seasons with 40 goals or more and is 12th in the league in points since his debut. Kaprizov will look to lead the Wild back to the playoffs once again this year.

74.50 < Number to Know

One of the biggest reasons Minnesota missed out on the playoffs last year was their poor penalty kill, which was 30th in the NHL. It was a steep decline after they finished 10th in the '22-23 season.