

Winnipegjets.com

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-jets-top-line-dominate-blackhawks>

***THREE THINGS: Jets top line dominate Blackhawks
Vilardi (2G, 1A), Mark Scheifele (1G, 2A) and Kyle Connor (1G, 2A) combined for nine points.***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – Gabriel Vilardi scored twice as the Winnipeg Jets beat the Chicago Blackhawks 6-3 at Canada Life Centre. Vilardi (2G, 1A), Mark Scheifele (1G, 2A) and Kyle Connor (1G, 2A) combined for nine points, Josh Morrissey (1G, 1A) and Dylan DeMelo (2A) also had multi-point efforts for the Jets who will now host the Pittsburgh Penguins on Saturday afternoon.

TOP LINE DOMINANT

After Kyle Connor scored the overtime winner at Minnesota on Tuesday night, the Jets top line continued their dominance against the Blackhawks. With the Jets up 1-0 thanks to a Vlad Namestnikov power play goal, Chicago had taken back some of the momentum thanks to a friendly bounce off the stanchion and onto the stick of Teuvo Teravainen to tie the game at one. Connor Hellebuyck had to bail out his teammates to make a huge save on a Ryan Greene breakaway. Soon after, Scheifele and Vilardi would break out 2-on-1 with Vilardi finishing.

"I thought we played really well in the first. Like you said, an unlucky bounce, not much you can do about those goals," said Vilardi.

"I thought we played really well in the second and kind of dominated most of the third but had that little spree there. It was one of our more complete games of the season."

After that the Jets took off and even though Chicago pulled within two goals in the third period, Connor put the game away for good with this effort.

MORRISSEY GETS SOME HELP

The Jets defenceman has been off to a good start offensively with eight assists coming into tonight but had to yet to score. That changed in the third period as Morrissey's slap shot from the point went off the goal post and then off the back of Spencer Knight's left leg and into the net.

"I just tried to make a good, quick shot, and I kind of faded away after, I guess, like a Kobe shot," said Morrissey.

"I didn't see it. I just heard it. And then I heard the fans, and it went in. So, it was nice to nice to get one there."

NOT ALL THE NEWS WAS GOOD

The Jets lost Gustav Nyquist tonight, Scott Arniel said that the Swedish forward tweaked something and they will look at it on Friday and go from there. This is nothing new for Winnipeg who are already without forwards Adam Lowry and Cole Perfetti.

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/prospect-report-edison-engle>

PROSPECT REPORT: Edison Engle
Engle was selected by the Jets in the sixth round of the 2025 Draft

By Jamie Thomas

Back in June, the Winnipeg Jets selected Edison Engle, a 6'2", 174-pound defenceman from Illinois in the sixth round of the NHL Draft. Engle played in the USHL last season and produced 17 points in 54 games for Des Moines and Dubuque. He added four assists in seven playoff games.

Jets Director of Amateur Scouting, Mark Hillier talked about what they liked about the young defenceman.

"Using our analytics a little bit, too, he's one of the best skaters that we thought was in the draft. So, it's a good opportunity for us to take him late. We think there's more offensive ability to come from him in the future," said Hillier after the draft.

"But we're really, sort of like (Sascha) Boumedienne, he really gets back to pucks quickly, separates from the forecheck and moves the puck quick. We think if he can add a little to his offensive game in the future, we've got a pretty good value pick there."

Engle is currently playing for the top ranked team in the OHL, the Brantford Bulldogs, a team that as of Wednesday morning (Oct. 29) had yet to lose in regulation with a 11-0-1-1 record. After this season, Engle will leave for the NCAA and play for the Ohio State Buckeyes.

"Yeah, I think obviously, since I've been young, I wanted to go to the college route and stuff. Both my parents are in education, so it was super important for them. So, I think obviously that was big," said Engle back in the summer at Jets development camp.

"And then just with the new rule change, I think the HL had the best development for me, for next year, getting ready for NCAA and things to come, and so at the end of the day, just kind of became what I had to do. And yeah, I'm super grateful for Brantford for reaching out and stuff like that."

Engle has fit right in with the Bulldogs and has been on its second defence pairing and is averaging over a point per game with 13 points (2G, 11A) in 11 games as of Wednesday morning.

"I mean, it's a bit of a cliché, but a steal of steals. It's incredible that that young man with that talent, the size, the skating ability, the defensive sense, the ability to move the puck, ended up in the sixth round," said Reed Duthie, Brantford's Director of Broadcasting and Communications.

"So great for the Winnipeg Jets, the consistency that he's had in playing that role is next to Vladimir Dravecky, two offensively gifted defenseman. I think the biggest thing for them was trying to figure out when one was going to pinch and stay."

With a team that is overflowing with eight other NHL draft picks, Engle can just play his game and not try to do too much on a nightly basis.

You look around and the first pair ahead of him has two NHL draft picks and Owen Protz (Montreal) and Adam Jiricek (St. Louis), so he can kind of settle into his spot in that second pair

with another kid in Dravecky, who's going to be a high NHL pick in 2026 so he's got that opportunity to settle back in," said Duthie.

"And then up front, there's just so much talent for him to be able to work with, distribute the puck to play in concert with, I think from his first moments here to where he is now, you're seeing that settling in. And you know, we're in late October. I can only imagine what this is going to look like, December, January, February and on."

Growing up in Illinois, Engle is very familiar with the Chicago Blackhawks and their former captain, Jonathan Toews, who signed with the Jets in the off-season.

"Obviously, growing up watching him win, win three cups and stuff like that, being Captain Serious," said Engle.

