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SPORTS

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TWINS PREVIEW WEEK

The clock starts now

By PHIL MILLER • phil.miller@startribune.com

FORT MYERS FLA. - A clock ticking backward isn't only the newest and most significant change to the way baseball is played in the major leagues — it's also a metaphor for what the national pastime is trying to accomplish.

"We want to restore the pace and rhythm that the game once had, something that had gradually gotten away from us," Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said. "We're not creating something new; we just want to make sure the game remains as crisp and exciting as it has for many decades."

"I would predict that once all the attention dies down, most fans won't even notice the clock."

They might on those nights at Target Field when the final out is recorded around 9 o'clock instead of 9:45 p.m., as had become the norm. A month's worth of spring training games have demonstrated that enforcing limits on the time between pitches, between batters and between innings dramatically shortens a typical baseball game without removing any of the action.

"It feels really good, too," Twins manager Rocco Baldelli said of spring games, which have averaged 2 hours, 36 minutes, See **BASEBALL** on C8 ▶

Inside: What was lost in Fort Myers Beach, Fla., might never come back. **C5** • Bailey Ober's perfect spring training turns sour. **C9**

Star Tribune illustration • Photos by Star Tribune, Associated Press

MEN'S HOCKEY • FARGO REGIONAL FINAL GOPHERS 4, ST. CLOUD STATE 1

Don't forget the sunscreen: U is Tampa-bound

The Gophers held off the Huskies for regional title.

By RANDY JOHNSON
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FARGO - Jackson LaCombe and Logan Cooley decided to play a game of catch a night, and they did it so well that the Gophers are going to the

NCAA FROZEN FOUR April 6 • Tampa, Fla. Gophers vs. Boston U. (ESPN2), 4 or 7:30 p.m.

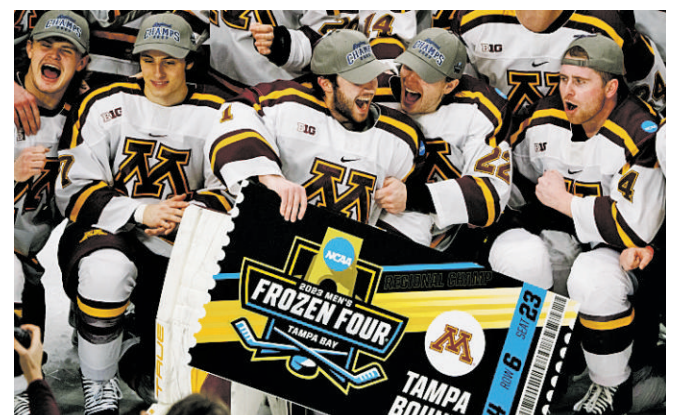
NCAA Frozen Four for the second consecutive year. LaCombe, the senior defenseman, and Cooley, the freshman phenom forward, hooked up for pair of goals

against St. Cloud State in the NCAA Fargo Regional, the two biggest plays in Minnesota's tougher-than-it-looked 4-1 victory over the Huskies that sent the Gophers to Tampa, Fla.

The top-seeded Gophers (28-9-1) will face Boston University, a 2-1 winner over Cornell in the Manchester Regional final, in the Frozen

Four semifinals on April 6 at Amalie Arena. Last year, the Gophers ended an eight-year Frozen Four drought, making it to Boston before losing 5-1 to Minnesota State Mankato in the national semifinals.

Regional Most Outstanding Player Bryce Brodzinski scored in the first period, and Jaxon Nelson added an See **GOPHERS** on C12 ▶



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The Gophers had their ticket punched — literally — for the Frozen Four with their 4-1 victory over St. Cloud State on Saturday.