

# sports

SAN JOSE 3, WILD 2  
**It's settled:  
No playoffs C5**

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Saturday: Target Field exhibition game vs. St. Louis, 1:10 p.m. (FSN) | Monday: Season opener at Los Angeles Angels, 9:05 p.m. (Ch. 29)

## GETTING USED TO NEW



Justin Morneau, left, and Michael Cuddyer sprinted onto the field Friday, their first run at live action in Target Field. The second chance comes quickly, Saturday afternoon, against St. Louis.

### Seeking a level of comfort is first-day task at ballpark

By LA VILLE E. NEAL III • lveal@startribune.com

The Twin Cities — Twins Nation, for that matter — was on edge for the first major league game played at Target Field. The Twins? They couldn't fret more out of place.

There was no "Dillon roof. No blind spots down the left field line. No baggie in right. No background of plastic, blue seats to hit against. They didn't have to look up 15 feet at fans in the first row.

It was an experience unlike any they've had in this town. "We're kind of like the visitors here," said Twins center fielder Denard Span, who hit the first home run in the ballpark, a solo shot to right in the third inning. "That's what it kind of felt like today, sitting here today, it felt like we were on the road. Over time, I think we'll get the hang of how the ball plays off the wall and corners and everything else."

The park will take getting used to. The Twins' 8-4 loss to St. Louis on Friday was the latest fake opening before the real one April 12 against Boston. While the organization is on the

Twins continues on C3 >



**COMING SUNDAY**  
A 24-page Target Field special section in the Star Tribune; Day 1 of MLB season

**Gardy picks Rauch to be his closer, ending the committee meeting C3**

**On A1 Rain, wind can't dampen fans' enthusiasm for Target Field**

### Critics, take note: Twins fans can be proud of their ballpark

There are three players wearing Twins caps on their plaques in the Baseball Hall of Fame: Harmon Killebrew, Rod Carew and Kirby Puckett. They also will be recipients of bronze statues located at Target Field.

The commission went to Bill Mack, the world's preeminent relief sculptor. You can discover that by Binging him.

Carew's statue was the first to be unveiled at mid-afternoon Friday. It is larger than life-size and depicts Sir Rodney in a classic stance with the bat extended off his shoulder.

The ceremony started in the rain. When it ended 15 minutes later, the rain had stopped, and the system that sucks water from the playing field was doing its magic. There wasn't a hint of extra moisture when the exhibition game started on schedule two hours later at 5:11 p.m.

This was a blow to the two groups of critics: A) The citizens still whining over Hennepin County's contribution to the project; and B) those upset that another \$200 million wasn't spent for a retractable roof.

Reusse continues on C3 >



patrick reusse

### MARCH MADNESS

#### THE FINAL FOUR AT LUCAS OIL STADIUM, INDIANAPOLIS

SATURDAY'S NATIONAL SEMIFINALS • MICHIGAN STATE VS. BUTLER (5-07 P.M.) • WEST VIRGINIA VS. DUKE (7-47 P.M.) • TV, CH. 4

## Junior achievement: At 33, Butler coach enjoys the ride

Brad Stevens gave up his 9-to-5 marketing job out of college to pursue his coaching dreams, and now he finds himself on his profession's biggest stage.

By MYRON R. MEDCALF  
mmecalf@startribune.com

INDIANAPOLIS — Brad Stevens is not only the coach of Butler's men's basketball team.

He's also a rock star. More than 30,000 people showed up to watch the Bulldogs' practice Friday at

Lucas Oil Stadium, only 5 miles south of Butler's campus.

Fans ran into the venue once the doors opened. Their seats were worthless, as they mostly stood to watch the best story line in this year's Final Four.

"I know some of you aren't rooting for Butler, but maybe we can convert you," Stevens told the roaring crowd.

That's not necessary. They're sold.

Entire families spotted Butler gear while walking near the stadium this week. A proud rental car employee at the airport showed a customer the Bulldogs shirt underneath his company clothing. Schoolchildren took field trips to watch Friday's practice. One young woman held up a sign asking Butler forward Gordon Hayward to take her to the prom.

The city of Indianapolis will explode if Stevens leads the Bulldogs to a national championship Monday night.

But the 33-year-old Stevens nearly missed this moment.

Fresh off a playing career at Division III DePauw, Stevens commenced a



Butler's Brad Stevens is the youngest Final Four head coach in 37 years, but as he said, "My age is no factor on how our team plays."

Duke's Nolan Smith still mourns — and honors — his father C4 • The details on the semifinals C4