"It was pretty cool to see that he's coming back here. And obviously, I'm sure he's really excited and stuff. And it was really cool to see."

OTHER PROSPECTS

Fellow 2025 draft prospect Viktor Klingsell is off to a tremendous start with Skelleftea AIK U20, the Jets fifth round selection has 22 points in 12 games...Kevin He has picked up where he left off last season with the OHL's Niagara IceDogs, with 18 points in 12 games and He has the IceDogs right behind Brantford in the Eastern Conference...While the Sudbury Wolves sit in last place in the East, Kieron Walton is almost averaging two points per game with 15 in eight contests.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/chicago-blackhawks-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-october-30-2025>

Toews helps Jets to win in 1st game against Blackhawks Former Chicago captain has assist, Vilardi gets 2 goals, assist for Winnipeg

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Jonathan Toews had an assist in his first game against his former team, and the Winnipeg Jets defeated the Chicago Blackhawks 6-3 at Canada Life Centre on Thursday.

Toews played his first 16 NHL seasons with Chicago, winning the Stanley Cup three times (2010, 2013, 2015) as captain of the Blackhawks. Prior to signing a one-year contract with his hometown Jets in July, Toews was out of the NHL since the end of the 2022-23 season.

"That was a real good game," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "I don't know if there ever is a perfect 60, but that was one of our best of the year. I liked a lot of what we did, whether that was our coverage, whether that was our breakouts. I thought we were really good on our breakouts. They're a quick, young team and I thought we did a good job, for the most part, trying to stay over top of them and slow them down and, obviously, we capitalized on all our chances."

Gabriel Vilardi scored twice and had an assist, and Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor each had a goal and two assists for the Jets (8-3-0), who have won three of five. Connor Hellebuyck made 21 saves, Josh Morrissey had a goal and an assist and Dylan DeMelo had two assists.

"That was our most complete game," Vilardi said. "We did a good job through the neutral zone and kind of limited their speed. Those young guys, they can really turn and burn when you have those turnovers. It was a good game."

Andre Burakovsky, Teuvo Teravainen, and Alex Vlasic scored for the Blackhawks (5-4-2), who have lost two of three. Spencer Knight made 26 saves. Connor Bedard and Connor Murphy each had two assists.

"I give Winnipeg credit," Burakovsky said. "They're a good team; they played a [heck] of a game. For us, we made some mistakes that cost us. If we can eliminate those, it will be a different game. It's a learning process for our group. It's something we will look over tomorrow and correct and just do better next game."

Vladislav Namestnikov scored on the power play to make it 1-0 Jets at 1:42 of the first period. Gustav Nyquist and Nino Niederreiter worked a give-and-go as they entered the zone, and Nyquist dropped a backhand from just behind the goal line to a trailing Namestnikov to tap it in from the edge of the crease.

"It was kind of a weird game," Chicago coach Jeff Blashill said. "There were moments in the game I thought we played really well, and then we made some big mistakes and those big mistakes ended up in our net."

Teravainen tied it 1-1 at 8:57 when Murphy's dump-in took a wild bounce off the end boards and caught Hellebuyck out of his net.

"An unlucky bounce, not much you can do about those goals," Vilardi said. "I thought we played really well in the second and kind of dominated most of the third but had that little spree there."

Vilardi made it 2-1 Jets at 16:56 when Scheifele set him up on a 2-on-1 rush.

"We didn't have our best," Murphy said. "They took advantage of some of our mistakes, and then we weren't able to score in the first part of the game to get ahead. It's just a lesson on the road to play a better game to win."

Scheifele pushed it to 3-1 at 1:54 of the second period, when Connor stickhandled into the zone and set him up for a wrist shot from the dot.

"Obviously they have one of the best top lines in the League and those guys get opportunities they're gonna make you pay, and they did tonight," Blashill said.

Vilardi's second made it 4-1 at 11:19 when DeMelo set him up for a one-timer in the slot.

"We haven't been down three going into the third ... and I thought our guys came out and fought hard," Blashill said. "That was one of the things I was interested to see in terms of the character of our group -- were we gonna lay down or were we gonna come out and play? And I thought we did a good job of that. Against this team, it's hard to come back from that. We certainly made a fight for it."

Morrissey pushed it to 5-1 at 10:12 of the third with a point shot that hit the post before going in off Knight's skate. Toews started the play with a pass from below the goal line out to the point to DeMelo.

"I think it was our best 60-minute effort," Morrissey said. "There's always things to clean up and but there's a lot to build on. There's been a lot of talk about our second periods and how we did a better job in that frame. So, yeah, it's a good win, and have to keep building."

Vlasic scored on a rebound at 13:02 to cut it to 5-2. Burakovsky then made it 5-3 at 15:03, lifting it over Hellebuyck's blocker with a between-the-legs shot after Bedard found him in front with a vertical seam pass.

"It's just instinct -- I was just trying to get a shot off somehow, and that's what came out," Burakovsky said of his goal. "I wasn't thinking about doing it; it just happened. So just instinct... It was a good goal, but at the end of the day we didn't win the game and that's what's most important, obviously. Would be better if we won, for sure."

Connor lifted a backhand over Knight's shoulder from in close at 17:19 for the 6-3 final.

"I thought we did a really good job of protecting that inside [part of our zone]," Arniel said. "That's when we're at our best. The gutsy ice, we don't give teams much to work with."

NOTES: Blackhawks forward Jason Dickinson left the game late in the second period. Blashill said it's the same nagging injury that has kept him out of a few games this season and he is questionable to play at the Edmonton Oilers on Saturday. ... Nyquist played 1:28 before leaving in the first period. Arniel said he "tweaked something" and will be assessed on Friday. ... Bedard has seven points (four goals, three assists) on a three-game point streak. ... Scheifele has eight points (two goals, six assists) on a four-game point streak. ... Morrissey has eight points (one goal, seven assists) on a four-game point streak. ... Connor has six points (three goals, three assists) on a four-game point streak. ... Vilardi has seven points (four goals, three assists) on a four-game point streak.

Canadian Press

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/10/31/winnipeg-jets-chicago-blackhawks-game-recap-story/>

'That's What is Expected of Us': Jets' Top Line Shows Up in Major Way in Victory

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

Gabriel Vilardi may have scored two goals, but he was really impressed with linemate Kyle Connor's marker that sealed a 6-3 Winnipeg Jets' victory over the Chicago Blackhawks on Thursday.

"It was a nasty view, I'll tell you that," said Vilardi, who also recorded an assist. "It was a pretty cool goal to see from there."

"I was just trying to make a wall (in front) -- throw it back door, and maybe it hits me and goes in, but he did a nice play. That was nice."

Connor skated across the front of the net with the puck and appeared to be heading behind it when he flipped a backhand behind goalie Spencer Knight that hit the crossbar and went in to make 6-3 with 2:41 left in the game.

Winnipeg's top line of Connor, Vilardi and Mark Scheifele each had three-point nights. Vilardi had two goals and an assist and Scheifele and Connor each posted a goal and pair of helpers.

Vilardi didn't score a goal in his first seven games, but has four in his past four outings for the 8-3-0 Jets.

"(Vilardi) was stressing pretty hard there about getting his first," Winnipeg head coach Scott Arniel said. "And ever since, he's actually... Like I've mentioned, it looks like he's skating 10 miles per hour faster.

"But that line was obviously outstanding. (Vilardi is) a goal scorer. He gets to holes, he gets to places, and he can make things happen. And those three, the chemistry that they have. They all have different things that they bring to the line and Gabe knows what his role is. He's really starting to play it."

Vilardi could feel the trio was clicking.

"I thought we played really well," he said. "Those two are going to do what they do. They're unreal to play with. That's what is expected of us. We've got to keep doing that."

Vladislav Namestnikov and Josh Morrissey had Winnipeg's other goals. Morrissey also had a helper and Dylan DeMelo contributed a pair of assists. Connor Hellebuyck made 21 saves.

Teuvo Teravainen, Alex Vlasic and Andre Burakovsky scored and Connor Bedard and Connor Murphy each had two assists for Chicago (5-4-2), which was starting a six-game road trip. Knight stopped 26 shots.

"Obviously they have one of the best top lines in the league and those guys get opportunities they're gonna make you pay, and they did tonight," Chicago head coach Jeff Blashill said of the Jets.

Scheifele leads the team with nine goals and eight assists. His nine markers is in a logjam with the NHL's other goal-scoring leaders.

Connor has six goals and 15 points and Vilardi had four markers and seven helpers.

Morrissey described the top line as "unreal."

"Three very talented guys that all complement each other kind of uniquely and really well," Morrissey said.

He's looking forward to seeing the three build on their early success.

"Goal scorers like that, I feel like they get one and you can't stop them," Morrissey said. "So it's gonna be fun to watch them here going forward. But yeah, they were unreal all night, and they've been great for us all year."

The Jets scored quick goals in each of the first two periods.

After Chicago took a penalty at 1:21 of the first period, Namestnikov scored 21 seconds later on a quick feed from behind the net by Gustav Nyquist.

Nyquist left the game later in the period and didn't return. Arniel said he "tweaked" something and was being assessed.

An unlucky bounce led to the Blackhawks evening it up at 8:57.

Hellebuyck went to play a puck when it was dumped in the corner, but it hit a seam in the boards and bounced straight to Teravainen as he was skating to the front of the net.

Scheifele and Vilardi scored in the middle frame.

The third period featured Morrissey and Vlasic's first goals of the season, followed by Burakovsky and Connor's marker to finished off the scoring.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11503829/top-line-shines-as-winnipeg-jets-continue-dominance-of-blackhawks-with-6-3-win/>

Top line shines as Winnipeg Jets continue dominance of Blackhawks with 6-3 win

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

There are not a lot of certainties in life, but over the last seven years, death and taxes have nearly been joined by the Winnipeg Jets whenever they face the Chicago Blackhawks.

The Jets continued their mastery of the once-dynastic franchise Thursday night at Canada Life Centre with a 6-3 win that extended their win streak over the Hawks to six games. Dating back to April 2018 the Jets improved their record against Chicago to 21-3-1 in their last 25 meetings.

Gabriel Vilardi scored a pair in the win and the trio on the Jets top line all had three points as the Jets made it back-to-back wins in what was their most complete, 60-minute effort of the season.

"That's more of what we need to do," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. "I don't know if there is ever a perfect 60, but that was one of our best of the year."

The Jets inconsistent play and poor second periods left Arniel frustrated on the weekend, but on this night, the Jets scored twice in the middle stanza and outshot the Hawks 11-7 in the period.

"There's always things to clean up," Josh Morrissey said. "But there's a lot to build on. There's been a lot of talk about our second periods and I thought we did a better job tonight in that frame."

The Jets top line was unstoppable, accounting for four of their six goals. Kyle Connor scored his sixth goal of the season and Mark Scheifele moved into a share of the NHL lead with his ninth goal already.

"I thought we played really well," said Vilardi. "Those two are going to do what they do. They're unreal to play with and that's what is expected of us."

The Jets finished October with eight wins for their second best start since returning to Winnipeg.

Vilardi now has four goals in his last four games after starting the season with a seven-game goalless slump.

“He was stressing pretty hard there about getting his first,” said Arniel. “And ever since actually, he looks like he’s skating 10 miles per hour faster. But that line was obviously outstanding.”

Jets forward Gustav Nyquist left the game in the first period and did not return.

“Tweaked something there in the corner,” said Arniel. “We got to get it looked at tomorrow and find out.”

It didn’t take long for the home side to get on the scoreboard. After Colton Dach took a hooking penalty 81 seconds into the game, the Jets’ power play struck at the 1:42 mark.

After the Blackhawks cleared the puck, Winnipeg rushed it back up the ice with Nyquist taking it through the neutral zone before sending it to the wing for Nino Niederreiter. Niederreiter then gave it back to Nyquist before he slid it in front to a wide-open Vladislav Namestnikov, who made no mistake for his fifth of the season.

Chicago could not score on a power play not long after Winnipeg opened the scoring but the Blackhawks drew level thanks to a true fluke.

It looked like a routine play as Connor Hellebuyck left the net to play the puck after Connor Murphy dumped it into the Winnipeg end. But the puck took a funky bounce off a stanchion, ricocheting right in front of a gaping net where Teuvo Teravainen whacked it home at the 8:57 mark for one of the easiest goals of his life.

It stayed tied until the Jets’ top line began to take over the game. Morrissey started the puck up the ice to Connor in the neutral zone, who made a one-touch pass to Scheifele that sprung him and Vilardi on a 2-on-1. Scheifele held the puck as long as he could before sliding a perfect pass across to Vilardi that he shoveled into the net to make it 2-1 with 3:04 left in the first.

The top line struck again early in the second. Connor picked off an errant pass in the neutral zone and burst up the ice, taking it into the Chicago end before giving it off to Scheifele. He walked into the faceoff dot and sent a wrister on net that Spencer Knight should have stopped, but didn’t, to make it 3-1 at the 1:54 mark of the middle frame.

Their domination continued at the 11:19 mark of the second. The line raced into the Chicago end, three-wide, as Scheifele carried the puck before stopping up. He drifted back towards the blueline before sending a pass across to Morrissey at the other point, who then dropped it down to the dot where Dylan DeMelo was waiting for it. He spotted Vilardi in the slot and fed him for a one-timer that beat Knight to make it 4-1.

Winnipeg outshot the Blackhawks 11-7 in the second after the two sides both registered seven shots in the first.

The Jets stretched the lead to 5-1 just past the midway point of the third. A point shot from Morrissey rang off the post and bounced into the crease before Knight unknowingly knocked it into his own net with his skate. The goal was Morrissey’s first of the season and Jonathan

Toews picked up an assist on the play in his first game against the team he called his own for so many years.

Chicago scored a couple of goals to make things a little interesting with Alex Vlasic and Andre Burakovsky scoring 2:01 apart.

But before the Hawks could pull Knight to try and push for a miracle comeback, Connor put the icing on the cake. Knight had to retreat back to his net after trying to leave the ice because the Jets' top line pushed the puck into the neutral zone and skated it back into Chicago's end. Scheifele got the puck over to Connor who then danced through the zone before lifting a backhand top shelf over the shoulder of Knight to make it 6-3.

The top line combined for nine points in the game while Morrissey and DeMelo each picked up a pair of points as well.

Hellebuyck only had to make 21 saves for the win as the Jets improved to 8-3 on the season.

They will try and extend their win streak to three games when they host Pittsburgh Saturday afternoon, a game that will be broadcast exclusively on Power 97 with Blue Bomber coverage on 680 CJOB.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11504320/winnipeg-jets-analysis-shannon-crosby-penguins/>

ANALYSIS: Jets fans have front-row seat to Crosby show with Penguins in town

By John Shannon CJOB

There are good stories in the NHL, and there are great stories in the NHL. Watching the resurgence of Connor Bedard with the Chicago Blackhawks after a lacklustre season last year is a good story.

But now to one of the great stories of the NHL, one that Winnipeg Jets fans will have a front-row seat for on Saturday. And that is the play of Sidney Crosby. Crosby of the 1,700 point plateau, of 20 seasons in the league, and of Canadian hockey lore. It's amazing to think that since 2005, Crosby has averaged a point per game. Absolutely amazing.

But Sidney is different. Let's face it, when Connor McDavid comes to town, you boo. When Alex Ovechkin is here, you chant something very creative. In fact, when all the best players in the game show up in Winnipeg, there's a good chance you view them as arch-rivals — the enemy.

But dare I suggest, not Sidney. Sidney is ours.

Crosby is on a different level than the others. Off the ice, he carries himself so well. In every interview, he is respectful to everyone, choosing his words with poise and politeness.

On the ice, he brings a complete game. You see it in every stride, shot and pass an understanding of how the game should be played. You can see his competitive blood boil, and his love of the game shines through with every smile. He truly is enjoying every shift.

The stories of Crosby's work ethic and practice regimen are legendary. There is little doubt that he leads by example, even at the age of 38. He has always put the game first.

On Saturday, we will inevitably see Sidney Crosby face off against Jonathan Toews. That's Winnipeg's Toews against Canada's Crosby. Both superstars who have given the game so much. I can only think that with the love and appreciation that Winnipeg has already displayed for Toews, there will be some left over for Sid.

After all, even though Crosby plays for Pittsburgh, he will always be ours.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/10/30/jets-top-line-feasts-on-blackhawks>

Jets top line feasts on Blackhawks Scheifele, Connor and Vilardi combine for nine points in victory

By: Mike McIntyre

The top line of the Winnipeg Jets went trick-or-treating on Thursday night, filling their goodie bags with some sugary-sweet offence.

Gabe Vilardi scored twice and had an assist, while Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor each had a goal and two helpers to lead the way in a 6-3 Halloween Eve victory over the Chicago Blackhawks at Canada Life Centre.

When playing at their best, this talented trio can be a nightmare for opponents. They showed that again in numerous ways, with slick puck movement, precision passing and lethal finishing on full display. You could make a compelling case to include all four goals they were involved with on league-wide highlight reels.

"I thought we played really well. Those two are going to do what they do. They're unreal to play with," said Vilardi, who didn't light the lamp in his first seven games but now has four in his past four. "That's what is expected of us. We've got to keep doing that."

Scheifele is now up to 18 points (9G, 9A) through 11 games which has him near the very top of the NHL scoring race. Connor (6G, 9A) and Vilardi (4G, 7A) are also putting up big early numbers.

"They were unreal," said Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey, who sloughed himself with a goal and an assist.

"Obviously three very talented guys that all complement each other in a kind of uniquely and really well. I saw it this morning. I saw Scheifele and KC and Gabe. They were buzzing at morning skate, and I kind of just knew that KC got that one the other night in overtime (against Minnesota on Tuesday). And goal scorers like that, I feel like they get one and you can't stop them. So it's gonna be fun to watch them here going forward."

The Jets improve to 8-3-0, while the Blackhawks fall to 5-4-2. The visitors came in hot, with just one regulation loss over the past seven games, but ran into a motivated Winnipeg club that put together arguably its most well-rounded effort of the young season.

“That was our most complete game,” said Vilardi. “We did a good job through the neutral zone and kind of limited their speed. Those young guys, they can really turn and burn when you have those turnovers. It was a good game.”

EMOTIONAL GAME: This was no ordinary night at the office for Jonathan Toews. The 37-year-old faced his former team for the first time, triggering plenty of emotions in the process.

“There’s still a connection to the organization and the city of Chicago and I think there always will be. Chicago was my home for a long time and it’s days like this that you get to stop for a second, reflect, look back,” Toews said following the morning skate.

A few hours later he went and had another solid game for the Jets. Toews had a team-high six shots on goal, won 14-of-20 faceoffs and chipped in with an assist on Morrissey’s third-period goal. He is now up to six points through his first 11 games (2G, 4A) while dominating in the dot, trailing only Ottawa Senators centre Tim Stutzle for best winning percentage.

Although his new team got the better of his old team on this night, Toews is happy to see things turning around in the Windy City — the place he spent his first 15 NHL seasons, winning three Stanley Cups — after several tough years languishing near the basement of the standings.

“It is good to see. I think ultimately the fans in Chicago are incredible and it’s nice to see that they have something to cheer for and some great young talent that’s really getting the United Center rocking again,” he said.

HOT START: Vlad Namestnikov spent the majority of last season as Winnipeg’s second-line centre and scored 11 goals in 78 games. So how to explain the fact he’s playing further down the lineup this year, yet already has five goals through his first 11 games?

Namestnikov’s latest came just 102 seconds into Thursday’s game as he finished off a great sequence with Gustav Nyquist and Nino Niederreiter with his team enjoying a very early power play.

It was the first shot of the game and got the Jets rolling.

Namestnikov is unlikely to keep scoring at this pace — his career-high of 22 goals came during the 2017-18 season — but the Jets will certainly take all the offence he can provide.

GHOULISH GOAL: Connor Hellebuyck has had some tough puck luck lately.

On Tuesday night in Minnesota, the Wild scored three times in rather unusual fashion, including one where Hellebuyck accidentally booted the puck into his own net.

The bad bounces continued in this one. Chicago defenceman Connor Murphy fired a shot around the glass into the Winnipeg zone, which Hellebuyck left his net to try and stop. Problem is, the puck hit a seam in the boards and went directly in front of the now wide-open net, where Blackhawks forward Teuvo Teravainen was waiting. He won’t score any easier goals than that.

That tied the game near the midway mark of the opening frame.

It looked like that might be the only goal that would beat Hellebuyck, but Alex Vlasic and Andre Burakovsky — a ridiculous between-the-legs play that ended with a top corner shot — scored just over two minutes apart late in the third period to make this one a bit closer.

He finished with 21 saves on the night.

UNDER THE HOOD: The advanced numbers suggest this game was actually closer than the final score makes it appear.

According to the Natural Stat Trick website, the Jets generated 11 high-danger chances at five-on-five, with the Blackhawks getting 12. It was a different story on the power play, where Winnipeg had six chances (and one goal) to none for Chicago. Overall, the Jets had 3.87 expected goals in all situations, which tells you Blackhawks goaltender Spencer Knight (32 shots, 26 saves) wasn't at his best. The Blackhawks had 2.84 expected goals, so they essentially got what they deserved in that department.

KEY PLAY: Vilardi's second goal of the night midway through the second period gave the Jets a comfortable three-goal cushion at the time and ultimately proved to be the game-winner,

THREE STARS:

1. Jets Gabe Vilardi: 2G, 1A
2. Jets Kyle Connor: 1G, 2A
3. Jets Mark Scheifele: 1G, 2A

EXTRA, EXTRA: The Jets did suffer a loss on the night, as Nyquist suffered an injury early in the first period and did not return. He appeared to tweak something off a faceoff, then slowly made his way down the tunnel after skating off the ice.

"He tweaked something there in the corner, so we'll look at it (Friday) and find out," said coach Scott Arniel.

A crowd of 13,682 took in the game.

Winnipeg went one-for-three on the power play, while Chicago went zero-for-three.

Forwards Brad Lambert and Nikita Chibrikov and defencemen Colin Miller were the healthy scratches for the Jets, who will close out this quick two-game homestand by hosting the Pittsburgh Penguins on Saturday afternoon.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/10/30/i-want-to-finish-every-single-check>

'I want to finish every single check'
Jets' Koepke important cog in penalty-killing unit

By: Ken Wiebe

Cole Koepke had an important life decision to make, so he sought a little help from his friends before signing on the dotted line.

Fortunately for Koepke, after the Winnipeg Jets came calling in free agency, he had two mainstays on the roster in Dylan Samberg and Neal Pionk that he could lean on for information and guidance.

“Quite a bit. I actually didn’t even know what to expect going into free agency,” Koepke said before suiting up in his 11th game of the season against the Chicago Blackhawks. “I hadn’t really heard much about Winnipeg. But I knew those guys, so when it started to get brought up, they were the first call and I just kind of asked how things were — and if they thought it would be a good fit. They gave me their advice and I’m glad I took it.”

The end result was a one-year contract with the Jets worth US\$1 million and it allowed Koepke to join an NHL club with two fellow University of Minnesota-Duluth Bulldogs he was quite familiar with.

“It’s crazy. It’s such a small world. If you think of the odds, when we were going to high school, there were 6,000 people in the whole city,” said Koepke. “Now three of us are on this team together. I’ve been playing on a team with Dylan (Samberg) for 12 years. Neal’s younger brother Nate is my age and was in my wedding party. My older brother was the same grade as Neal. Neal’s dad coached me a ton growing up, so now when their family comes up to Winnipeg, it’s cool to see them. It’s really special.”

Those friendships were forged in Hermantown, Minn., whether it was playing on the outdoor rinks or attending games to cheer on the local heroes.

“Everything in the town was about going to the high school games and going to UMD on the weekend and stuff like that,” said Koepke. “Trying to collect broken sticks from players. It was always super cool to look up to them. As I got older and got the opportunity to go through those steps, that was always awesome.

“When I was younger, the goal was to make the high school team, then to make a USHL team and then college and then from there, you try to take it once step at a time and the NHL was always the goal. I’m just super fortunate with how it’s turned out.”

While Koepke left home to join the Sioux City Musketeers of the USHL after three seasons at Hermantown High, the chance to join the Bulldogs for college was an opportunity he was not going to pass up.

Chosen by the Tampa Bay Lightning in the sixth round of the 2018 NHL draft, Koepke spent three seasons with the Bulldogs before turning pro in the spring of 2021.

Koepke spent the bulk of the next three seasons in the American Hockey League with the Syracuse Crunch, but earned multiple recalls to the Lightning that resulted in 26 NHL games over two seasons.

“In my first year there, (the Lightning) were coming off back-to-back (Stanley) Cups,” said Koepke, who scored his first NHL goal on Charlie Lindgren of the Washington Capitals on Nov. 13 of 2022. “I don’t even know how many Hall of Famers were on that team. I learned a lot my first couple of years. Just by watching them, seeing how the process goes and going into that locker room that has such a winning culture.”

Although he's only been around this group for a couple of months here, Koepke has noticed some parallels to those past Lightning teams he suited up for.

"It's actually very similar to here, where you go in and just see that the guys expect to win every single game," said Koepke. "If you don't have your A-game, it's not, 'Oh shoot, we didn't have our A-game. It's how are we going to win with our B-game? What are we going to do?' No matter what, the expectation is to win and be in contention for the Cup. That mindset gives a whole different confidence or swagger to the team at times and that's a huge thing."

Koepke has been used primarily in a fourth line role so far and is an important part of the penalty killing unit that's been extremely strong in the early part of the season.

"That speed is a huge element," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. "You see it on the penalty kill. You see it on the forecheck, or if they get the puck to him, using his quickness down that line. He's got some detail to his game, plays hard, gives us real good minutes and that's what you want."

Although he only had one assist in his first 10 games with the Jets, Koepke showed last season with the Boston Bruins that he can supply some valuable secondary scoring, as he produced career-highs in goals (10), assists (seven) and points (17).

"Going back to junior and college and even in the American Hockey League, I've always scored at a pretty good number," said Koepke, who posted a pair of 20-goal seasons with the Crunch. "It's never been something where I thought I would go to the NHL and not score. I know I have more of a defensive role in that bottom six and on the penalty kill. It's not expected (as much), but for me it's something I've always wanted to do and expect myself to do."

Finishing his checks with great frequency has also helped Koepke become an NHL regular, as he racked up 177 hits last season and already had 29 through 10 games.

"I've always been pretty physical, but I ramped it up in the last couple of years," said Koepke. "Just knowing that this league is really hard to make it to and then it's really, really hard to stay there too. So, especially in my up and down years during my time in Tampa, that was something I really tried to implement in my first few years. I've always been physical, but I want to finish every single check."

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/gabe-vilardi-scores-twice-to-pace-the-jets-to-a-win-over-chicago-blackhawks>

Gabe Vilardi scores twice to pace the Jets to a win over Chicago Blackhawks

By Gordon Anderson

After not scoring in the team's opening seven games, the flame has returned the red-hot stick of Gabe Vilardi.

Vilardi scored twice and picked up one assist as the Jets beat the Chicago Blackhawks 6-3 at Canada Life Centre.

"It's nice to score, obviously. It was a tough start, but like I said that day when you guys asked me, I was getting chances," Vilardi said. "It's tough to be over critical when they're not going in, but you're getting the looks. I had two goals but I don't want to get ahead of myself and we need to keep going. I expect to keep scoring – it's my job."

His first goal on Thursday was an open-net special as Mark Scheifele did all the work on the odd-man rush, dishing the puck to Vilardi for the quick redirect into the net at 16:56 of the opening period, giving the Jets a 2-1 lead at the time.

His second marker was a one-timer from the slot with defender Alex Vlasic in his back pocket. The quick shot from the slot found the far side on Spencer Knight at 11:19 of the second period for the game-winning goal. Vilardi has four goals in his last four games.

"It looks like he's skating 10 miles per hour faster," head coach Scott Arniel said of Vilardi. "But that line (with Scheifele and Connor) was obviously outstanding. Vilardi is a goal scorer. He gets to holes, he gets to places, and he can make things happen. And those three, the chemistry that they have. They all have different things that they bring to the line and Gabe knows what his role is. He's really starting to play it."

The team's top line combined for nine points. Kyle Connor and Scheifele both recorded two helpers each to go along with their respective goals.

Vlad Namestnikov and Josh Morrissey also scored for the Jets. Along with his goal, Morrissey picked up an assist, giving him one goal and nine assists in his last 10 games.

Connor Hellebuyck stopped 21 shots for his second consecutive victory.

Teuvo Teravainen, Alex Vlasic and Andre Burakovsky scored for the Blackhawks. The six goals against are the most the Blackhawks have surrendered in a single game this season. Their previous high was four in an overtime loss to the Bruins on Oct. 9.

Spencer Knight turned aside 26 shots. The loss snaps Knight's personal three-game win streak.

The Jets went 1-for-3 on the power play. Chicago went 0-for-3 with the power play. Winnipeg improves to 4-3-0 at home and 3-2-0 against the Central Division.

The Jets play host to the Pittsburgh Penguins on Saturday afternoon.

First thing is first

For the first time this season, the Jets won a game in which they outshot their opponent. Coming into this divisional matchup they were 0-1-0, having lost 3-0 to the Kraken on Oct. 23, despite outshooting Seattle 32-28. Oddly enough, the Jets are 7-2-0 when the opposition registers more shots on goal. The final shots on goal were 32-24 for the home team.

Off the ice surface

Gustav Nyquist left the playing surface and went in the direction of the dressing room under assistance from the Jets training staff early in the first period. He did not return. His last shift ended at 8:03. He logged 1:28 in three shifts. Nyquist picked up an assist on Namestnikov's goal at 1:42 of the first period.

Fortune finds the Hawks

Teravainen's second goal of the season came via a lucky bounce. Hellebuyck went behind the net to handle the puck, but the puck bounced off the glass and ricocheted into the slot for Teravainen, who directed the puck into the empty net at 8:57 of the first period. Perhaps, realizing the fortune bestowed upon him, there was little celebration for the goal. Not long after Teravainen's marker, Dylan DeMelo blew a tire in the defensive zone allowing Connor Bedard a free crack at Hellebuyck. Bedard's shot banged off the right post.

<https://winnipegssun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jonathan-toews-takes-his-first-face-off-against-the-chicago-blackhawks>

Jonathan Toews takes his first face-off against the Chicago Blackhawks

By Gordon Anderson

The first faceoff of the game was not a usual drop of the puck for Jonathan Toews.

The ex-captain of the Chicago Blackhawks took the opening face-off in Thursday night's matchup between the 'Hawks and Jets.

"I've still got a couple of good friends on the team and the training staff and all of those guys are still there," Toews said prior to Thursday night's matchup between the Central Division foes. "Overall, there's still a connection to the organization and the city of Chicago, and I think there always will be."

Toews last played for the Blackhawks in April of 2023, his final game with his former employer coming against the Philadelphia Flyers. Three players from that team were in the lineup on Thursday in Connor Murphy, Jason Dickenson and Wyatt Kaiser.

Even though ex-teammates like Patrick Sharp, Patrick Kane or Brent Seabrook are no longer on the ice with the Windy City organization, that fact doesn't dim the house lights for Toews.

"Chicago was my home for a long time and it's days like this that you get to stop for a second, reflect, look back," he said. "I always said that there's a lot of years in Chicago that felt like groundhog's day because it felt like the same group of guys, the same coaching staff, and the same continuity. I've always said I'm very thankful for how things went in Chicago. It was definitely a dream. I'll always have a special connection with the people and the city of Chicago."

<https://winnipegssun.com/sports/jonathan-toews-passes-his-first-big-test-saying-its-not-suppsed-to-be-easy>

Jonathan Toews passes his first big test, saying 'it's not supposed to be easy'

By Gordon Anderson

When the Jets brought Jonathan Toews on board during the summer, the plan was to immerse him fully in the grind of NHL life.

Heading into Thursday night's matchup with the Blackhawks, the 37-year-old has endured his first busy portion of the season, the team now on the other side of a five games in nine nights stretch.

"It's not supposed to be easy," Toews said. "That's part of it, so that's always been something that's consistent throughout my career, and playing a lot of games, it's going to be hard. You've got to work on taking care of yourself on your days off and train and recover as much as you can."

And Toews has been present and accounted for every game this season, averaging 15:54 of ice time per game.

It's well documented the health challenges Toews has faced since his last game back in April of 2023. He missed two seasons with health issues related to chronic inflammatory response syndrome, connected with a COVID-19 infection early in 2020.

"I don't think I ever had doubts," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said. "He is too creative an athlete and he is so driven, his mindset, his determination, all those things that we saw in Chicago for all those years, when they were doing what they were doing there and winning championships. He has that drive."

When Toews made his first public appearance following his introductory press conference in early July, he said he missed the game and was looking forward to getting back into the swing of things, dearly missing the grind of the season.

The Winnipeg native says he's having a great time competing, not just against an opponent, but against the ravages of the condensed schedule.

"It's as good as it'll be for (my) fifth game in nine nights or whatever it's been," Toews said. "Having said that, I'm happy with how I'm recovering after games and getting ready for the next one. I'm sure that's something that's going to continue to improve this year."

Another daunting task awaits him in November as the team is scheduled to play 13 games between Nov. 1 and Nov. 29.

"It's fun. I felt like our schedule in Chicago was that we didn't play a lot of games in October, and I always wished we would just play every other day and just get into it and get the season going," he said. "I think that's the time of year when you've got a lot of energy and you're super excited to play coming out of training camp. I kind of got what I wished for now. So, it's been good. Let's keep this thing going here."

On the competition side, Toews is less enthusiastic. He has two goals and three assists in 10 games. He is still a whiz in the faceoff circle. He is 13th in the league with 70 face-off wins, to go along with 31 losses. His winning percentage is 69.31%.

"It's been good, but not great," Toews said about his season so far. "At the end of the day, I'm just trying to go out there and play loose, play with some confidence. It's just really finding my legs and finding my ability to just relax with the puck and just go out there and make some more creative plays and create a little more offence out there."

Arniel expects an uptick on the offensive side when Toews feels fully accustomed to his 'new' surroundings.

"Every day he has gotten better," Arniel said. We just went through a stretch of the three in four nights and five games in eight days, and that was a big test, and I thought he came through it. (He is) doing what he needs to do every game and every shift, so that was a tough test for him, an early first test, playing a lot of games in a short period of time."

<https://winnipegssun.com/sports/the-winnipeg-jets-arent-eye-candy-just-yet>

The Winnipeg Jets aren't eye candy just yet

By Gordon Anderson

With Halloween knocking at your door, the Winnipeg Jets aren't eye candy just yet.

"I don't ever want to talk down on being 7-3, but we still haven't come close to playing our complete game yet," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said prior to Thursday night's game against the Chicago Blackhawks.

Jets forward Kyle Connor shared the same sentiment as the bench boss.

"I think we're still growing as a team," he said. "We have to work on our consistency. With that being said, we've shown spurts of, I think, the identity of the team, but it's definitely a work in progress. Everybody is motivated to get better and push each other. We're kind of building identity but we are) still working on it."

Kyle Connor scored the OT winner against the Minnesota Wild on Tuesday night. The Jets are 4-0-0 on the road this season. Connor is second on the team in goals with five. Mark Scheifele has eight goals to pace the Jets.

Transition was one theme for the Jets in the off-season, that transition still lingering to this day.

Nikolaj Ehlers, Mason Appleton and Brandon Tanev left the squad with Jonathan Toews, Tanner Pearson, Gustav Nyquist and Cole Koepke coming the other way. Meanwhile, injuries to roster regulars in Adam Lowry, Cole Perfetti and Dylan Samberg have seen the club utilize Parker Ford, Nikita Chibrikov and Brad Lambert as temporary stop gaps.

Lowry has been skating with the team for the last couple of weeks. If all goes well, there is a chance the captain could return to the lineup at some point during their six-game road trip, which starts next Tuesday in Los Angeles. Samberg and Perfetti have returned to practice with both players wearing the yellow non-contact jersey.

"There are lots of new guys that have mixed in and there's growth there," Arniel said. "There are signs of things that we're doing better but sometimes it's two steps forward, one step back. But it's early in the year and if we're going to do it, do it now. Get it out of the way. But I like the fact that, even though we haven't played our best hockey."

The Jets have allowed the third fewest goals in the league at 25. Only the Philadelphia Flyers and Washington Capitals have allowed fewer goals. The Jets are 13th in the league in terms of goals scored, with 34. Their goal differential is third best at plus-9.

Arniel says the Jets are still in familiarization mode heading into the next busy stretch with 13 games in November. The Jets begin the month when they host the Pittsburgh Penguins on Saturday afternoon at Canada Life Centre.

The Jets are third in the Central Division, two points behind the Colorado Avalanche and the Utah Mammoth with one game in-hand on both teams. They are also two points behind the Mammoth and Avs for the best record in the league.

"The good thing is we've won more games than we've lost," Nino Niederreiter said. "At the same time, you can't be super pleased with how we've been playing. We have to find a way to pull a full 60 minutes together. I think that's going to make us feel a lot better than we do right now."

Niederreiter is third on the team in goals scored with three. He scored in the win over the Wild.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/2025/10/31/he-was-an-absolute-horse-sawyer-impressed-with-toews-in-first-faceoff-vs-blackhawks/>

'He was an absolute horse': Sawyer impressed with Toews in first faceoff vs. Blackhawks (VIDEO)

The Jets delivered Jonathan Toews a big win in his first game against the Blackhawks and are now 8-3 on the season. Kevin Sawyer joins Dan Robertson to discuss how Toews looked against his former team and Kyle Connor's three-point performance in the victory.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/2025/10/31/gaunce-details-why-winnipegs-win-over-blackhawks-was-so-important-for-toews/>

Gaunce details why Winnipeg's win over Blackhawks was so important for Toews (VIDEO)

Jonathan Toews marked his first faceoff against the Blackhawks, where he played for 15 years, with an assist as the Jets rolled to victory. TSN Hockey analysts Frankie Corrado and Cameron Gaunce discuss how important it was for Winnipeg to win for Toews and if Mark Scheifele is playing his way onto Team Canada.'